

# THE PACIFICATION OF BURMA



• *Picket on the Chin Hills.*

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# THE PACIFICATION OF BURMA

BY

SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE, K.C.S.I.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF BURMA, 1887-1890  
MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF INDIA, ETC., ETC

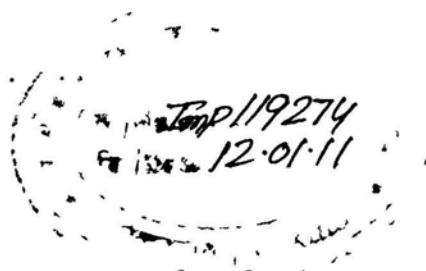
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

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## PREFACE

UPPER BURMA was invaded and annexed in the year 1885. The work hardly occupied a month. In the following year the subjugation of the people by the destruction of all formidable armed resistance was effected; lastly, the pacification of the country, including the establishment of an orderly government with peace and security, occupied four years.

As head of the civil administration, I was mainly concerned with this last phase.

It would be a difficult task to give a continuous history of the military operations by which the country was subjugated. The resistance opposed to our troops was desultory, spasmodic, and without definite plan or purpose. The measures taken to overcome it necessarily were affected by these characteristics, although they were framed on definite principles. A history of them would resolve itself into a number of more or less unconnected narratives.

A similar difficulty, but less in degree, meets the attempt to record the measures which I have included in the term "pacification." Certain definite objects were always before us. The policy to be followed for their attainment was fixed, and the measures and instruments by which it was to be carried out were selected and prepared. But I have found it best not to attempt to follow

any order, either chronological or other, in writing this narrative.

My purpose in writing has been to give an intelligible narrative of the work done in Burma in the years following the annexation. It was certainly arduous work done under great difficulties of all kinds, and, from the nature of the case, with less chance of recognition or distinction than of disease or death. The work was, I believe, well done, and has proved itself to be good.

My narrative may not attract many who have no connection with Burma. But for those who served in Burma during the period covered by it, whether soldiers or civilians, it may have an interest, and especially for those still in the Burma Commission and their successors.

I hope that Field-Marshal Sir George White, V.C., to whom, and to all the officers and men of the Burma Field Force, I owe so much, may find my pages not without interest.

I have endeavoured to show how the conduct of the soldiers of the Queen, British and Indian, helped the civil administration to establish peace.

I believe, as I have said, that our work has been successful. The credit, let us remember, is due quite as much to India as to Britain. How long would it have taken to subjugate and pacify Burma if we had not been able to get the help of the fighting-men from India, and what would have been the cost in men and money? For the Burmans themselves I, in common with all who have been associated with them, have a sincere affection. Many of them assisted us from the first, and from the Upper Burmans many loyal and capable gentlemen are now helping to govern their country justly and efficiently.

It has been brought home to me in making this rough

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record how many of those who took part in this campaign against disorder have laid down their lives. I hope I may have helped to do honour to their memories.

I have to thank all the kind friends who have sent me photographs to illustrate this book, and especially Sir Harvey Adamson, the present Lieutenant-Governor, for his kindness in making my wants known.

C. H. C.

*February, 1912.*

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# THE PACIFICATION OF BURMA

## CHAPTER I

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF BURMA

ON the 20th of December, 1852, Lord Dalhousie issued a proclamation annexing the province of Pegu to the British Dominions. "The Governor-General in Council," he said, "having exacted the reparation he deems sufficient, desires no further conquest in Burma and is willing that hostilities should cease.

"But if the King of Ava shall fail to renew his former relations with the British Government, and if he shall recklessly seek to dispute its quiet possession of the province it has now declared to be its own, the Governor-General in Council will again put forth the power he holds and will visit with full retribution aggressions, which, if they be persisted in, must of necessity lead to the total subversion of the Burman State and to the ruin and exile of the King and his race."

In 1885 the fulfilment of this menace—prophecy it might be called—was brought about by the contumacy of the Government of Ava. The Burman State was "totally subverted." Its territories were added to the British Empire. The King and his race were "ruined and exiled."

At the end of November, 1885, the British commander was in full possession of Mandalay, the capital. Our forces had made a procession up the great river, which is the main artery of the country, almost unopposed. Such opposition as there had been was childish in its feebleness and want of skill and purpose. Fortunately for us the King and his

ministers prided themselves on their voluntary army system. King Thebaw was not going to compel his subjects to defend their country. They were told to go about their daily tasks without fear or carefulness. They might sleep in their beds. He would see to it that the foreign barbarians were driven into the sea whence they had come. Unfortunately the soldiers to whom he trusted were insufficiently trained, badly armed and equipped. He had intended, perhaps, to remedy all this and to train his troops for six months before the fighting began.

His enemy, however, was unreasonably hasty and had an abundance of fast steamers for transporting the invading force. Before the training could begin or the arms be provided or the officers instructed, the invaders were before Ava, where the bulk of the defending army had been collected, and a few miles from the capital. The King's government was as helpless as it had been arrogant and pretentious. Ministers of State were sent down in hot haste with messages of submission and surrender.

The army, however, took a different view of the case. They refused to obey the order to surrender which had come from Mandalay. Before General Prendergast could land his men they dispersed over the country in every direction with their arms, and as the British force had no cavalry to pursue them, they got away to a man. At first under various leaders, few of whom showed any military talent, they waged a guerilla warfare against the invaders; and afterwards, when their larger divisions had been defeated and broken up, they succeeded in creating a state of anarchy and brigandage ruinous to the peasantry and infinitely harassing to the British.

On the 29th of November Mandalay was occupied and the King a prisoner on his way down the river to Rangoon. The waterway from Mandalay to the sea was under our control. A few of the principal places on the banks of the river had been held by small garrisons as the expedition came up, and the ultimate subjugation of the Burman people was assured. The trouble, however, was to come.

To a loosely organized nation like the Burmese, the occupation of the capital and the removal of the King meant nothing. They were still free to resist and fight. It was



to be five years before the last of the large gangs was dispersed, the leaders captured, and peace and security established.

Burma will be, in all likelihood, the last important province to be added to the Indian Empire. Eastward that Empire has been extended as far as our arms can well reach. Its boundaries march with Siam, with the French dominion of Tongking, and on the East and North for a vast distance with China. Our convention with France for the preservation of the territory which remains to Siam and our long friendship with the latter country bars any extension of our borders in that direction. It is improbable that we shall be driven to encroach on Chinese territory; and so far as the French possessions are concerned, a line has been drawn by agreement which neither side will wish to cross.

In all likelihood, therefore, the experience gained in Burma will not be repeated in Asia. Nevertheless it may be worth while to put on record a connected account of the methods by which a country of wide extent, destitute of roads and covered with dense jungle and forest, in which the only rule had become the misrule of brigands and the only order systematic disorder, was transformed in a few years into a quiet and prosperous State.

I cannot hope that the story will be of interest to many, but it may be of some interest and perhaps of use to those who worked with me and to their successors.

From 1852 to 1878 King Mindôn ruled Upper Burma fairly well. He had seized the throne from the hands of his brother Pagan Min, whose life he spared with more humanity than was usual on such occasions. He was, to quote from the Upper Burma Administration Report of 1886, "an enlightened Prince" who, while professing no love for the British, recognized the power of the British Government, was always careful to keep on friendly terms with them, and was anxious to introduce into his kingdom, as far as was compatible with the maintenance of his own autocratic power, Western ideas and Western civilization." He was tolerant in religious matters even for a Burmese Buddhist. He protected and even encouraged the Christian missions in Upper Burma, and for Dr. Marks, the

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representative of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Mandalay he built a handsome teak church and a good clergy-house, giving a tinge of contempt to his generosity by putting them down by the Burmese burial-ground. The contempt was not for the religion but for the foreign barbarians who professed it.

His measures for encouraging trade and increasing and ordering the revenues were good, and the country prospered under him. In Burma there are no hereditary leaders of the people. There is no hereditary aristocracy outside the royal family, and their descendants rapidly merge into the people. There was no law or binding custom determining the descent of the crown within the family. Every one with royal blood, however little, in his veins was a potential pretender. Whenever the crown demised the succession was settled by intrigue or violence, and possible aspirants were removed by the prince who had obtained the prize. There was no other way of securing its peaceful enjoyment.

Under the King was the Hlutdaw, or great Council of State, composed of the Chief Ministers, who were appointed by the King from the courtiers who had the good fortune to be known to him or had helped him to the throne. To each of these was assigned a province of the empire, which he governed through a deputy.

The immediate power was vested in the deputy, who resided in the province and remitted to the Minister as much as he could collect over and above the amount due to the crown and, it need hardly be said, necessary for his own needs. The provinces were divided into townships, which were ruled by officials appointed by the governors, no doubt with regard to local influence and claims, and with a general inclination to keep the office in a family.

The really stable part of the administration on which everything rested was the village, the headship of which was by custom hereditary, but not necessarily in the direct line.

As there was little central control, it may be supposed that under a system of this kind the people were pillaged, and doubtless they were to some extent. But the deputy-governor on the spot had no organized police or militia to

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support him. If he wanted to use force he had to pay for it, and if he drove his province to the point of rebellion he was unlikely to profit by it.

The amount of revenue was fixed at Mandalay with reference to a rough estimate of what the province could pay, and that was divided amongst the townships and again amongst the villages. The headman of each village, assisted by a committee or Punchayet, as it would be called in India, settled the sum due from each householder, and this was as a rule honestly and fairly done. It was not a bad system on the whole, and it was in its incidence probably as just as local taxation in Great Britain, which I admit is somewhat faint praise.

As to the administration of justice between man and man and the security of life and property, there was no doubt little refinement of law and not always impartiality in the judges. The majority of civil cases in a society like Burma, where there are few rich men and no great landowners, must be trivial, and in Burma disputes were settled by arbitration or by the village headmen, who could rarely set at nought the opinion of their fellow-villagers.

In a country which is under-populated and contains vast areas of land fit for cultivation unoccupied and free to all, migration is a great check on oppression. Life is simple in Burma. The climate for the most of the year makes a roof unnecessary; flitting is easy. Every man is his own carpenter. He has put together his house of bamboo and planks cut by his own hands. He knows how to take it down. He has not to send for contractors or furniture vans. There are the carts and the plough cattle in his sheds. He has talked things over with his wife, who is a capable and sensible woman.

One morning they get up, and instead of going to his fields or his fishing or whatever it may be, he takes his tools, and before sunset, his wife helping, the house is down and, with the simple household goods, is in the cart. The children find a place in it, or if they are old enough they run along with the mother. If the local magistrate is so blind to his own interests as to oppress his people, there is another wiser man a few score leagues away who is ready to welcome them. For what is the good of land without

men to live on it? Is not the King's revenue assessed at so much to the house? But suppose the worst comes to the worst and the man in power is a fiend, and neither property nor life nor honour is safe from him, even then there is the great forest, in which life, though hard, is a real pleasure to a man; and, given a good leader, the oppressed may soon change places with his oppressor.

We are too ready to imagine that life under such a King as Mindôn or even as Thebaw must be unbearable. We fancy them armed with all the organization of the Inland Revenue Department and supported by a force like our constabulary. Fortunately they were not. No system of extortion yet devised by the most ruthless and greedy tyrant is at all comparable in its efficacy to the scientific methods of a modern revenue officer. The world will see to what a perfection of completeness the arts of oppression and squeezing can be carried when the power of modern European organization is in the hands of a socialist government.

It need not be supposed, therefore, that under King Mindôn life in Upper Burma was bad, and it must be remembered that since 1852 escape to British Burma, although forbidden, was not impossible.

Under Thebaw things were different. Mindôn was on the whole well-intentioned, and had kept the power in his own hands. Thebaw was weak and incompetent, and the Ministers who had most influence with him were the worst men. With his barbarities, old-fashioned rather than unexampled, and perhaps not much worse than the measures of precaution usually taken in Burma after the succession of a new king, or with the causes of the war which led to his deposition, the present narrative is not concerned. It is desired to give as clear an idea as possible of the state of Upper Burma when we were called upon to administer the country.

The rapacity and greed of the Court, where the Queen Supayalat was the ruling spirit, set the example to the whole hierarchy of officials. The result was a state of extreme disorder throughout the whole kingdom. The demands made on the people for money became excessive and intolerable. Men left their villages and took to the jungle. Bands



THE PALACE, MANDALAY—"CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE."



THE PALACE, MANDALAY—“CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE”

of armed brigands, some of considerable strength under active leaders, sprang up everywhere. Formed in the first instance as a protest and defence against extortion, they soon began to live on the country and to terrorize the peasantry. After a time, brigands and Ministers, finding themselves working for a common object, formed an unholy alliance for loot. The leaders of the bands came to an understanding with the more powerful officials, who in turn leant upon them for support.

Under such conditions it was not wonderful that the sudden seizure of the capital and the summary removal of the King should have completed the dissolution of society, already far advanced. The British Government, if it had decided to annex Upper Burma, might by a more leisurely occupation, not only with a larger military force, but with a complete staff of civil administrators, have saved the people from some years of anarchy and great suffering. But that is not our way, and under modern political conditions in England is impossible.

The country was taken and its government destroyed before we had decided what we should do with it, or considered the effect on the people.

The King's rule ended on the 29th of November, 1885. On the 1st of January, 1886, the Viceroy's proclamation included Upper Burma in Her Majesty's dominions. The administration of the country was temporarily provided for by allowing the Hlutdaw, or great Council of State, to continue in power, discharging all its functions as usual, but under the guidance of Colonel (afterwards Sir E. B.) Sladen, who was attached as Political officer to General Prendergast's staff. All Civil officers, British and Burmese, were placed under the Hlutdaw's orders, and the King's Burmese officials throughout the country were instructed to go on with the regular performance of their duties as if nothing had occurred. Some arrangement had to be made, and probably this was the best possible. The best was bad.

On the 15th of December the Chief Commissioner, Sir Charles Bernard, arrived at Mandalay from Rangoon. On his way up the river he had visited Minhla, Pagan and Myingyan, where Civil officers, supported by small garrisons,

had been placed by General Prendergast. He decided that these three districts should be removed from the jurisdiction of the Hlutdaw and controlled directly by himself. Mandalay town and district were similarly treated. A British officer was appointed to govern them, under the immediate orders of Colonel Sladen, who was responsible to the Chief Commissioner.

All this must have confused the minds of the people and prevented those who were ready to submit to the British power from coming forward. Fortunately this period of hesitation was short. From the 26th of February, 1886, Upper Burma became a province of British India.

When the Chief Commissioner, who had gone down to Rangoon with the Viceroy, returned to Mandalay, the Hlutdaw was finally dissolved and Sir Charles Bernard took the government into his own hands. A few of the Burmese Ministers were retained as advisers. At first they were of some use as knowing the facts and the ways of the King's administration. Very soon they became superfluous.

It must not be supposed that no steps had been taken towards the construction of an administration during the first two months of the year. Anticipating the decision of Her Majesty's Government, Sir Charles Bernard had applied his signal energy to this work, and before the end of February the Viceroy had laid his rough proposals before the Secretary of State. As soon as Upper Burma was incorporated with British India the scheme of government already drafted came into force.

The country was mapped out into fourteen districts, corresponding as closely as possible to the existing provinces under the King, namely:—

Mandalay	Minbu	Pagan
Katha	Bhamo	Ningyan, afterwards called Pyinmana
Ava	Shwebo	Ye-w
Chindwin	Kyaukse	Yamethin
Myingyan	Sagaing	

and after a time three more were added: Taungdwingyi, Meiktila, and the Ruby Mines. The boundaries were necessarily left vague at first until more accurate knowledge of the country enabled them to be defined. At first there



were no maps whatever. The greater part of the country had not been occupied nor even visited by us.

To each district was appointed an officer of the Burma Commission under the style of Deputy Commissioner, with a British police officer to assist him and such armed force of police as could be assigned to him. His first duty was to get in touch with the local officials and to induce those capable and willing to serve us to retain or take office under our Government.

Having firmly established his authority at headquarters, he was to work outwards in a widening circle, placing police posts and introducing settled administration as opportunity offered. He was, however, to consider it his primary object to attack and destroy the robber bands and to protect the loyal villages from their violence. There were few districts in which the guerilla leaders were not active. Their vengeance on every Burman who attempted to assist the British was swift and unmerciful. As it was impossible at first and for some time to afford adequate protection, villages which aided and sheltered the enemy were treated with consideration. The despatch of flying columns moving through a part of the country and returning quickly to headquarters was discouraged. There was a tendency in the beginning of the business to follow this practice, which was mischievous. If the people were friendly and helped the troops, they were certain to suffer when the column retired. If they were hostile, a hasty visit had little effect on them. They looked on the retirement as a retreat and became more bitter than before.

Upper Burma was incorporated with British India on the 26th of February. Thereupon the elaborate Statute law of India, including the Civil and Criminal Codes, came into force, a body of law which implies the existence of a hierarchy of educated and trained officials, with police and gaols, and all the machinery of organized administration. But there were none of these things in Upper Burma, which was, in fact, an enemy's country, still frankly hostile to us. This difficulty had been foreseen, and the proper remedy suggested in Lord Dufferin's minute (dated at Mandalay on the 17th of February, 1886) in which he proposed to annex the country.

The Acts for the Government of India give to the Secretary of State the power of constituting any province or part of a province an excepted or scheduled district, and thereupon the Governor of the province may draw up regulations for the peace and good government of the district, which, when approved by the Governor-General in Council, have the full force of law.\*

This machinery is put in force by a resolution of the Secretary of State in Council, and at the Viceroy's instance a resolution for this purpose was made, with effect from and after the 1st of March, 1886. It applied to all Upper Burma except the Shan States.

Sir Charles Bernard was ready to take advantage of the powers given to him. Early in March he published an admirable rough code of instructions, sufficiently elastic to meet the varying conditions, and at the same time sufficiently definite to prevent anything like injustice or oppression. The summary given in Section 10 of the Upper Burma Administration Report for 1886 shows their nature.

"By these instructions each district was placed in charge of a Civil officer, who was invested with the full powers of a Deputy Commissioner, and in criminal matters with power to try as a magistrate any case and to pass any sentence. The Deputy Commissioner was also invested with full power to revise the proceedings of any subordinate magistrate or official and to pass any order except an order enhancing a sentence. In criminal matters the courts were to be guided as far as possible by the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Penal Code, and the Evidence Act (*i.e.*, the Indian Codes). But dacoity or robbery was made punishable with death, though magistrates were instructed to pass capital sentences only in very heinous cases. In order to provide a safeguard against undue severity in the infliction of punishments, it was ordered that no capital sentence should be carried out except after confirmation by the Chief Commissioner. No regular appeals were allowed from any decision; but it was open for any one who felt aggrieved by the decision of a sub-

\* "The Government of India," by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, chap. i. p. 105. Second edition.

ordinate officer to move the Deputy Commissioner to revise the order, and for any one who demurred to an order passed by a Deputy Commissioner to bring the matter to the notice of the Chief Commissioner.

"In revenue matters the customs of the country were as far as possible to be observed, save that no monopolies (except that of precious stones) were allowed and no customs or transport duties were levied. As regards excise administration, in accordance with the custom of the country the sale of opium and of intoxicating liquors to Burmans was prohibited. But a limited number of licences were issued for the sale of liquors to persons not of Burmese race, and the Chinese were specially exempted from the restrictions imposed on the traffic in opium."

Thus in four months after annexation the country had been parcelled into seventeen districts, each under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner, who was guided by the provisional instructions and worked at first directly under the Chief Commissioner. It was thought (*vide* Lord Dufferin's minute of February 17, 1886) that the province could be worked, in the beginning, without any authority such as Divisional Commissioners or Sessions Judges interposed between the Chief Commissioner and the district officers. "I would adopt, as I have already said," wrote Lord Dufferin, "the simplest and cheapest system of administration open to us. There will be in each district or circle one British Civil officer and one police officer. The Civil officer will work through the indigenous agency of the country, Myo-ôks (governors of towns), Thugyis (headmen of villages) and others, confining his efforts in the first instance to the restoration of order, the protection of life and property, and the assessment and collection of the ordinary revenue. . . . But most of the unimportant criminal work and nearly all the civil suits must be disposed of by the native officials, subject to the check and control of the district officer."

The area of the province, excluding the Shan States, which were left to the care of their own chiefs, was nearly one hundred thousand square miles. It was divided into seventeen districts. There were no roads in the interior, much of which was difficult country. The Irrawaddy, it is true,

formed a splendid line of communication from north to south. But the river was not connected with the districts east or west of it by anything better than an ordinary village cart-track, with numerous streams and rivers, most of them unbridged. The Eastern districts between the Sittang and the Irrawaddy were especially inaccessible. Under such circumstances it was impossible for any man to discharge the duties imposed on the Chief Commissioner, even if all his subordinates had been endowed with ripe wisdom and experience. Only a man of the heroic energy and devotion of Sir Charles Bernard could have conceived it possible. Moreover, the Chief Commissioner was to be responsible for all death sentences, and was to be the final Court of Revision for the province; while the lower province also remained in his charge, and although he was relieved of the routine work of Lower Burma, the responsibility still rested on him, and was by no means nominal. It was not business.

The difficulty soon began to be felt. In June a Commissioner was appointed for the Eastern Division, Mr. St. G. Tucker, from the Punjab. In August and September three more commissionerships were constituted, to one of which, the Northern, was appointed Mr. Burgess (the late Mr. G. D. Burgess), of the Burma Commission; to the Central Division, Mr. F. W. Fryer (now Sir Frederick Fryer), from the Punjab; and Mr. J. D. La Touche (now Sir James La Touche) from the North-Western Provinces to the Southern Division. The Chief Commissioner delegated to them, in their respective divisions, the general control of the district officers and the revision of their judicial proceedings, including the duty of confirming sentences of death.

The administrative divisions of the province, excluding the Shan States, then stood as follows:—

1. The Northern Division ... Bhamo  
Katha  
Shwebo  
Ruby Mines  
Mandalay

2. The Central Division ... Sagaing  
Kyaukse  
Yeu  
Chindwin  
Ava
3. The Eastern Division ... Meiktila  
Yamethin  
Ningyan (afterwards called  
Pyinmana)
4. The Southern Division ... Myingyan  
Pagan  
Minbu  
Taungdwingyi

This organization enabled the Chief Commissioner to attend to his own work and brought the task of governing the whole of Burma within the powers of an energetic man. It enabled him to give sufficient time to the organization of the revenue and of the police and to the exercise of that control without which there could be no united action. The attempt to govern without an authority intervening between the executive officers in the districts and the head of the province was due to a desire for economy, and to the belief that in this way there would be closer connection and easier communication between the Chief Commissioner and the executive officers. In fact, the contrary was the result, and in all such cases must be.

The framework of a civil administration had now been formed. It remained to give the district officers such armed support as would enable them to govern their charges.

In the autumn of 1886 the country generally was far from being under our control. It had been supposed that our coming was welcome to the people and that "the prospects of the substitution of a strong and orderly government for the incompetent and cruel tyranny of their former ruler" was by the people generally regarded with pleasure. (See Lord Dufferin's minute of February 17, 1886.) But

by July it had become evident that a considerable minority of the population, to say the least, did not want us, and that until we proved our strength it was idle to expect active help even from our friends.

The total military force hitherto employed in Upper Burma had been about fourteen thousand men. There was not anywhere in the whole country a well-armed or organized body of the enemy. A few hundred British troops could have marched from north to south or from east to west without meeting with very serious opposition or suffering much loss. Small flying columns could be moved through the country and might find no enemy, and might even gather from the demeanour of the people that they were welcome. When the soldiers passed on, the power of the British Government went with them, and the villagers fell back under the rule of the guerilla leaders and their gangs. At first there may have been some faint tinge of patriotism in the motives which drove the leaders and members of these bands to take the field. Very soon they became mere brigands, living on the villagers and taking whatever they wanted, including their women.

"These bands are freebooters," wrote Sir George White\* (to the Quartermaster-General in India, July 17, 1886), "pillaging wherever they go, but usually reserving the refinement of their cruelty for those who have taken office under us or part with us. Flying columns arrive too late to save the village. The villagers, having cause to recognize that we are too far off to protect them, lose confidence in our power and throw in their lot with the insurgents. They make terms with the leaders and baffle pursuit of those leaders by roundabout guidance or systematic silence. In a country itself one vast military obstacle, the seizure of the leaders of the rebellion, though of paramount importance, thus becomes a source of greatest difficulty."

The experience of the first half of 1886 had brought home to the Government of India as well as to the military officers in the field that the resistance was more widespread and more obstinate than any one had foreseen. Sir George White considered that "the most effective plan of

\* Major-General, commanding the Burma Field Force, now Field-Marshal Sir George White, V.C., G.C.B., &c.

establishing our rule, and at the same time protecting and gaining touch of the villages, is a close occupation of the disturbed districts by military posts" (*ibid.*). Under the circumstances, this was the best course to adopt, provided that the posts were strong enough to patrol the country and to crush every attempt at rising. The people might be held down in this way, but not governed. Something more was necessary. The difficulties were to be overcome rather by the vigorous administration of civil government than by the employment of military detachments scattered over the country. A sufficient force of armed police at the disposal of the civil officers was therefore a necessity.

It had been foreseen from the first by Sir Charles Bernard and the Government of India, although the strength of the force necessary to achieve success was much under-estimated. In February, 1886, two military police levies, each of five hundred and sixty-one men, were raised from the Indian army. Of these one was sent to the Chindwin district and one to Mandalay. At the same time the recruitment of two thousand two hundred men in Northern India for a military police force was ordered. These men were untrained and came over in batches as they were raised. They were trained and disciplined at Mandalay and other convenient places, and were distributed to the districts when they were sufficiently formed. Thus besides the soldiers the Chief Commissioner had about 3,300 men at his disposal.

As the year went on and the magnitude of the undertaking began to be understood, the need of a much larger force was admitted. Two more levies were sanctioned. One from Northern India was raised without difficulty, and was posted to the railway line from Toungoo to Mandalay, which had been tardily sanctioned by the Secretary of State in November, 1886, and was at once put in hand. The other, a Gurkha battalion for use in the Northern frontier subdivision of Mogaung, was more difficult to recruit. At the end of the year two companies had arrived, and after being trained at Mandalay had gone on to Bhamo. By this time forty-six posts were held by the military police. The hunger for men, however, so far from being satisfied, continued to grow. After reviewing the position

in November (1886) Sir Charles Bernard decided to ask the Government of India for sixteen thousand men, including those already sanctioned, nine thousand to be recruited in India and seven thousand in Burma.

It was proposed that ultimately half of this force should be Indians and half local men. They were all to be engaged for three years, and were to be drilled and disciplined, and divided into battalions, one for each district. Each battalion was to contain fixed proportions of Indians and local men, "under the command of a military officer for the purpose of training and discipline and under the orders of the local police officers for ordinary police work." At this time it was believed that Burmans, Shans, Karens and Kachins could by training and discipline become a valuable element in a military police force, and the experiment was made at Mandalay. This was the beginning of the Burma military police force, which contributed so pre-eminently to the subjugation and pacification of the province. The attempt to raise any part of it locally was, however, very quickly abandoned, and it was recruited, with the exception of a few companies of Karens, entirely from Indians.

But to return to the middle of 1886. Sir George White, in writing to Army Headquarters, urged the necessity of reinforcements. The fighting had, it is true, been trivial and deaths in action or by wounds had amounted to six officers and fifty-six men only. Disease, however, had been busy. Exposure and fatigue in a semi-tropical climate, the want of fresh food in a country which gave little but rice and salt fish, was gradually reducing the strength and numbers of the force. One officer and two hundred and sixty-nine men had died of disease and thirty-nine officers and nine hundred and twenty men had been invalided between November, 1885, and July, 1886.

There were few large bodies of the enemy in the field—few at any rate who would wait to meet an attack. It was only by a close occupation of the disturbed districts by military posts that progress could be made. The Major-General Commanding did not shrink from this measure, although it used up his army. Fourteen thousand men looks on paper a formidable force, but more men, more



mounted infantry, and especially more cavalry were necessary.

It had been a tradition at Army Headquarters, handed down probably from the first and second Burmese Wars, that cavalry was useless in Burma. The experience of 1885-6 proved it to be the most effective arm. It was essential to catch the "Bos," or captains of the guerilla bands, who gave life and spirit to the whole movement. Short compact men, nearly always well mounted, with a modern jockey seat, they were the first as a rule to run away. The mounted infantry man, British or Indian, a stone or two heavier, and weighted with rifle, ammunition, and accoutrements, on an underbred twelve-hand pony, had no chance of riding down a "Bo." But the trooper inspired the enemy with terror.

"In a land where only ponies are bred the cavalry horses seem monsters to the people, and the long reach and short shrift of the lance paralyse them with fear," wrote Sir George White, and asked that as soon as the rains had ceased "three more regiments of cavalry, complete in establishments," should be added to the Upper Burma Field Force.

The proposal was accepted by the Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir Frederick Roberts, and approved by the Government of India. It may be said here once for all that the Government of India throughout the whole of this business were ready to give the local authorities, civil and military, everything that was found necessary for the speedy completion of the work in hand, the difficulties of which they appreciated, as far as any one not on the spot could.

"It is proposed," they wrote to Lord Cross (August 13, 1886), "to reinforce the Upper Burma Field Force by three regiments of native cavalry and to relieve all or nearly all the corps and batteries which were despatched to Burma in October last. The troops to be relieved will be kept four or five months longer, so that, including those sent in relief, the force will be very considerable and should suffice to complete rapidly and finally the pacification and settlement of the whole country."

In consequence of the increased strength of the field

force the Government of India directed Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Macpherson, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, to transfer his headquarters to Burma and remain there until the conclusion of the operations. Unfortunately, Sir Herbert died shortly after reaching Burma. The Commander-in-Chief in India, Sir Frederick Roberts, then took charge of the business and landed in Rangoon in November.

It was evident that Sir George White had not exaggerated the difficulties of the work. After taking stock of the position, Roberts asked for five more regiments to be sent from India. During the cold or, as it should be called in Burma, the dry season following much was done to gain control of the country, under the personal supervision of the Commander-in-Chief. Especially in the Eastern Division, where large bands of men under various pretenders had been most troublesome, the stern energy of General Lockhart produced a rapid and wholesome change. When Sir Frederick returned to India in February, 1887, the subjugation of Upper Burma had been accomplished and the way was cleared for the civil administration. But four years of constant patient work were needed before the country was pacified and the peasant who wished to live a life of honest industry could accomplish his desire.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHIEF COMMISSIONERSHIP OF BURMA

MY first acquaintance with Burma was made in the early part of 1883. I was then a member of the Legislative Council of India. Mr. Charles Bernard, who was Chief Commissioner of British Burma, had asked for a year's leave, and Lord Ripon selected me to take his place. During that year, 1883-4, I went over Lower Burma—British Burma as it was then called—and learnt the methods of the administration and became acquainted with the officers in the commission and the nature of the country and its people.

There was at that time very little communication between the Court of Ava and the Chief Commissioner, who represented the Governor-General in Council. The embassy which the King had sent to Simla with the ostensible purpose of making a new treaty had been suddenly recalled, notwithstanding, and perhaps in some degree because of, the very honourable and hospitable manner in which Lord Ripon had received it. The King was already negotiating a treaty with France, and in 1883, before the mission despatched for this purpose to Europe had left Mandalay, it was believed to have been drafted. But when I surrendered the office to Sir Charles Bernard on his return from leave in February, 1884, there was no thought of war in the near future.

From Rangoon I was transferred to Nagpur, to the post of Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces. Towards the end of 1885, fever drove me to England on sick leave just as the relations with the King of Burma were broken off and war had become unavoidable. Returning from leave in November, 1886, I found awaiting me at Suez orders posting me to the Public Service Commission,

of which the late Sir Charles Aitchison was president. At Bombay I found instructions to proceed at once to Hyderabad in the Deccan, as the Viceroy (Lord Dufferin) desired to see me. At Hyderabad I waited on Lord Dufferin. He told me that Bernard might have to leave, and he wished to know if I would accept the appointment of Chief Commissioner of Burma if he decided to offer it to me. He added that it was in his opinion the post in all India most to be coveted, and that if he was not Viceroy he would choose Burma an unnecessary stimulus, as ever since leaving that province in 1884 my ambition had been to succeed Bernard. I told the Viceroy that I would go to Burma if it were offered to me.

I was with the Public Service Commission at Lahore, Allahabad, and Jubulpore, and back to Bombay, before I heard anything more about Burma. At the end of January, 1887, we were leaving the Parel Station, Bombay, for Madras, where the next sitting of the Commission was to be, when the train was stopped just as it began to move, and the station-master ran up with a clear-the-line message for me from the Viceroy, desiring me to wait further orders at Bombay. I left the train gladly, as I knew that it meant that I was to go to Burma, and I was delighted to be relieved from the work of the Commission, which was distasteful to me, especially as it appeared from the character of the evidence brought forward, a matter left entirely to the local Government in each province, not likely to lead to beneficial results. On the 3rd of February a telegram dated the 2nd came from the Viceroy, offering me the Chief Commissionership as Bernard's health had broken down, and desiring me to come to Calcutta to consult with the Government.

As soon as I could arrange my affairs I went to Calcutta. The Viceroy received me on the 14th of February. He took me out to the lawn at the side where the great house throws a pleasant shade in the afternoon. There we sat, and Lord Dufferin explained to me how matters stood in Burma, and gave me his instructions on many points and on the general principles which he wished to guide the administration.

The organization of the military police and the material of which the force was to be constituted was one of

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the chief matters he spoke about. He attached much importance to the enlistment of Burmans, Shans, and Karens, so that the unhealthy posts might be held by acclimatized natives. British officers would have to be posted to command them, and they must be relieved at short intervals. He showed me letters which had passed between him and Bernard about the military police force, to which, as an instrument in the pacification of the province, he attached the first importance. He spoke of the strength of the Commission, and told me to consider it carefully and ask for more men if I thought them necessary. Generally he considered that true economy dictated the expenditure of as much money as was necessary to fit out the new province with offices, roads, buildings, and river steamers, and it was folly, he said, not to give it. Barracks and shelter for troops and police should be vigorously pushed on.

The questions of the Shan States and our relations with China were discussed. As to the Shan States, I represented the manner in which our relations with the feudatory chiefs in the Central Provinces were managed and the saving in cost and responsibility to be gained by leaving them quasi-independent. Lord Dufferin approved of this policy and preferred it to annexation, even in the case of the Wuntho Sawbwa, who had shown an inclination to refuse submission to our Government.

The Viceroy spoke at length and with emphasis regarding our relations with China, which he looked upon as most important. We were face to face, he said, with a very powerful neighbour, who might greatly harass us if she or even her subordinate officials chose to worry us. Two officers of the Chinese Consular Service had been sent to Upper Burma to be at my disposal in dealing with the Chinese in Burma and in conducting relations with the Chinese Government. In the matter of the frontiers of Upper Burma, where they touched China, great care should be exercised. "Feel your way," he said, putting out his hand, "and when you come against anything hard, draw back," advice that was most sound in dealing with the ill-defined boundaries of a conquered province. We wished to hold what our predecessors had held or had been entitled to hold, and we did not desire to leave unoccupied space

for others to come in. He told me to think carefully whether there was anything I wanted done and to let him know before I left. I was to see him again.

In a country where one man is as good as another, where there are no landlords, no hereditary aristocracy and no tribal chiefs, the Government, especially a foreign Government, is at a great disadvantage. It is impossible to deal with each individual. The first question is, who is the great man of this village: who has influence, who knows the villagers, their characters and so on? Having found the man, it becomes possible to enter into relations with the village and to treat with them as a whole. In Upper Burma there was a recognized headman in each village who had duties, and powers corresponding to his duties; and in many administrative matters, especially in taxation, the village was dealt with as a whole.

The difficulty in Lower Burma was the absence of such a local authority or unit. The villagers were not held together by any obligation to each other or by subordination to any one on the spot. Each man had his own bit of land which he held directly from the Government. He lived where he pleased, and if he put his house in the same place with other cultivators, it was for the sake of convenience and protection. The villages were grouped for revenue purposes by the British administration under officials who collected the taxes and received a percentage on the amount. Each of these *taik Thugyis* (headmen of circles), as they were designated, had many villages under him and could not be expected to have local knowledge or personal influence in all of them. He had no powers outside his revenue work. It was open to any one to put up his hut in any village, wherever he could find room. There was no one to say him nay, even if he was a gambler, an opium-eater, or a notorious evildoer living by theft and robbery. There were, it is true, village policemen appointed by law, who were intended to supply the wants of a local authority. But no power was given to them: they were subordinated to the regular civil police and had no status as revenue officials. Consequently they tended to become mere village drudges, although by no means useless and frequently showing both courage and sagacity in police matters.

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When I was in Burma in 1883-84 gang-robbery was prevalent, even in the neighbourhood of Rangoon; so much so as to demand close attention from the head of the province. I had observed that in nearly every case where a large gang of dacoits, to use the Indian term, was dominating a district or part of a district they were assisted by sympathisers, who sent them food, supplied them with information, and made it possible for them to live undetected. The codes of Indian Criminal Procedure do not enable a magistrate to touch cases of this sort. If the people are against the Government—and in 1887 they were certainly not minded to help it—the difficulty of detecting and convicting such secret abettors is almost insuperable. At any rate, it was a slow process, and meanwhile violence and disorder flourished and the peasantry became more and more enthralled to the brigands.

It occurred to me that nothing would give the civil magistrate more assistance than the power of summarily removing persons who, while they themselves appeared to be living harmless lives without reproach, were enabling the insurgent or brigand gangs to keep the field.

I explained my views on these matters to the Viceroy. He promised me his support and desired me to embody my ideas in a draft Regulation before I left Calcutta. With the assistance of the Legislative Department the draft was quickly completed, and on my arrival in Burma it was circulated to district officers for their opinions. It was delayed by various formalities and inquiries, and was not finally made law until October, 1887. Founded so far as might be on the system indigenous to the country and in accord with the mind of the people, this law was a great aid to the administration. Writing in October, 1890, I said: "I think that most officers will now admit that the policy of dealing with the people by villages and not by individuals has been a very powerful instrument for suppressing disorder and establishing our authority. It would not have been possible to use this instrument if the village system had no vitality. If we are to rule the country cheaply and efficiently and to keep the people from being robbed and oppressed by the criminal classes, the village system must be maintained in vigour. It cannot thrive or live unless

the post of headman is sought after, or at least willingly accepted, by respectable persons." I believe the provisions of the village regulation are still a living force and are brought into action when occasion arises. But the life of the system is the headman, his dignity and his position. This is what the author of "The Soul of a People" wrote in 1898:—

"So each village managed its own affairs untroubled by squire or priest, very little troubled by the State. That within their little means they did it well no one can doubt. They taxed themselves without friction, they built their own monastery schools by voluntary effort, they maintained a very high, a very simple, code of morals entirely of their own initiative.

"All this has passed or is passing. The King has gone to a banishment far across the sea, the Ministers are either banished or powerless for good or evil. It will never rise again, this government of the King which was so bad in all it did and only good in what it left alone. It will never rise again. The people are now part of the British Empire, subjects of the Queen. What may be in store for them in the far future no one can tell; only we may be sure that the past can return no more. And the local government is passing away too. It cannot exist with a strong Government such as ours. For good or for evil, in a few years, it too, will be gone."\*

This is a prophecy which I believe has not yet been fulfilled, and I hope never will. But to return to the order of events.

I was detained in Calcutta until the 24th of February. Time by no means wasted. I had frequent opportunities of seeing the Members of Council and learning what was going on in each department. Lord Dufferin allowed me to discuss matters with him more than once. On the 19th I attended His Excellency in Council and explained my views, especially regarding the village system. Leaving Calcutta in the British India steamship *Rangoon* on the 24th, I landed at Rangoon on Sunday the 27th of March. Next day I relieved Sir Charles Bernard and took charge of the Province of Burma.

\* "The Soul of a People," pp. 103-4.



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In order to enable the Chief Commissioner to give more time to the affairs of Upper Burma, a Special Commissioner, Mr. Hodgkinson, had been appointed to take immediate charge of the older province. I found that the Special Commissioner was in fact ruler of the Lower Province, and was so regarded by the public. Nothing which was not of a very extraordinary nature was referred to the Chief Commissioner, whose responsibility, however, remained unimpaired. For example, two or three days after my arrival the Viceroy telegraphed in cipher to the Chief Commissioner about some matters in Lower Burma which had given rise to questions in Parliament, and of which the responsible Chief Commissioner had no cognizance. No more competent and trustworthy man than Mr. Hodgkinson could have been found for the work. Nevertheless the arrangement did not seem to me quite satisfactory.

There were urgent matters requiring to be settled with Mr. Hodgkinson, more especially the Budget of the Province and the organization of the police in Lower Burma, which needed thorough reform. They had earned the reputation of being the worst and the most costly in the world, and during the last eighteen months they had not belied it. It was necessary to form a body of military police for Lower Burma of suitable Indians, trained and disciplined. During the few days I was in Rangoon this and other urgent matters—for example, the arrangements with the Bombay Burma Company about the Upper Burma Forests, the Ruby Mines, the condition of some of the Lower Burma districts, the postings of officers, the distribution of reinforcements of military police just disembarking from the transports, consultations with the General Commanding in Lower Burma as to the measures necessary along and beyond the line of the old frontier within the limits of his command, all these things and much more would have given me plenty of work for many days.

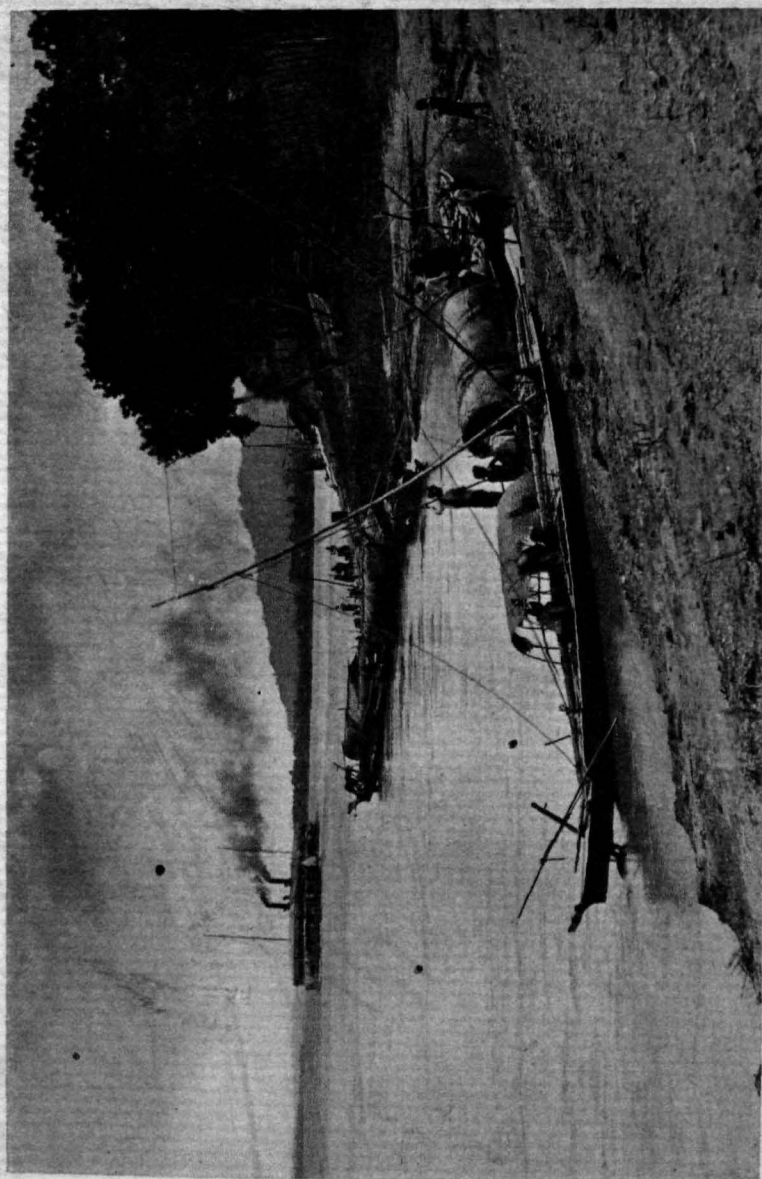
I could only dispose of those matters which required my personal orders and leave the rest to Mr. Hodgkinson. I could not remain in Rangoon. Sir Charles Bernard had a powerful memory. The Upper Burma Secretariat was, as has been said, in Mandalay; when Sir Charles Bernard was in Rangoon, he relied to a great extent on

his memory. Letters and telegrams received from Mandalay were dealt with and returned with his orders, no copies for reference being kept. As the Rangoon Secretariat was ignorant of Upper Burma affairs, I found myself completely in the air. I decided therefore to start as soon as possible for Mandalay.

I left Rangoon by rail for Prome on the 9th of March. At Prome a Government steamer, the *Sir William Peel*, was waiting for me, and I reached Mandalay on the 14th. To a man sailing up the river there were few signs of trouble. The people appeared to be going about their business as usual, and no doubt along the river bank and in the neighbourhood of our posts there was little disorder. But this appearance was deceptive. Just beyond the old frontier the country from the right bank of the Irrawaddy up to the Arakan Yoma was in the hands of insurgents.

On the right bank of the river, forty miles above Thayetmyo, is the Burman fort and town of Minhla, where the first opposition was offered to the British expedition. I found here a small detachment of Indian troops, and in the town, about half a mile off, a police post. I learnt from the British officer commanding the detachment and from the Burman magistrate that for some fifty miles inland, up to the Chin hills on the west, the villages were deserted and the headmen had absconded. This is an unhealthy tract, with much jungle, and broken up into small valleys by the spurs from the Arakan mountains. The noted leader Bo Swè made his lair here and had still to be reckoned with. His story illustrates the difficulties which had to be overcome.

In November, 1885, after taking Minhla, a district was formed by Sir Harry Prendergast consisting of a large tract of country above the British Burma frontier on both sides of the river to Salin, north of Minbu, on the right bank, and including Magwè and Yenangyoung on the left. This district was known at first as Minhla, but afterwards as Minbu, to which the headquarters were moved. Mr. Robert Phayre, of the Indian Civil Service and of the British Burma Commission, was left in charge, supported by a small force.



THAYETNYO—MAIL STEAMER LEAVING.

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Mr. Phayre, a relative of that distinguished man, Colonel Sir Arthur Phayre, the first Chief Commissioner of British Burma, was the right man for the work. He began by getting into touch with the native officials, and by the 15th of December all those on the right bank of the river had accepted service under the new Government. Outposts were established, and flying columns dispersed any gatherings of malcontents that were reported. A small body of troops from Thayetmyo, moving about in the west under the Arakan hills, acted in support of Minhla. Revenue began to come in, and at Yenangyoung, the seat of the earth-oil industry, work was being resumed. Everything promised well.

There were two men, however, who had not been or would not be propitiated, Maung Swè and Ôktama. Maung Swè was hereditary headman or Thugyi of Mindat, a village near the old frontier. He had for years been a trouble to the Thayetmyo district of British Burma, harbouring criminals and assisting dacoit gangs to attack our villages, if he did not lead them himself. He had been ordered up to Mandalay by the Burmese Government owing to the strong remonstrances of the Chief Commissioner.

On the outbreak of war Bo\* Swè was at once sent back to do his utmost against the invaders. So long as there was a force moving about in the west of the district he was unable to do much. When the troops were withdrawn (the deadly climate under the hills compelled their recall), he began active operations.

The second man was named Ôktama, one of the most determined opponents of the British. He had inspired his followers with some of his spirit, whether fanatical or patriotic, and harassed the north of the district about and beyond Minbu. His gang was more than once attacked and dispersed, but came together again. He and Maung Swè worked together and between them dominated the country.

In May, 1886, Maung Swè was attacked and driven back towards the hills. He retired on Ngapè, a strong position thirty miles west of Minbu and commanding the principal

\* Bo means "Captain"; Maung is the ordinary way of addressing a Burman, the equivalent of "Mister."

pass through the mountains into Arakan. Early in June, 1886, Mr. Phayre, with fifty sepoy of a Bengal infantry regiment and as many military police (Indians), started from Minbu to attack Maung Swè, who was at a place called Padein. The enemy were reinforced during the night by two or three hundred men from Ngapè. The attack was delivered on the 9th of June, and Phayre, who was leading, was shot dead. His men fell back, leaving his body, which was carried off by the Burmans, but was afterwards recovered and buried at Minbu. Three days after this two parties of Ôktama's gang who had taken up positions near Salin were attacked by Captain Dunsford. His force consisted of twenty rifles of the Liverpool Regiment and twenty rifles of the 2nd Bengal Infantry. The Burmans were driven from their ground, but Captain Dunsford was killed and a few of our men wounded.

Reinforcements were sent across the river from Pagan: and Major Gordon, of the 2nd Bengal Infantry, with ninety-five rifles of his own regiment, fifty rifles of the Liverpool Regiment, and two guns 7-1 R.A., attacked Maung Swè in a position near Ngapè. The Burmans fought well, but were forced to retire. Unfortunately the want of mounted men prevented a pursuit. The enemy carried off their killed and wounded. Our loss was eight men killed and twenty-six wounded, including one officer. We then occupied Ngapè in strength, but in July the deadly climate obliged us to withdraw.

Maung Swè returned at once to his lair. By the end of August the whole of the western part of the district was in the hands of the insurgents, rebels, or patriots, according to the side from which they are seen.

Meanwhile Salin had been besieged by Ôktama. He was driven off after three days by Captain Atkinson, who brought up reinforcements to aid the garrison of the post. Captain Atkinson was killed in the action. Thus in a few weeks these two leaders had cost us the lives of three officers.

In the course of the operations undertaken under Sir Frederick Roberts's command in the open season of 1886-87, this country was well searched by parties of troops with mounted infantry. Bo Swè's power was broken, and in March, 1887, he was near the end of his exploits. In the

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north of the district, the exertions of the troops had made little impression on Òktama's influence. The peasantry, whether through sympathy or fear, were on his side.

I have troubled the reader with this story because it will help to the understanding of the problem we had before us in every part of Upper Burma. It will explain how districts reported at an early date to be "quite peaceful" or "comparatively settled" were often altogether in the hands of hostile bands. They were reported quiet because we could hear no noise. We were outsiders, as indeed we are, more or less, not only in Burma but in every part of the Indian Empire—less perhaps in Burma than elsewhere.

On the way up the river I had the advantage of meeting Mr. (now Sir James) La Touche, the Commissioner of the Southern Division, Sir Robert Low,\* commanding at Myingyan, Brigadier-General Anderson, Captain Eyre, the Deputy Commissioner of Pagan district (which then included Pakokku and the Yaw country), and others. At Mandalay I was able to consult with General Sir George White, commanding the field force, with His Excellency Sir Charles Arbuthnot, the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, and with the civil officers, namely, the Commissioner of the Northern Division, Mr. Burgess,† and Mr. (now Sir Frederick) Fryer, the Commissioner of the Central or Sagaing Division, and their subordinates. No more capable or helpful men could have been found. The Commissioner of the Eastern Division was out of reach for the time. The only way of getting to that country was by road from Mandalay, which would have taken many days. I had to wait until I returned to Rangoon and could go by rail to Toungoo before I made acquaintance with Mr. Henry St. George Tucker, of the Indian Civil Service, a Punjab officer.

\* The late General Sir Robert Cunliffe Low, G.C.B.

† The late Mr. G. D. Burgess, C.S.I., Judicial Commissioner, Upper Burma.

## CHAPTER III

### UPPER BURMA

I WILL now give as brief a sketch as may be of the state of Upper Burma when I arrived in Mandalay in March, 1887.

Upper Burma, inclusive of the Shan States, contains in round numbers one hundred and sixty thousand square miles, of which the Shan States cover sixty thousand miles and the Chin hills ten thousand. It may be divided, for the present purpose, into four parts. The first is the great valley of the Irrawaddy, from the mountain ranges north of Mogaung to the northern boundary of the Thayetmyo district; the second is the valley of the Chindwin; the third is the valley of the Sittang, in which lies the Eastern Division, down to the boundary of the Toungoo district; and the fourth is the Shan States. In 1887 the British administration had not yet touched the Chin hills or the Kachins in the mountains which divide Burma from China.

Beginning with the Irrawaddy Valley, Mogaung, the most northerly post of importance, was held by a Burman Myook, or township officer, nominally for us. He collected the revenue and spent it—much, no doubt, on his establishment, for which no regular provision had been made. South of Mogaung as far as Bhamo the country was quiet, and no organized gangs were in the field. The Katha district, which comes next below Bhamo, was disturbed on the Wuntho border, and was not much under control.

The Wuntho Sawbwa, a Shan chief exercising independent jurisdiction within his country, had refused our invitation to come in. A strong force under Brigadier-General Cox, with Mr. Burgess, the Commissioner of the Northern Division, had gone to try the methods of peaceful

persuasion. The districts south of Katha, namely Shwebo and Ye-u, were controlled by dacoit gangs under active leaders.

On the left bank of the river the Shan States of Moh-laing and Möngmit were disturbed by the raids of Hkam Leng (*vide* Chapter XX.). The Ruby Mines district, with its capital, Mogok, was held in force and had remained submissive since its occupation.

South of the ruby mines lies the district of Mandalay, shut in on the north and east by the Shan hills. There was a British force of some thousand men of all arms in Mandalay itself, with several outlying detachments and a strong party in the hills at Pyinulwin,\* forty miles on the road to Hsipaw. In spite of this force the district was dominated by three or four leaders, who had large followings and acted in concert. They had divided the country between them into definite jurisdictions, which they mutually respected. They collected revenue from the villagers. Disobedience or any attempt to help the British Government met with swift and severe punishment. They professed to be acting under the authority of the Myingun Prince, who was at the time a refugee in Pondicherry, and they were encouraged and helped to combine by a relative of the Prince, known as the Bayingan or Viceroy, who went from one to the other and supplied them with information. The district of Ava, south of Mandalay, was in a similar state. The valleys of the Samôn and Panlaung gave good shelter to the dacoits. Unfortunately several district boundaries and divisions of military commands met in this country, and on that account action was not so prompt as it ought to have been.

Following the river below Ava, the Myingyan and Pagan districts extended to both sides of the river, an inconvenient arrangement inherited from the Burmese Government. The headquarters of these districts, both on the left bank, were held by garrisons of some size, and within striking range the country was controlled.

About forty miles from Pagan town, and as many from

\* Now the hill station for Upper Burma, named Maymyo from Colonel May, who commanded the Bengal Regiment, which garrisoned the place in 1887.



the river, is the isolated hill or mountain of Popa. It rises to a height of four thousand five hundred feet, a gigantic cone throwing out numerous spurs. It is wooded thickly almost to the top, and extending for a long distance round it is a tangle of scrub jungle and ravines, an ideal hunting-ground for robbers and the home of cattle-thieves.

South of this was the Taungdwingyi district, extending down to the old border. It was in the hands of a leader named Min Yaung, who was well provided with ponies, and even elephants. The northern spurs of the Pegu Yoma divide this district from the Sittang Valley, and are densely wooded, offering a harbour of refuge to criminals. To this, among other causes, it was due that this district gave more trouble than any other in Upper Burma. It was at that time separated from the river by the Magwè township, which belonged to the Minbu district, and enjoyed comparative peace, owing mainly to the influence of the Burman governor, who had taken service under us and for a time was loyal.

These parts of the Myingyan and Pagan districts, which were on the right bank of the Irrawaddy, were not really under our control or administered by us. The wild tract on the Yaw (*vide* Chapter XXI, p 295), which was much left to itself in Burmese times, had not been visited, and was overrun by dacoits.

Southward, still on the right bank, came the Minbu district, where Ôktama and Bo Swè were still powerful, the former in full force.

The difficulties of country and climate which our men had to face in this district were very great. The west of the Minbu district lies up against the range of mountains known as the Arakan Yoma, which run parallel to the sea and shut off the Irrawaddy Valley from the Bay of Bengal. The country below the Yoma is what is known in India as Terai, a waterlogged region reeking with malaria, deadly to those not acclimatized. Many a good soldier, British and Indian, found his grave in the posts occupied in this district, Taingda, Myothit, Ngapè, and Sidoktaya. The dacoit leaders knew the advantage of being able to live where our men could not. Soldiers like Captain Golightly (Colonel R. E. Golightly, D.S.O., late of the 60th Rifles)

and his mounted infantry would have made short work of them under less adverse conditions.

Passing to the Chindwin, which joins the Irrawaddy at Pakokku, twenty-five miles above Myingyan, the Upper Chindwin\* was fairly quiet. The two local potentates, the Sawbwa of Hsawnghsup and the Sawbwa of Kalè, were not of much importance. The former had made his submission; the latter was holding aloof, but had shown his goodwill by arresting and delivering to the Deputy Commissioner a pretender who had attacked a British post and was gathering to his banner various leaders. Lower down, the country round Mingin, where Mr. Gleeson, Assistant Commissioner, was murdered in 1886, was much disturbed. In the Lower Chindwin there was trouble in Pagyi and Pakangyi. The former country, which is covered with forests and very unhealthy, had been placed under the management of Burmans of local influence—a plan which answered for a time. The Kani township, which adjoins Mingin, had been governed from the first by the Burmese Wun well and loyally. He was murdered on that account by a dacoit leader. His younger brother was appointed in his room and followed in his steps. On the left bank the country was not openly disturbed. The river trade was busy, but boats were obliged to take a guard or to be convoyed by a steam-launch.

At this time the cause of order seemed nearer victory in the Eastern Division than elsewhere. The Sittang Valley includes the Kyauksè district, which at first was placed under the Commissioner of the Central Division, but was allied in dacoit politics to Meiktila. Myat Hmon, Maung Gyi, and Maung Lat, names well known to soldiers in 1885-6, hunted this country, making the Hmawwaing jungles their rallying-ground. When hard-pressed they took refuge in the hills of Baw and Lawksawk, coming back when the troops retired. In the three districts of Meiktila, Yamethin, and Pyinmana, which then formed the Eastern Division under Mr. H. St. George Tucker, General Sir William Lockhart had given them no rest day or night. Nevertheless, in March, 1887, large bands were still active.

\* The district was not formally divided into Upper and Lower until 1888.

The Shan States were in a very troubled state, but a good beginning had been made, and Mr. Hildebrand had nearly succeeded in breaking up the Limbin Confederacy (*vide* Chapter XV.). But throughout the plateau dacoities were rife and petty wars were raging. Wide tracts were laid waste, and the peasantry, deserting their fields, had joined in the fights or gone across the Salween. Great scarcity, perhaps in some cases actual famine, resulted, not from failure of rain, but from strife and anarchy. And this reacted on Burma proper, for some of the Shan States on the border gave the dacoits encouragement and shelter.

The whole of Upper Burma at this time was in military occupation. There were one hundred and forty-one posts held by troops, and yet in wide stretches of country, in the greater part of the Chindwin Valley, in the Mogaung country and elsewhere, there was not a soldier. The tide, however, was on the turn. The officers in command of parties and posts were beginning to know the country and the game, while the dacoits and their leaders were losing heart. The soldiers had in fact completed their task, and they had done it well. What remained to be done was work for the civil administrator.

The first and essential step was to enable the civil officers to get a firm grip of their districts. For this purpose a civil police force, recruited from the natives of the country, was necessary. Without it, detection and intelligence were impossible. Commissioners and generals were alike unanimous on this point.

The next thing was to provide an armed force at the disposal of the district officer, so that he should be able to get an escort immediately—for there was no district where an Englishman could yet travel safely without an armed escort—and should be able also to quell risings and disperse ordinary bands of insurgents or brigands without having to ask assistance from the army. The military police had been designed and raised for these purposes, and the men were being distributed as fast as they arrived from India.

The relations of the district officers to the commandants of military police and of the latter to the civil police officers, and the duties and spheres of each, had to

be defined. I had drafted regulations for these purposes, and was waiting for the appointment of an Inspector-General to carry them out. It had been decided before I left Calcutta that a soldier should be selected for this post. The military police force was in fact an army of occupation sixteen thousand strong. Many of them were old soldiers who had volunteered from the Indian regiments, the rest were recruited mainly from the fighting races of Northern India. And they were commanded by young officers, some of whom had come with somewhat exalted ideas of their independence. It was imperative, therefore, to get an able soldier who could look at matters from all points of view, and who could manage men as well as command them. For it required a delicate touch to avoid friction between the military and civil members of the district staff. Some of the civil officers were young, some were quite without experience, and some were inferior to the military commandants in force and ability.

In April, 1887, Colonel E. Stedman, commanding the 3rd Gurkhas, who had accompanied Mr. Hildebrand to the Shan States, was appointed to be Inspector-General of Police in Upper Burma, with the military rank of Brigadier-General. Among the many able officers of the Indian Army it would have been hard to find another man equally adapted to the work. I had reason to be grateful to General Stedman (now Sir Edward Stedman, G.C.B., K.C.I.E.) and to the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts (then Sir Frederick), who selected him.

On the 21st of March, 1887, I wrote to Lord Dufferin regarding the relations of the district and police officers as follows: "The relations between Deputy Commissioners, District Superintendents (Civil Police) and Commandants (Military Police) are ill-defined and work badly, unless all are really good fellows. I have decided to keep the Commandant to his military work, and the District Superintendent of Police to the real civil police duty—intelligence, detection, and investigation. The Deputy Commissioner has by law supreme control and must exercise it. . . . The Deputy Commissioners have no hold on their districts, and through the absence of a civil police they get no intelligence and no touch with the people.

Hence our military parties sometimes go wandering about blindly, unable to get any information. There must be a completely separate trained body of Burman Civil Police, trained not to arms but to their police duties. . . . I have got orders under issue about the location of posts and everything connected with them and the constitution of the police in them. We must have some Burmans and some Civil Police Burmans in every police post, and I think in every military post also."

The details of these matters could not be settled until General Stedman came to take up the work. Meanwhile I must return to affairs at Mandalay.

## CHAPTER IV

### MANDALAY

SOON after my arrival in Mandalay I made the Thathanabaing's acquaintance. He is the head of the Buddhist monks, the religious order which in Bishop Bigandet's words is "The greatest in its extent and diffusion, the most extraordinary and perfect in its fabric and constituent parts, and the wisest in its rules and prescriptions that has ever existed either in ancient or modern times outside the pale of Christianity."\* The Thathanabaing is the head of this order for purposes of discipline and for settling doctrinal disputes. His title means that he has power over all religious matters. It is misleading to speak of him as an archbishop or to apply any of the titles of the Christian Church to the Buddhist monks, who are not priests in any sense, but "are the strict followers of Buddha, who, like him, have renounced the world to devote themselves to the twofold object of mastering their passions and acquiring the true wisdom which alone can lead to the deliverance."† "The regulations they are subject to and the object they have in view in entering the religious profession debar them from concerning themselves in affairs that are foreign to their calling" ‡

The great mass of the Pongyis, or monks, in Upper Burma, who may have numbered in 1887 twenty or thirty thousand persons, obeyed the rules of their order and took no part in the troubles that followed the annexation. In the King's time the Thathanabaing neither personally nor as representative of the order interfered in affairs of State.

\* "Legend of Gaudama," vol. ii., p. 319. (Trübner, 1880.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 242.

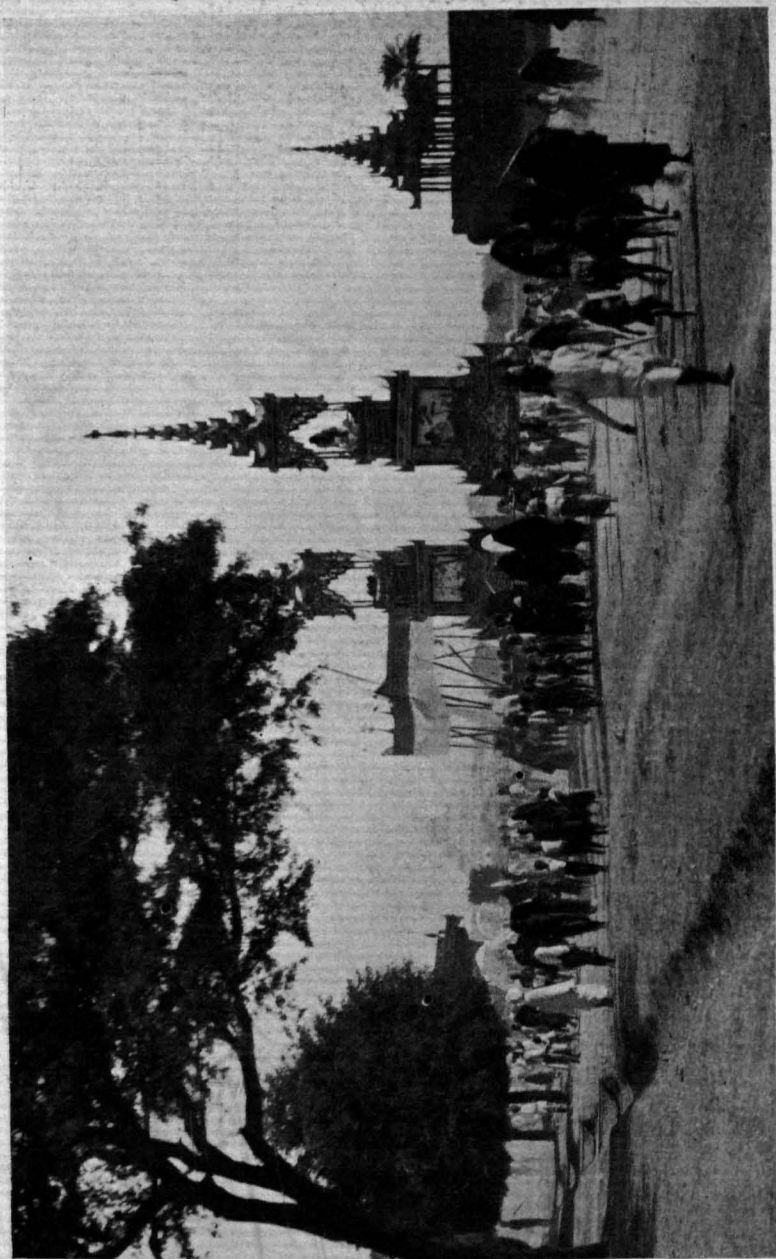
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

He might have, as a work of mercy, pleaded for the remission of a sentence, but it is doubtful whether he went beyond that, or whether he had any political influence in our sense of the word. As a "religious" he would have, and was bound to have, no concern with mundane affairs. Could he bring any influence to bear on the people at large to induce them to submit peacefully to our rule?

"When we speak," writes Bishop Bigandet,\* "of the great influence possessed by the religious order of Buddhist monks we do not intend to speak of political influence. It does not appear that in Burma they have ever aimed at any share in the management or direction of the affairs of the country. Since the accession of the house of Alomphra to the throne, that is to say, during a period of above a hundred years, the history of Burma has been tolerably well known. We do not recollect having ever met with one instance when the Pongyis, as a body, have interfered in the affairs of State. But in a religious point of view," continues Bishop Bigandet, "their influence is a mighty one." And undoubtedly if they were an energetic, ambitious, and intellectual body, instead of a thoroughly lazy and densely ignorant set of men, they might easily direct this influence to worldly purposes, and they might have excited the people to resist the British.

One of my first acts at Mandalay was to issue orders for the repair of monasteries occupied by our men and for making compensation in some form to the monks, and at least twice afterwards I reiterated and enlarged these orders. No doubt this matter of the monasteries was a grievance. But, as often happens, it was made more of by busybodies and correspondents interested in defaming the administration than by the sufferers. It was an unfortunate necessity of war. The only remedy was to build barracks and reduce the garrison, both of which were done with all the speed possible. It is worth noting that the Thathanabaing did not make any complaint to me on this head. In his conversations with me he dwelt mainly on the sufferings caused to the monks by the removal of the inhabitants from the walled city, which was being converted into a cantonment. The monks

\* "Legend of Gaudama," vol. ii., p. 308.



.A PONGHI'S FUNERAL PROCESSION.



living in the cluster of great *Kyaungs* (monasteries), of which the Incomparable was the centre, depended on the faithful in the city for their food. I reminded him of the removal of the people by their own monarchs, first from Ava to Amarapura and then from Amarapura to Mandalay. He replied that the King removed the *kyaungs* with the people, and put them up on the new sites at the public cost, and also compelled his Ministers to build new monasteries. He was amused by my suggesting that the Commissioner and the secretary who accompanied me should be ordered to erect some monasteries on the sites to which the people were being moved. He saw the humour of it.

I found the Thathanabaing in my intercourse with him always courteous and good-humoured; and in his bearing there was neither arrogance nor ill-will. Of the Pongyis generally in Upper Burma I saw something, as in riding about the districts (there were no motors or tents for Chief Commissioners in those days) we had generally to ask the Pongyis to give us shelter; and their manner was courteous and hospitable. Not a few, I thought, felt and deplored the misery which the disturbances caused, and would have been glad to work for peace. It must be remembered that from the experience of our rule in Lower Burma they knew the attitude of the British Government towards their religion. They had no reason to fear oppression or persecution. They knew at the same time that in losing a Buddhist King their position and influence must be lowered. They could hardly be asked to rejoice with us.

In common with others who know Burma better, I doubt if the religious orders as a body had much influence on the course of events, or took an active part in the resistance to us. When a monk became a noted leader, it was a patriot who had been a monk and not a monk who had become a patriot. At the same time some of the most serious and deepest-laid plots were hatched in monasteries or initiated by Pongyis.

I may give some instances of the conduct and feelings of Pongyis.

In August, 1887, a pretender calling himself the Pakan Prince joined a conspiracy to get up a rebellion in Mandalay.

The police detected the movement and the prince was arrested. The prince told all that he knew. The originator of the scheme was a Sadaw or Abbot living in one of the Thathanabaing's monasteries. He made his escape. I sent for the Thathanabaing and he consented readily at my request to cite the Sadaw to appear before him and to proclaim him as a man with whom Pongyis should not associate. Whether he was sincere or not, I cannot say. But he issued the injunction and I took care it was widely published. Another case shows how the people as well as the Pongyis were coming to regard us. The town of Tabayin in the Ye-u (now Shwèbo) district was burnt by insurgents soon after our occupation of Mandalay. It was rebuilt in 1887 owing to the exertions of certain Pongyis formerly attached to the place. In order to ensure protection for the new town the Pongyis induced the people to build a barrack at their own expense for the police. Similarly, in July, 1887, when I was at Ngathaingyaung in the Bassein district of Lower Burma the people were glad to have a detachment of Bengal Infantry (7th Regiment) in one of the monasteries. They welcomed them. One of the monks had learned Hindustani from the men; and the Abbot, or head Pongyi, told me he would gladly give up his own monastery if it was wanted for the soldiers.

Another matter which occupied my attention in Mandalay at this time was our position towards the Chinese in Upper Burma. They are most numerous in the Northern Division and congregate in Bhamo and Mandalay. They numbered according to the census of 1901 about ten thousand, and may have been less in 1887. Owing to their energy in trade and their wealth they formed a not insignificant body, and like most bodies they had their grievances.

It was arranged to hold a meeting in order to let them state their complaints. All the prominent Chinese in Mandalay attended the meeting, and Mr. Warry was present to interpret for me. They had minor grievances about the collection of the jade duties and the farm of the india-rubber tax in the Mogaung subdivisions. These things were easily arranged. The chief subject of complaint, however, was the difficulty in procuring and trading in opium, a matter not to be easily settled. The regulations issued by the Chief

Commissioner in March, 1886, practically stopped the traffic. The words were these:—

“No shops whatever will be licensed for the sale of opium, inasmuch as all respectable classes of Burmans are against legalizing the consumption of opium in the new province. Any one found selling opium to persons other than Chinese, or transporting opium in quantities above three tolahs, or keeping a saloon for consuming opium, will be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding Rs. 500 or to three months' imprisonment, or to both. As traffic in opium was absolutely prohibited under the Burmese Government, there will be no hardship in thus proscribing opium dealings.”

The Chinese, however, considered it the greatest hardship. The small quantity, little more than one ounce troy weight, which might be lawfully transported, practically stopped dealings in the drug. This provision may not seem to go beyond the regulations of the Burmese Government. But there was all the difference between a rule meant to be enforced and one that could be easily evaded or was not intended to be made effective. No doubt the prohibition by the King of the use of opium by Burmans was real, and was backed by religious precept and influence; but the restrictions on the Chinese were laxly administered and were not too inconvenient to them.

If the Burmese alone had been concerned, opium might have been prohibited altogether, and the prohibition might have been made effectual, for it would have been backed by a very strong religious sanction. But the Chinamen had to be considered. It was contrary to our interests and wishes, especially at that time, in Upper Burma to make things unpleasant for them. They are at all times a useful and enterprising element in the population, although the ingenuity of the least reputable amongst them in exploiting the Burmans and leading them to gamble and to smoke opium requires to be firmly checked.

A second objection to prohibition, and even greater than the hardship and annoyance it would cause to the Chinese, was the great difficulty—almost impossibility, it may be said—of enforcing it.

Opium is perhaps as easy, and in Burma as profitable,

to smuggle as any article in the world. The Chinese are born smugglers. The poppy is largely cultivated in Yunnan and in the hilly country on the Salween. To prevent smuggling of opium overland into Burma would require a very large expenditure and a numerous establishment. The thousand miles of coast would be equally difficult to watch. If the growth of the poppy is prevented in China and India it may perhaps become practicable to stop opium from entering Burma. It was futile at that time and under those circumstances to attempt absolute prohibition.

The Indian Excise and Opium Acts were extended to Upper Burma in the latter half of 1888. The restrictions on the sale to Burmans of opium and intoxicants were maintained—and neither excise licence nor opium-shop was allowed in any place where the non-Burman population was not considerable. Yunnan opium, which had hitherto come in free, was subjected to a duty. The result was a great increase in the price of opium in Upper Burma and at the same time energetic smuggling; while it was believed, that so far as the restrictions against the sale of liquor or opium to Burmans were effectual, their efficacy was due, as in the King's time, more to the strength of the Buddhist religion than to the power of the British Government and the honesty of its magistrates. No further change was introduced while I was in Burma.

An excitement, however, arose in England, and the societies who, belonging to one of the most intemperate races in the world, make it their vocation to preach temperance to the most abstemious and sober of nations, drove the Government of India to experiment on Burma. Since 1893 one device after another has been tried to prevent Burmans from getting opium. The results appear to have been that contraband opium has been driven to some extent from the market; that the consumption of Government opium which has paid duty has doubled; that hundreds of people are punished yearly, not a few on false charges, for offences against the Opium Act, many of them by imprisonment; that the use of cocaine and other drugs worse than opium has been substituted for it, and in spite of the police is growing.

The following passage from a very excellent and accurate handbook of Burma by Sir J. George Scott, K.C.I.E. (Alexander Moring, Ltd., 1906) is worth quoting as the opinion of a man who knows the country well:—

“In Kokang and the Wa States the out-turn (of opium) runs to tons. West of the Salween, Loimaw is the only place where opium is systematically grown for profit. The cultivators are all Chinamen, and the amount produced in the season reaches about four thousand pounds. The price ranges from twelve to fifteen rupees for three and a half pounds. No doubt a very great deal is smuggled into Burma by opium-roads—tracks only passable by coolies, and not known to many. It is to be noted that there are no victims to opium in the opium-producing districts, any more than there are in Ssu-ch’uan, where the people are the wealthiest in China and half the crops are poppy. It is only in places where opium is prohibitive in price that there are victims to opium. If a man is accustomed to take opium, he must have it to soothe his nerves under excessive fatigue; if he lives in a malarious district, it is necessary to kill the bacteria. When such a man is poor and comes to a place where opium duty is high, he has to starve himself to get the anodyne for his muscles, quivering under the weight of loads which no white man could carry, or to soothe the racking fever in his bones. He dies of want and opium is denounced. Where opium is cheap, the people are healthy and stalwart and the women are fruitful. East of the Salween the universal opinion of opium is that of the Turk, who stamps on his opium lozenges *Mash Alla’h*, ‘the gift of God.’ Some of the Wa eat as well as smoke opium; but, so far as is known, regular opium-eating is rare, and none of the races drink it in the form of an emulsion, like the *Kusumba* of the Rajputs. West of the Salween, the European cant about opium has penetrated. A Shan either tells deliberate lies or says he only smokes when he has fever. The Rumai is pious and hypocritical, and says his opium is intended for his ponies or for cases of malarial fever. There are, of course, cases of excess, but the opium victim is never the hideous spectacle of the man sodden with alcohol or the repulsive bestiality

that the man becomes who takes food to excess" (pp. 268-69).

The only laws that will preserve the Burmans from the evils of opium and alcohol and other drugs are the teachings of Buddha. So long as they preserve their vigour and command the Burmans' belief, there is not much fear. The danger is that Buddhism will be undermined by Western education and contact with Europe, before it can be replaced by a better and stronger faith. The number of young Burmans coming to England is increasing. Will they return as abstemious and as temperate as they came? They will not: the danger to the Burman is probably more from alcohol than from opium, and more from contact with the West than with China.\*

This question, however, had no influence whatever on the work we were engaged in. I was able to reassure the Chinese and to make them feel that the Government desired to treat them with fairness and consideration. The Chinese in Burma behaved throughout these stormy years as loyal citizens. There were at first numerous reports of hostile gatherings on or near the Chinese frontier, especially in the north of Hsenwi and at Hpunkan, near Bhamo. They had little foundation in fact. The only case in which it is certain that an armed body of Chinese entered Burma was in January, 1889. A strong body of Chinamen, chiefly deserters from the Chinese army and outlaws, gathered on the Molè stream north-east of Bhamo. They were promptly attacked by the police and so severely handled that they were not heard of again.

Still less influence on the restoration of order had the Ruby Mines affair, which excited the British public and enabled parliamentary busybodies to create an absurd fuss. The whole question of these mines and their administration might well have waited until we had pacified the country. Even as a source of revenue they were of no great moment, and if we had left the native miners alone

\* A summary of the measures taken in Burma is given in the report of "The Committee appointed by the Philippine Commission to investigate the use of opium and the traffic therein," which deals with the evidence in a sane and judicial manner. (See "The Province of Burma," by Alleyne Ireland, F.R.G.S., vol. ii., p. 845 *et seq.*)

we should have saved the heavy expense of maintaining a strong force up in the hills and making a long and costly cart-road from the river. Mogok, the headquarters of the mines, lies nearly six thousand feet above the sea-level, and is distant sixty miles by road from the river port of Thabeikkyin, most of it lying through thick jungle, poisoned with malaria and, in 1887, infested with dacoits.

The mines were then worked by the Shans, who live on the spot and have hereditary rights. A proposal had been made by Sir Charles Bernard, and supported by the Government of India, to give a lease of the mines for three years to Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot, of Calcutta, at an annual rent of two lakhs of rupees, the equivalent then of about £14,000. This firm had been accustomed to trade in rubies with the Shans at Mogok. The proposal was judicious, and would have enabled the Government to learn the value of the mines before committing themselves for a longer term, as the firm's books were to be open to inspection.

This proposal, however, did not meet the views of the gentlemen who had marked down the ruby mines as a field of speculation. A parliamentary intrigue was got up. Questions were asked—jobs were hinted at. The enormous value of the mines—the richest ruby mines in the world—was talked about, until the British public began to see rubies and to suspect, I verily believe, Sir Charles Bernard and all of us, his official heirs and successors, of desiring to make dishonest fortunes. Some of the speculators went to Simla to persuade the Government of India that Gillanders Arbuthnot's offer was inconceivably ridiculous. Then they came on to Rangoon with letters of introduction, not unaccompanied by hints and warnings to be careful, to sniff about the mines and get the ear of the authorities in Burma. The Secretary of State trembled lest he should be suspected of favouring somebody; and if I had destroyed Mandalay or drained the Irrawaddy, I doubt if there would have been more disturbance than was caused by the grant to one of the prospectors of a few yards of worthless land at Mogok on which to erect a hut, and of an ordinary licence to mine.

Eventually an expert was sent out to inspect and value the mines. The gentleman deputed to this duty was no doubt a skilled mineralogist, even if he was without previous

experience in ruby mines. It is possible that his report was worth the cost. It was, I take it, a means of getting out of a parliamentary difficulty. It served the Secretary of State for India as an excuse for delay, and gave the appearance at least of a searching and impartial investigation.

Late in 1889 a concession for seven years was granted to five lucky promoters; and then the course usual in such cases was followed. A company was floated in London under the auspices of a big financier. The success for the concessionaires was unexampled. The public, especially the small investors, in an enthusiasm of greed, tumbled over each other to secure shares. In November, 1889, the company began to work. Its history since has not been one of remarkable prosperity either for the Government or the shareholders. The terms have been revised several times. The receipts of the Government from the company in 1903-4 were Rs. 2,11,500, or £14,000.

The history of this matter is interesting only as an example of the futility of interfering with the Government of India in local matters. To the administration of Burma it meant more writing, more labour, more anxiety, when attention was needed elsewhere. When a man's house is on fire he does not want to spend time in polishing the handle of his door. I was compelled to keep at Mogok better men and a stronger force than the district needed. For some years there was much disturbance in the neighbouring country. But it was unconnected with the mines.

It is a defect in parliamentary government that so many members, avoiding the really important matters, fasten greedily on lesser questions, especially those which promise a scandal. As Parliament chose to look at this matter as one of imperial interest, the mines acquired an importance out of all proportion to their value. I found the ruby mines was a burning question, and I had to go there without delay. I left Mandalay on the 29th of March in a steamer for Kyannyat, which was then the river station for Bernard Myo and Mogok, with Mr. Herbert White and my private secretary. We rode the forty miles from the river to Sagadaung, the halting-place at the foot of the hills, taking as we went an escort of five mounted men (Gurkhas) from the military posts on the road, and stopped there for the



night. From Sagadounng a mule-path (twenty miles) took us to Bernard Myo, where I halted, and next day rode into Mogok.

The regulations and conditions under which it was proposed to allow the mines to be worked were explained to the native mineowners and to the persons present on behalf of the applicants for the concession, and the way was cleared for a settlement.

A matter of more importance, although not one in which Parliament was interested, was the dispute about Möngmit and Mohlaing (explained in Chapter XX.). The Sawbwa of Möngmit and his ministers, as well as the claimant, Hkam Leng, had been summoned to attend me. The latter did not appear. He was one of the few irreconcilables Upper Burma produced. The investigation of the case satisfied me that he had no title to Möngmit, and I ordered him to be informed that his claim to that State was inadmissible, but that he would be recognised as chief of Mohlaing if he appeared and submitted.

After a few days at Mogok I returned to the river, marching down by the Thabeikkyin road. We were obliged to go slowly, as it was thought necessary to take an escort of twenty-five Gurkhas. One Paw Kwe, the headman of a village on the road, the influential brigand in these parts and one of the most evil-looking rascals I ever met, accompanied the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Carter,\* and was in a measure responsible that no mischief should befall us. In the hope of keeping him quiet I gave him a subsidy for carrying the mails. But he preferred unemployment and took again to the jungle after a time, and, I believe, became an irreconcilable.

The leisurely march down gave time to take up some matters of importance that were waiting for me.

In the forefront of pressing questions was the provision of a sufficient fleet of steam-launches. The delta of the

\* Mr. G. M. S. Carter had served in the Police Department in British Burma for eleven years and had made a reputation for ability and knowledge of the people. In June, 1886, he was appointed to be an Assistant Commissioner and posted to Upper Burma. Mr. Carter was one of the best executive officers in the Commission, and his death in 1890 was a severe loss to the Government and a sorrow to all of us, his comrades and friends.

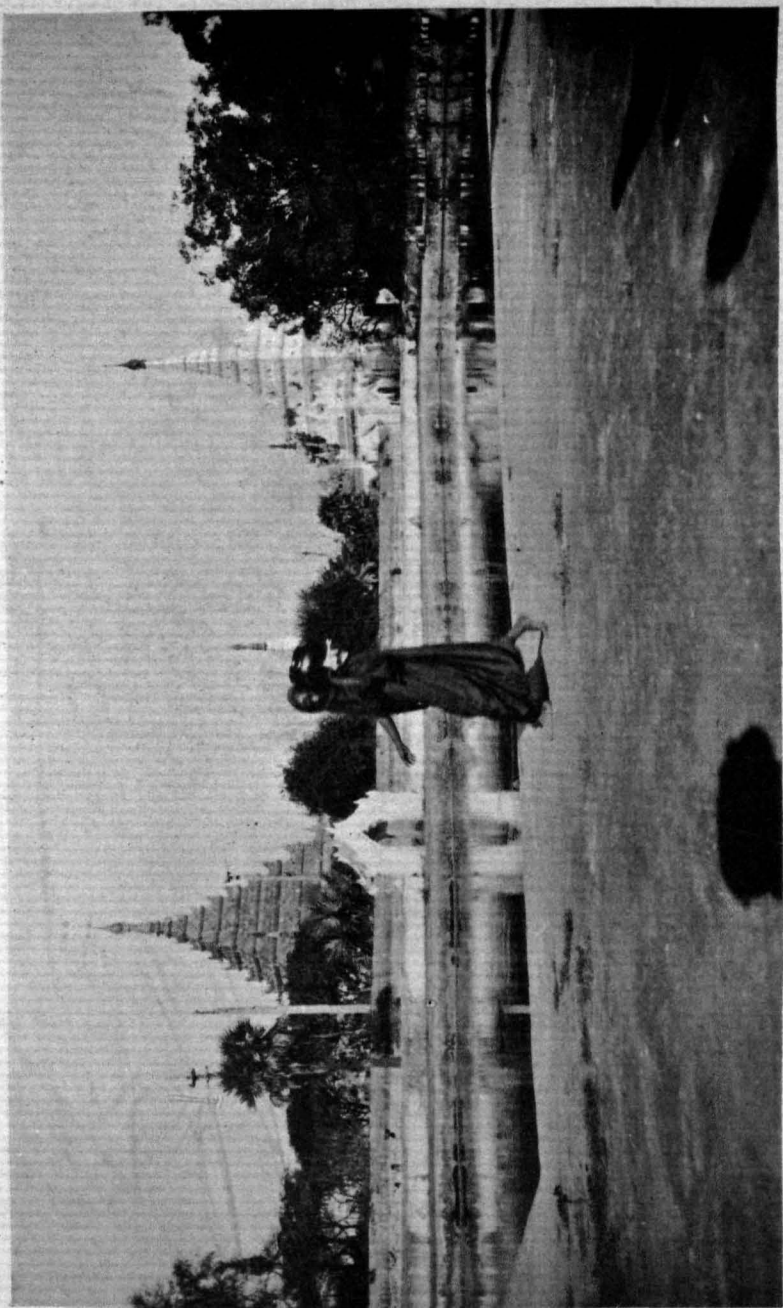
Irrawaddy, where the population is most dense and most wealthy, is a country of rivers and creeks, where most of the transport is by boats. In the rice-harvest season the waterways are much used by the Burman craft carrying rice to the mills at Rangoon or Bassein, or making their way homeward with the money for which it has been sold.

The waterways needed to be patrolled. The disorders following the annexation extended to the creeks and rivers, and river pirates had become more daring and the necessity of a well-formed service of river police more urgent. Lower Burma was not well provided in this matter; and being unable to obtain funds, the administration was driven to apply local funds intended for roads to the purchase of launches.

In the Upper Province the want of suitable boats was even greater. There were some six hundred miles of waterway to be served. The rivers were the main lines of communication, and on the banks were placed in most cases the headquarters of districts, the military stations and outposts, and most of the larger villages and busier markets. At first, until I had time to revise administrative boundaries, several districts included land on both banks. Insurgents and dacoits had no difficulty in obtaining boats for the purposes of attacking river craft or waterside villages, or of escaping from pursuit. Once or twice we were compelled to put an embargo on the boats to hinder the enemy from getting across, but it was impossible to interfere thus with the river life of the province, except under great necessity and for a very short time.

To meet the demands of the soldiers, the police, and the district officers, and, before the telegraph service was complete, to keep up communication between stations and outposts, many boats were required. It was also necessary to have the means of moving small bodies of troops up and down or across the river without delay as the need might arise.

I had little difficulty in showing the need for a better fleet. But the Government of India were startled at my demands. The Director of Indian Marine, Captain John Hext, R.N. (now Rear-Admiral Sir John Hext, K.C.I.E.),



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was sent down to persuade me to reduce the size and cost of my navy. He was successful, and might perhaps succeed in persuading the Emperor of Germany to limit his naval armaments. He had designed an excellent type of river boat, a very light-draught paddle-wheeler, with simple machinery and fair speed, with accommodation for half a company of rifles and a couple of officers. They were built under his instructions in the Government dockyard at Kidderpore. Being his own creation, he named them the X type. In Burma they were called after every type of robber known to the country. It was agreed that I was to have nine of these boats and four smaller craft. I had asked for twenty-three boats, and looking back, I am surprised at my moderation. At the present time, after twenty years of peace and freedom from organized crime, I believe the Burma Government has a fleet four times as large as that with which I had to be content. But then I was, as it were, a pioneer.

I was back in Mandalay on the 10th of April. There were some gleams of light between the clouds. Baw or Maw, a small Shan State on the Kyauksè border, had been brought to reason by General East without fighting: the Kalè Sawbwa on the Chindwin had completed the payment of his tribute: Hla U, the most noted leader in the Sagaing district, had been killed by his own men, who were sick of the life.

On the other side of the account, Sinbyugyun, a post north of Salin in the Minbu district, held by a military garrison of fifty men, had been attacked twice and partially burnt. The news from the Northern Shan States was somewhat disquieting. A desultory warfare was going on in Hsenwi between the hereditary chief of the State, who had allied himself with the pretender, Saw Yan Naing, and San Ton Hon, the usurper in possession of Northern Hsenwi, supported by the Sawbwa of Hsipaw. It was reported that San Ton Hon was being driven back, and it was feared that the Hsipaw chief, who was our only assured friend in the Shan States, might suffer a repulse. It seemed at one time that it might become necessary to send an officer to Hsipaw with a small force. I was unwilling to take this step. I wished to leave the Northern Shan States alone until the

next open season, and then to deal with the settlement of the States as a whole. The rains, moreover, were now near at hand, and Sir George White disliked moving troops into the hills if it could be avoided. I held a party of military police ready, and had obtained the Viceroy's consent to act, if it should be necessary. Meanwhile arms and ammunition were sent up to Hsipaw, and the Sawbwa, who was not more incapable or half-hearted than his opponents, contrived to hold his own until the next open season.

The military police were arriving now, and were being distributed and sent to their various destinations.

I could do little more by remaining in Mandalay. The most urgent matters in connection with the police were the definition of their duties and of their relations with the civil officers, their housing, rationing, and medical treatment. Until, as I stated before, these matters had been discussed and settled with the new Inspector-General of Police, little progress could be made in relieving the soldiers from occupying the small posts.

General Stedman was expected to arrive in Rangoon about the middle of May, and it was convenient that he should meet me there.

Another matter which called me to Rangoon was the condition of Lower Burma. Shortly before I took charge the Government of India had called the Chief Commissioner's attention to the state of the province, "the constant occurrence of petty dacoities (gang robberies), the apparent want of concerted and energetic action in dealing with them which," they wrote, "have attracted the serious notice of the Governor-General in Council. His Excellency trusts that the subject may receive your immediate and active intervention."

The condition of the province was bad from a police point of view. The people had enjoyed excellent harvests and good prices. Yet there was a constant recurrence of crime, and the police quite failed to cope with it. The excitement of the last year or two had been too much for the younger Burmans. They could not settle down again, and the spirit of loot and adventure rather than any real patriotism led to numerous gang robberies, and sometimes to foolish

outbreaks, of which men from Upper Burma were sometimes the instigators.

Even within a short distance of Rangoon an Upper Burman, related, it was said, to the Minbu leader, Ôktama, raised the Golden Umbrella and called for followers. Some hundreds obeyed the call, but at the first sight of the police they began to disperse. A party of Karens, led by a British police officer, came up with some of them, killed and wounded several, captured others, and made an end of the rising.

The Karens in Lower Burma were loyal and generally staunch, especially the Christian Karens. The American Baptist missionaries have done an inestimable service to the Karen race. They understand thoroughly how to educate—in the true sense of the word—a tribe that has been despised and trodden down for some generations. The missionary has made himself not only the pastor but also the chief of his people, and in those troubled times he organized them under their catechists, taught them discipline and obedience, and made them useful and orderly members of society, industrious, self-respecting, and independent. The Government of Burma owes a debt to the American Baptist Mission which should not be forgotten.

On receipt of this letter from the Government of India, reports from Commissioners and from the head of the police had been called for. Their answers were now before me. The Inspector-General of Police in Lower Burma was the late Mr. Jameson, an officer of ability and long experience. He frankly admitted that the police administration had failed in suppressing organized brigandage. "So far," he wrote, "from the crime of dacoity having been eradicated by British administration, each year more dacoities are committed than in the one preceding." He attributed this failure to defects in the judicial courts, especially the Court of Revision and Appeal, which resulted in making punishment very uncertain and sentences capricious; to the absence of any law establishing a village organization and responsibility; and to the number of arms in the hands of the peasantry, who received them for their self-defence against dacoits, but gave them or lost them to the robbers. The result was, Mr. Jameson asserted, that

after thirty-five years of British rule the country "was in a more disturbed state than after the second war."

There is no doubt that the judicial administration in Lower Burma was defective. The Judicial Commissioner who presided over the Chief Appellate and Revising Court for the interior of the province was selected by the Government of India from the members of the Indian Civil Service of one of the Indian provinces, and seldom stayed long in Burma. It is no libel on the distinguished men who have held this position to say that as a rule they had no knowledge of the language or customs of the people or of the conditions of Burma. They came from some quiet province of India, and were unable at first to appreciate those conditions. One of them might think the sentences awarded by the magistrates too severe; his successor might pronounce them to be too lenient.

There was a tendency to forget that an act—for example, shooting a thief or burglar at sight—which in a quiet and settled country may be a crime, may be excusable in a state of society where plunder and murder by armed robbers are everyday occurrences.

Much mischief may be and was done by well-intentioned but inept judicial action; neither the police nor the people knew how far they might go in defending themselves or in effecting the capture of criminals, and circulars were issued explaining the law which would have puzzled the Chief Justice. A Burman peasant before he fired his gun had to consider whether all the conditions justified him; and a frontier guard had to pause with his finger on the trigger while he recalled the words of the last circular on the use of firearms. The result was that the police and the people were nervous and demoralized. It was better to let the dacoit pass or to run away than to run the risk of a trial for murder.

This may seem exaggeration. On one occasion when the prisoners in a central gaol mutinied, the armed guard stood idle, until at last, when the convicts were breaking out, one of the guards took his courage in both hands and fired. The riot was checked. I wished to reward the man, but the superintendent of the gaol reported that he could not discover who had fired the shot. The warders said

they did not doubt the Chief Commissioner's power to reward them, but they knew the Judicial Commissioner would hang the man who fired the gun.

The freedom with which licences to possess firearms had been granted in Lower Burma was no doubt responsible for the facility with which the bad characters could arm themselves. Every day's experience proved that to arm the villagers was to arm the dacoits. Burmans are incredibly careless. Even the Burman constables, who were to some extent trained and disciplined, constantly allowed their guns to be taken. A half hearted measure had been in force in Lower Burma, which required that a village must have at least five guns, as it was thought that with that number they could defend themselves. Like most half-measures, it was of no use.

The absence of a village organization and of the means of enforcing village responsibility was no doubt a very great obstacle in the way of the police, even if the police had been good. But when everything had been said it came to this, that the police were bad and police administration in a hopeless muddle.

The Burmans have, from the first day that British officers have tried to discipline them, shown a great want of responsibility and incurable slackness and little sense of duty. They cannot be trusted to keep watch and ward, to guard or escort prisoners or treasure, or even to remain on duty if they are posted as sentries. The discipline of Frederick the Great might have improved them. But he would have shot most of his men before he had made trustworthy soldiers of the few that remained.

Hence it came to pass that Indians were enlisted to perform the duties which the Burmans seemed unable to fulfil. A few Indians were posted to every station for these purposes, and the Burmans were employed mainly on detection and investigation and reporting. This system led to still further deterioration of the Burman constable, who ceased to rely on his own courage or resources.

The Indians, again, were recruited locally. The police officers who recruited them had no experience of the Indian races and did not know one caste from another. The most unfit men were taken. They were not much looked after,



and their officers did not know the Indian languages or understand their customs.

When the risings took place in Shwègyin and elsewhere after the annexation, the Burma police showed themselves to be absolutely untrustworthy. More Indians were enrolled and the mischief increased. The Burman knew he had behaved badly and was not trusted, and became more untrustworthy, while the Indians were not under proper discipline, scattered about as they were in small parties, and were in any case quite useless for detective or ordinary police purposes. The only exception to this condemnation of the indigenous police that could be made was, I think, the armed frontier guard in the Thayetmyo district, who were stationed and housed with their families on the frontier of British Burma.

It was clear that the working of the police force in Lower Burma required thorough investigation, and that its constitution would have to be recast. As necessary subsidiary measures, the country would have to be thoroughly disarmed, and above all a village organization must be created and the joint responsibility of the village for certain crimes enforced.

A committee was appointed to consider the best method of reforming the civil police force of Lower Burma. I took in hand the question of thoroughly disarming the whole province, and a bill dealing with Lower Burma villages on the lines of the Upper Burma village regulation was framed.

These matters would take some time. The Indian police, however, could be improved at once. It was decided to remove all Indians from the civil police, and to enroll them in a regiment under a military commandant, similar to one of the Upper Burma military police battalions in formation and discipline. Their headquarters were to be at Rangoon, and the men needed for other districts were to be sent from Rangoon and treated as detachments of the regiment. They were to be enrolled for three years under a Military Police Act, which was passed in 1887. Pending the report of the Committee and the measures that might be taken on their advice, it was necessary to act at once in the most disordered parts of the province. Especially in portions of the Shwègyin district in Tharawaddy, and in the northern

townships of Thayetmyo the dacoit gangs were strong and active. The ordinary district staff seemed helpless and unable to make head against the brigands, to whose exactions the peasants had become accustomed. They found it easier to make terms with the criminals than to help a government that was unable to protect them.

I adopted the plan of selecting a young officer known for his activity and character, and placing him in charge of the disturbed tract, giving him a sufficient police force and magisterial powers, and making him independent of the Deputy Commissioner of the district, who continued to conduct the ordinary administration. This special officer had no other duty than to hunt down and punish the gangs of outlaws. He was to be always out and always on their tracks, using every means in his power to make friends with the villagers and induce them to give him information and help against the common enemy.

This policy succeeded, and the disturbed districts were brought into line. The late Mr. Henry Todd Naylor,\* of the Indian Civil Service, distinguished himself especially in this work, and won a well-merited decoration from the Viceroy.

I had made up my mind to dispense with the services of the Special Commissioner for Lower Burma as soon as possible. The appointment was undoubtedly necessary at first, when communications were bad, but, as the province settled down the need was less and the saving of labour to me very little. The responsibility remained with me. I was bound to know everything that went on, and in such matters as the condition of the province the Government of India expected me to intervene personally.

The work and exposure since the annexation were beginning to tell on the members of the Commission, especially on those who had sustained the heaviest burdens of responsibility and had been most exposed to the climate, and I was hard pressed for men to fill the places of those who wanted leave.† An accident happening to the Commissioner of

\* Mr. Todd Taylor, C.S.I., C.I.E., died last year, after acting as Financial Commissioner of Burma.

† Amongst others, Mr. Burgess, Mr. Fryer, Mr. Symes, and Mr. Carter were asking for leave. Of these only Mr. Fryer (Sir Frederic Fryer, K.C.S.I.) is alive. The others are dead many years.