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BURMAH.

In the present posture of our affairs on the eastern frontier of India, it is not unimportant to consider the character of the people inhabiting the regions beyond the Ganges, when it is remembered how much our intercourse with those semi-barbarous nations has been impeded by our ignorance of their national prejudices and our contempt for their mental qualities.

The extra Gangetic nations divide themselves into upwards of thirty branches, which, they maintain, possess in common the same physical conformation. Their average height is 5 feet 3 inches, and they weigh about 120 lbs. each; they are active, fleshy, strong, and symmetrical in form. The Chinese, Siamese, and Kareens, are the fairest; the Arracanese, Burmese, and Peguers the darkest. The first three are of a bright cane colour; the last three are dark bamboo: the other tribes are of every intermediate shade. They have all a more uniform standard of conformation than prevails in the Caucasian race; the deviations from the fixed standard being few, and those not of an important character.

With regard to the Burmans, it is obvious to the most casual observer on the spot, that the country is gradually falling to decay. While the people of India are pressing forward with rapid strides, in defiance of the trammels of caste, scarcely glancing behind them, and then only to smile at the errors of their ancestors, the Burmese are receding from twilight into darkness, gathering their wisdom from books fourteen hundred years old, turning the fables of their forefathers into truths, pausing in puerile admiration over the knowledge and exploits of their ancestors, and lamenting their own fallen condition; the government meanwhile, regardless of the value of life, draining an already half-peopled country of its inhabitants, towns dwindling into villages, and villages disappearing altogether, communication becoming less frequent, the people, dispirited by oppression, passionately attached to the soil, anxiously waiting the fulfilment of the prediction, which promises them restoration of their lost happiness and power, under a wise and just dynasty.* The wars, which had prevailed since the twelfth century, at one time between the Shans and Burmans, at another between the Siamese and Peguers, and at a later period between the Peguers and Burmans, had almost stripped those regions of their inhabitants, when the warlike propensities of the successors of Alongpora gave the final blow to the prosperity of Burmah. They robbed their cities of every able-bodied man and carried their arms into Siam, Arracan, Assam and Cassay, exterminating the people wherever they came, till the whole tract, from the 95th to the 100th degree of longitude, and from Cape Nagrais to the Tropic, became nearly untenanted, by human beings. This vast tract is now overrun with an extensive jungle which encloses within its gigantic embrace the ruins of numerous forts and temples, that serve to indicate the spots which in former times were crowded with a dense population, whose descendants are gathered in scanty groups upon the banks of the magnificent rivers, which still water the land. But they have lost the enterprise and valour which for ages rendered them the terror of every neighbouring country, and retain only the vanity, obstinacy, and restlessness by which they have always been characterized. These degenerate people seldom engage in any pursuit which demands much mental application; their books upon religion and scientific subjects are translations from the Pales: they have no knowledge of perspective, their drawings being all in profile; their poetry is confined to odes and songs of love and war, the larger poems being paraphrastic translations of the great Hindu epics; their knowledge of music is very limited; their system of anatomy is imperfect; they are unacquainted with chemistry, and believe in the transmutation of metals. On the other hand, they are acquainted with vegetable physiology, and recognise the sexes of plants; they can work in gold with considerable taste; they can weave intricate patterns, which even in England have been found difficult to imitate, and they can carve in wood with tolerable ingenuity; but, upon the whole, they do not excel, or even attain mediocrity, in any art which demands elaborate manipulation; and the few manufactures which they still possess flourished among them in higher perfection at the moment of our first acquaintance with them than they do at the present moment.

The vivacity of the Burmans is observable in their conversation; they talk over trifles with the same zest and interest as the people of other countries discuss events of momentous importance. We are sorry to add, that they season their discourse with the most astounding falsehoods, which pass without any other notice than a smile, for lying is not held in much disesteem; on the contrary, it is a national boast, that the Burmans are without equals in their adroitness in concealing the truth. Candour and sincerity are unknown to them; they are early taught by experience to study precaution, and practice dissimulation in every action of their lives. Happy or sad, their physiognomies announce neither pleasure nor grief; questioned upon the simplest topic, they return an indirect reply. Empty are their promises, and idle their professions of regard; artifice and circumvention are resorted to as the legitimate means of obtaining their ends, and so necessary are they considered, that the man who should employ neither deceit nor stratagem in the attainment of his object would be looked upon as little better than a fool.

At the commencement of hostilities in 1823, such had been the discouragement to respectable English merchants, that there were no more than three houses in Ava, and four at Rangoon, to supply a population of nearly three millions with foreign goods, and it was not till the termination of the war that trade was placed upon a firm footing. Numerous restrictions having been removed by a commercial treaty, the return of peace brought a considerable influx of English traders, and imports of plain and coloured cottons, muslins, opium, arms, and wrought iron, were made to a large amount, which was annually increasing, the returns being teak, bullion, rice, and catch, when a suspension of friendly intercourse between the Company and Tharawaddy suddenly annihilated the trade, and what is infinitely more deplorable, left us without a guarantee for the performance of the remaining articles of the treaty of Yandabo.

The Burmans are vain, obstinate, and suspicious; the uniformity which prevails throughout the entire population, in their physical structure, extends in an equal degree to their moral development of character; the diversity of talent, the variety of aspect, and disparity of form, so conspicuous in individuals of the civilized countries of Europe, are scarcely to be found in Burmah; the king and the Mekran prince are almost the only exceptions to the mediocrity which every where prevails. The national characteristics are, perhaps, less strongly marked in the priests, arising from the life of study and devotion which they are compelled to observe; but these are not perpetuated, in consequence of their celibacy. Each person conforms to the habits of the mass; and, in respect of fortune, they are more upon a par with each other than any people who dwell in cities. Each has the same opinion of himself, of his country, and of foreigners in general. Symmetrical and robust, the Burman affects a contempt for the "black stranger" of India, who is lightly formed, and trammelled with the observances of caste. "With respect to his country, it is the most favoured region of the south-island; its rocks are rubies, gold its sand." Its king receives tribute from a hundred and one vassal princes of Shans and Kareens; he once conquered Arracan, Assam, Siam, Pegu, and Tenasserim, and drove away an army of Chinese invaders, "whose weight pressed the earth from its centre." With regard to foreigners, all living to the west of the Ganges (with the exception of the Arabs) are "strangers," divided by caste, black, poor, and timid. The Chinese live near the rising sun, are fair of complexion, ingenious, and industrious; the Siamese are the handsomest, and the most cowardly; the Arracanese the darkest, the poorest, and the most servile. With these extravagant notions of themselves, the Burmans entered upon the war with the company in 1823, and, notwithstanding our signal success, their ideas have undergone very little change. The courage and magnanimity of the English have excited no admiration; our moderation has been overlooked, and our retention of the kingdoms which we conquered has inflicted an incurable wound upon the national vanity. Even his highness, Tharawaddy, who fled before our troops at Prome, and entreated his brother to make peace with the terrible foreigners, has outlived his own fears, and forgotten his own advice. The rich presents from the viceroys to the north, south, and east, no longer pour into his treasury; the splendour of his court is diminished, and the reliance of the people upon the excellence of sovereign power has already begun to waver. In contemplating these evils, he ascribes them to the wrong cause, and is about to attempt their cure by the wrong means. Instead of looking to the insatiable ambition of his predecessors, and more immediately to the hostile propensities of his brother, as the cause of the invasion of Burmah in 1823, and to the inability of an impoverished country to maintain a struggle with a wealthy and flourishing state, as the occasion of the series of disasters which befel the Burman army, he traces the first to the artful policy of the company, in making the collision of two parties on the frontiers of the two states a pretext for quarrel between the powers themselves; and finds the origin of the second in the imbecility and treachery of his brother's advisers! Instead of seeking the remedy for the wasting malady which has brought the country to the point of dissolution, in remodelling the government and adapting it to the emergencies of the times, he imagines that the resumption of the lost provinces will arrest the progress of decay, and ultimately restore his kingdom to its former vigour. To accomplish this undertaking, he well knows he must be aided by other powers, and to enlist their sympathies he must make them sensible of the dangers which encompass them. The Company's inordinate thirst for universal dominion is the theme which they best understand; it speaks to their experience, and kindles their alarm; they have all suffered more or less by our propinquity, and if any of them have received occasional benefit from our protection, it has rendered them envious of our prowess.

To drive out the common enemy by a simultaneous movement of the Indian princes, has been contemplated a hundred times, and attempted upon more than one occasion; it is still the favourite project of the discontented, and will be put in operation again, whenever a fitting moment may present itself.

* A tradition is now circulating among the Burmans, that the seventh sovereign of the dynasty founded by Aiongya will be replaced by a prince of supernatural wisdom to whom universal dominion will be given over the "south island," that is, the world.

THE BIRMAN EMPIRE.

BIRMA, or the **BIRMAN EMPIRE**, of which other names are—**Butma**, **Brahma**, **Buraghmah**, **Boman**, **Barma**, and **Varma**, called also the kingdom of **Ava**, extends over more than one-fourth of the surface of the Peninsula beyond the Ganges, and contains nearly the double of the area of the British islands. According to Crawford, it may be conjectured to contain in round numbers, about 184,000 square miles. But this is mere conjecture, its northern and eastern boundaries being imperfectly known. It is, however, certain that the most northern point of the empire extends considerably to the north of the 27th parallel, and probably passes the 28th, in the country of the **Bor Khamti** (Wilcox). We have still less information respecting the portion of Upper Lao, which is subject to the king of Ava. Berghaus, following Sir Francis Hamilton, extends it to 100° E. long., in the parallel of 22°. Farther south, where the river Saluen or Salween divides it from the kingdom of Siam and the English possessions of Martaban, the eastern frontier lies between 98° and 99° E. long. On the south, where it is bounded by the gulf of Martaban, it extends to 15° 44' lat., and on the west, where it borders on Aracan, it probably does not run west of 93° 20' long. The length of this country from the western mouth of the river Irawaddi to its source in the country of the **Bor Khamti**, may be about 950 miles. Its width to the south of the parallel of 24° amounts at an average to 220 miles, but to the north of it only to 130 miles. In this estimation, Upper Lao is not taken into account, which, between 21° 30' and 23° N. lat., extends perhaps 100 miles farther.

The Birman empire has about 240 miles of sea-coast along the gulf of Martaban, extending from the cape of **Kyai-kami**, near the British settlement of **Amherst** in Martaban, to **Cape Negrais**, the southern extremity of the **Aracan Mountains**. The whole of this coast is low, marshy, and broken by at least twenty considerable channels of rivers or arms of the sea.

The Birman territory is divided from the British province of **Aracan** by a range of mountains called by Europeans the **Aracan Mountains**, but by the natives **Anapectau-meaw** (**Anupectu-mew**) or the **Great Western Range**; also **Yeomadong** or **Romopokung Mountains**. It begins at 16° N. lat. with **Cape Negrais** (**Negraglia** of **Sangermano**), called by the **Birmans** **Modaen**, and extends in a northern direction with a slight bend westward to the northern boundary of **Aracan**, about 21° N. lat. The southern part of it, extending from 16° to 18° between the **Delta** of the **Irawaddi** and the **Gulf of Bengal**, presents one continued ridge of craggy rocks of a moderate height, whose bare cliffs of a reddish colour generally approach so near the sea as not to have any intermediate level ground between them and the ocean. This portion of the range is called by the **Birmans** **Modaen Garit**, from the Birman name of **Cape Negrais**. To the north of 18° N. **Aracan** on the west, while on the east extends the valley of the river **Irawaddi**. In this tract the mountains rise to a greater height, and between 20° and 21° N. lat. the highest summits are thought to attain 6000 feet above the level of the sea. Their western slope towards the plains of **Aracan** and the **Gulf of Bengal** is very rapid; but to the east they descend in a kind of terraces formed by three or four or more lateral ridges of less height, which however present rapid declivities on the east and west.

Three mountain-passes traverse the **Anapectau-meaw Mountains** and connect **Birma** with **Aracan**. The most southern, called the **Tongho Pass**, leads from **Padaong Mew** on the **Irawaddi**, 18° 34', to **Tongho** in **Aracan**, 19° 15' N. lat. The highest point of the pass is 4,692 feet above the sea, and many parts of it are so difficult that it cannot be travelled by beasts of burden. The eastern ridges are commonly covered with bamboo jungle, but on the western declivity there are extensive forests of lofty trees. The second pass connects **Sembeghewn**, in the valley of the **Irawaddi** (20° 40' N. lat.), with **Aeng** in **Aracan** (19° 53' N. lat.), and is called the **Nairiangain Pass**, from a small stockade of that name erected on the highest part of it. The **Birmans** used it as a military road to **Aracan**, and had rendered it passable for beasts of burden by building bridges over the precipices and cutting away the rocks in many places. Before the occupation of **Aracan** by the British, a considerable commerce was carried on by means of this road. This commerce is said to have occupied 40,000 persons, but this number seems greatly exaggerated. This road is now rapidly falling into decay, being exposed to the destructive influence of the south-west monsoons. The third mountain-pass begins likewise at **Sembeghewn** and leads to **Talak** in **Aracan**, 20° 10' N. lat.: by this Pass the **Birmans** entered **Aracan** at the time of the conquest of that country. But it seems that they did not use it afterwards, probably because that which leads to **Aeng** presented less difficulties. We have no information of any kind respecting this road.

To the north of 21° N. lat. the mountains appear to decrease considerably in height, but at the same time they divide into several ranges, running mostly north and south, and occupying a considerable tract of country. This rugged highland, which extends between and along the upper branches of the **Aracan** river, the **Surmah**, or river of **Sihet**, and some tributaries of the **Kyan Duayn**, a branch of the **Irawaddi**, is inhabited by savage nations which are independent of **Birma** and not subject to any of the princes protected by the British. The principal of these tribes are the **Kookis**, and on that account this country is called the highland of the **Kookis**. It has not been ascertained how far the authority of the court of **Ava** extends into this region.

Thus far the western boundary of the **Birman Empire** is formed by mountain-ranges. The remainder, from 24° N. lat. up to the **Nagas Mountains**, which divide it from **Assam**, is bounded by the territories of the **Rajah** of **Munipoore**, a prince who has placed himself under the protection of the British, and whose country extends eastward as far as the **Nampagna River**, a branch of the **Khyandusen**, which constitutes the boundary line of the **Birman Empire** in this part.

The northern extremity of **Birma** is again separated by mountain-ranges from the neighbouring country. The ranges called **Patkoi** or **Poapuo Mountains**, which rise to a great height, and the still higher **Langtan Mountains**, divide it from **Assam** and the countries along the **Upper Brahmapootra**. In the high summits, whence the **Brahmapootra** descends to the west, are also the sources of the **Irawaddi**, which river may with great propriety be called the river of **Birma**, as all the countries drained by it and its tributaries belong to that empire, with the single exception of the southern part of **Munipoore**. It has lately been ascertained that no part of the Chinese empire extends so far west as the banks of the **Irawaddi**. We shall, therefore, follow the course of this river, and make some observations on the countries drained by it.

The different opinions respecting the source of the **Irawaddi**, and its identity with the **Zangbo-tsin** of **Tibet**, will be examined under the head of **БРАХМАПООТРА**. Lieutenant **Wilcox** was informed that its source was at no great distance from that of the **Brahmapootra**, to the south of it, and about fifty miles from **Manchi**, a town of the **Bor Khamti**. The river soon issues from the mountains, and enters a plain, or rather an extensive valley, occupied by the **Bor Khamti**. The country here forms a perfect level, partly cultivated, and partly studded with clumps of trees and bamboos, and intersected by a number of rivulets. The **Irawaddi** opposite the town of **Manchi** is only eighty yards broad, and fordable. The plain on its banks is 1,855 feet above the level of the sea.

From the country of the Bor Khamti the Irawaddi continues its southern course through three degrees of latitude to Bhamnò, through countries about which we have scarcely any information at all. It would seem that high mountain-ranges frequently close upon it, and at other places plains of considerable extent border its banks. Such on its western side are the Samokhtura Mountains and the plain of Mungkung, extending on both sides of the Mungkung river far to the west. The mountain-ranges are partly in possession of the Singfos, a powerful mountain tribe which also occupies a considerable portion of the mountains south of Assam, and every where maintains its independence in the mountain-fastness. The ranges which divide this portion of Birma from the Chinese province of Yunnan seem to be exceedingly rugged, and the difficulties encountered in traversing them have always frustrated the attempts of the Chinese to conquer the countries along the Irawaddi. From Manchi to Bhamnò the river falls in the course of about 350 miles 1,300 feet, being at the latter place only 500 feet above the sea. This accounts for the river being unnavigable for the greater part of that distance, except for small canoes.

Bhamnò is a place of some note, being the principal market for Chinese goods, which are brought to this town on horses and asses. Below Bhamnò the river suddenly turns to the west, but soon resumes its southern course, and thus continues to a few miles east of Amarapoora. The river flows in this tract through a valley of no great breadth, the mountains inclosing it on each side, and frequently advancing to the very banks of the river, especially on the east. Between Bhamnò and Amarapoora the river is only navigable for small trading boats.

Above Amarapoora the Irawaddi begins to decline to the south-west, and from that town it runs in a western direction for nearly a hundred miles as far as the mouth of the Kyan-Duayn. 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 this plain 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. To the north of these hills is the lake of Nandagando, which extends in length from S. to N. above thirty miles; the country about it presents an undulating surface. At a considerable distance east of the mouth of the Kyan Duayn river the hills cease, and an open slightly-undulating country extends to its banks and beyond them. This portion of the valley of the Irawaddi seems to be the most fertile and most populous part of the Birman empire, and offers at the same time the most easy communication with its internal provinces. The Irawaddi opens an easy access to the north as well as to the south, and its two greatest tributaries, the Myit-ngè and the Kyan-Duayn, with the provinces lying east and north-west of the valley. The seat of government has for a long time been fixed in this central part of the empire, and here are the four capitals, Ava, Amarapoora, Sagaing (Zagain), and Monchabo.

The Myit-ngè, or 'Little river' (so called in comparison with the Irawaddi), which is named by Sir F. Hamilton the Mringugean, rises in the Chinese province of Yunnan, and runs a little to the west of south, nearly parallel with the Irawaddi, probably for more than three hundred miles. In this course it drains an elevated but wide, fertile, and well-peopled valley, in which its waters are employed to irrigate the cultivated lands. Arrived at the parallel of Ava, where it is still about eighty miles from the capital, it suddenly turns to the west, and continues generally in that direction to its mouth. Near its entrance into the Irawaddi it divides into two branches, of which the eastern retains the name of Myit-ngè; the western is called Myit-tha. On the island formed by these two branches of the Myit-ngè, the present capital of the country. Ava, is built, more especially near the mouth of the eastern or principal branch, which at this place is from 150 to 200 yards broad and very deep. It must be considered as the proper port of the capital, and a considerable number of war-boats are always stationed there.

Ava is called by the natives Angwa, meaning a fish-pond, because the town was erected on a place where such a pond had formerly been. This name has been corrupted by the Hindus and Malays into Awa, and by Europeans again into Ava; but in all public writings it bears the name of Ratnapoora, or the City of the Pearl.

Ava consists of the inner town or city and the outer town. The city occupies the north-east angle of the whole, and extends nearly up to the mouth of the Myit-ngè river. The outer town lies to the south-west of the city. The whole is surrounded by a brick wall fifteen and half feet high and ten feet in thickness, with innumerable embrasures about the distance of five feet from each other; on the island of the wall there is thrown up a bank of earth, forming an angle of about forty-five degrees. The ditch round this wall is inconsiderable, and during all the dry season fordable in every part. The Myit-ngè on the east face forms a considerable defence on that side. The city is enclosed by a separate wall, which is better constructed than that of the large town. The ditch on the south and west faces of it is also broader and deeper and not fordable; the east side is defended by the Myit-ngè, and the north by the Irawaddi. It is mostly occupied by the palace of the king, the Rung d'hau, or hall of justice, the Lut d'hau, or council chamber, the arsenal, and the habitations of a few courtiers of distinction. All these buildings are situated in a square, which is surrounded by a strong well-built wall about twenty feet in height; and on the outside of this wall and at no great distance is a teak-wood stockade of the same height as the wall.

The circumference of Ava round the walls and excluding the suburbs, is about five miles and a half. In general the houses are mere huts thatched with grass. Some of the dwellings of the chiefs are constructed of planks, and tiled; there are probably in all not half a dozen houses constructed of brick and mortar. Poor as the houses are, they are scattered over the extensive area of the place, and some large quarters are, indeed, wholly destitute of habitations. There are in the town eleven markets or bazars, composed of thatched huts and sheds, but well supplied with commodities, at least with reference to the wants and habits of the people.

The town of Ava, which twice before had been the capital of the Birman empire, became so a third time in 1822, and must therefore be considered as a new town. This accounts for its small population, which Crawford estimated in 1826 at only 25,000 inhabitants.

The town of Sagaing, or Zakkain, which was once the seat of government, is situated on the opposite side of the Irawaddi, directly fronting Ava. The river is at this place 1050 yards wide. On the river face the town has a brick wall, which extends for about half a mile: the height of this is not above ten feet; but it has a *terre pleine*, parapet, and embrasures, like the wall of Ava. On the land side there are no defences whatever. The town extends along the Irawaddi more than a mile and a half, but its depth towards the hills is very inconsiderable. It consists of mean houses thinly scattered among gardens and orchards. On the site of the town and its environs there are innumerable temples, ruinous, old or modern, which give it a striking appearance from a distance.

Moksobo, commonly called by Europeans Monchabo, is about fifty-two miles from Ava in a north-west direction, and at no great distance from the western shores of the lake of Nandagando. It is a walled town, and still a place of considerable traffic and population. In 1756, Alompra, the founder of the present dynasty, who was a native of the place, made it his capital, and gave it the Pali name of Ratna-sinha, or 'the pearl lion,' or lion of pearls.

Below the town of Ava the Irawaddi is a majestic river, whose breadth in some places extends to four miles and upwards, but it is commonly divided into many channels by sandy and uninhabited islands, which are inundated when the water of the river rises to its greatest height. Near the place where the river declines to the south-west begins an extensive island, called Ala-kyun or 'middle islands,' which extends for many miles to the confluence of the Kyan Duayn with the Irawaddi. It is the largest of all the islands in the river, high and not exposed to inundation, and consequently well cultivated and inhabited. Opposite this island on the eastern bank of the Irawaddi is the town of Yandabo, where the peace was concluded between the Birmans and English in 1826.

The Kyan Duayn, by far the largest of the tributaries of the Irawaddi, drains an immense country, its further branches rising in the Patkoi Mountains and the Samokhtura, where these two chains meet the Langtan Mountains. The numerous streams which descend from these ranges unite in a country called Hukhung, which, according to our imperfect information, seems to be a large plain enclosed on all sides by mountains, but fertile, and offering extensive tracts for colonization. Hukhung lies between 26° and 27° N. lat. The river formed in this plain receives the name of the Tenni, and passes afterwards through a nearly unknown mountainous country in a narrow vale, till near 25° N. lat. it enters a wider valley, and unites with the Nampegna, which latter, for the greatest part of its course constitutes the boundary line between Birma and the kingdom of Munipoore. After this junction the country on the river begins to resemble an undulating plain, especially on the eastern banks of the river, which is here called the Ningthi. On the western banks the country belongs to Munipoore, and is much more hilly, and in some parts even mountainous. South of 24° N. lat. Birma extends on both banks of the Ningthi, which is here increased by the waters of the Kongba, or river of Munipoore, which comes from the west. This latter river runs nearly parallel to the Ningthi for about 200 miles from north to south, but then, suddenly turning to the east, breaks through the chain of the Danghi Hills and unites with the Ningthi. After this junction the river begins to be called Kyan Duayn, and to the west of it, at no great distance from its banks, rises a range of hills, the Danghi Hills, or Gnambeandong, which are of moderate height, but very barren and bleak. The level country on its eastern banks extends to a considerable distance, is in general well peopled, and contains extensive tracts of cultivated ground. It is bounded eastward by an undulating country, which becomes hilly only near the banks of the lake of Nandagando. The Kyan Duayn in the wet season is a considerable river, but in the dry season its mouth is not more than 200 yards wide. The whole of its course probably exceeds 600 miles.

From its confluence with the Kyan Duayn the Irawaddi continues, in general, its south-western direction, but with numerous bends on both sides, to the neighbourhood of Sembeghewn, where it turns to the south, and continues in that direction to the town of Padaong Mew. Hence it runs to the south-east, and after a few miles passes the promontory of Kyaok-ta-ran, and enters the low countries which form its delta. This promontory constitutes the boundary between the ancient kingdoms of Ava and Pegu. The population, which north of it consists principally of Birmans, or Mrammas, is to the south of it almost entirely composed of Talains and Karians. In this part of its course the river sometimes expands to a width of three or four miles, and at other places it narrows to 600 or 800 yards. At the more narrow places it is commonly very rapid, and the navigation is also rendered difficult in the dry season by numerous shoals and a few ledges of rocks which traverse the bed of the stream.

The valley of the Irawaddi, 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 which teak-trees are frequent. Cultivation is confined to the narrow flat tracts, which here and there separate the hills from the river.

The most important place on the Irawaddi, between the mouth of this river and the capital of the Birman empire, is Promé (about 18° 50' N. lat.), called by the Mahomedans Pron, whence the European name derives its origin: the Birmans call it Pri (pronounced Pyi). It is a thriving town, and contained in 1827, shortly after the war, upwards of 10,000 inhabitants. This place, or rather one lying about six miles to the east of it, is reported to have been the most ancient seat of the Birman government, at an epoch which begins some centuries before the Christian era. The ruins of the ancient town consists of a broad, earthen wall, of a quadrangular form, from five to six feet in height.

The promontory of Kyaok-ta-ran, which forms the southern extremity of the valley of the Irawaddi, is the eastern extremity of one of the offsets of the Arracan mountains. Nearly opposite to it rises another chain of hills of very moderate elevation, which, however, in its progress to the east increases in height, and forms a range which is visible at a distance of fifty miles and upwards. The higher portion of these mountains, called the Galladzet Mountains, extends in an eastern direction probably to the banks of the Setang river. Nothing is known of this range but its geographical position; nor are we better acquainted with the country extending to the north of this chain up to the capital of the empire, and occupying the central parts of the southern portion of Birma, between 18° and 22° N. lat., and the rivers Irawaddi and Saluen. It is supposed to be a country of secondary and tertiary formation, and to constitute a kind of uneven table-land of very moderate elevation. As far as our information goes, it has in general a very sterile soil, consisting mostly of sand or gravel, and is very thinly inhabited. Perhaps the valleys along the rivers form an exception. The hills, which cover the whole surface, and are commonly low, rise to a considerable height in a few places. A conical mountain, called Poupá, several miles to the east of Pughan, is thought to attain an elevation of above 5000 feet. Crawford thinks that the ranges visible from Ava to the south-east exceeds the mountains of Aracan in height: and Sangermano states that the Kurians, who inhabit the neighbourhood of Tongo or Taunt, have been able to maintain their independence against the Birmans in their mountain-fastnesses; whence we may infer that this portion of the Birman territories contains extensive mountain ranges.

The southern portion of the Birman empire is a low, level country, without any hills. It comprehends the Delta of the Irawaddi, and all the extensive tract which spreads from its eastern branch to the banks of the Setang river. Hamilton estimates the southern line of the Delta at 135, the western at 145, and the eastern at 113 miles. It contains more than 10,000 square miles, and is considerably larger than the Delta of the Nile. The country east of it may extend over a tract of nearly the same area; and thus this level country contains considerably more than 20,000 square miles.

The Irawaddi enters the low lands near 18° N. lat., where it throws off a great number of branches of various magnitudes; watering an immense extent of country, and affording a convenient internal navigation, to which there are few parallels in any country. Many of these branches reunite and divide again. The river falls into the sea by fourteen different channels. The three principal are Bassein, Dalla, and Rangoon, or Syrian. The Bassein river, also called Anank Khiaun, that is, western channel, forms an excellent harbour near the island of Negrais (called by the Birmans Haingri Kyun, and by Sangermano, Negraglia), and is navigable for vessels of considerable burden up to the town of Bassein; farther upwards it is only navigated by the river barges, and this navigation extends in the dry season (from November to May) only to Lamena or Lemena. Higher up it is a trifling stream, nearly dry, and all water connexion with the main river is interrupted; but after the rains it becomes again navigable for the river barges. This channel branches off from the main river south of Myan-aong.

After having thrown off the Bassein-river on the right, the Irawaddi continues to flow in a southern direction, but with numerous windings, and sends off many smaller branches. At nearly the same distance from the sea and the place where the Bassein channel branches off, is the second great branch of the Irawaddi, at the village Yangain-chain-yah, the river here dividing its waters between the Dallah and Rangoon channels. The Dallah channel forms near the sea numerous wide branches, but they are not navigable, on account of the bars before their embouchures. The Rangoon or Syrian channel, which is also called the Asiae Khiaun, that is, the eastern channel, flows off nearly in an eastern direction, and affords in all seasons an uninterrupted navigation into the main river, being from 80 to 150 yards across, and generally three or four fathoms deep, which, however, on some shoals lessens to two and a half fathoms. At the lowest water the depth on these shoals is said to be not more than five feet; and hence Crawford infers, that the whole rise of the water in the river amounts to ten feet. The advantages which this branch of the Irawaddi offers for navigation have concentrated on its shores, especially at the town of Rangoon, all the maritime commerce of the Birman empire. [See RANGOON.] In the dry season the tides ascend the branches of the river to the place where the two principal branches meet at the village of Yangain-chain-yah, but in the wet season they are observable in the Rangoon channel only as far as the village of Panlang, which is many miles farther down.

The distance from Rangoon to Ava along the river, according to Colonel Wood's map, is 446 miles; according to Symes, 500; and according to the *Diana's* log-book 640. At the height of the freshes, a war-boat, proceeding day and night, has been known to go from Ava to Rangoon in four days. In the dry season, a war-boat, proceeding in the same manner, will go from Rangoon to Ava in eight days, and in the rainy season in ten.

The Delta of the Irawaddi, as far as the tide reaches, is covered with a thick forest of moderate-sized trees, sparingly interspersed with some grassy plains. As soon as the tides cease, the character of the vegetation is greatly altered. The country is covered with a tall rush grass (a species of *saccharum*), among which are scattered trees from twenty to sixty feet high, without any underwood. The appearance of inhabitants and cultivation is extremely scanty. Here and there, on the immediate banks of the river, are a few villages of Talain fishermen; and farther off are the Karian villages, somewhat more numerous, and with a few patches of rice-culture. As the banks of the river are a foot or two above the level of the surrounding country, this circumstance might be taken advantage of for watering the land to a great extent. But irrigation is neglected, and the country is covered with innumerable pools, which are often so extensive that they might be called lakes. In the province of Bassein alone, 127 of these lagoons were counted at the time when it was occupied by the British. In the northern district of the Delta, especially north of Henzadah, the cultivated portion of the country is much more considerable, and here the water of the river is used for irrigating the rice-grounds.

The country which extends to the eastward of the Delta seems to be of the same description. It is drained by the Pegu river and the Setang. The Pegu river, which is called by the natives Bagoo Kioup, or 'Pegu Rivulet,' has its source in the Galladzet hill, and unites with the Rangoon branch of the Irawaddi three miles below the town of Rangoon. It is navigable only a few miles to the northward of the town of Pegu, which advantage it owes wholly to the action of the tide. In the fair season it is almost dry at low-water. The Setang has its sources near the 20th parallel, and runs southward the whole of its course; till it empties its waters into the northernmost angle of the Bight of Martaban. This river, where it is of great breadth, is rather a considerable arm of the sea than a river. Beyond the reach of the tides it is an inconsiderable stream; and even as low down as the town of Tongo it is only navigable for boats. Its mouth is confined by sand-banks, and is liable to a dangerous bore, which renders its navigation impracticable for large vessels, and difficult for vessels of all descriptions.

That portion of the Birman empire which extends along the western banks of the Saluen river is almost entirely unknown. It seems to be more mountainous than the country along the middle course of the Irawaddi, but to contain some fertile tracts.

Of Upper Lao, or that portion of Birma which extends on the left bank of the Saluen river, between the Chinese province of Yunnan and the kingdom of Siam, we have so little information, that we only know it to be a mountainous country, which however contain some fertile and cultivated tracts along the courses of the rivers. It seems to be rich in metallic wealth.

We conclude our description of the Birman Empire with a short notice of the Saluen river, which forms the eastern boundary-line between it and Siam, and the British province of Martaban, for between 500 and 600 miles. The Saluen, or Thaluen, called also Sanluen, rises in the eastern districts of Tibet, in the country of the Nou or Noui and its upper course is called by the Chinese Nou-kiang. It afterwards passes through the Chinese province of Yunnan, where it is named the Lou-kiang. Continuing its southern course, it leaves China, and divides the province of Upper Lao from the remainder of the Birman territories, and afterwards forms the boundary between Siam and Martaban on one side, and the Birman empire on the other. This river is remarkable for the small number of large bends, and for not forming a Delta, as is the case with all larger rivers in this part of the world. It is likewise less navigable: vessels of moderate size can only come up to the town of Martaban, and with difficulty and danger. Small boats may ascend as far as Ka Kayet, at the confluence of the Yunzalaen river: but farther to the north the navigation in the wet season is entirely interrupted by numerous eddies, rapids, and cataracts. About twelve miles north of the town of Martaban, a creek, called the Kadachaong, leads from the Saluen to the Setang, and another channel hence to the Pegu river; so that there is an inland water communication between the Saluen and the Bassein branch of the Irawaddi, a direct distance of more than 200 miles. Near its mouth the Saluen is divided into two branches by the island of Balu, which is about twenty miles in length, and about half that extent in average breadth: it is noted for its great fertility in rice. The southern branch of the Saluen, between the island of Balu and the new settlement of Amherst, is seven miles across, and the wider of the two.

The climate of such an extensive country, which extends over twelve degrees of latitude, must, of course, vary very greatly. We are, however, acquainted only with a small portion of it. The greatest difference observed is that which prevails between the low country at the southern extremity and the valley of the Irawaddi before it branches off into different channels. In the low lands the south-west and north-east monsoons divide the year between them, and hence there are only two seasons, the wet and the dry. From the end of April or the beginning of May, to the end of July, or during the south-west monsoon, violent rains pour down nearly without intermission; and at the beginning, as well as at the end of this period, the rains are accompanied with tremendous thunder and lightning, and with violent winds. These rains are followed by an unsettled state of weather, which continues to the end of October or the beginning of November. But from this time to April the season is perfectly dry, except the month of February, in which a little rain sometimes falls; but it is very gentle, and never continues for several days. In the mornings however thick fogs are frequent in October and November.

In the valley of the Irawaddi and the adjacent hilly countries three seasons are observed, the cold, the hot, and the rainy. The cold season, which may be called the winter, though it never freezes nor snows, prevails during the two months which precede the winter solstice and the two which follow it. The air is dry, the nights and mornings chilly, and the heat of the day very moderate; but mists are frequent in November and December. This is the most pleasant part of the year, and the season of the harvest of rice, grain, and pulse. The transition from cold to heat is very sudden. In March and April it is often very hot, and the heat continues to the month of July. In May many trees shed their leaves, but they are instantly clothed with new ones. During the season of the heat the climate of the low lands is less warm than the valley, because the rain diminishes the heat. In the valley a little rain falls in May or the beginning of June, and this rain is called the first rain; but sometimes the rains do not come on, and even when they are abundant, they do not continue long enough to change the temperature very much. During the hot season the clouds are carried by the south-west monsoon between the two ranges of mountains which enclose the valley of the river to the hilly country adjacent to it on the north, where the moisture contained in them descends on the mountains which divide the Birman Empire from Asam, and pours down to the valley of the Irawaddi in torrents and streams, which cause the river to rise and to inundate the lower tracts on its banks during the months of June, July, and August. In some places the difference of the lowest and highest water-mark is not less than thirty-two feet. After the first rains in May, two months and a half follow in which not a drop of rain falls in the valley of the Irawaddi. The second or great rains begin in the middle of August, and last to the end of October. They are generally heavy, but it sometimes happens that these second rains do not come at all, or are not sufficiently plentiful, and in such an event scarcity is the natural consequence. Such a disaster never occurs in the low lands. During the second rains the river rises and falls several times; but in general the waters are not entirely drained off before the end of October, in which month the fair weather becomes settled, and the agricultural labours begin, as well on those fields which have only the advantage of the rains as on those annually inundated by the river, which, by its deposits, renders the soil more fertile.

The thermometer ranges in the low lands between 55° and 90°, rarely passing these two extreme points, but more frequently the latter than the former. In the valley of the Irawaddi it descends lower in the cold season and rises higher in the hot, occasionally to 94° and upwards.

We are unacquainted with the climate of the northern mountainous districts, except that of the country of the Bor Khamti, at the most northern extremity of Birma, which was visited in 1827 by Lieutenant Wilcox, who states that after the rain the thermometer fell five or six degrees, when the air was delightfully clear, and the sky partially covered with clouds. Within three or four days the atmosphere thickened, and the thermometer regained its highest range, when it became excessively close, till another storm reduced the heat. In the morning at sunrise the range was from 72° to 78° in the shade, and at the hottest time of the day from 84° to 94°. The nights were comparatively cool and pleasant. The observations were made in the month of May. From the 15th of October to February, the weather is clear and dry; the remainder is perfectly uncertain. The heavy rains set in about the 15th of June, and continue to the 15th of September.

If we may judge from the languages which are spoken in the Birman territories, the inhabitants are divided at least into five nations, some of which comprehend many tribes. Crawford states that eighteen different tribes or nations had been enumerated to him. Wilcox, in his attempt to reach the sources of the Irawaddi, found in the most northern corner of the kingdom seven dialects spoken in villages only one day's journey from one another, and differing so much that the inhabitants of one could not be understood by those of another village. He also found that the languages of the Bor Khamti, of the Singfos, and of the Kunungs, were entirely distinct from one another.

The Birmans, who call themselves Mrammas (pronounced Myanmas) or Brahmas (pronounced Byahmas), occupy the centre of the empire, between 18° and 22° or 23° N. lat., and extend from the Aracan mountains to the Saluen river. The languages spoken by the Yo or Io, and those of the Kyain and Karens, are only dialects of the Birman language. The Yo inhabit the hilly country extending west of the Danghii hills to the mountains of the Kookis; we know very little of them. The Kyains, who call themselves Koloun, are the inhabitants of the Aracan mountains, but many of them have settled in the valleys on the west of the Irawaddi; they are a peaceful industrious tribe, who cultivate the ground and weave cloth of cotton and silk. The men and women tattoo their faces all over, in lines mostly describing segments of circles. The Karens or Karians live partly intermixed with the Peguans in the Delta of the Irawaddi, where they call themselves Pflay, and are the most industrious cultivators of the soil. They occupy also the hilly and mountainous country on the upper branches of the Setaing, near Tongo, where, according to the statement of Sangermano, they have preserved their independence. Other Karens are found on the banks of the Saluen north of Martaban, as far as the mouth of the Junzalaen.

The Peguans, who at no distant time formed an independent and powerful nation, seem at present not to be very numerous. They are called Talains by the Birmans, and by themselves Moan: they occupy nearly exclusively the low country between the Delta of the Irawaddi and the Saluen river. In the Delta itself they are mingled with the Karens, but form the greater part of the population.

The Shans are the most numerous nation of the peninsula beyond the Ganges; they call themselves Tay. This nation is dispersed over nearly one half of the Birman empire, and all the tribes inhabiting the kingdom of Siam and Lao belong to it. In Birma four tribes of Shan are distinguished: the Lowa Shan occupy Upper Lao, the Tay-yay, called by the Birmans Mrelap-shan (pronounced Myelapshan), live on the western banks of the Saluen, and extend north of Amara-poor to the banks of the Irawaddi, and even on the country to the west of that river. Their country is called Ko-shan-pri pronounced (Ko-sang-pyi), or the nine provinces of Shan. The country to the north of them is inhabited by the Tay-loong, called by the Birmans Casi-Shan; the Bor Khamti, visited by Wilcox, are only a smaller tribe of these Casi-Shan. Another numerous tribe of the Shan extends on both sides of the Kyan-Duayn up to the boundary of Munipoore, and the inhabitants of the last named country are likewise Shans. The Shans inhabiting the country along the Kyan-Duayn are called by the Birmans Kathu or Casi.

In the northern parts of the empire the tribes of the Shan appear to occupy only the plains and larger valleys. The mountains and the upper valleys are in possession of two numerous races of mountaineers, the Singfos and the Naga. The Singfos inhabit the mountains which skirt the Irawaddi on both sides and extend northward to the vale of the Brahmapootra in Assam. The Naga tribes are dispersed over the extensive mountain districts between the upper branches of the Kyan-Duayn, and as far as the boundary of Assam. They seem to belong to the same nation which, under the name of Kookis, occupies the country between Munipoore and Chittagong. The Singfos and the Naga live in a state of independence.

The Birmans are greatly inferior to the Hindoos in civilization, and still more so to the Chinese. Like the Talains or Peguans, they tattoo or stain the skin with an indelible tint, but this practice is confined to the men. Not to be tattooed is considered a sign of effeminacy, and there is no one who is not tattooed more or less. They bore the lobe of the ear, making a very large and unseemly aperture, into which a gold or silver ornament is put, or a piece of wood, or roll of paper. If the aperture is not occupied, a man or woman, after smoking half a cigar, thrusts the remainder into the ear for future use. They consume large quantities of tobacco in the form of cigars; and also much betel, which they mix with the areca nut, lime, and a little tobacco.

Their dress, though upon the whole not unbecoming, is much less so than the flowing and graceful garments of the western nations of India. Too much of the body is left naked, and the fabrics worn are comparatively coarse and homely. Umbrellas, which are in general use among all classes, are among the principal insignia of rank or office. The colour of the dress of the priests is yellow, and it would be deemed nothing less than sacrilege in any one else to use this colour.

The Birmans are very uncleanly in their food. They eat all kinds of reptiles, lizards, iguanas, and snakes; and as their religion forbids them killing animals for food, they generally eat those which have died of disease. Venison is the only meat permitted to be sold in the markets. The killing of a cow is punished with peculiar severity.

The Birmans are of a gay character, and fond of amusements, which are principally chess, music, the exhibition of fire-works, and some kinds of dramatic representations.

Their progress in the useful arts has not been great. All their cotton fabrics are coarse and high priced, and British piece-goods are imported in considerable quantity. Silk articles are coarse and high-priced, but durable. All the colours given to these fabrics are fugitive, especially those of the cottons. Coarse and unglazed earthenware is of very good quality, and cheap. Those known in India under the name of Pegu jars often contain 180 gallons; but the Birmans are unacquainted with the art of making any kind of porcelain. Their iron manufactures, which are always coarse and rude, consist of swords, spears, knives, scissors, and carpenters' tools. Muskets, or rather matchlocks, are made at Ava, and the best tempered swords are imported from the country of the Shans. Brass ware is not much used, lacquered ware being chiefly substituted for it. The manufacture of this ware is very much extended, and in this the Birmans display invention and taste, but the best description is imported from Lao. Gold and silver ornaments are manufactured at the capital; some are good, but in general the jewellery is clumsy and rude, and inferior to that of India.

In Birma, as among other nations which have embraced the religion of Buddha, education is in some degree attended to. It is a kind of religious duty in the priests to instruct youth. The monasteries are the only schools, and the priests generally the only teachers. Education is entirely eleemosynary: the children even live at the Kyaongs, and the parents only make occasional presents to the priests. The children are instructed for about six hours in the day in reading, writing, and the four common rules of arithmetic. There are few persons who do not know how to read, and not many who do not write. The girls are instructed by the nuns, or female priestesses, in reading, and some also in writing, but that is less general.

Like the other Hindu-Chinese nations the Birmans have two languages and two alphabets, the vernacular and the foreign, or Pali. In the Birman language all the words not derived from the Pali are monosyllables, and even the polysyllabic words derived from this source are pronounced as if each syllable were a distinct word. There is no inflexion of any part of speech. Relation, number, mode, and time are all expressed by prefixing or affixing certain particles. Some roots of this language may be converted into nouns, verbs, or adjectives by a similar simple contrivance. The Pali alphabet is very little used, even in their religious writings, for which they have recourse to the vernacular alphabet.

The literature of the Birmans consists of songs, religious romances, and chronological histories, of which the second class occupies the principal rank. The Budd'hist religion, as it exists among the Birmans, does not appear to differ materially from that practised in Ceylon, Siam, and Kamboja. Among the Birmans neither the Christian nor the Mahomedan religion has made any progress.

In Birma there is no census of the population, and accordingly there are no exact data for ascertaining the amount. There is consequently a great difference in estimating the number of inhabitants. Symes carried it to upwards of fourteen millions, which Cox reduced to from six to seven millions; and Crawford, who has been at great pains in collecting information on this subject, does not rate the population of the Birman empire higher than four millions, or about twenty-two inhabitants to a square mile.

The sovereign of Birma, who is called Boa, is lord of the life and property of all his subjects. The country and people are at his entire disposal, and the chief object of government is his personal honour and aggrandizement. No class of inhabitants possesses hereditary rights except the Taubwas, or Saubwas, who are the tributary princes of some of the subdued nations. Among the Birmans themselves there is no hereditary nobility. The first officers are appointed and dismissed at a nod, and neither their titles, rank, nor officers, and very often not even their property, can descend to their children. Any subject can aspire to the first office in the state, and such offices in reality are often held by persons of very mean origin.

In Birma there is no vizier or prime minister; but the king has two councils, a public and a privy one, through which the royal orders are issued. The first is called the *lut'-d'hau*, from the name of the hall in which the business is transacted, and consists commonly of four officers, called *wun-gyis*, who have the right of deliberating, and of voting, and four of less rank, called *wun-dauks*, who do not deliberate or vote; there are also eight secretaries, called *sare-d'hau-gyis*. The privy council consists likewise of four officers, called *atwen-wuns*, and thirty secretaries. Whatever emanates directly from the king is first discussed in the privy council and then transmitted to the *lut'-d'hau*.

For internal administration the country is divided into provinces, these into townships, the townships into districts, and the districts into villages and hamlets, and every one of these divisions has its political head. The governor of a province is called *myo-wun*, his first officer *re-wun*, who is, deputy, and then follow the *akhwon-wun*, or collector of taxes, and the *akaok-wun*, or collector of customs.

The Birmans have no standing army, nor is there any distinction between the civil and military classes, or between civil and military employments. As the sovereign is considered the lord of all his subjects, every male adult is obliged to become a soldier. In case of a war, all persons able to bear arms are brought together through the agency of the local officers, by an order of the *lut'-d'hau*; and they serve under the same leaders as when dwelling in their own districts or townships. The troops have no regular pay, but are armed and fed at the public expense. An army thus composed cannot be long kept together, and a defeat or difficulty is almost sure to disperse them. This accounts for the sudden disappearance of the numerous armies which the Birmans opposed to the British at the beginning of the last war. The Birmans, however, would be good soldiers if they were well disciplined and armed; but at present they are unable to withstand a European force. In their last contest with the English they displayed a good deal of skill in the construction of field-works, but they seldom knew how to defend them.

In Birma there is no land-tax; but the sovereign, being considered as the lord of all the inhabitants, assigns the labour of the peasants or cultivators to his favourites and public officers instead of stipends and salaries, or appropriates them to the expenses of public establishments, such as the war-boats, the elephants, &c. Those to whom the townships or villages are assigned in this way assess the cultivators at their discretion, usually by levying a kind of capitation-tax, which according to circumstances, is taken either in money, in kind, or in services. This manner of taxing the country is exceedingly oppressive, and whenever such high persons are in favour at court, the cultivators have no resource against oppression but to abandon the lands, and to take refuge in some other place. Hence the decay of established towns and villages and the rise of new ones is a thing of yearly occurrence.

The lords of the land make yearly offerings to the king, and it is supposed that these offerings amount to one-tenth of the income derived from the grant. These offerings constitute one of the principal sources of the king's revenue. The remainder arises from a tax on the petroleum, the *ngapi*, salt, and teak-timber, besides the customs on the merchandise exported and imported, the former paying five per cent., and the latter ten per cent. Crawford thinks that the whole revenue of the king does not exceed 25,000*l.* per annum. But his expenses are still less, as no public officer receives any fixed money salary. The principal officers are paid, as already stated, by assignments of land, or, more correctly by an assignment of the labour and industry of a given portion of the inhabitants; and the inferior ones by fees, perquisites, and irregular emoluments. Money therefore is seldom paid out of the royal treasury, unless for the personal gratification of the sovereign. In extraordinary cases, as for instance if a war be undertaken, an extraordinary contribution is levied on the people.

The circulating medium consists, for small payments, of lead; in the case of larger ones, of gold and silver, and chiefly of the latter; but there is no coin of any of these metals. The money must be weighed and generally assayed at every payment. Silver may be considered as the standard, and gold is about seventeen times as dear. Lead fluctuates according to its market value. The weighing and assaying of the metals, which is done by a class of brokers called *poe za*, causes an expense or loss of two and a half per cent. at every disbursement.

The commerce carried on in the interior of the country is considerable, the different portions of the empire producing several things which are not found in others. The inhabitants of the sea-coast and the lower country take to the capital and the upper provinces rice, salt, ngapi, dried fish, and foreign commodities. The Shans bring to Ava cotton and silk stuffs, some raw silk, varnish, stick-lac, ivory, bees-wax, lacquer ware, swords, gold, lead, and tin; and take in return the articles brought from the lower provinces, especially salt, ngapi, and dried fish. Ava sends to the lower provinces petroleum, saltpetre, lime, paper, lacquer ware, cotton and silk fabrics, iron, cutlery, some brass-ware, catechu, palm-sugar, &c.

The internal commerce is much facilitated by the easy water-communication, especially in the lower country, where the numerous branches and channels of the Irawaddi, together with the Pegu river and the Setaing, render the transport of commodities so easy that roads are nearly unknown. The hilly-country north of it possesses these advantages only so far as it approaches the Irawaddi or Kyan-Duayn. In this part roads are numerous, and the merchants travel for security in caravans, as in other parts of Asia. The trading vessels used on the Irawaddi for the transport of commodities are commonly small, not exceeding ten or fifteen tons burden; but larger vessels are also used, some of which may be 100 tons.

The foreign commerce of the Birmans is limited to that with China, carried on over land, and to that with the nations who visit the ports of the country. The traffic with China is considerable, and entirely carried on by the Chinese, who come in great numbers to the annual fairs of Bhanmo and Mide. Bhanmo is situated on the banks of the Irawaddi, and seems to be a considerable place. Mide is a small town about six miles to the north-east of Ava. This traffic resembles that between China and Russia at Kiachta and Maimatchin. The caravan arrives at Ava in the beginning of December, and is stated to be six weeks in travelling from Yunnan. The commodities are brought on small horses, mules, and asses. The principal fair is at Bhanmo, and few traders only come to Ava. The articles imported from China are copper, orpiment or yellow arsenic, quicksilver, vermilion, iron pans, brass-wire, tin, lead, alum, silver, gold and gold-leaf, earthen-ware, paints, carpets, rhubarb, tea, honey, raw silk, velvets and raw silks, spirits, musk, verdigris, dry fruits, paper, fans, umbrellas, shoes, wearing apparel, and a few live animals. The largest article of import is raw silk which is worked up in the manufactures of the country. The exports from Birma consist of raw cotton, ornamental feathers, esculent swallows' nests, ivory, rhinoceros and deer horns, sapphires, and noble serpentine, with a small quantity of British woollens. Raw cotton is by far the most considerable article. The average amount is stated to be not less than 14,000,000 lbs. The whole amount of the export trade with China is estimated at from 400,000*l.* to 700,000*l.*

The navigation of the Birmans does not generally extend beyond the Gulf of Bengal. The places visited by their vessels are Chittagong, Dacca, and Calcutta in Bengal; Madras and Musilipatnam on the coast of Coromandel; and the Nicobar islands, and a few places in Sumatra. Many foreign vessels, especially British, American, and Chinese, visit the harbour of Rangoon. The articles exported seaward are teak-wood, terra Japonica or catechu, stick-lac, bees-wax, ivory, raw cotton, orpiment, gold, silver, rubies, and sapphires, with horses. The most important article is teak timber, which is principally carried to Calcutta. Raw cotton goes to Dacca, and is used in the fabrication of the fine muslins.

The principal articles imported at Rangoon are cotton piece-goods, British, Bengal, and Madras; British woollens; iron, steel, quicksilver, copper, cordage, borax, sulphur, gunpowder, saltpetre, fire-arms, coarse porcelain, English glass-ware, opium, tobacco, cocoa and areca nuts, sugar and spirits. After cotton piece-goods the most important articles are areca and cocoa-nuts. The value of the cotton piece-goods was estimated in 1822 at 282,000*l.* Crawford thinks that the value of all the imports of Rangoon is not over-rated at 300,000*l.* a year and that the exports may be taken at the same amount. Bassein formerly was a place of considerable traffic, and some European nations had factories established there, but since the foundation of Rangoon it has lost all its commercial importance.

EXTERNAL

AVA.

The precise time of our arrival in Birman is uncertain, but we very early possessed factories at Prome, Ava, and on the borders of China, probably at the Birman frontier town of Bamau. These were afterwards forfeited by the misconduct of the Dutch, who likewise had settlements in the country; and Europeans of all nations were banished from Ava.

In 1687, Captain Weldon was sent to Mergui, to declare war against Siam, and on his return, he took possession of the Island of Negrais, in the name of the British. By Captain Weldon's report, the island appears to have belonged to the Siamese at that period. On this island the Government of Fort St. George established a settlement.

Prior to this, however, the British Government made two unsuccessful attempts to obtain a location in the country, and particularly 'at Peammoo on the confines of China.'

Notwithstanding the early date of the arrival of the British in Birman, no regular official intercourse appears to have been instituted until the year 1695, when Messrs. Fleetwood and Sealy were sent as ambassadors to the Court of Ava; some trifling advantages were obtained from this mission. In 1697 the Government of Madras again deputed a Mr. Bowyear as ambassador to the Birman Court. He did not however proceed to the capital; and commerce was carried on without further protecting efforts on the part of the British Government.

In 1709, Mr. Pitt, Governor of Madras, deputed a Mr. Allanson or Alison to the Court of Ava. This gentleman was twice at Ava, and we may reasonably conclude that his missions were successful; for several years after the date of his missions, the English were settled at Syriam, and trading freely between the British possessions and Birman, under the protection of residents, who were, however, supervisors of private trade, and not immediately in the service of the Company; that body itself having had no commerce with the Birman, after its expulsion in the 17th century.

The supremacy of the Birman over the Peguers continued throughout the seventeenth, and during the first forty years of the eighteenth century; when the Peguers in the provinces of Dalla, Martaban, Toungo, and Prome, revolted, a civil war ensued, which was prosecuted on both sides with savage ferocity. In the year 1744, the British factory at Syriam was destroyed by the contending parties, and the views of commerce were suspended by precautions of personal security.

Success long continued doubtful: at length the Peguers, by the aid of arms procured from Europeans trading to their ports, and with the assistance of some renegade Dutch and native Portuguese, gained several victories over the Birman in the years 1750 and 1751. These advantages they pursued with so much vigor that early in the year 1752, the capital of Ava was invested. The Birman, disheartened by repeated defeats, after a short siege surrendered at discretion.

In 1754, both the English and French nations had re-established their factories at Syriam, and of course had their separate interests. The French favored the Peguers, whilst the English leaned to the Birman; but until the vicinity of their residence again became the seat of war, neither engaged in open hostility; their partialities were manifested by giving assistance, but in secret, and supplies clandestinely conveyed, probably more with a view to private emolument than from any enlarged political consideration.

The seat of war between the Birman and Peguers becoming likely to be confined to the mouths of the navigable rivers, and the numerous creeks and canals that intersect the lower provinces of Pegue, and communicate between the larger streams, the Birman king Alonpra, formed a right estimation of the advantage to be derived from an alliance with nations versed in the arts of maritime war; in order, therefore, to gain the good offices of the English, or at least stipulate for their neutrality, he sent a deputation to Mr. Burke, Resident at Negrais, and at that time chief of all the English factories.

The Birman deputies were escorted by Captain Baker from Bassein, and arrived at Negrais on the night of the 22d March 1755. The deputies returned with a letter from the Resident at Negrais to Alonpra, who had reached Dagon (now Rangoon) early in the preceding month.

The French and English factories at Syriam were at this time in a state of rivalry; the situation of both became at this juncture highly critical. In this difficulty 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.

The English, when it became necessary to avow the side they meant to espouse, seem to have declared explicitly for the Birman. Some vessels belonging to the India Company left Syriam, and joined the Birman at Dagon. In the beginning of June, the Company's *Snow*, *Arcoot*, bound to Negrais, commanded by a Captain Jackson, 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. On an invitation from the Birman King, the vessel was taken up to the town, and Mr. Whitehill was received in a manner that gave no cause for complaint.

During the contest of the Birman and Peguers, Mr. Burke was advancing his negotiations with Alonpra; Captain Baker and Lieutenant North were delegated with presents and instructions to conclude a treaty of amity and alliance with the Birman Monarch.

The English deputation proceeded slowly up the river.

On the 8th of September, Captain Baker reached Ava, lately the metropolis of the empire. Alonpra had removed the seat of government to Moutshobo, which he constituted his capital. On the 12th he reached Kyouk Myoung, situated on the west bank of the Irrawaddy, and on the 16th he received a summons to attend "the golden feet." During the interview, the new monarch vaunted of his victories, and the extent of his empire; he upbraided our national character in an affair at Dagon, where some English had fired on some Birman, alleging that he had treated the English with kindness, which they repaid by perfidiously breaking

of friendship given to him on his departure from Dagon. The Birman could only reply by expressions of regret, and a

so far from having authorized, knew nothing

At a second audience, a few days subsequent to the first, his Majesty dictated a letter, addressed to Mr. Burke, in which he granted permission to the Company to establish factories at Dagon and Bassein, having determined on the total demolition of Syriam. Captain Baker made a further requisition of the island of Negrais. Although this desire was not refused, the formal assignment was postponed; but as it was his Majesty's intention shortly to repair to Rangoon, to conduct in person the Pegue war, the completion of the grant was deferred to a future opportunity. Captain Baker having obtained his dismissal set out for Khyouk Myoung, and on the 29th of September-embarked to return to Negrais.

The English interests in India, during the time that hostilities still continued between the Birmans and Peguers, were suspended in a doubtful scale; Negrais was in consequence neglected, though not yet abandoned. The Talion or Pegue government, by the surrender of their capital, being now extinct, it became necessary for foreigners to conciliate the new sovereign. Alonpra had summoned Mr. Newton, Resident on the part of the East India Company at Negrais, to attend him at Prome. On this occasion he also addressed a letter in his own name to the King of England, written on a leaf of virgin gold, ornamented with rubies, which he delivered to a Mr. John Dyer, and some other persons who visited him at Rangoon. Mr. Newton deputed Ensign Lister to the Birman Chief, with presents and instructions to obtain for the Company the settlement of Negrais, with certain immunities and privileges of trade.

In pursuance of his orders, Ensign Lister left Negrais on the 27th of June 1757; after some unnecessary delay, an instrument consisting of five distinct articles, was drawn up. The island of Negrais was granted to the India Company in perpetuity, together with a piece of ground opposite to the town of Bassein, for the purpose of erecting a factory; in return for which, the Company engaged to pay an annual tribute consisting of ordinance and military stores, and to aid and defend the King of Ava against all his enemies, the king to pay the expenses of any troops with which he may be furnished. A particular clause specified that aid should be given to the Birmans against the King of Tavoy.

Had this treaty being respected by the Birmans, it would have been most advantageous to the English; but its provisions were not observed, and rumour said, that Alonpra was ignorant of its import. On the 22d of August 1757, Ensign Lister measured the allotted portion of ground near Bassein, on which the British colours were hoisted, and three volleys of small arms fired to solemnize the act of occupancy.

The affairs of the British Government of India were by no means in such a state of prosperity, as to allow of sending the supplies that were necessary for the effectual support of the settlement of Negrais, it was therefore deemed expedient for the present, to withdraw the settlers from it. Captain Newton was accordingly recalled, and reached Bengal on the 14th of May 1759, having left a few persons to take care of the teak timbers and materials for ship-building, that could not conveniently be removed.

Soon after the return of Captain Newton with his party, the Government of Bengal sent Mr. Southby to Negrais, to take care of the materials collected there, and to retain possession of the settlement. In prosecution of this determination, the *Victoria*, *Snow*, anchored in the harbour of Negrais on the 14th of October. Mr. Southby disembarked on the evening of his arrival. One Antonio, an interpreter of the Birman King, came down to Negrais to meet him, and delivered to him a letter, purporting to be from the King.

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, to meet the European gentlemen of the settlement. Whilst the entertainment was serving up, the treacherous guest withdrew. At that instant, a number of armed Birmans rushed into the house, and barbarously murdered every soul except Mr. Robertson and three Europeans, who after defending themselves in a godown surrendered on an assurance that their lives would be spared. A midshipman was about to enter the house, when the slaughter commenced, but perceiving the danger, he fled to the water-side, and was brought away by one of the ship's boats. After the Europeans had been despatched, a general massacre of the natives took place; and of the whole settlement only 60 men, 4 women, and one child escaped to the ships.

The Birmans thus becoming masters of the fortified works, turned the guns of the battery against the English ships, which were greatly damaged. In the performance of this service, *Lavene*, the Frenchman, was conspicuously active; indeed the whole of this diabolical assassination seems to have been executed under his direction. Captain *Alves*, the Commander of the *Victoria*, was fortunately not on shore when the massacre took place: he returned to Bengal in the beginning of November, with the tidings of our misfortunes.

After so many proofs of a friendly disposition, the assurances given to Captain Baker, and the compact concluded with Ensign Lister, it is reasonable to suppose that some acts, not thoroughly explained, must have been committed or that very plausible misrepresentations must have been used, to excite the Birman monarch to take such sanguinary revenge. That Gregory, an Armenian, was the principal instigator, is a fact of which no native of the country, who mentions the transaction, entertains the smallest doubt, as well as that *Lavene* was the agent and instrument of execution.

Whatever might have been their inclination, the English settlements of India were not at this juncture in circumstances to revenge the murder of their servants, and exact retribution for the insult offered to their flag. Captain *Alves*, who in the preceding year had conveyed Mr. Southby to Negrais, was selected to return as the bearer of letters and presents to the Birman monarch, from Mr. Holwell, Governor of Bengal, and Mr. Pigot, Governor of Madras.

In the beginning of June, Captain *Alves* reached Bassein, where he was well received. The Prince of Bassein, who was at that time in Rangoon, sent repeatedly for the king's presents, but Captain *Alves* had resolved to deliver them in person, and not yet being furnished with suitable boats, he declined giving them up, on which the Birmese carried off from the vessel muskets, and whatever else they could get at. At length he procured a boat, and quitted Bassein on the 30th of July; and on arriving at Dagon, the prince compelled him to deliver the king's presents, and ordered him up to Court, whither he would rather not have gone, as the country was in a very unsettled state. He remonstrated in vain against the treatment he met with.

On the 22nd of August, Captain Alves reached Tsagain, at this time the head quarters of the Birman king. On the 23rd he was honored with an audience to deliver his credentials; he, however, did not obtain any satisfaction for the massacre at Negrais. His Majesty was pleased to agree, that the property of the East India Company should be restored, and that all English subjects, who were prisoners in his dominions, should be released. He also consented to give the Company a grant of ground for a factory at Bassein, under the stipulation, that their chief settlement should be there, and not at Negrais; thus abolishing the previous grant of Negrais and the whole of Ensign Lister's treaty.

His Majesty was farther pleased, on the request of Captain Alves, to order the release of three Dutchmen who had been captured by Alonpra in his expedition to Siam. At length on the 10th of October, having received the replies to the letters brought by him, Captain Alves left Tsagain on the 14th, got to Bassein, whence he again embarked, leaving Messrs. Robertson and Helass to take care of the Company's property, and reached Calcutta a few days before the expiration of the year.

About the end of 1765, the Birmans undertook an expedition against Siam, the capital of which country they took in 1766. They likewise made an incursion into Munneepore, where they stayed one month, and returned laden with plunder.

In 1765, the Chinese, invaded the Birman territories in consequence of a Chinaman having been murdered in an affray, and the offender not being given up. They were, however, repulsed. In the successive years of 1767 to 1769, the Chinese armies invaded Birmah, but were all driven back, when, in December 1769, a peace was concluded between the two nations at the proposition of the Chinese. The treaty stipulates for an exchange of presents, both armies retiring and peace and friendship being firmly established between the two countries, and that letters on gold should be exchanged once every ten years by the two monarchs. Such at least is the Birman version of these invasions; but their own historians admit, that the King would not receive the presents, and was highly incensed against his officers for entering into such a treaty. It is rather to be surmised that the Chinese ravaged the country for three years, and on certain submissions being made to them by the Birmans, they retired. The convention by which the evacuation of the country was procured, was considered by the King of Ava so humiliating, that to mark his disapprobation, and satirize the cowardice of his general, he sent him a woman's dress. At the conferences with the British commissioners at Yandaboo, the Birman chiefs quoted the example of the Chinese, as one which they expected, we should imitate. Each party, they said, then retired from the contest on equal terms; the Chinese not claiming, as we did, territorial cession or pecuniary indemnity.

In 1774, Munneepore was again overrun, as was Cachar, by the Birmans.

The invasion of Arracan being determined on by the Birmans, a force left the Imperial City in September 1783, and having taken the country, brought the King prisoner to Amerpoora, where he soon died.

The surrender of Cheduba, Ramree, and the broken Isles, followed the conquest of Arracan. Arracan with its dependencies was constituted a province of the Birman Empire, and a viceroy appointed to govern it. In 1785, the Birman monarch resolved to invade Siam at the head of a large army, and marched from Martaban; but had scarcely entered the Siamese territories, when a furious engagement ensued, in which the Birmans were completely routed. The King himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner. In the year 1790 Tavoy was delivered over to the Siamese, but was retaken by treachery in 1791. The year 1793 opened with overtures for peace on the part the Siamese a negotiation commenced, which speedily terminated in the ratification of a treaty highly favorable to the Birman interests. By this compact the Siamese ceded to the Birmans the western maritime towns as far south as Mergui, thus yielding to them entire possession of Tenasserim.

Upon the subjugation of Arracan, great numbers of the native population fled from the cruelty and oppression of their conquerors, and either found an asylum in the British territories, or secreted themselves amongst the hills and thickets, and alluvial islands along its southern and eastern boundaries. From these haunts they occasionally sallied, and inflicted upon the Birmans in Arracan a feeble retaliation for the injuries they had sustained, retiring to their fastnesses when their purpose was effected, or when encountered by a superior force; and even taking refuge in Chittagong unknown to the British authorities. On its being ascertained that three distinguished leaders of these robbers had sought refuge in the British districts, a Birman army entered our territories in pursuit of them, without any previous representation of the cause of their aggression or intimation of their purpose, whilst a force of twenty thousand men was assembled at Arracan for their support. To meet these threatening and hostile demonstrations, the British Government promptly despatched a force under General Erskine to the Chitta-

gong frontier, where he had no sooner arrived, and the Burman General perceived our determination to resist them, than a messenger was deputed to the British camp, with proposals of friendship, followed shortly after by the Birman general himself. Previous to entering upon any discussion, General Erskine peremptorily demanded the removal of the Birman troops from their threatening position on the frontier, which being done, affairs were speedily accommodated, and the prisoners having been tried and found guilty were surrendered.

In consequence of the resort of the French about this time to Birmah and the neighbouring tracts and from a consideration of the political and commercial advantages to be derived from a more intimate connection with Birmah, the Right Honorable Sir John Shore, the then Governor General, deemed it advisable, if possible, to strengthen the existing intimacy and friendship with this state, and, therefore in the year 1795 deputed Captain Michael Symes as Ambassador to the Court of Ava, with suitable letters and presents.

On his arrival at Rangoon, he was doomed to experience the usual modicum of Birman insolence. After suffering neglect for some time, he informed the local government, that unless he was immediately acknowledged and respected as the representative of the Governor General he would return to Rengal with the letters and presents intended for the King. This remonstrance produced a good effect, and all vexatious restrictions were forthwith removed, and suitable boats were furnished for himself and suite to proceed to the capital.

By this mission, permission was obtained for a British Resident or superintendent to reside at Rangoon, for the protection of British subjects and British trade, and orders were issued, directing that the customary duties were only to be levied. Captain Symes, having, as far as practicable, considering the character of the people, completed the service on which he was deputed to Ava, returned to Bengal.

In pursuance of the paper given by the Birman government in 1795 to Captain Symes, and miscalled 'a treaty,' the Right Honorable the Governor General Sir John Shore, Bart., appointed Captain Hiram Cox to be Resident at Rangoon but not Ambassador, on the part of the Governor General. The principal objects of this mission were;—

1. To render permanent and effective the friendship and alliance formed by the treaty of 1795.

2. To protect the Political and Commercial interests of British India and its subjects from Birman oppression.

3. To counteract in a private manner, the designs of our enemies, and to endeavour to prevail on the King to send an Embassy to Bengal.

On the 12th October. Captain Cox landed at Rangoon, where he was treated with becoming civility, and on an invitation from the court, prepared to proceed to the capital. Notwithstanding that so large a sum as 30,000 Rupees was collected from the inhabitants of Rangoon, to defray the expenses of the journey, very unsuitable boats were provided. Having arrived at Amarapoora on the 24th January 1797, he was destined to suffer a series of premeditated insults. His Majesty at this time held his court at Mengwon, a few miles above Amarapoora, where he was superintending the building of an immense Pagoda, and to which place Captain Cox proceeded. No public notice was taken of him until the 6th February, when he was surprised at receiving an intimation, that the 8th was fixed on for his introduction to the King. The object of this precipitancy was evidently to get possession of a state carriage, coining apparatus, &c. which His Majesty had commissioned Captain Symes to procure for him, and the other presents, and which appeared to have ensured him a favorable reception from His Majesty.

After his audience, however, he continued unnoticed. At this time, a Rajah of Assam, who had usurped the throne, and had been deposed by the aid of the British, made an application to the Court of Ava for assistance, and great preparations were making for invading Assam, although Captain Cox had previously informed the ministers, that that state was under British protection. He reiterated his complaints, and applied officially for boats.

At length about the 21st or 22nd March, matters bore a more favorable appearance, and he was indebted for some tardy civilities to the King's desire to interest the British Government in obtaining for him one of Gaudama's teeth, which was in the possession of the King of Candy. He, however, soon found himself subjected to the same neglect as he had before experienced; and after two months' sojourn at Mengwon, he returned to Amarapoora.

In June, neglect still continuing his portion, he informed the ministers of his intention of immediately quitting the capital, on which they consulted upon the propriety of detaining the embassy as a hostage until the 7,000 persons, who were said to have fled from Arracan into Chittagong at the Birman conquests of that country, were delivered up; and Chittagong, Dacca, Luckipore, and Cassimbazar formerly under Arracan, were restored to Birmah, together with one half of the revenues collected from those countries since they first came into the British possession. Captain Cox now feared personal restraint. After suffering many indignities for a period of nine months, he at length resolved to bear them no longer and accordingly embarked himself and followers, and dropped four or five miles down the river on the 6th October 1797. A day or two after, however, overtures were made to him on the part of the heir apparent, whom he visited, but he had the mortification to find out that in reality no change had come over the sentiments of the court, and on the 17th he finally quitted the capital, and reached Rangoon on the 1st November.

The viceroy arrived at Rangoon a few days after, and issued a Court Order prohibiting the departure of the mission from the country, and instructions were issued to the pilots to run ashore all armed vessels entering the port.

At this time His Majesty had been taken with a mania for fire-arms, and wishing our Envoy's assistance to procure them, sent down an order acknowledging him as Resident at Rangoon, and granting ground for a factory and garden. This order came too late; for the mission was at the mouth of the river, on its return to Bengal, Captain Cox having left Rangoon on the 1st of March.

In November 1798. The Raja of Arracan wrote a most violent and menacing letter to the Governor General, demanding the instant surrender of some Mugh fugitives who had taken refuge in Chittagong from Birmese oppression.

The Governor General, (Marquis Wellesley) contemplated some further communication with the Birman Government, on which Major Franklin was to have been employed. Early in 1802, however, Captain Symes having arrived from Europe with the increased rank of Lieutenant Colonel, the Governor General resolved upon deputing him to the court of Ava.

The object of this mission was:—

1st. An improved treaty of friendship and alliance.

2d. Protection to commerce against the daily extortions of the Birmese.

3rd. To demand an acknowledgment or disavowal on the part of the King of the insolent and menacing threats of invasion, contained in the Governor of Arracan's letter to the Governor General, and to explain to the Court of Ava, that according to the laws of civilized nations the Mugh fugitives could not be surrendered, and that His Excellency's doubts of the authenticity of the letter, was his only reason for not immediately appealing to arms, to convince the Birman Government, that the British power could not be insulted with impunity.

4th. To establish a Resident at the Court of Ava and a Consul at Rangoon, for the protection of trade; and to procure the enforcement of the treaty of 1795.

5th. To claim the Island of Negrais, or to obtain some commercial advantages equivalent to its value.

Colonel Symes was well received and treated at Rangoon, but he was destined to experience the same slight and indignities, as Captain Cox at the Court where he arrived on the 30th September.

After great delay and difficulty, His Majesty deigned to acknowledge the British Ambassador, who received an audience of His Majesty on the 28th of November.

Lieutenant Colonel Symes quitted the court on the 27th of December, having only obtained in answer to the Governor's letter, a verbal message as if from the King, through the Viceroy of Rangoon, that no further demand should be made for the Arracan fugitives, and that the Governor of that district was not authorized to make any disrespectful or threatening demand for them. His Majesty would offer no apology, neither would he listen to any new treaty, nor permit the establishment of a British Resident at Rangoon, as promised to Captain Cox, but insisted that commercial affairs should remain on the footing settled by the treaty of 1795, and declared he would not grant either lands or settlements in Birmanah to any European power whatever.

At Rangoon further indignities were passed upon him. Colonel Symes, however, satisfied himself with forwarding a statement of the Rangoon Governor's conduct to the capital, and took his departure from Rangoon on the 20th January 1803.

We must next notice the appointment of Lieutenant Canning as Agent at Rangoon, on the part of Colonel Symes. The objects of the mission were:—

1. To give the Birman Court an opportunity of apologizing for the insults which had been offered to the two preceding missions.
2. To obtain good and early information of the state of French interests in Birmanah, and to observe the general conduct and feelings of the Birman Court towards the British Government.

Captain Canning having arrived at Rangoon was received with attention, and having duly forwarded Colonel Symes' letters to the Court, he received a reply with orders to the Rangoon Officers stating, that His Majesty having granted Colonel Symes every wish, saw no necessity for sending Birman Envoys to Calcutta as at first intended; and that, 'in consequence of the Governor General's desire to seek refuge under the Golden Feet, Lieutenant Canning was permitted to reside at Rangoon.' This unusual condescension from the Court, as well as the civility of the local officers, may probably be traced to the consternation created by the near approach to the walls of the capital of a Siamese army, which, however, after defeating the Birmans, and driving them from Zimmay, were obliged to return to the Eastern bank of the Salween, in consequence of the setting in of the rains. These civilities however were not of long duration; for in November, the Yewoom returned from the capital, and his first act was to order all English letters to be opened. To reason with him was found impossible, and the order being persisted in, Lieutenant Canning returned to Bengal.

During the year 1803, an Envoy arrived in Calcutta from the Governor of Arracan, but the object of his mission was not known.

The French Isles having been blockaded, Captain Canning was deputed to Rangoon as Governor General's Agent for the following objects:—

1. To acquaint the Birmans that the Isles of France were blockaded, and explain the custom on this head.
2. To soothe them for the consequent diminution of their Pegue trade, and to explain the nature of the blockade system.
3. To explain that the Brig 'Birmanah' had been seized, and condemned with her cargo, as it was proved to be French property.
4. To protect British persons and property in Birmanah, and to watch narrowly the intrigues of our enemies.

Captain Canning arrived at Rangoon on the 2nd October, and was invited to the capital by the Court, where he arrived on the 10th of February 1810, and was well received and treated, and though the ministers addressed a letter, in reply to those delivered by Captain Canning, to the Governor General, in their usual bombastic style, and threw out vague hints at the restoration of Dacca, &c. yet he satisfied the King and Court respecting the blockade system, and the Rangoon Government was forbidden from granting passes to vessels bound to the French Isles. The French interest had also in other ways been for some time on the decline at Court. Having brought his mission to a conclusion, Captain Canning returned to Calcutta in May 1804.

In the early part of the succeeding year a native of Arracan, named Khyen byen, a Mugh chief, who had before taken refuge with a number of his followers, in the District of Chittagong, made an aggression into Arracan of a most serious nature. He was joined by many Mughs from Chittagong, and being aided by those still resident in Arracan, they soon overran that province, and recovered the whole of it, except the capital, from the Birmans. The Indian Government, learning that the local authorities in Arracan entertained a conviction, that the invasion was supported by the British, and fearing that the first measure of the Birman Government of Rangoon would be to seize and barbarously revenge themselves on the persons and property of the British subjects residing there, determined on sending another mission to Ava. Captain Canning was for the third time deputed with the following instructions:—

1. To remove from the mind of the King and Court of Ava the conviction they appeared to entertain, that the invasion of Arracan was instigated or supported by the British Government.
2. To represent the unjust and unfriendly conduct of the local Government of Pegue with respect to British subjects and British ships trading to Rangoon; especially the unwarrantable conduct of that Government in seizing a ship, dispossessing the commander and sending her in charge of another person with troops to Tavoy, and refusing to offer any compensation for the injuries the vessel sustained, or for the heavy loss occasioned by her detention.
3. To explain certain other questions between the two Governments, respecting the seizure of a Birman vessel and her cargo; of the crew of another vessel charged with murder and piracy, and of certain Military Stores, which the Commander of a British Ship of War had taken out of a Brig, on her passage from Junk Ceylon to Tavoy.

Captain Canning was well received by the authorities at Rangoon, and the Viceroy of Pegue, on the part of his Government, declared himself satisfied with the explanations offered by Captain Canning respecting the disturbances in Arracan. Captain Canning took up his abode at Rangoon, waiting for the usual authority from the King to proceed to the Capital.

In January 1811, King Berring (Bhyen byen) and his colleague being defeated and driven out of Arracan, took refuge in the jungles of Chittagong, upon which the Governor of Arracan marched a considerable force to our frontiers, and demanded the surrender of the fugitives, in the language of menace and insult, whilst parties of his troops actually entered the Company's limits, and the Governor ostentatiously declared the expected approach of 80,000 men for the purpose of invading the British territories, the French having formed an alliance with them for the same purpose. Subsequent negotiations took place between him and the Magistrate of Chittagong, when he recalled his troops, denying all knowledge of their having exceeded the Birman territories.

Captain Canning was, therefore, desired to complain of this breach of friendship, and the violation of the British territories, and the insulting tone of the Arracan Governor's letters, and to communicate, that by their conduct they had created a state of affairs which, but for the friendly disposition of the Governor General, would justify an immediate appeal to arms; and that no negotiation could take place until the recall of the Birman troops from their threatening position on the frontier. That Chittagong had been fortified as a measure of defence, and though the Governor General's desire was peace, yet the British Government would be at all times ready to resist insolence and aggression, although open to the call of justice and reason, when urged in a suitable manner, and that the surrender of the Mugh rebels must be negotiated according to the usages of civilized nations.

Our differences were in a fair way of adjustment, and the Envoy was even preparing for his journey to the capital, when, on the 18th March, advices arrived from the Supreme Government of a second invasion of Chittagong by the Birman Army. Captain Canning therefore declined to proceed to the capital, and the Viceroy finding all his persuasions in vain, endeavoured to obtain forcible possession of the Envoy's person, but fortunately he escaped with his suite to the ship.

The Viceroy, sensible of the unjustifiable nature of his late attempt, made overtures to Captain Canning, and the latter returned to his residence on shore. In the meantime he was recalled, but peremptory orders had arrived from Ava to forward him to Court, by 'force, if necessary.'

The Viceroy, dreading the consequence of his disobedience to the royal orders to 'seize the Embassy,' proposed several plans to Captain Canning, to qualify his refusal, and, amongst others, that he would excuse his collecting a number of men as a shew of resistance to his departure, and not take offence at having a few shots fired at him, which would assure the Court of his exertions, and be satisfactory to all parties!

On the 31st of July 1812, a fifth and most peremptory order arrived to send Captain Canning to Court immediately 'by force, and well secured if necessary,' it being the anxious wish of this benighted Court, regardless of consequences, to obtain possession of the Envoy and followers, as hostages for the delivery of the Mugh rebels.

The very officers who had been sent from Court to convey Captain Canning thither, well secured, were astonished at the size and force of an English ship-of-war. The armed vessel 'Amboyna' was also present, and no doubt the dread of those two ships deterred the local Government from resorting to force. The Viceroy was superseded from Court, and disgraced for disobedience to orders, which he had not the means of enforcing. Captain Canning, however, having all things ready, embarked himself and suite the same day, and sailed for Bengal on the 16th of August.

In the early part of the succeeding year, Birman Vakeels arrived in Calcutta, with a renewal of the demand for the Mugh fugitives, and a Birman Shahbunder or custom-master was, during the year, arrested on his way to Delhi, whither he was proceeding ostensibly in search of religious books, but it was supposed, really to try and league the native powers against us.

During the year 1814, the Birmans made two more incursions into the British territories, and on both occasions they were guilty of seizing and murdering British subjects. They were discovered endeavouring to intrigue with the native powers in a scheme to drive us out of India, and they carried matters so far as to forcibly detain the Agent of the Magistrate of Chittagong at Arracan for twenty days under a guard. In consequence of this insult, all communication with the Rajah of Arracan ceased.

King Berring, who had been crippled by the efforts of the British and Birman Governments, died in 1815; the dispersion of his adherents, and the confinement of the principal leaders, produced a favorable change in the state of the country. The insurgents generally manifested a disposition to return quietly to their homes, but a few continued to lurk in the hills and jungles of Chittagong, under the command of Ryngunzing. The depredations of this chief and his adherents were finally suppressed by the surrender of the chief. Their existence, however, ought not to have furnished the Court of Ava with any additional ground of complaint, as the chiefs were kept as state prisoners, and persons of lesser rank and importance were liberated, but restricted to the Company's territories.

The perfect immunity of the Birman frontiers from aggression, and the assurances of the British Government, that so far as depended upon their officers, this desirable state of things should be perpetuated, might have satisfied the Government of Ava of sincerity of the pledge, and justified the expectation that amicable relations would be permanently formed.

The restoration of tranquillity had not, however, lasted long, when the demand was renewed for the surrender of the Mugh Chiefs. Several embassies were sent both to Bengal and Chittagong with the above object, but the Governor General, the Marquis of Hastings, refused to deliver them up, and wrote a temperate letter to the Rangoon Viceroy, to inform the King of Ava of the inutility of any further application on the subject.

The peremptory and firm tone assumed by the British Government was for a short time attended with salutary consequences, but in October 1817, an attempt at intrigue with the Court of Lahore was discovered and prevented.

After the expiration of nearly a year, a second letter was received from the Rajah of Ramree; making a demand, on the part of the King of Ava, for the cession of Ramoo, Chittagong, Moorshedabad, and Dacca, on the alleged grounds of their being ancient dependencies of Arracan. A letter in reply was written to the Viceroy of Pegue, treating this demand as the authorized act of the Rajah of Ramree; and stating, that if the Governor General could suppose it to have been dictated by the King of Ava, the British Government would be justified in considering it as a declaration of war. Previous to these communications, the Birmans were known to have made overtures to the Mahrattas, and by a simultaneous rising of these two states, the British were to have been annihilated. The Birmans, however, were too late in their arrangements, for the Mahrattas had been already crushed, and this ebullition of Birman insolence died a natural death.

The constitution of Assam comprised even to a greater extent than usual with Asiatic nations, the seeds of civil dissension. The succession to the throne of that country being disputed, the Birmans interfered in favor of Rajah Chunder Kaunt, who was successful. Poorunder Singh, who was disposed, applied to the Supreme Government for assistance, which was refused, though they afforded him and his followers an asylum in the British territories. Repeated applications were made for his seizure and surrender by Chunder Kaunt, and a minister of the King of Ava.

Towards the end of May 1821, Poorunder Singh invaded Assam with a force under the command of a Mr. Bruce, but this force was defeated, and the commander made prisoner. Rajah Chunder Kaunt though successful was not long allowed to enjoy his usurped power. He began to tire of his friends, the Birmans, and as a first act against them, is supposed to have ordered the murder of his chief minister, who was warm in their interests, and for this he was deposed. The Assamese were growing weary of the plundering and devastations of the Birman Army, which at this time had to contend against the forces of the two deposed princes; our frontiers, consequently, became the scene of various excesses, for which the Birman chief apologized, and stated, that our villages had been attacked by mistake, and offered remuneration for whatever injuries that had occurred.

Rajah Chunder Kaunt made head against his enemies in the latter part of the year, and having purchased supplies of arms and ammunition, and being joined by a number of Assamese, he became, in his turn, triumphant, and at the end of 1821, had again established his authority over the Western part of Assam.

The temporary successes of Chunder Kaunt were arrested by the reinforcement of the Birman Army; he was defeated and compelled to seek safety by flight.

In July a Birman Vakeel arrived in Calcutta, bearing letters from the Birman Commander in Assam, expressing a desire to remain on friendly terms with the Company, and to respect the British territories; yet should protection be given to Chunder Kaunt, he had received orders to follow him wherever he might go, and take him by force. In reply, the Governor General in Council expressed his desire for peace and friendly relations, but refused to surrender the fugitive, and remonstrated against a recent seizure and detention by the Governor of Arracan, of some of our elephant hunters from the province of Chittagong.

In the meantime Assam had ceased to be an independent state, and had become a province of the Birman Empire. Rajah Poorunder Singh, latterly supported by the Birmans, had been deposed, and the supreme authority vested in

The vicinity of a powerful and ambitious neighbour was, therefore, substituted for a feeble and distracted state. It was to be anticipated from the known pretensions of the Birman, and the spirit they had invariably displayed, that it would not be long before they found some excuse for disturbing the amicable relations. This anticipation was speedily realized. An island in the Brahmaputra, on which the British flag had been erected, was claimed by the Birman, the flag thrown down, and an armed force assembled to maintain the insult.

Under these circumstances, our line of defence on that frontier was strengthened, with a view of protecting our valuable provinces of Rungpore and Dacca, the possession of which had long been the anxious object of the King of Ava.

For years past, the Birman had been gradually encroaching on the Chittagong frontier, and advancing claims to the jungles frequented by our elephant hunters, whom they had unjustly seized and detained, notwithstanding the urgent applications which were made for their release.

Taking advantage of the conciliatory policy of the British Government, and misinterpreting its forbearance under insults to an inability to resent and punish them, they, in 1823, claimed the island of Shahpooree, which, independently of being situated on the Chittagong side of the river Naaf, and fordable at low water, had for years been occupied by British subjects, and paying revenue to the British Government. Early this year, the Birman, in pursuance of their arrogant pretensions, and with a view to deter our people from occupying the island, attacked a Mugh merchant boat, and wantonly shot the helmsman. The Magistrate immediately established a protecting guard upon it, and reported, that a Birman force was collecting on the East bank of the Naaf.

The determination thus shown by the British authorities to maintain the integrity of their frontier was immediately resented by the Birman Governor of Arracan desiring us 'immediately to evacuate the island,' denying our right to any portion of the boundary river, and declaring, that if the detachment was not immediately recalled, the consequences would be a war between the two countries. He also deputed an ambassador to Calcutta, to enforce his unjust demands, in which, however, he was unsuccessful.

The Rajah of Arracan was addressed on the subject, but he replied reiterating the demand for the concession of the island, and in answer to his demand, the right of the Company was asserted, though at the same time, a disposition to investigate the claim in a deliberate and friendly manner was expressed. Before this reply could reach the Rajah, he proceeded to carry his threat of applying force into execution, under the express orders, as was carefully promulgated, of his sovereign, the King of Ava. On the night of the 24th September 1823, a body of one thousand Birman attacked and took the island of Shahpooree, and retired to the main land. This outrage was followed by the assemblage of an Army of about 15,000 men in Arracan, and sixty boats were already prepared to transport it across the river into Chittagong.

In order to avoid till the last possible moment the necessity of hostilities, the Governor General, although determined to assert our just pretensions, resolved to afford the Court of Ava opportunity of avoiding any collision. With this intent, the Governor General resolved to consider the forcible occupation of Shahpooree as the act of the local authorities alone, and addressed a declaration to the Government of Ava, recapitulating the past occurrences, and calling upon that Court to disavow their officers in Arracan.

In the meantime, the orders of Government were restricted to the re-occupation of the island. The Rajah of Arracan, however, intimated to the Magistrate, that any attempt on our side to take possession of it, would be resisted. In reply to the Governor General's letter, he denied, that the English had any claims to the island, and if we persisted in the course we were pursuing, he would take from us Dacca, and Moorshedabad. On the 21st of November, our troops re-took the island, which was at this time unoccupied.

Sickness at length compelled the British troops to retire from the island to Tek Naaf, a post on the main land at no great distance from it; and Mr. Robertson informed the Birman, that any attempt on their part to retake it, would be punished by us. In the meantime, the King of Ava did not deign to answer the Governor General's letter, but peremptorily ordered the Arracan Governor, to retake the island at all hazards, and a large Birman force was assembled for this purpose. The Governor of Arracan made advances, and the messengers sent by him declared that they would be satisfied by a declaration that the island should be considered neutral ground, and not occupied by either party. This proposition which, if brought forward in a suitable manner in the earlier proceedings, might have been admitted without disgrace, could not be now listened to, and Government had decided to eject them by force.

In the beginning of 1824, two Birman armies actually invaded Cachar at the invitation of the Ex-Rajah Govind Chunder, although it had been previously communicated to them that the British Government, being in treaty with that state, would not permit Birman interference. The same protection was at the same time extended to the Rajah of Jyntea. A small force was in the meantime advanced from Dacca to Sylhet. The Birman armies, notwithstanding the representations of the Commissioner in Assam, entered Cachar in different quarters, the chief declaring that he had received the royal orders to reinstate Govind Chunder on the throne of Cachar, and to arrest the three Munneeporean chiefs, Georgeet Singh, Marjeet Singh, and Gumbheer Singh. It therefore became necessary to resist their progress before they occupied positions, which would give them the command of the Sylhet frontier, and the British Officers were accordingly instructed to oppose the advance of the Birman by force, and hostilities shortly ensued.

Intelligence was also received, that the troops under Gumbheer Singh had been defeated by a Birman force from Munneepore, and that a third Birman division was passing into Jyntea immediately to the North of the station of Sylhet: It was therefore judged advisable by Major Newton, the Officer commanding on the Sylhet frontier, to concentrate his detachments to advance against the invading party from Assam, before they should have time to complete their intrenchments. Arrangements were immediately made to oppose them; and on the 17th of January 1824, Major Newton fell in with the Northern Division of their army, which, after a severe struggle, he entirely defeated. Subsequently to the action, Major Newton returned with the force under his command to Sylhet, withdrawing the whole of the troops from Cachar. The Birman then advanced to Jatrapore, about five miles east of the frontier, and eight miles from Bhadrapore, where the two divisions from Assam and Munneepore effected a junction, and erected stockades on the other bank of the Soormah, connecting them by a bridge across the river. Their united force amounted to about six thousand men, of whom four thousand were Assamese and Cacharees:—a detachment of two thousand more was posted at Kila Kandy, in the South-east quarter of Cachar. The main body of the Birman proceeded to push their stockades on the North bank of the Soormah, within one thousand yards of the British post at Bhadrapore; but from these they were driven at the point of the bayonet. The Assam division fell back upon the Bherdeka pass and the Jetinghi river, whilst the Munneepore force stockaded itself at Doodputlee.

Lieutenant Colonel Bowen, who had joined and taken the command, marched in pursuit of the retreating enemy, and found them at the foot of the pass above mentioned, stockading themselves. The troops formed and carried the position at the point of the bayonet. The enemy fled to the hills, and left no further force in the direction of Assam to be encountered.

Still there remained the Munneepore Division to be expelled, and with this object Lieutenant Colonel Bowen directed his march against their position at Doodputlee, which proved much stronger than any yet assailed; after being exposed to their fire for some time, the attempt was abandoned, and the force was withdrawn to Jatrapore. In the meantime the Birman retreated from their position, and fell back to Munneepore, so that Cachar was freed from the presence of the enemy.

The Mahá Bundoolah took the supreme command of the troops of Arracan, having brought with him considerable reinforcements from Ava. Shortly prior to his arrival, however, four individuals said to have been deputed by the Court of Ava, arrived at Mungdoo. When the sepoys were withdrawn from Shahpooree, the Honorable Company's Pilot Vessel 'Sophia' was ordered to join the Gun boats off that Island, to serve in some degree as a substitute for the troops. Upon the arrival of the Deputies on the opposite bank of the Naaf, they invited the Commanding Officer of the 'Sophia' on shore, under the pretence of communicating

Rare section

P A P E R S

RELATING TO

HOSTILITIES WITH BURMAH.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty's Command.
June 4, 1852.*

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SON.

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