

Tennasserim, I decided to send Mr. Hodgkinson there and to take the Lower Burma work into my own hands.

An increase to the Secretariat had been sanctioned in April, 1887. This enabled me to save a man by appointing Mr. Smeaton (the late Donald Mackenzie Smeaton,* C.S.I., M.P.), to the newly created post of Chief Secretary. He had served for some years in Burma, with distinction, under Sir Charles Aitchison and Sir Charles Bernard.

In a short time the Secretariats were united in Rangoon and the work distributed into the ordinary departments of Indian administration without reference to territorial division.

On the arrival of General Stedman in the middle of May (1887), the Upper Burma military police questions were brought under discussion. The men, as I have said before, were coming in fast. The sanctioned strength at this time was fifteen thousand five hundred men. It was necessary to determine the constitution of the force, its relation to the Deputy Commissioners of districts, and the methods by which it was to be rationed and kept supplied with necessaries.

These matters had been thought out before General Stedman's arrival. They were now discussed with him in detail, and the general lines to be followed were laid down. Briefly, the following constitution was adopted:—✓

The keynote of Indian administration was, and I believe still is, that the District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner, or by whatever name he may be called, is the executive representative of the Government, and is responsible for all matters in his district subject to the control of the Commissioner of the division. He is especially responsible for the peace of his district, and therefore the allocation of the police force rests primarily with him. It was laid down for the guidance of Deputy Commissioners that the most important and central posts should be occupied by fairly strong bodies of military police, to which should be attached a few Burman constables, some of whom were to be mounted, who were to collect information, receive reports, and investigate cases. Between the military police posts, and helping to link them up, were to be civil police stations manned by Burmans exclusively, who were to be locally

* Mr. Smeaton was at this time serving in the North-Western (now United) Provinces of India.

recruited. A constant and systematic patrol was to be maintained between the military police posts. The posts were to be fortified and capable of defence by the garrison remaining after the despatch of a patrol. It was laid down as a fixed law that the reserve at headquarters must be sufficient to provide a reasonably strong movable column ready to reinforce any part of the district that might need it.

The police force was divided into battalions, one to each district, of a strength varying with the size and wants of the district. To each battalion was appointed a commandant, to all except a few very small battalions a second-in-command, and to some more than one. These officers were all selected from the Indian Army, and, with very rare exceptions, were capable men. The interior economy, the training, and the discipline of the men were left to the commandants under the Inspector-General's orders. With these matters the civil officials could not in any way interfere.

It was found necessary from the first to restrain firmly the tendency of the local officials to fritter away the strength of the force in small posts. The moment anything occurred they wanted to clap down a post on the disturbed spot; and if this had been allowed to go on unchecked there would not have been a man left to form a movable column or even to send out a patrol of sufficient strength.

The number of men to be kept at headquarters, the minimum strength of a post, and the minimum number of a patrol had to be absolutely laid down by the Chief Commissioner's order. At first the strength prescribed was too small. After some experience, the lowest post garrison was fixed at forty rifles, the minimum strength of a patrol at ten rifles; and these orders were stringently enforced.

It was resolved to mount a certain number of the force, and as soon as the ponies could be obtained—which was not an easy matter, as the mounted infantry and the army transport took up very many—about 10 per cent. of the men were mounted.

Many of the military police who arrived in Burma in 1887 were newly raised and insufficiently trained levies, and until the men had been drilled and taught to use their weapons

it was impossible to do much towards relieving the soldiers from the outposts. The rainy season was occupied in the work of instruction. The task was performed under very difficult conditions, for the men were often called away to occupy posts and take part in active operations, and the officers were few. The duty was well done, and by the end of the autumn of 1887 we were in possession of an army, which proved itself to be a most serviceable instrument for reducing the country to order. The men, whether in the field or in their lines, behaved exceedingly well.

Hardly less important than the constitution of the force was its maintenance in a state of contentment and efficiency. At the beginning of 1887 the number of military police landed in Burma was between five and six thousand, and as the year advanced the force was fast increasing. As the men arrived they were rapidly distributed to the districts of Upper Burma, and when trained were destined to relieve the troops in distant outposts.

It was necessary to make immediate arrangements for their rations and for renewing their clothing, equipment, and ammunition; and also for the medical treatment of the men. The principal medical officer of the field force kindly undertook to organize the medical service, and Captain Davis was engaged in working out the details.

Captain S. C. F. Peile, who, in 1885, had accompanied the Bengal Brigade of the field force as executive commissariat officer, had been selected to organize the supply business of the police force. He was ready to commence work early in April. The rains in Burma begin in May. Large numbers of the police were stationed in the Eastern Division, where cart traffic would soon become impossible, and also in the Ruby Mines and other districts, which would soon be cut off altogether.

I had found at several places that the military police at outposts were not properly rationed and depended on the military commissariat, which might at any time be moved away.

The question arose as to the best method of supplying our men. One of the conditions under which they had taken service was that they should, as in the army, get money compensation for dearness of provisions at a rate varying with

the price of flour. The men of the Indian army, when not on active service, ration themselves, and are paid on this principle. But this system presupposes that the necessary provisions are procurable in the local markets.

The Burman markets afford everything that a Burman needs—Burman caviare, a dainty that one has to be brought up to; tinned milk, biscuits, sardines, and other delicacies; but wheat flour, *ghi* (clarified butter), and various pulses are not to be had. It is on such things that the fighting man from Northern India lives.

After discussing the question carefully with Captain Peile, it was determined, with the consent of the men, to give no compensation and to serve out rations to all at a fixed monthly charge. The Central Direction undertook to deliver sufficient supplies at the headquarters of each battalion. The distribution to the outposts was to be managed by the battalion officers with the battalion transport.

I was able to say at the end of the year that the Supply Department had worked well, and that without its aid the organization of the military police could not have been effected. The system has stood the trial of more than twenty years, and it is doubtful whether any cheaper or better system could have been devised for the supply of a large force in similar circumstances.

The same establishment under Captain Peile provided for the supply and renewal of clothing, arms, and ammunition.

These matters and the work connected with the many parts of the administrative machine of the province gave me ample occupation in Rangoon for some weeks.

CHAPTER V

DEALING WITH DACOITS

IT was about this time (May, 1887) that the news of the surrender of the Limbin prince to Mr. Hildebrand, and the submission of the influential Sawbwa of Mongnai came to remove some of our anxieties. Lord Dufferin telegraphed his congratulations to me. "These circumstances," he said, "greatly clear the air." They proved in effect that we need not apprehend any very serious opposition in the Shan States, and that there was no risk in holding that country with a small force during the rains, on which point there were apprehensions in some quarters.

Good news came also from Upper Burma. A noted gang, led by men of more force than the ordinary leaders of dacoits possessed, had surrendered to Major Ilderton, who commanded a post at Wundwin, in the Meiktila district. The gang was known by the name of the place, Hmaw-waing, where it made its retreat, and it had sustained several severe attacks before the leaders gave in, of whom two had been village headmen and the third had been a Government servant under the King. The three had long worked together, and before the annexation they had dominated the northern part of Meiktila. They were pardoned, and provision made for their support. Two of them absconded. They soon found, however, that their influence was gone. The country was weary of them. One (Maung Kala) died of fever, a second (Myat Hmon) gave himself up again. The third (Maung Ohn), the most educated and best bred of them, had remained quiet.

It was now necessary for me to return to Upper Burma, but I had not yet met Mr. Tucker, the Commissioner of the Eastern Division. As the rains were beginning, and the extension of the railway beyond Toungoo had not been opened, I asked Mr. Tucker to meet me at Toungoo. I could

not spare time to march up to his headquarters. The chief engineer of the Mandalay Railway, Mr. Buyers, was pushing on the line as fast as he could. He had many difficulties to contend with. The Burmans, although coming readily to the work, were new to it. The working parties had to be protected; the heavy forest in some divisions of the line had to be cleared. I had seen Mr. Buyers and satisfied myself that work was going on well.

I met Mr. Tucker, and received from him a fairly satisfactory account of his division. Meiktila and Yamèthin were almost quiet. Pyinmana was a difficult tract to reduce to order. It is described in the *Burma Gazetteer* as "one large forest with the exception of the immediate surroundings of Pyinmana town and small patches of cultivation near the villages and streams." The station had been for some months almost besieged by dacoits, who took cover close to our lines. So much so that the postmaster, who came from a peaceful district, put up a notice closing the post-office as "urgent private affairs" compelled him to leave. It needed a good deal of peaceful persuasion to induce him to remain at his work.

In April, May, and June the troops of Sir William Lockhart's command, aided to some extent by the police, were very active. The forests and all the hiding-places were thoroughly explored and for the time at least cleared of dacoits. Meanwhile the civil officers, under the energetic direction of Mr. H. St. G. Tucker, vigorously disarmed the district, making full use of the men of local influence. By the middle of June, when Mr. Tucker met me, only small bands were left, who were forced to conceal themselves, and there was little trouble afterwards in this district. But the difficult country of the Pegu Yoma between Pyinmana and the Magwè district of the Southern Division continued to harbour dacoits until 1890.

I returned to Rangoon from Toungoo and left for Upper Burma on the 10th of June. Going by the river, I stopped at all the towns on the way up, seeing the officers, inspecting every part of the administration, and discussing affairs.

In Lower Burma the towns and villages showed their wonted comfort and prosperity, the boats were as numerous as ever, and the rice and other produce was waiting in

abundance at the landing-places for the steamers. The disturbances had had little effect on trade.

The country inland to the west of the river was still harassed by predatory gangs in the wilder parts, and the police did not appear able to suppress them.

There was no need, however, for the aid of the soldiers. I was able to reduce the number of outposts occupied by troops, and I would have reduced them still more, but that the General Commanding in Lower Burma was unable to provide barrack-room for the men occupying them. It was clearly time to take up the question of reducing the garrison of Lower Burma.

It was not a good thing to accustom the civil officers, the police, or the people to depend on detachments of troops scattered over the country, and it certainly was not good for the discipline and efficiency of the men. The conduct of the soldiers, however, was excellent, and the people welcomed them. I found a general unwillingness to lose the sense of security which their presence gave; and possibly also the profits of dealings with them. The Indian soldiers and the Burmans were on excellent terms. Even where the men were quartered in the monasteries the Pongyis did not want them to leave.*

At Thayetmyo the region of dacoit-gangs and disturbances was reached. The main trouble appeared to be in what may be termed Bo Swè's country, which lay on the right bank of the river, reaching from the old British Burma boundary to a line going westward with a slight southerly curve from Minhla to the Arakan mountains. Part of the trouble I thought arose from the fact that the jurisdiction of the Lower Burma command had been extended so as to cover this country, while the civil jurisdiction belonged to the Minbu district of Upper Burma. This impeded free communication between the civil and military authorities. I transferred the tract to Thayetmyo, made it a subdivision of that district, and put a young and

* The same is true of the British soldier, of whom in war or peace his countrymen cannot be proud enough. When, after the barracks were built at Mandalay, a regiment (the Royal Munster Fusiliers) was ordered to leave a great group of monasteries, the abbots and chief Pongyis came to me with a petition to let the soldiers remain where they were.

energetic officer in charge. The tract across the river was similarly treated.

I was now in Upper Burma again. Minbu on both sides of the river (it extended to both banks at this time) was very disturbed. Ôktama's power was not broken. Villages were attacked and burnt, and friendly headmen were murdered.

Pagan, the next district, was not much better; and divided as it was by the river, and containing the troublesome Yaw tract, the civil authorities were somewhat handicapped. From Pagan I crossed over to Pakokku, even then a fine trading town and the centre, as it still is, of the boat-building industry. The town in 1887 had a population of about 5,000, which had increased in 1901 to 19,000. It was well laid out with handsome avenues of tamarind-trees. Standing on good sandy soil and well drained, it was a fine site for the headquarters of a district.

The town and its neighbourhood had been skilfully governed by a lady, the widow of the old Governor, who had died thirty years before. Her son, a very fat and apparently stupid youth, was titular town-mayor (*Myo-thugyi*); but because he was suspected of playing false, through fear of the insurgents, he had been superseded, and a stranger from Lower Burma appointed as magistrate.

The wisdom of importing men from Lower Burma was always, to my mind, doubtful, and in this case was peculiarly open to objection, as it was a slight to the widow, who was undoubtedly an able woman, and had joined the British cause from the first.

It was said that in 1885 she was ordered by the King's Government to block the channel by sinking boats, of which there were always plenty at Pakokku; she let all the Upper Burma craft go—for a consideration, of course—and sunk some boats which belonged to British Burma. She was alleged to have made a thousand pounds by this transaction, which is very characteristic of the East.

I called on this old lady and had some conversation with her, and I would gladly have seen more of her, as she appeared to be a woman of some power. It was arranged to remove the Lower Burman magistrate and to send an English Assistant Commissioner, who would work through the hereditary Governor and his mother.

At Myingyan, the next station, I found the best of my officers was Captain Hastings,* the commandant of the military police, who was fast making his men into a very fine battalion, with which before long he did excellent service. I waited at Myingyan to see General Sir Robert Low, who had been at Mandalay. He was satisfied about the progress in his district, except in the country about Salin, Ôktama's country, and in Taundwingyi, which he said was full of dacoits, and would probably be their last abiding-place.

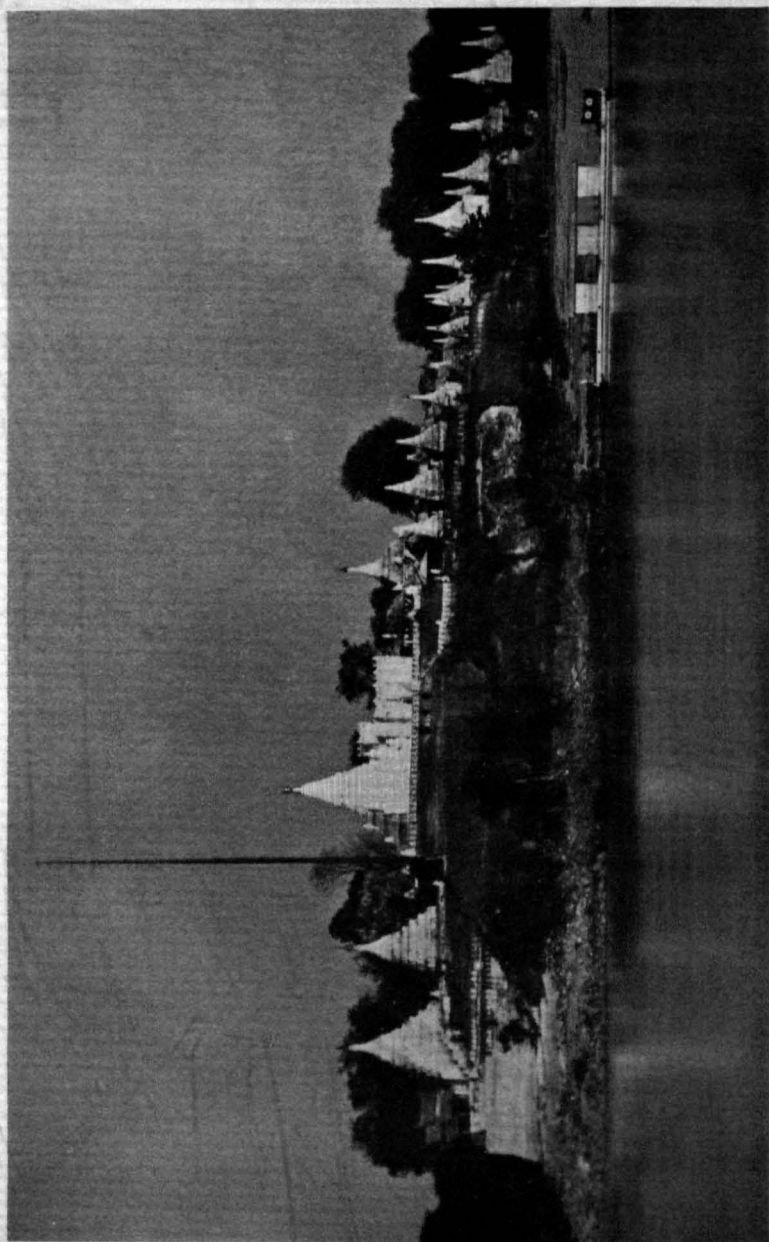
It was a true prophecy, as I learnt to my sorrow. Partly owing to the very difficult country on its east border, and partly, perhaps even more, to the incompetence and weakness of the local officers, this district became my shame and despair. But at this time I had not been over the Taundwingyi country.

My next halt was at Myinmu, the headquarters of a subdivision of the Sagaing district, on the right bank, about thirty miles below Sagaing. Mr. Macnabb, a young soldier who had lately joined the Commission, was there as sub-divisional officer. His report was not very satisfactory. Myinmu, for some reason or other, was especially obnoxious to the insurgents and was repeatedly attacked. Even quite recently there has been some trouble at Myinmu, although it is now a station on the railway which goes from Sagaing to the Chindwin.

Ava, which is a little further up on the opposite side of the river, was at that time a separate district. But except that it was the old capital of Burma, and was a favourite ground for dacoits, there was no reason for keeping a Deputy Commissioner there, and little ordinary work for him. It was soon to be added to the Sagaing district, to which it still belongs. There were no troops at this time at Ava; the Indian military police were good.

I found the experiment of training Burmans as military police still going on in Ava. It will be remembered that the first idea was to recruit half the force from the Burmans and other local races. The commandant called my attention to the gross waste of money that was involved in this

* Now Major-General Edward Spence Hastings, C.B., D.S.O., Commanding the Mandalay Brigade. The Myingyan Battalion was in 1892 formed into the 4th Burma Battalion under its old commandant.



SHWETAKVAT PROMONTORY OPPOSITE SAGAING.

experiment. The Burman officers were hopelessly unfit. One had been imported from Lower Burma; the other was a half-caste, a poor specimen of his kind in every way. They were disbanded as soon as possible.

The dacoits hung about the country under the Ava Deputy Commissioner for a long time. His jurisdiction did not extend over more than three hundred and fifty square miles, but it was harried by three noted guerilla leaders—Shwe Yan, who occupied the country on the borders of the Kyaukse and Ava districts; Bo Tok, who frequented the borders of Ava and Myingyan; and the third, Shwe Yan the second, who ravaged the south-west part of the district. The two last were killed by British troops. The first and the most formidable of the three was reported to have disappeared.

It may be mentioned here, as illustrating the persistence of the insurgents and the apparently endless nature of the task, which demanded all our patience and perseverance, that in the spring of 1888 Ava was as bad as ever. There were nineteen well-known leaders—"named varieties," as a gardener might call them—who, in the words of the official report, "held the countryside in terror." Early in May, Shwe Yan, whose disappearance had been reported, was again on foot with a strong body of followers. A force of troops and police which encountered him lost two British officers.

From Ava I went over to Sagaing and inspected the station and the police, and crossed to Mandalay the same day. Sir George White met me on landing, and I rode up with him to my quarters on the wall.

This journey had occupied me eighteen days. I left Rangoon on the 10th of June, and reached Mandalay on the 28th. But the time had been well spent in gaining information and in making or renewing acquaintance with the district officers. I had inspected all stations on the way, and had been able to dispose of many questions on the spot. When I was not on shore, the office work and correspondence kept me busy. My secretary and I had to write on the skylight of the boat, as there was no accommodation of any kind except a few dressing-rooms below, which in that climate and at that season were suffocating.

CHAPTER VI

CIVIL AND MILITARY WORKS

NOTHING has been said as yet about roads and communications, the most powerful of all aids in pacifying a disturbed country. The plains of India in most provinces lend themselves to military operations, and for the greater part of the year an army can move about at will. In Burma the long and heavy rains, the numerous streams, and the extensive and dense forests and jungles, make campaigning very difficult. The country, in Sir George White's words, quoted before, "is one huge military obstacle."

Sir Charles Bernard had not lost sight of this part of his work. With the aid of Mr. Richard, of the Public Works Department, a most able superintending engineer, as much as possible had been done. No time had been lost.

In Mandalay itself, in 1886, fifteen miles of road had been re-formed, the bridges renewed and metal consolidated, and in the country generally more than two hundred miles of roads had been taken in hand and partially finished. Tracks one hundred feet in width had been cleared of forest and jungle between many of the military posts, a work in which the military officers took a large part. As our occupation of the country became closer, more roads and more tracks were called for. These forest tracks can hardly be called engineering works, but they were of first importance for the free movement of troops. The time during which road-making can be carried on is short in Burma, owing to the great rainfall. The dry zone in the centre of the province, where the climate is no impediment, is precisely the country where roads are least necessary.

Eastern Governments as a rule trouble themselves very little about roads and public buildings of a useful kind. In Burma there were pagodas and monasteries innumerable. But roads and prosaic buildings, such as court-houses and jails, received little attention. Such a thing as a trunk road did not exist.

Controlling the engineering establishment in Lower Burma there was a chief engineer, who was also Public Works secretary. His hands were full. To ask him to supervise the work in the new province as well was to lay on him an impossible task and to ensure the waste of much money. A chief engineer for Upper Burma was appointed at my request, and Major Gracey, R.E., who was selected for the post, had arrived in Burma. I have met with few men who had more power of work and of getting their subordinates to work, or who took greater care of the public money, than Major Gracey.

On his arrival, in consultation with Colonel Cumming, the expenditure was examined and the whole situation discussed in Rangoon, and afterwards both officers met me in Mandalay. There was much difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of engineers and a competent engineering establishment. The Indian Public Works service in the higher grades is recruited in England, and the subordinates are appointed in India. Service in Burma was for many reasons unpopular with men trained in India. The other provinces were not anxious to part with their best men. Hence the men who came to Burma were frequently unwilling and sometimes not very efficient.

The difficulty was to apportion the existing establishment as fairly as possible between the two provinces, so as to give Major Gracey a fair number of men with Burman experience.

With Major Gracey's help everything went on well, and as fast as possible. A list of the work done in 1887 would fill a page. The grant for military works in that year was £317,500. Permanent barracks at Mandalay and Bhamo, and a great number of temporary buildings to accommodate troops, were erected all over Burma in the first year of Major Gracey's tenure. Many of the temporary

buildings were put up by military and civil officers; but after a time, all military buildings were carried out by the Public Works Department.

The Civil Works grant was nearly £350,000.

The provinces had no court-houses, no jails, no places of detention at the police stations, and no barracks or accommodation for the military police. Two larger jails, one at Mandalay for eight hundred prisoners and one at Myingyan for one thousand, although not yet completed, were already occupied. Of three smaller prisons at Monywa, Pagan, and Minbu, one was finished and two partially, but enough to be of use. At ten stations small lock-ups were being built for persons arrested by the police. The jails and lock-ups were pressed on, because the existing arrangements for confining prisoners inherited from the Burmese Government were insufferable, and in some cases inhuman.

Provision had to be made for housing some thousands of military police. At the headquarters of eighteen districts accommodation had to be provided for about half a battalion, with hospitals, guard-rooms, magazines, and cook-houses. These buildings, especially the hospitals with accommodation for 8 per cent. of the strength, were constructed of good permanent material. The barracks, officers' quarters, stables, and the like were built in the cheapest way consistent with comfort and health. The condition of the country in a year or two would permit, it was expected, of a reduction of the military police force, or at least of a change in its disposition; the barrack accommodation would not be permanently wanted, but the hospitals could be used for the civil population.

Added to all this building work, roads to the extent of five hundred miles, of which one hundred and fifty were hill roads, were laid out and made passable, raised and bridged in most cases, and in some places metalled. These works were scattered over the province from Bhamo to the old frontier of British Burma. In designing the roads it was remembered that the great trunk lines of communication were the great rivers in the centre and west of the province, and the railway in the east. All the main roads were designed to be feeders to the rivers or the rails. In addition

to the larger roads, many hundreds of miles of tracks and rough district roads were cut through the forest and jungles, and a survey was begun, to open up the difficult Yaw country, through which we had afterwards to push troops. (*vide* Chapter XXI.). I think it may be claimed that our engineers did their duty.

The middle of Upper Burma, the dry zone, as it is called, differs in climatic conditions from the country to the south and north of it. The rainfall is deficient, and droughts, sometimes severe, are not unknown.

The Burmese rulers were capable of large conceptions, but they lacked skill; and their great irrigation schemes, attempted without sufficient science, were foredoomed to failure. The largest works of this class existing, when we took the country, were the Mandalay and Shwebo Canals, which were of little use, as even where the construction was not faulty they had been allowed to go to ruin. In Kyaukse Salin (Minbu district) and elsewhere there were extensive canals of a less ambitious nature, which although neglected were still of much service. Even in the turmoil of 1886 and the pressure of what was in fact a state of war, Sir Charles Bernard found time to attend to the irrigation systems; and as soon as a skilled engineer could be obtained from India, and funds allotted, the work of irrigation was tackled in earnest. The first business was to examine the existing systems and see whether they could be made use of. Before I left Burma in December, 1890, I had the pleasure of knowing that this work was in hand, and that further deterioration from neglect had been stopped, and also that new schemes were under consideration.

The expenditure in Upper Burma at this time was very great. An army of fourteen thousand men cannot be kept in the field for nothing. The military police force was a second army, and there was besides all the cost of the civil administration. The incoming revenue was in comparison insignificant. In 1886-7 it had been £250,000 in round numbers, in 1887-8 it rose to £500,000—not enough to cover the public works expenditure alone.

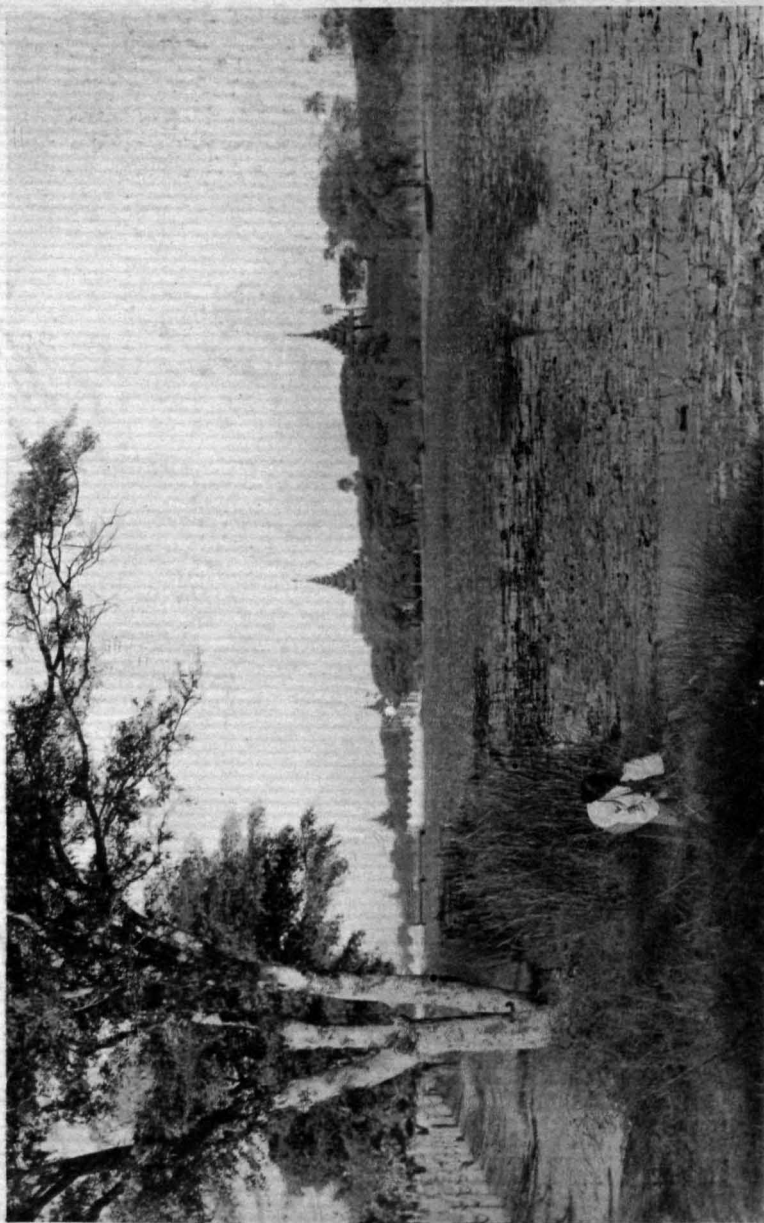
It was not wonderful, therefore, that the Government of India, whose finances at the time were by no means happy, should be nervous about the expenditure. They were most

gentle and considerate in the matter; and although it was evident that our success in Burma would be measured in England mainly by the financial results, no pressure was put upon me to get in revenue, and I felt the pinch chiefly in the difficulty of getting an adequate and competent engineering establishment and immediate funds for works, the urgency of which was less apparent to the Government of India than to me on the spot. With Lord Dufferin's backing I obtained what I wanted, and I hope I did not exhibit an indecent importunity.

I had considered and reported to the Finance Department all possible means of raising the revenue. On the whole, my conclusion was that we had to look rather to existing sources than to new taxation, which in a country not yet completely subdued and of which we had imperfect knowledge would have been inexpedient. The excise revenue might have been made profitable, but we were debarred from interfering for the time with the regulations made and sanctioned (somewhat hastily, perhaps) by the Government of India, immediately after the annexation.

Under the circumstance, the best and quickest method of improving the financial conditions was clearly the reduction of the field force. This was already under discussion. The initial step had been taken and one regiment of Native Infantry had been sent back to India. The military police had begun to relieve the troops in the outposts. The Major-General, Sir George White (who in addition to his merits as a gallant leader and good strategist, was an able administrator), was careful always of public money, and in perfect accord with the civil administration. He desired his men to be relieved as quickly as possible.

It was a matter, however, in which it was unsafe to rush, and in which a heavy responsibility rested on me. Events were happening from time to time which warned us that we were not yet out of the wood. On the 3rd of June, for example, the troops at Pyinulwin, forty miles from Mandalay, led by Colonel May, had attacked a stockade held on behalf of the Setkya Mintha, a pretender. Darrah, Assistant Commissioner, was killed, an officer named Cuppage badly wounded, and several men



"THE MOAT," MANDALAY.
And North Wall of Fort Dufferin.

lost. Hkam Leng (see Chapter XX.) was active in the Mongnit Country.

The Commissioners of the Northern and Central Divisions were urging me to have the large and numerous islands between Mandalay and Sagaing cleared of the gangs who held them. They represented the necessity of a river patrol. The cry from the Southern Division was for launches. The Commissioner wrote that the only boat in his division fit for service was that assigned to the military authorities; and this was the day after Captain Hext's arrival on his mission from India, to persuade me to reduce my demand for boats.

The Deputy Commissioner for Mandalay reported that there was a dacoit leader stockaded within forty miles of Mandalay, and that he was unable to get a force to turn him out of his position.

At the same time (July, 1887) bad news came from the Ye-u district. Two pretenders had appeared with a considerable following. As a prelude they had burnt villages, crucified one of the village headmen, and committed other brutalities. The civil administration was obliged to ask for help from the soldiers in this case. The weather was fine, and the country which these men had occupied was a good field for cavalry. The Hyderabad Cavalry were in the field at once, and the Inspector-General of Police was able to get together a hundred mounted military police and send them to help. A force from the Chindwin side co-operated. The gathering was very soon scattered. One of the leaders died of fever and the other escaped for a time, but was afterwards captured in the Lower Chindwin district, where he was attempting to organize another rising.

I was compelled in Sagaing also to ask Sir George White's assistance. The Sagaing Police battalion was backward in training and not fit for outpost work in a bad district. The death of Hla U had been expected to bring peace. But it now appeared that the district on both sides of the Mu was in the hands of three or four dacoit leaders who collected a fixed revenue from each village, which was spared so long as the demand was paid. Any headman who failed to pay was murdered

remorselessly. In some cases the man's wife and children were killed before his face, to add to the sting of death.

The system in the Sagaing and other districts much resembled—in its machinery, not altogether in its methods—the organization of the Nationalists in Ireland.

At my request Sir George White consented to occupy the district closely, and although the gangs were not caught or brought to justice, some protection was given to the peaceful part of the population until we were ready later on to take the district in hand and destroy the gangs.

In Sagaing, as in some other cases, the local officers had been ignorant of what was going on around them. It was believed to be quiet because we had no touch with the people, and they told us nothing.

The intention in referring to these events is to show why caution was needed in the matter of relieving the troops. It must be remembered that a very large proportion of the military police had received very little training before their arrival. With the exception of some two thousand men all were recruits entirely untaught in drill or discipline. The employment of such raw men on outpost duty under native officers whom they did not know was not without risk. In many cases the risk had to be faced, and consequently some disasters were inevitable. Progress was slow, but under the conditions it was good. "To instil discipline into so large a body of young soldiers," wrote the Inspector-General (General Stedman), "was a far more difficult task than to teach them the rudiments of drill. By discipline must be understood not only good conduct in quarters and prompt obedience to the orders of superiors, but the necessity of sticking to one another in the field and the habit of working together as a welded body."

Before I left Mandalay again for Lower Burma, Sir George White and I had arrived at an agreement regarding the force which it was necessary to keep up. We were able to propose the abolition of the field force and the reduction of the garrison by one regiment of British Infantry, two regiments of Indian Cavalry, eight regiments of Indian Infantry, and one British Mountain Battery. The allocation of the troops and police was reviewed in consultation with the Commissioners of Divisions

and so made that the one force supplemented the other. The reduction was to take effect from the spring of 1888.

We were now about to enter on a new development of the British occupation. The civil officers, supported by the military police, were to take the responsibility of keeping order. The soldiers were there ready to help if need be, but they were not to be called out except for operations beyond the power of the police.

CHAPTER VII

A VISIT TO BHAMO

I HAD arranged to hold a Durbar at Mandalay on the 5th of August, in order to meet the notables of Burma, and such of the Shan chiefs as might be able to come, face to face, and to make them understand the position, the intentions, and the power of the British Government. I hoped, perhaps not in vain, that the spirit of my words might penetrate to the towns and villages of Burma.

Meanwhile I had not visited Bhamo, and I decided to go there. I had sent for Mr. Hildebrand, whom I wanted to consult about the operations in the Shan States which were to be undertaken in the coming cold season. He arrived before I left Mandalay for Bhamo, and as he evidently needed rest, I asked him to remain at Government House until my return.

I found Bhamo a disappointing place. A very dirty, miserable kind of village, arranged in two streets parallel to the river. At the back lay a marsh or lagoon, which evidently was at one time a channel for the backwater of the river. Conservancy there was none, and the stench from the streets, the lagoon, and even the bank of the river was sickening. Considering that the place had been the headquarters of a district since our occupation, and a cantonment for British and Indian troops, it was not much to be proud of. But the soldiers and the civil officers had been well occupied with more pressing business.

The Chinese were the most prominent of the population. They were all, it was said, opium smokers, and seldom moved until near midday. They managed notwithstanding to make money, and to retire with fortunes after a few years. I anticipated a large increase of the trade with

China, but doubted if the town could grow much on its present site.* As to the trade, it could not make much progress on account of the cost of transport between Bhamo and Tengyueh, the risk of attack by Kachins, and the exactions and oppressions of the Chinese Customs officials, who at one time had maintained a *likin* station within the British boundary not far from Bhamo. There was another route used by traders, which went by Mansi and Namkham, a Shan State on the Shweli. Since the Kachins in the country south of Bhamo have been subjugated, the Chinese caravans have preferred the Namkham route; and at present although the Kachins have ceased to raid, and much has been done of late to improve the road to Tengyueh, the trade has not returned to that channel.

A survey for a light railway to Tengyueh has been made, but a strange indifference exists to the benefits certain, as I think, to result from making the line. The construction of a railway between Northern Burma and Yunnan has always appeared to me essential to the full development of the province. The opportunity has been lost and France has anticipated us. It would be a difficult and expensive work no doubt, but whether more difficult than the French line may be doubted. Even now, after twenty years, it has not been surveyed beyond the Kunlon ferry, and the opinion of persons without engineering knowledge has been accepted as sufficient to condemn it. But we may still hope. Napoleon crossing the Alps might have scoffed at the notion of a railway to Italy.

There is a vast area of land in Upper Burma waiting for population to cultivate it, and if communications were made easy, the Chinese Shans and possibly Chinese and Panthays from Yunnan might be induced to settle in the northern districts. The Chinese and Burmans are akin, and the offspring of Chinese fathers and Burman mothers have the good qualities of both races, which cannot be said of other crosses.

I returned to Mandalay from Bhamo before the end of July, having learnt and arranged much, especially in con-

* The population was 8,048 in 1891, and 10,784 in 1901, of which number 8,000 were natives of India. These numbers include the garrison.

sultation with Major Adamson, the Deputy Commissioner, regarding the contemplated occupation of Mogaung. The stations on the river were all inspected on the way down.

I found Mr. Hildebrand waiting for me, and discussed with him and with Sir George White the plans for an expedition to the Shan States.

The Durbar was held on the 5th of August, and I think was a useful function. It was held in the great Eastern Hall of the Palace, the place where the King of Burma used to give audience to his feudatories and his people. The ex-ministers and some of the Shan Sawbwas were present, and the great hall was crowded with notables and officials from Mandalay and other districts. It must have been to them a striking occasion, and to many of them, perhaps, not altogether pleasant. To such as had any patriotic feeling, and no doubt many of them had, the representative of a foreign Government standing in front of the empty throne must have been the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not.*

My duty, however, was not to show sympathy with sentiment of this kind, but to impress them with the permanence, the benevolence, and the power of the new Government. In an appendix I have given the text of my speech and some comments upon it taken from an article in the *Times* newspaper of the 13th of September, 1887. Two of the high Burman officials who had formerly been in the King's service, the Kinwun Mingyi, one of the Ministers of the State, and the Myowun, or City Governor of Mandalay, both of whom had given great assistance to the British Government, received decorations. The former was made a Companion of the Star of India and the latter of the Indian Empire.* I was glad to get the following commendation from Lord Dufferin.

He wrote: "I congratulate you on your Durbar and upon the excellent speech you made on the occasion. It was full of go and good sense, and will convince everybody that you really mean business."

There were fresh rumours at this time (August, 1887) of hostile intentions on the part of the Chinese, of gather-

* This was written before the removal of the capital of India from Delhi to Calcutta.

ings of soldiers and bandits on the frontier, of the presence of auxiliaries from Yunnan with San Ton Hon in Theinni. There was no foundation in fact for any of these rumours; Mr. Warry, the Chinese adviser, placed no faith in them, and I did not believe in them. But they were repeated in the newspapers, magnified in gossip, and disturbed the public mind.

The best way of silencing these rumours was to make our occupation of the northernmost district, Mogaung, effectual, and to establish a definite control in the Shan States. In concert with the Major-General, proposals for effecting both these objects had been prepared and were before the Government of India, and I knew that the Viceroy approved them.

In neither case was serious opposition expected. Detailed accounts of both movements will be found in separate chapters of this book. In the case of the Shan States, the character of the expedition was essentially peaceful and conciliatory. The escorts given to the two civil officers were strong enough to deter, or if necessary overcome, opposition and support the dignity of our representatives. But unless hostilities broke out, in which case the military commanders would necessarily become supreme, the control was vested in the senior civil officer, Mr. Hildebrand. It is unnecessary to say more here, except that with Sir George White's help everything was done to keep down the cost. Not a man more than was absolutely necessary was sent. The Shan plateau, at this time nowhere prosperous, was in some parts on the verge of famine; not from drought or other climatic cause, but simply from the cat-and-dog life the people had led for some years. No supplies could be obtained in the country. It was necessary to ration the troops for four or five months, and the cost of transport was heavy.

Every one felt, however, that cost what it might, the work we had undertaken must be completed. Nothing could have justified us in leaving the Shan country any longer in a state of anarchy; and I doubt if even the most narrow-minded Under Secretary in the Financial Department dared to raise objections to the needful expenditure. It may be permitted to say here that no money

was better spent. The Shan plateau for lovely scenery, for good climate, and I believe for its natural wealth, is proving itself a most valuable possession. Lord Dufferin thoroughly approved of the action taken in these cases.

It was a relief to deal with these larger matters. They were less harassing than the constant stream of administrative details of every kind which leave a man at the head of a large province barely time to think of his most important problems. The demands from the Secretary of State for information, which came through the Government of India, wasted a great deal of time. Members of Parliament who cannot force themselves into notice in other ways, take up a subject like Burma, of which no one knows anything, and ask questions which the Secretary of State has to answer. Frequently there was little foundation for these questions, and when the call came to answer them, it took both time and labour to ascertain what they were all about. Correspondents of newspapers, not so much perhaps out of malice—although that is not quite unknown—as from the necessities of their profession are greedy for sensational news. They know that the English public prefer to think that their servants abroad are either fools or scoundrels. If everything is reported to be going well and the officers to be doing their duty, few will credit it, and none will be interested in it. But hint vaguely at dark intrigues or horrible atrocities, ears are cocked at once, and the newspaper boys sweep in the pence.

Few of the uninitiated would believe how much time has to be given by the head of an Indian province to the placing of his men. In a climate like Burma, and under the conditions obtaining in 1887, frequent and sudden sickness compels officers to take leave. The civil staff of the province was barely sufficient if no losses occurred. If a man fell out it was often difficult to supply his place, and if a good man went down, as they often did, it was sometimes impossible to find a good man to succeed him. Writing to Lord Dufferin at this time (September, 1887) of one of the worst districts, I said: "I have not been able to put a good man there yet, but I hope to have a man soon. It all depends on getting hold of the right man." In a settled province the personal factor is not so important;

but in a newly annexed country it is everything. Even in the oldest province in India, if a fool is put in charge of a district and kept there long enough you will have trouble of some sort.

Much has been heard of late years of the evils of transfers, and even Viceroys have talked as if the carelessness or favouritism of provincial governors were responsible for the mischief. The real cause in my experience is the inadequacy of the staff of officers. If one man falls sick and has to leave his district, two or three transfers may become inevitable. The Government of India realize no doubt that the staff, of the smaller provinces especially, is inadequate. If they give a liberal allowance of Englishmen the expense is increased and promotion becomes too slow. If they cut down the staff, the head of the province has to tear his hair and worry through somehow.

CHAPTER VIII

DISARMAMENT: TROUBLE IN PAGYI

IT was in Rangoon at this time that I made up my mind to disarm the whole province, Upper and Lower, rigorously, as soon as possible. I wrote to Lord Dufferin on September 30, 1887, as follows: "I am of opinion that the time has come for the complete disarming of the whole province, except perhaps on some exposed frontiers. The firearms in the hands of dacoits are evidently much fewer, but they continually replenish their stock by taking arms from villagers and Burman police. I would temper the measure in the Lower province by giving arms to selected Karens and Burmans, who should enrol themselves as special constables. As the Burmans hate nothing so much as signing any engagement to serve for a term, few of them would enrol themselves.

"I should fix the number of such special police myself, for each district."

The Baptist missionaries, I feared, would not look upon the scheme with favour. The loyalty of the Karens and the benefits of their organization under their missionaries, to whom the Government, as I have said on a former page, owes much, were not questioned. But it was not admissible that the Government of Burma should prefer one race more than another, and I had been warned by one of the missionaries themselves that Burman ill-will had been excited by the preference given to Karens in raising bodies of police auxiliaries during the disturbances.

By laying down conditions, fair and necessary in themselves, which men of the one race were likely to accept, but would be less acceptable to the other, as much discrimination was made between Karens and Burmans as was needful or decent.

In Upper Burma, Sir Charles Bernard had ordered the withdrawal of firearms from the villagers, soon after the annexation. It was not possible to carry it out effectually at that time. It was not until 1888 that I had arranged all the details and could put the orders fully into force. It is admitted generally to have been a beneficial measure, and to have helped very much to pacify the country and to put down dacoity. It is a pity that the disarmament of Lower Burma had not been enforced many years before. But no accumulation of facts are enough to destroy a prejudice, and for a long time my action was violently, I might say virulently, denounced in the Press and in Parliament.

The wisdom and necessity of this measure has come, I think, to be admitted by most people and was never doubted by my successors, who wisely disarmed the Chins at the cost of a serious rising and a hill campaign. The number of firearms taken from the villagers amounted in the years 1888 and 1889 to many thousands. Most of them were very antiquated and fit for a museum of ancient weapons. But they served the purpose of the Burman brigand, and not a few good men, British and Indian, died by them.

The Village Regulation was passed on October 28, 1887. It established on a legal basis the ancient and still existing constitution of Upper Burma. While emphasizing the responsibility of the village headman, it gave him sufficient powers and the support of the law. It also enacted the joint responsibility of the village in the case of certain crimes; the duty of all to resist the attacks of gangs of robbers and to take measures to protect their villages against such attacks. In the case of stolen cattle which were traced to a village, it placed on it the duty of carrying on the tracks or paying for the cattle. It gave the district officer power to remove from a village, and cause to reside elsewhere, persons who were aiding and abetting dacoits and criminals. This enactment, the genesis of which I have given in a former chapter, was framed in accordance with the old customary law and with the feelings of the people. It strengthened our hands more and gave us a tighter grip on the country than anything else could have

done. Without the military police no law could have done much. Without the Village Regulation, the military police would have been like a ship without a rudder.

When the open season of 1887-8 began, the administration was in a strong position to deal with the disorder still prevailing. It was prepared as it never had been before. There was the law enforcing village responsibility, and enabling the magistrate to deal summarily with the persons who were really the life of dacoity; those who, living an apparently honest life, were the intelligence and commissariat agents of the gangs. All the details of disarmament had not been settled, but every opportunity was taken of withdrawing arms, and in the case of dacoit leaders or their followers, or of rebel villages, the surrender of a certain number of firearms was made a condition of the grant of pardon. Lastly, the military police organization was complete, and the physical force needed to enforce the law was thus provided in a ready and convenient form.

The rains were over, and I anticipated that the dacoits would again become active. I also thought it probable that the inexperienced police would meet with some disasters.

The country now in the Thayetmyo district, frequented by Bo Swè, was quieter. He was a fugitive with a diminished following. Early in October we were cheered by the news of his destruction. The Viceroy wired his congratulations.

It may seem unworthy of the Government of a great country to rejoice at the death of a brigand whose influence did not extend over more than a few hundred square miles. It was not the man's death, but all that it meant. A sign of the coming end—slowly coming, it may be, but still the coming end—of a very weary struggle with a system of resistance which was costing us many good men and a lavish expenditure of money. Bo Swè was ridden down by a party of Colonel Clements' Mounted Infantry belonging to the Lower Burma command. He and his men were surprised in a ravine, and many, including Bo Swè, killed.

There were still left the broken remnants of the leader's following. Active officers, with special powers and sufficient police, were placed in charge of the Northern subdivisions of the Thayetmyo district on both sides of the

river, and order was established before the end of 1887. But in Upper Burma the districts of the Southern Division remained in a very bad state. Ôktama was still master, especially in the valley of the Môn. I had not found the right men for Minbu, and the weakness of the civil administration was represented as an evil, not without reason, by the military commanders.

The following extract from a letter dated 1st of October, 1887, from the Commissioner of the Southern Division will give a better idea of the state of things than mere general phrases :—

“ On 16th August, Po Saung, an informer, was caught and killed by Bo Cho's gang in Pagan.

“ On 29th August, Yan Sin, a dacoit who had submitted, was caught and killed by Nga Kway in Pagan.

“ On 5th September, at Kôkkozu village in Pauk, the dacoits tried to catch the thugyi, but failed, and caught and murdered his wife.

“ Su Gaung, a mounted police constable, was shot while carrying letters between Myingyan and Natogyi on 16th September.

“ In Lindaung, Pagan district, the thugyi was murdered a month ago and Thade's gang on 10th September attempted to capture his son, but failed, and plundered the village.

“ On 29th September, Nurtama in Minbu, which is the headquarters of the Kyabin Myoôk, was attacked. The Myoôk's and seven other houses were burned; no one was killed. The Myoôk lived here in fear of his life for some time. He sleeps at night at Sinbyugyun, on the other side of the Salin Creek, and if he sleeps at Nurtama he does not sleep in his own house, but in a little post which he has built. He has taken a guard of ten men from Sinbyugyun.

“ On 24th September at Sagyun, in Myingyan district, Custance's interpreter and the thugyi of Welôn were breakfasting in the village; they were attacked, and the interpreter killed, his head being nearly severed from his body. The thugyi escaped with a slight wound.”

More than one attack was made on Yéuangyaung, the village near the oil-wells, with the object of killing the Burman headman. The raiders did not secure him, but

they carried off his wife and daughter and set fire to a number of boats, loaded with oil. The military police (a few raw Punjabis without a British officer) were flurried and did nothing. These attacks made them nervous, and shortly afterwards, taking a forest officer, who was going down the river with a white umbrella * over his head, for a leader of rebels, they fired volleys at him until he and his crew had to get out of the boat and cling to the side of it. Fortunately the men shot badly and no one was hit. The forest officer complained loudly of the indignity he had suffered, which he thought was not within the letter of his bond. It was believed that the men who had made the attack on Yénangyaung had come from the right bank of the Irrawaddy River. There was a patrol launch on this part of the river, and it had called several times at Yénangyaung before the attack. We had not enough boats to patrol a long stretch of river effectually, and it was easy for the dacoits to watch the steamer as it went up or down and time their crossing. The Commissioner, therefore, collected the boats on the right bank and put them under guards until confidence was restored. The towns on the left bank below Pagan were reported to live in dread of attack.

Meanwhile trouble broke out in the Chindwin district, on the west of the river. Two leaders of revolt had appeared in this region. One was the Bayingan, or Viceroy, of the Myingun Prince whose name has already been mentioned. He was known to have left the Mandalay district with the object of raising a disturbance in the Chindwin. The other was a person called the Shwègyobu Prince, who at the time of the annexation had been a vaccinator in the Government service in the Thayetinyo district. He must have been a man of considerable character and ambition, for when the war began he went up to the Chindwin country and established himself at Kanlé, in the difficult hills of the Pondaung range. He assumed, with what right is not known, the style and title of "Prince," and proceeded to enrol men to resist the foreigners.

While we were congratulating ourselves on the destruction of Bo Swè and his gang, news came down that Pagyi was up. As yet we had not been able to occupy this region. It was a country of hills and ravines, densely

* The white umbrella is a token of royalty.

wooded and also very unhealthy. It had been impossible to find civil officers to administer it, or men, either soldiers or police, to occupy it. The people had always more or less managed their own affairs under their own headmen, and as a temporary makeshift we had endeavoured to continue this arrangement. One, Maung Po. O, had been appointed an honorary head constable, and had hitherto maintained order in the south-west corner of Pagyi, and Maung Tha Gyi, an influential headman, held a similar position in the north-west and had done well and had acted with loyalty. The villages under Maung Tha Gyi, a group of small hamlets of twenty to thirty houses each, lay in the thick scrub jungle on the spurs of the Pondaung range.

A leader named Bo Sawbwa, who was acting in the interests of the Shwègyobu Prince and had fortified himself in the jungles south of Pagyi, attacked and carried off Po. O. At the same time Maung Tha Gyi suddenly threw off his allegiance to the British, collected men, and fortified a position near one of his villages. He was reported to be ready to join the Shwegyobu Prince, who ever since his gang was dispersed in 1886 had been harboured by a circle of villages in the west of Pagyi.

On receipt of this intelligence every precaution was taken. Sir George White sent Colonel Symons to take command of the military operations, and I selected Mr.¹ Carter as the best man to accompany him as a civil officer with magisterial powers.

Captain Raikes was Deputy Commissioner of the Chindwin district at the time. He was away on leave, and Mr. W. T. Morison,* of the Indian Civil Service, Bombay Presidency, was acting for him and was at Alôn, the district headquarters on the left bank of the Chindwin River. Mr. W. T. Morison was a young officer of five or six years' service and had been in Burma a very short time. He was one of the young men, of whom there were not a few in Burma, who took instinctively to the work.

On the 2nd of October he crossed over to the disturbed tract and joined Lieutenant Plumer, who, with a detachment of the 2nd Hyderabad Contingent Infantry, was at Hlawga, a march west from the river.

* Wm. Thomson Morison, C.S.I., member of Executive Council of the Governor of Bombay.

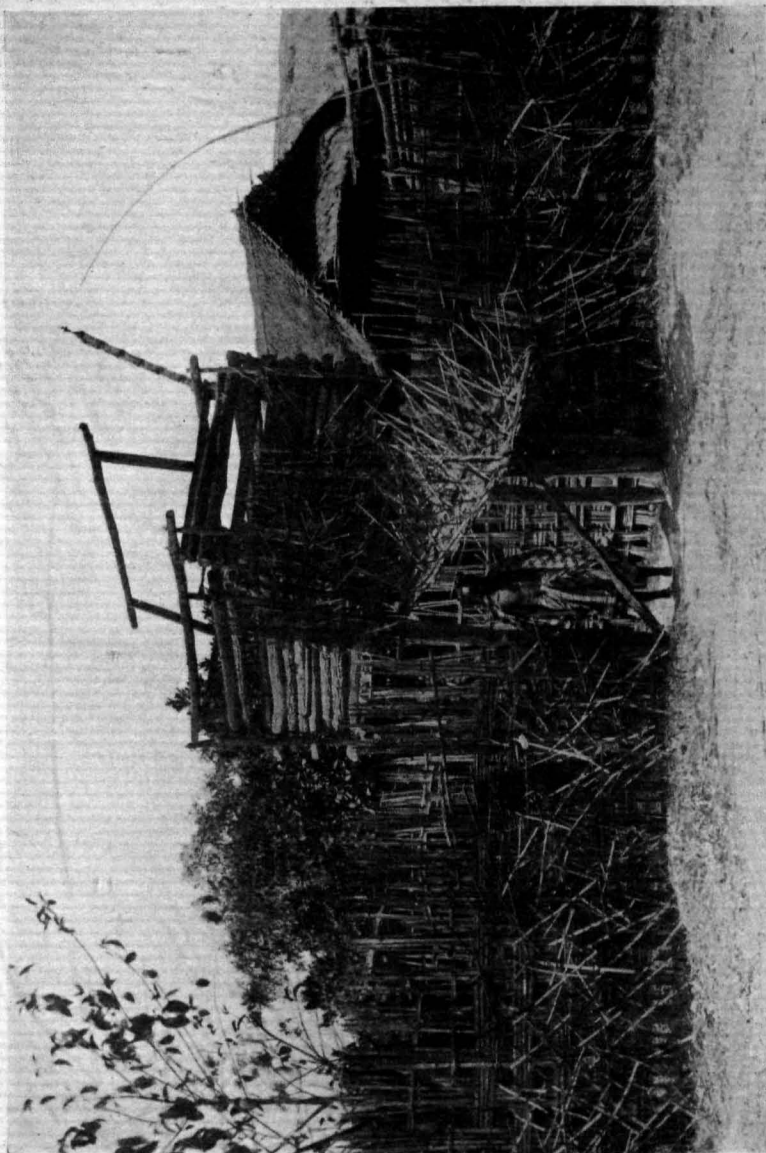
Mr. Morison wrote at once to Maung Tha Gyi, ordering him to come in. Tha Gyi, who was at one of his villages, Chaungwa, about sixteen miles from Hlawga, sent an evasive reply and began to collect men and arms.

Mr. Morison decided to try to surprise him. On the morning of the 8th of October, Lieutenant Plumer and Mr. Morison, with twenty-one Mounted Infantry, from the military police battalion, and the Hyderabad Contingent, left Hlawga soon after midnight, and surprised Chaungwa at four o'clock in the morning, when it was still dark.

The village, when day broke, was found to be on the west bank of a deep ravine, at the bottom of which was the only cart-road. On the steep bank on which the village stood strong fortifications and entrenchments, commanding this cart-road, had been built; trees had been felled and thrown across, and the road covered with bamboo spikes. Our men were led by an excellent guide, who took them through the jungle across the ravine and up to one of the enemy's outposts.

Twenty-one men could not surround the village, but they rushed it, killing one only and capturing six. The leaders, who were found to have been the Bayingan and Maung Tha Gyi, escaped. Nine ponies tied near the house occupied by the former were taken, and in the house were found twenty royal battle standards, many arms, and much correspondence.

After a halt for rest, the main body, fifteen rifles with the prisoners and captured ponies, were sent off. Lieutenant Plumer and Mr. Morison, with a jemadar and six mounted military policemen and a Burmese interpreter, remained behind, hoping that some of the enemy would return and fall into their hands. The Burmans, however, were not so simple. After a short delay the two British officers and their men set out to follow the main body. The moment they reached the ravine a volley was fired from the perpendicular bank opposite the village. Maung Po Min, the interpreter, was shot in the leg, his pony killed, and Mr. Morison's hand was grazed by a bullet. Mr. Morison, who was well mounted, took Po Min up behind him, and they all scrambled up the western bank of the ravine, hoping to be able to see the dacoits and return



OUTER BAMBOO STOCKADE OF BURMESE FRONTIER VILLAGE.

their fire. A few volleys were fired at random, as the enemy could not be seen; and then, fearing further ambuscades, the small party took a jungle track, hoping it would lead round into the main road lower down. The village of Chaungwa is on the spurs of a low range of hills. The jungle is of the densest, and cut up in every direction by deep ravines, and they had no guide. The track was evidently taking them in a wrong direction. They resolved to leave it and make as nearly due east as they could.

The rest of the story can best be told in Mr. Morison's own words, taken from a letter to the Commissioner of the Central Division, dated Camp Kyadet, the 13th of October, 1887:—

“After about fifteen minutes the dacoits, who had followed us, opened fire on us from about 50 yards in the front, they being quite concealed. After one volley they would retire, allow us to go forward 200 yards, then go round in front and give us another volley. We had at each volley to dismount and try and return their fire as best we could. But from first to last the dacoits were invisible and under complete cover, and, knowing the jungle, had time to go ahead, lie in wait for us, and take aim. This continued for over an hour. Our horses were completely done out with going down and up the precipitous ravines, and the ravines became at last quite impassable for horses. So after a consultation we determined to leave our ponies and make our way east on foot. Shortly after leaving the ponies one of the men, Amır Mahomed, was shot dead in the head from one of the usual ambuscades. That the others of our party escaped appears a miracle to me. However, after about two hours, *i.e.*, about 10 a.m., the firing ceased, and we managed, exhausted as we were, to get clear of the jungle by 2 p.m., going 200 yards at a time and then lying down to rest. We arrived at Mintainbin at 4 p.m. and Hlawga at 6. Our loss was thus one man killed and seven police ponies, with saddles and bridles, left. . . . The men behaved well throughout the affair.”

If the ponies had not been left there would have been little chance of the men escaping from the jungle with their lives.

Unfortunately, the mass of the Bayingan's correspond-

ence was in one of the saddle-bags abandoned with the ponies. Some of the documents saved were copies of notices to noted leaders in many districts of Upper Burma and the Shan States. The following is a translation of one of them:—

“I, the Bayingan Prince, brother of the Myingun Prince, write to the Chief Bo Nyo U and other Chiefs in Sagaing as follows. I have been to all Sawwas, Bo Gyôks (Chief Bos), and other Bos of the north, south, and east, and have given orders and administered oaths which they have taken; they have promised to serve loyally, and we intend to drive the British from Kani and Pagyi and take Alôn, Shwebô, Dabayen, &c., and go up to Mandalay in month of Tazaungmôn.”

Careful inquiries showed that Maung Ba, the Bayingan Prince, arrived in Pagyi in the end of September and came to Maung Tha Gyi. Since his arrival he had been corresponding with the Shwëgyobyn Prince and other Bos in this part, and had actually sent over to Yaw for assistance. He had friends in Alôn and elsewhere. A letter from Kin Le Gyi (a maid-of-honour to Supayalat, who had since the war taken contracts for public works in Monywa and elsewhere, and had been trusted by the British officials) was found in the Prince's house, saying that she was going up to Alôn to see how the troops were disposed and what all the officers were doing, and that she would write to him on her return. This is very characteristic of the Burman woman.

On the 12th of October Morison was back at Kyadet, in the south of Pagyi, where there was a military post, and consulted with Major Kennedy, commanding the 2nd Hyderabad Contingent Infantry, who arrived with a reinforcement of seventy rifles. They decided to telegraph for more troops. This request had been anticipated.

Unfortunately, Major Kennedy did not wait for the reinforcements. Hearing that the Bayingan and Tha Gyi had taken up a position at Chinbyit, about twenty miles from Kyadet, he left with a few Mounted Infantry. He was accompanied by Captain Beville, Assistant Commissioner, who had been posted to the district to enable Mr. Morison to return to his headquarters at Alôn. The rebels, who were in strength and in a good position, stood, and both

Major Kennedy and Captain Beville were killed. The rebels lost forty men, killed. The seventy rifles, under Lieutenant Plumer (2nd Hyderabad Contingent Infantry), came up in time to complete the defeat of the enemy.

It was reported at the time that the leaders had escaped. Afterwards it was found that Maung Tha Gyi and the Bayingan Prince had both been killed.* Nga Pyo, a notorious rebel and dacoit leader, was present, but did not expose himself, and lived until 1889, to be assassinated by a colleague. Whether the Shwègyobu Prince was there is doubtful.

The action at Chinbyit cost us much. Lord Dufferin wrote: "It is too distressing to think that so slight an affair should have cost us the lives of two valuable officers." Their lives were not thrown away. The loss inflicted on the enemy was severe, and the death of the Bayingan prince put an end to a troublesome organization.

Mr Carter records in the official diary of his work in Pagy with Colonel Symons, under date 27th of November, 1887: "At Chinbyit visited scene of late fight. The villagers pointed out the skeleton of the Bayengan. The body had been left where it had fallen, a few bushes and stones being placed over it to keep off dogs and vultures."

CHAPTER IX

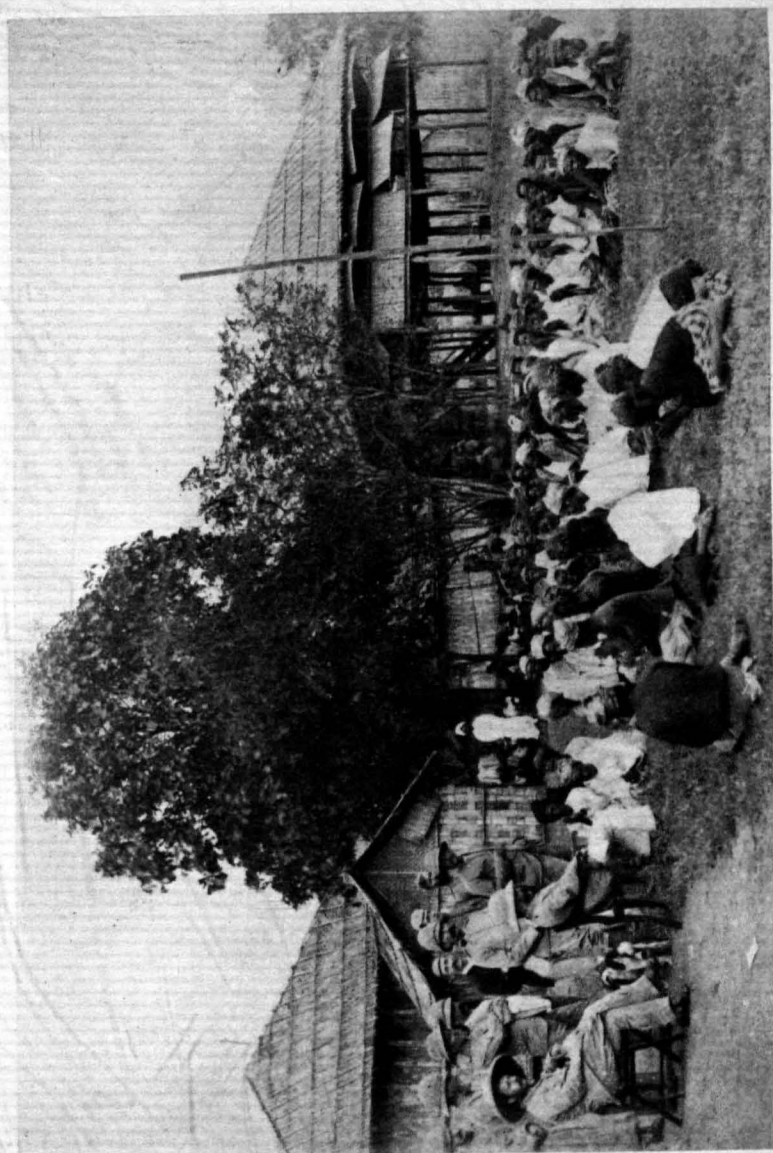
TROUBLE WITH THE WUNTHO SAWBWA

I LEFT Rangoon on the 30th of November, after arranging the measures necessary for commencing the disarmament of the province at the beginning of the new year. There were two districts in Lower Burma giving trouble at that time—Tharrawaddy in the Pegu Division and Thayetmyo. Tharrawaddy has always been a sore spot.* In the early part of 1889 it was brought into a more orderly state; but towards the end of the year, owing in a great measure to the action of the local officers in issuing licences for firearms to the villagers, the gangs were able to obtain weapons, and crime increased to such a degree that strenuous measures had to be adopted.

I went to Thayetmyo, and there met the local officers and heard what account they had to give. They reported the remaining gangs to be small. Parties of Mounted Infantry, with active police and civil officers, were told off to work both sides of the river, and a great improvement was effected in a few months.

I marched from Thayetmyo to Minhla, about seventy miles, having all the neighbouring villagers collected to meet me at each halting-place. They were encouraged to talk freely and tell their grievances. They complained only of the impressment of carts and such-like matters inseparable from the constant movement of troops and the disturbed times. That they had suffered a good deal between the upper and the nether millstone—the Government and the dacoits—may be easily believed. But it was

* "Long notorious for the ill-repute of its inhabitants." See *Burma Gazetteer*, vol. i., p. 258.



CONSULTATION OF VILLAGE HEADMEN WITH CHIEF COMMISSIONER.

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in great part their own fault, as they would not give our officers information.

The country through which we marched was mostly dense forest and jungle, with very few villages. It was only necessary to see it to understand the difficulty of beating out of such cover small gangs of active men, unencumbered by anything except their arms, and able to get food from any hamlet. The wonder is that with a mere handful of Mounted Infantry at their disposal, our officers were able to run the dacoits down and exterminate them in so short a time.

Sir Benjamin Simpson, K.C.I.E., Surgeon-General, with the Government of India, who had been sent over by the Government to advise me about the medical establishments of the military police and of the province generally, accompanied me on this march.

From Minhla I went to Minbu and saw the officers there. I then went on to Pagan. In order to see the country about Popa, I rode from Pagan to Popa and back by another road. This country is very wild and densely wooded. It would seem to one riding through it to be uncultivated, but this is not the case. All the bottoms of the slopes are cultivated, and there are numerous shallow streams which in the dry weather have no water in them. The villages were few and poor-looking, mere huts with palm-leaf thatch. The cattle, however, were numerous and good, carts stood in all the villages.

Not a man was to be seen anywhere, only women and children. We had lost our way and wanted a guide, and eventually were fain to ask for two women to show us the way. It is no wonder that Popa was the home of dacoits. Most of the people seemed at this time to live by stealing cattle from the neighbouring and more populous districts. Once they got the cattle into their villages, they kept them in enclosures, hidden away in the jungle, until they could drive them off to a distant market. This country was not brought under control for two years.

From Pagan I crossed to Pakokku and saw the Wunkadaw and her son, and Mr. Browning the Assistant Commissioner, and then went on to Myingyan. I had only time to inspect the station and see the officers and

talk to Brigadier-General Low, when a telegram came from Sir George White asking me to come up to Mandalay at once, as trouble threatened with the Wuntho Sawbwa.

This man's territory lay in a hilly country lying between the Katha district and the Chindwin River. He had been from the first year of our occupation a source of trouble; he refused to come in, and at one time objected to pay his tribute. Early in '87 the Commissioner of the Northern Division, Mr. Burgess, went to the town of Wuntho, which is on the eastern extremity of his country, and is not his real capital although he takes his title from it, to meet him. Mr. Burgess was accompanied by a military force. The matter was then arranged by the Sawbwa paying his tribute, but he refused to see our officers, and continued to give trouble by harbouring dacoits and insurgents who raided our territory.

It was the fixed policy of Lord Dufferin to preserve so far as might be these autonomous States. I have explained elsewhere how it came about that Shan States existed in this part of Burma, separated as they were by position and in their politics from the body of States on the Shan plateau. Every endeavour was made therefore to smooth matters and not to quarrel with the Wuntho man, whom we believed, and perhaps justly, to be actuated more by fear than by determined hostility.

The circumstances which led Sir George White to call me to Mandalay were these. A regiment of Gurkhas was coming across from India to relieve another which had been some time in Burma. It was convenient to bring the relieving regiment down by the Kabaw Valley to the Chindwin, where they would meet the other. A road had been selected through the Wuntho territory by which both regiments should march. They were to meet on the Chindwin and exchange transport trains, thus saving expense and trouble.

This was a natural arrangement. The route did not pass through the Sawbwa's capital. The military authorities had satisfied themselves that it was practicable for troops. I agreed to the proposal, caused the matter to be carefully explained to the Sawbwa, and directed him to collect supplies and to clear the roads.

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The Sawbwa replied, objecting to our troops passing through, and proposing an alternative route to which he had no objection. He based his opposition on the ground of personal fear, and referred to our assurance that Wuntho should not be occupied. I considered that we could not allow the Sawbwa to close his territory to us, and after consulting the Major-General, I told the Sawbwa through the Deputy Commissioner of Katha that the regiments must march by the road we had chosen. Rumours had been heard for some time that the Sawbwa was blocking his roads and preparing to oppose us in force. General White wished me to come up at once as the regiment leaving Burma had reached Kawlin, which is on the verge of Wuntho territory, and it was necessary to decide on the action to be taken in case its march was opposed. I decided to let it wait at Kawlin for ten days in order to give the Sawbwa time to reply to my order, utilising the delay by making arrangements to support and strengthen the Gurkhas in case we should have to fight. Soon after this decision had been reached, Sir George White sent me a telegram from the Colonel commanding the 43rd, dated from Kawlin, to the effect that the route by which he had been ordered to march was impracticable, and that the attempt to march along it would be opposed. General White advised the acceptance of the Sawbwa's alternative route, which was reported to have been prepared and supplied with provisions.

As my order sent through the Deputy Commissioner had been couched in very peremptory terms, I felt it inadvisable to withdraw. The Sawbwa was reported to be making preparations for opposing us by force, and if we drew back now our action would be certainly attributed to fear. There was telegraphic communication with Katha, but letters to Wuntho had to go on by messenger. It occurred to me that the Deputy Commissioner's messenger might still be stopped, and I telegraphed to Katha to recall him. Fortunately the letter was stopped at Kawlin. Under these circumstances Sir George White and I agreed to send the Gurkhas by the road which the Sawbwa had prepared. Any other course would have laid us open to the charge of having picked a quarrel with the Sawbwa.

There was every reason at the time for avoiding a step

which would have increased our direct responsibilities. The civil staff of the province was weak, not only in numbers but in experience. I was forced to trust men with districts who had no training and did not know Burmese. The annexation of Upper Burma was more difficult in some ways than the annexation of the Punjab. In the latter case there was in the army and in the adjacent provinces a supply of officers acquainted if not with the language of the Punjab, yet with a kindred speech. The whole *cadre* of Lower Burma was only threescore men, and it was impossible to take many men fit for service in Upper Burma from its ranks without leaving the Lower Province very much undermanned. For these reasons I did my best as long as I was in Burma to avoid a breach with the Wuntho Sawbwa, and latterly, when he sent in his wife to Mandalay to see the Commissioner, I was in hopes that we had overcome his suspicions, but I felt certain that sooner or later we should be obliged to get rid of him. I do not regret having waited as long as possible. When he broke out in 1891 the whole of the adjacent country was under control, the military police were organized and trained, and his revolt was put down with very little trouble or disturbance. No one can say that he was treated otherwise than with the greatest forbearance. I shall not have to refer to him again.

CHAPTER X

MILITARY REPLACED BY POLICE

THE beginning of 1888 saw the civil administration in a position to wage a systematic campaign against all disturbers of the peace.

Lower Burma had been reduced almost to its normal condition. The late Mr. Todd Naylor in the Tharrawaddy district had thoroughly extirpated the gangs which had troubled it and brought it to a state of quiet which it had not enjoyed for a very long time.

The disarmament of the whole province had been systematically taken in hand; the Village Regulation had become law, the military police had been organized and now numbered 17,880 men. The whole conditions had been changed. At the beginning of the year (1887) the troops had held one hundred and forty-two posts and the police fifty posts. At the end of the year the police held one hundred and seventy-five, and the troops eighty-four. The concentration of the troops in a few principal stations, left the work of destroying the remaining gangs to the military police, who were frequently engaged in action with dacoits. There were a few petty disasters at first. Nothing else was or could have been expected of partially trained men scattered about in small posts. There were only three serious cases in 1888. In one case, in distinct contravention of my orders, a small picket of ten men had been put out on the edge of a forest in a small house or shed without even a bamboo stockade. The picket was two miles from a military police post. The Burmans set fire to a cooking shed and volleyed the police by the aid of the firelight. Seven men fell to the first two volleys and only two were unwounded. These men behaved gallantly and kept the dacoits at bay until aid came from the post.

In another case and in another district a patrol of one jemadar and eleven sepoy was ambushed. The jemadar and nine of the men were killed and one man badly wounded and left for dead. The remaining man with the aid of two Burmans reached the nearest post. A party was sent out and the wounded man picked up.

The third disaster was in the Magwe district, where thirty men under an English Inspector met a large body of dacoits and were forced to retreat losing seven killed and two wounded. Six Snider rifles and two ponies were captured by the dacoits. This was an unfortunate affair for which the men were not responsible. It gave the Magwe dacoits fresh spirit.

To the responsible head of the administration the year 1888 was one of much anxiety. The troops were vacating numerous outposts held by them and they were being replaced by police fresh from India, and most of them imperfectly trained. The dacoits had learned to fear the soldiers, and the presence of a large body of men with numerous outlying detachments under military discipline and keeping touch with each other, kept districts which had all the elements of disorder and were perhaps in fact dominated by dacoit leaders in apparent tranquillity. Sagaing was a notable instance of this. The district was covered with posts, but the soldiers hardly saw a dacoit, and consequently no progress was made in breaking up what was a strongly organized combination against our rule.

The troops, moreover, had learned their work; they were led by trained and zealous officers, who had acquired in many cases a minute knowledge of localities which was lost with them. The military police, on the other hand, were new to the country and the work, and seldom had the advantage of being led by trained British officers. The effect of the change began to be felt towards the end of 1887, and the beginning of 1888—that is to say, in the season of the year when life in the forest is dry and pleasant, the favourite time for the pastime of dacoity. Hence there was no doubt a revival of disorder in some places, and the petty disasters which befell the military police were magnified and made much of by some corre-

spondents who found it profitable to misrepresent everything connected with the administration of Burma.

The transition stage did not last long. The Indian police picked up their work with rapidity. No men could have learnt it quicker. They were constantly engaged with dacoits; they frequently followed up and inflicted punishment on them and recovered property without loss to themselves. The few mistakes were seized upon and magnified while the successes vastly greater in number were not noticed.

In the first orders regarding the military police the minimum garrison of a post was fixed at twenty-five men. This was found to be too weak and was raised to forty, and the minimum strength of a patrol was fixed at ten. I found it necessary to forbid any new post to be established without my sanction and to lay down the strength of the movable column to be maintained in each district. The local officers seemed unable to refrain from putting out posts until there was not a man left at headquarters.

In April, 1888, the Viceroy asked me if I saw any sensible signs of the reduction of our troops and the substitution of the police encouraging the dacoits or loosening our hold on the country. After explaining that the districts where the dacoits were most active and organized there had been no reduction of troops, but, on the contrary, constant military activity under keen commanders, I wrote:—

“I have carefully watched events and thought over the matter, and my conclusion is that the dacoits know that the troops have retired and that the police move in small numbers and have taken advantage of the occasion. If this is allowed to go on they will get bolder and will give trouble. . . . I am inclined to sit tight and wait until the men have learnt their work. The native officers will learn the language and the country. . . . The commissioners and district officers like to cover their districts with a perfect network of posts at short distances from each other. If they were allowed their own way there would not be a man left to move about. Last August (1887) this was foreseen, and the strength of the movable column to be kept for active operations in each district was laid down, and orders have been given and have been enforced forbidding the formation of new posts without my sanction.”

Lord Dufferin accepted my views, saying that he would not go into the various considerations which I had placed before him, "except to say that I fully appreciate the calmness and good sense with which you have discussed the matter. A more excitable man might have gone off at a tangent and have been frightened into measures which would certainly have been very expensive and might not have been necessary. I have taken the Commander-in-Chief into counsel, and after going fully and very carefully into the whole matter we are content to accept your views."

There was in point of fact no reason for anxiety. Week by week the police improved. The first combined movement attempted with military police was in the difficult Popa country where four small columns under Captain Hastings, Commandant of the Myingyan battalion, succeeded in running Ya Nyun's gang hard, but did not capture him. And in various encounters in this district alone the dacoit gangs loss amounted to: killed, 105; wounded and captured, 29; captured, 486. Eighteen ponies were taken, 316 firearms, and many dahs and spears.

The casualties of the military police in Upper Burma, during 1888, were 46 killed and 76 wounded, whilst the dacoits lost 312 killed (actually counted after action), and 721 captured. The casualties in the Army in Upper Burma between the 1st of May, 1887, and the 31st of March, 1889, were: killed or died of wounds 60, and wounded 142. (Par. 26 of the Despatch of Major-General Sir George White, K.C.B., V.C., late Commanding the Upper Burma Force. Dated Simla, July 6, 1889.) The police could not have been more active than the soldiers had been. They probably suffered more in proportion to their numbers owing to their inferior training. During the year 1888 the military police were in the field constantly in almost every district in the province.

It became evident that we had not a sufficient number of British officers; if a man fell sick or was wounded, there was no one to take his place. Sixteen additional officers were sanctioned for the police, but they did not arrive until after the close of the year. They added much to the strength and efficiency of the force.

On the whole, it became evident before the middle of 1888 that the police were getting a hold of the province and that no danger had been incurred by reducing the military garrison and bringing the troops into quarters. We had still to rely on the assistance of the soldiers in work that belonged more properly to the police.

Hence in Sagaing, Magwè, the Chindwin district, and some other places where the insurgents showed special activity, I was compelled in some cases to ask for aid. If it was sought unwillingly, it was given most readily by the Major-General commanding, and was invaluable. The civil administration was not yet able to stand alone. It was not so much the rank and file but the many British officers, keen and experienced, whose withdrawal was felt; for it will be remembered each police battalion had at the most two British officers, while very few districts had an area of less than three thousand square miles.

As an example of the invaluable aid rendered by the soldiers, two of the most noted leaders on the Ava side, Shwe Yan and Bo Tok, who had been the scourge of the country since the annexation, fell to parties of British Infantry. Bo Tok was killed by Mounted Infantry of the Rifle Brigade led by Major Sir Bartle Frere, and a few months later, Lieutenant Minogue, with some Mounted Infantry of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, ran down Shwe Yan. The deaths of these two men, who kept the borders of Ava, Myingyan, and Kyauksè in a ferment, enabled the civil power to bring this country into order in a short time.

The military police, however, took their full share of work. A man who had given endless trouble to the troops since the annexation and made his lair on the east side of the Kyauksè district was the Setkya leader. He was attacked by the Kyauksè military police under Captain Gastrell, Commandant of the Mandalay battalion, and his band dispersed. The Setkya escaped, but he was caught and delivered up by the Shan Sawbwa of Lawksawk. After his defeats on former occasions he had found a safe refuge in the Shan hills. The Shan leaders were now our loyal subjects, and the Setkya's career came to an end.

CHAPTER XI

BURMA BECOMES A FRONTIER PROVINCE

IN another direction there was a still greater change than the substitution of police for troops. From being an isolated administration hardly able to look up from our own affairs, and obliged to work in detail, district by district, to establish a beginning of order, Burma was rapidly becoming a frontier province, with daily extending boundaries. I was occupied in this year with framing the administration of the Shan States, which had been visited by Mr. Hildebrand and Mr. Hugh Daly,* with our relations to Eastern Karenni, with the Trans-Salween States and the Siamese claims on that border. The distant region to the north of Bhamo had been occupied for the first time, and it was becoming evident that we should have to reckon with the Kachins in the north and north-east; while the eastern frontier of Upper Burma resting up against the great mass of mountains which stretch down from Manipur to the Bay of Bengal, was beginning to demand attention.

There had been hitherto no leisure and no need to give much thought to the tribes of Chins and others inhabiting these hills. It had been suggested at an early period that Burma should send a party through the Chin country to meet another from the Bengal side, with the design of opening up communication from east to west and making a through road.

I was opposed to this project, and besought the Viceroy to disallow it. I looked upon it as a certain way of rousing the

* Lieut.-Colonel Sir Hugh Daly, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Resident in Mysore.

Chins before we were ready to deal with them. A few days before the end of 1887 Lord Dufferin telegraphed his agreement with my view. In a letter which followed, he wrote: "When the idea was originally proposed, I allowed the matter to be taken in hand with some hesitation, as I felt that it would probably prove a premature endeavour, and I saw no special reason for embarking on luxurious enterprises of the kind while the main work on which we are engaged is still incomplete. For God's sake let us get Burma proper quiet before we stir up fresh chances of trouble and collision in outlying districts."

Of the wisdom of this doctrine there was no doubt. And no one could have been more anxious to avoid new difficulties than I was. The Chins, however, forced our hands, and before the rains of 1888 it was clear that it would be impossible to ignore them. It was foreseen from the first that the occupation of Upper Burma must bring us into conflict with half-savage or altogether savage tribes who occupied the mountains on three sides of the province; and no doubt when it was decided to annex the kingdom the responsible authorities had this matter in their minds.

From the first occupation of Mogaung the isolation of that post and the difficulty of reinforcing it, especially in the rains, was a source of disquiet. I had lost no time in asking that some mountain guns should be attached to the Mogaung battalion of military police, and that a survey for an extension of the railway to the north of the province should be undertaken. The guns were readily granted. To give life to the railway project several departments in India had to be persuaded, notably Finance and Public Works. When their consent had been obtained the Government of India had to move the Secretary of State to sanction the work and to grant the money for it. The survey was started in 1890, and some progress, which may be characterized without injustice as deliberate, had been made before I surrendered Burma to my successor in December of that year. The line to Myitkyina, three hundred and thirty-one miles, was opened in 1895.

These frontier matters have been dealt with in separate chapters of this book. They are referred to here to show the change which had come over the province. The area

of administration was extending rapidly—more rapidly than our resources in men.

Before the end of 1888 the interior of the province ceased to give much cause for anxiety, although it cannot be described as altogether restful. Daylight had appeared in the districts of the Northern and Central Divisions, where the outlook had been darkest. And in some of the southern districts, Minbu and Myingyan (in which was now included Pagan), and in Pakokku, as well as in the whole of the Eastern Division, the disturbances had ceased or were confined to difficult forest tracks in which the remaining gangs had taken refuge.

The Magwè district, as it was now called (the township on the left bank of the river, which had before belonged to Minbu, had been transferred to the Taungdwingyi district, and the headquarters moved to the river town of Magwè), was a source of trouble and sorrow. Nothing seemed to succeed there. Sir Robert Low's warning that this would be the last stronghold of dacoity or organized resistance was justified by events.

The British public were becoming very weary of Burma and even of the abuse heaped upon the local government of the province. Tormented by the questions in Parliament, the Secretary of State would order us every now and then to report how we were getting on, like a child that has planted a flower and pulls it up occasionally to make sure that it is alive. Nevertheless those on the spot were not disheartened. The work had to be done, and all were determined to do it. Personally I had encouragement from every one in the province, civilian or soldier, for whose opinion I cared. Lord Dufferin's kindness and support were never wanting. He understood well the nature of the task. He was satisfied with the work done, and his confidence in our success was firm.

Writing to me on April 2, 1888, he expressed his satisfaction with our work and with what had been done, in terms which are too flattering to be repeated by me.

The constant recurrence of small encounters, small successes, and occasionally small disasters, was very wearisome at the time to all of us, and would be as fatiguing to the reader as to me to relate. I will give the history of some

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cases, which will be enough to explain how the province settled down. It will be remembered that the Village Regulation became law in October, 1887. It took some time to get the district officers, magistrates as well as police, to make themselves acquainted with it, and still longer to induce some of them to make use of its provisions.

In the summer of 1888 the country generally had improved much. Few of the big Bos, or leaders of gangs, were left. But in some districts there was not merely a system of brigandage; it was a system, a long-established system, of government by brigands. The attacks on villages, the murder and torture of headmen and their families, were not so much the symptoms of rebellion against our Government as of the efforts made by the brigands to crush the growing revolt against their tyranny.

Hence it came about that in districts where there was little activity on the part of British officers, and where the chief civil officer failed to get information, very little was heard of the dacoits, simply because the people were paying their tribute to the leaders, who did not need to use coercion.

Sagaing was one of the worst districts in this respect. It had been under the domination of brigands for years before Thebaw was dethroned. It was held by a score of dacoit leaders, who had a thousand men armed with guns at their call. Each had his own division, in and on which he and his men lived, leaving the villagers alone so long as they paid their dues, and punishing default or defection with a ruthless and savage cruelty that might have made a North American Indian in his worst time weep for human nature. It was brought home to us by hard facts that the question was whether the British Government, or what may be called the Bo Government, were to be masters. The people were, everything considered, wonderfully well off. They found our officers ready to accept their excuses and to remit taxation, or, at the worst, to enforce a mild process of distraint or detention against defaulters. On the other side were the Bos, with fire and sword, and worse if their demands were refused or if aid in any form was given to the foreigners. If the people would have given us information, the dacoit system could have been

broken up in a very short time. As they would not, the only course open was to make them fear us more than the dacoits.

In Sagaing no measures hitherto taken had made any visible improvement. Persuasion had been tried. The display of a strong military force occupying the country in numerous posts had no effect. The soldiers seldom saw or heard of a dacoit. The experiment was made of allowing influential local Burman officials to raise a force of armed Burman police on whom they could depend. This succeeded in some cases. But on the whole it failed. The Burmans gave up their guns to the first gang that came for them, or allowed them to be stolen. We could not afford to arm the enemy. I came to the conclusion that the Deputy Commissioner would never get his district into order.

Colonel Symons, working with Mr. Carter, had done very good service in reducing the troublesome country of Pagyi in the Lower Chindwin into order (see p. 85). I asked Sir George White to let me have Colonel Symons's help again. He readily agreed. I sent him, with Mr. Carter, to put Sagaing in order, giving Mr. Carter full powers under the Village Regulation and ample magisterial powers, but reserving the ordinary administrative work to the Deputy Commissioner. At the same time, Mr. Herbert Browning, Assistant Commissioner, was posted to the Ava subdivision to work with Captain Knox, of the 4th Hyderabad Cavalry.

The Sagaing military police battalion was placed under Colonel Symons's orders, and thus unity of command was assured.

Captain Raikes was at this time acting as Commissioner of the Central Division, in the absence of Mr. Fryer, who had taken leave. Captain Raikes was a man who knew Burma well, and was keen and energetic in his work. He came to the conclusion, and Colonel Symons agreed with him, that the severest pressure must be put on the villagers.

A great obstacle in our way was, as has been said, the refusal of the villagers to assist us. But an equal obstacle was their zeal in giving assistance and information to the

brigands. The powers of the Village Regulation had been used elsewhere, under my instructions, to remove persons who gave assistance in any way to the dacoits, and with excellent effect. The proposals now made to me by Colonel Symons and Captain Rankes went beyond anything hitherto done. They represented that so long as the relatives and sympathisers of the brigands remained in their villages, no progress was possible. The gangs would be fed and furnished with immediate news of the movements of police or troops, while no assistance would be given to us. The people themselves told our officers that they could not help us. If they did, the dacoits' relatives informed against them and their lives were taken. Hardly a day passed without some murder of this kind.

It was proposed, therefore, to issue a proclamation to all villages believed to be in league with the dacoits, informing them that unless the men belonging to the village who were out dacoiting surrendered within a fixed time, all their relations and sympathisers would be ordered to leave the village and would be removed to some distant place out of reach of communication. At first the people thought this was a mere threat, and little notice was taken of it. When they found that it was to be enforced, and that the relations and friends were actually being deported, the effect was magical. Concurrently with this action the dacoit gangs were hunted incessantly from jungle to jungle and village to village, and severe fines were imposed on villages which harboured the outlaws or withheld information regarding their movements.

The results were better than I had dared to hope. Many dacoits surrendered in order to save their people from being removed. The villagers came forward with information, and put police and soldiers on to the tracks of the gangs. Small parties of dacoits could no longer move about without danger of being attacked and captured by the people they had preyed upon so long. Whole bodies of men came in and surrendered with their arms. At the end of 1888 few members of the Sagaing gangs were at large, and the district was reduced to order. In Ava the success was similar; and the districts of Yeu Shwebo and the Lower Chindwin had likewise benefited from Colonel Symons's labours.

The credit of devising this system is due to Colonel Raikes. I hesitated at first to go as far as he advised. There were obvious reasons against moving people in this manner; but, if it was easy to see objections to it, it was very difficult to devise a milder measure that would be successful. It proved the most effective weapon in our battery for the restoration of peace and order. The people, of course, felt the pressure of these coercive measures. It was intended that they should feel it. One of the most notorious leaders in the Sagaing Division, Min O, after his capture, declared the fining under the Village Regulation had ruined him, because the villagers, finding themselves unable to meet both the Government demands and his, and finding that the Government could enforce payment while he no longer could, turned upon him and refused to give him asylum. The moving and grouping of villages made it difficult for the gangs to get food, and compelled them to disband or surrender.

The *Gazetteer of Burma*, in the article on Sagaing (vol. ii., p. 188), published in 1908, records that "the strict observance of the Village Regulation . . . gradually led to the pacification of the country. By the end of 1888 no less than twenty-six dacoit leaders, including Shwe Yan, had been killed and twenty-six captured, and most of their followers had come in and were disarmed. Since that time the district has given no trouble."

CHAPTER XII

DACOITY IN THE MINBU AND MYINGYAN DISTRICTS

THE disorder in the Minbu district was similar to that in Sagaing, but I doubt if it had been of such long standing.

It differed in other respects from Sagaing. In that district the Bos formed a confederation. Each had his own village or district, from which he drew his supplies, and his exclusive rights which the others recognized. They communicated with each other and were ready to join forces when it was necessary. In Minbu the government was more autocratic, and centralized in the hands of Ôktama, who had seven or eight lieutenants under his orders. There was also another point of difference. The leaders in Sagaing and generally elsewhere, were local men, and for the most part professional robbers. Ôktama had been a Pongyi some years before, in a monastery a few miles north-west of Minbu. He professed to have a commission from some obscure prince, but laid no claim to royal blood.

He made his first appearance in Minbu in February, 1886, and induced the headmen of many villages to join him.

The people at this time were like sheep without a shepherd. They had heard of the destruction of the wolf they knew, and to whose ways they had become accustomed. Of the new-comers, the *Kalas*, or barbarians, they had had no experience, and they had as yet no reason to believe in their power to protect them. Naturally, therefore, they looked about for some one to help them to work together in their own defence.

Ôktama no doubt had a capacity for organization and command, and the people recognized him as a leader of men; otherwise it is difficult to conceive how in so short

a time he secured their allegiance. His attack on Sagu, a town on the right bank of the Irrawaddy nearly opposite Magwè, has been mentioned before. He burnt the town, which was held by a handful of troops, and then laid siege to Salin with a force said to have numbered five thousand men. The deaths of the two British officers in action against him increased his prestige, and from that time until a few weeks before his capture on the 20th of July, 1889, he was at the head of a large confederacy which had more power in Minbu than the British.

Ôktama assumed the title of Commissioner (Mingyi), and created a regular system of government. He had five lieutenants under him, to whom defined portions of the country were entrusted. His intelligence department was perfect. If the British troops showed a sign of movement, warning was sent from village to village and reached Ôktama in time for him to shift his camp. The organization was very strong. It could not have lived and grown as it did if my officers in Minbu had not been weak, and their rule "*placidius quam feroci provincia dignum.*" They were not of the stuff that can bring a turbulent people to submission.

When I was at Minbu, in the early part of the year, I wished to march through the district and speak to the people. Both the Commissioner and the Brigadier-General, Sir Robert Low, strongly opposed my wish, as they thought it likely that my party would be fired on, the effect of which would be bad. However, I gave my instructions regarding the measures to be taken.

In the June following I rode through the valley of the Môn. The country seemed to me prosperous and well cultivated; betel-vine gardens and plantations of bananas were frequent near the villages, and I saw no sign of distress or armed disorder.

Nevertheless the people were even then under the feet of the dacoits. I changed the district officials as soon as possible.

The improvement of the district dated from the appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Mr. H. S. Hartnoll, who brought to the work the necessary energy, activity, and judgment. He was assisted by Mr. G. G. Collins and

Mr. W. A. Hertz, who were as zealous and active as their chief. In May, 1888, being assured that the people were getting weary of the brigands, I issued a proclamation offering a free pardon to all the rank and file on condition that they surrendered and engaged to live peaceably in their villages. The leaders, eight in number, were excepted by name. They were to be pursued until they were captured or killed.

As two years and a half had elapsed since the annexation, the fact that Burma was part of the British Empire must have penetrated to the most remote village. Warning, therefore, was given that the full rigour of the law would be enforced against all who were taken fighting against the Government, or who aided or abetted the leaders excepted from pardon. The terms of this proclamation were explained to the headmen and villagers assembled at suitable places, and the severe penalties that would follow disobedience were explained to them. A period of one month was allowed for surrenders, and the pursuit of the gangs was pressed unceasingly all through the rains and open season of 1888-9.

The sequel I will give in Mr. Hartnoll's words:—

"His [Ôktama's] power had gradually grown less and less from time to time, but the difficulty has always been to get information of him and his leaders. The villagers would give no aid or information. They began to turn at the beginning of this year (1889) when certain fines were imposed on the worst of the villages, yet they did not give us all the help they could. In April, though his power was much broken and many of his lieutenants killed and captured, yet he had a fairly strong gathering; and Maung Ya Baw, Maung Kan Thi, Ôktaya, Nga Kin, and Byaing Gyi were still to the fore.

"From May 1st the relations of dacoits were removed from their villages and a fortnightly fine imposed on all harbouring villages. On this the villagers gave him up. He and all his principal men except Maung Kin are dead or captured. He had at the end only one boy with him. . . .

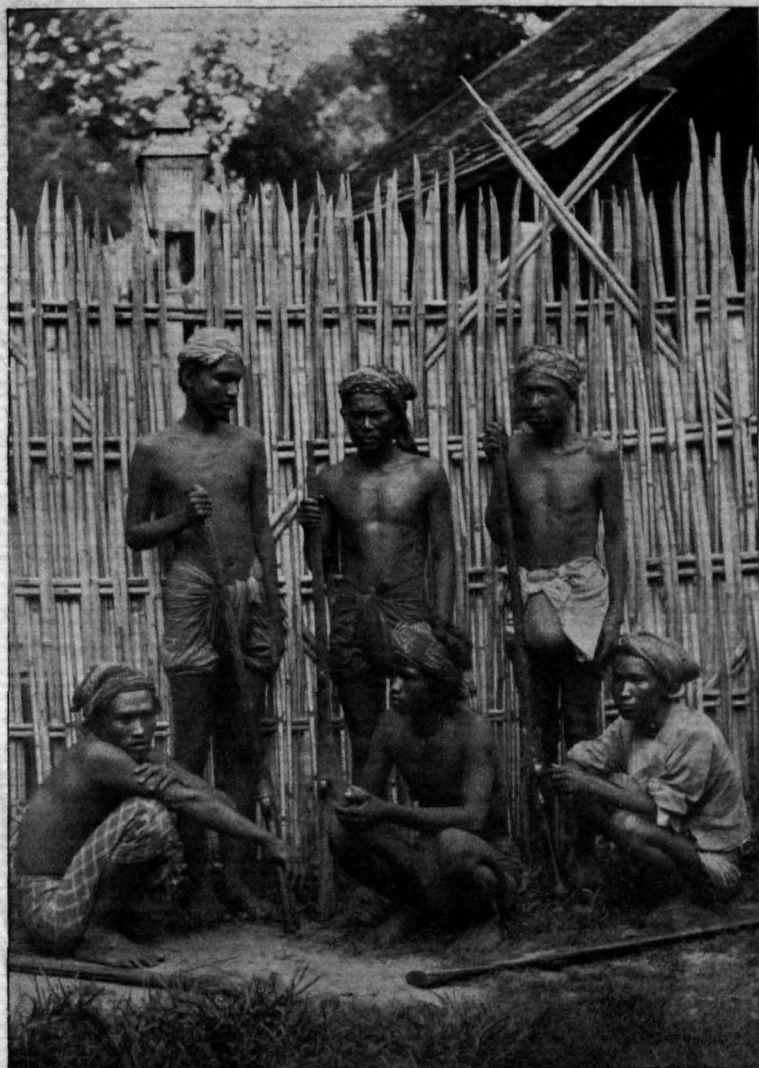
"Our success has been entirely achieved by bringing the villagers to our side by imposing a periodical general fine on them until they helped us, by removing the

relations and sympathizers of the dacoits, by holding certain points fairly close together throughout the district till the leader troubling the point held was caught, and by having constant parties of troops and police always on the move."

The capture of Ôktama was effected in this wise. Maung An Taw Ni, an Upper Burman, the township officer of Legaing, a little town with a population of about three thousand people, some fifteen miles north-west of Minbu, received information that the dacoit chief was near the Chaungdawya Pagoda, a short way from Legaing. Maung An Taw Ni, who had borne a very active part in all the measures taken against the dacoits, started at once with some military police. They came upon Ôktama sitting despairingly by the pagoda with only one follower. It was a tragic picture. When Burmans shall paint historical scenes for the galleries at Rangoon or Mandalay, or write on the events following the fall of their king, "Ôktama at the Golden Pagoda" will be a favourite theme for ballad or drama (*pyazat*).

Another example of dacoity in Upper Burma may be taken from the Myingyan district. I will give the case of Ya Nyun, which gained some notoriety at the time. It is remarkable also for the fact that Ya Nyun is probably the last great leader who is still alive. And that he owes his life to the extraordinary conduct of some very subordinate officials, who, in the loyal desire, it may be supposed, to secure his apprehension, took upon themselves to induce him by vague words to hope for his life if he surrendered. It is certain that no man in Burma ever deserved to be hung more than Ya Nyun. If the voice of the blood of the murdered cries from the ground, the cries for vengeance must still be echoing through the villages and woods round Popa.

Ya Nyun was the Myingaung (literally Captain of the Horse) of the Welaung sub-district of Myingyan, bound at call to furnish one hundred mounted men to the king's army. He had thirty headmen of villages under him. His father, who had been Myingaung before him, was a murderer and a scoundrel. He had been dismissed by King Mindon's Government and tattooed as a bad character



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with the Burmese words meaning: "Beware, cease to do evil," on his forearm.* The son, however, was at Court a hanger-on of the Yaw Mingyi, one of the big ministers. He obtained his father's post. He returned to Welaung and kept a large following of thieves and robbers, and lived on the people.

His oppression became intolerable, and two years before the war a deputation of the Thugyis (village headmen) went up to Mandalay to beg protection, but as the Taingda Mingyi, the most powerful and the worst man about the Court, took Ya Nyun's part, they could get no redress. Two years afterwards a second deputation was sent, and Ya Nyun was summoned to Mandalay. The matter was under inquiry when the British advance became known. Thereupon Ya Nyun was decorated with a gold umbrella (equivalent to a K.C.B.) and sent back to Welaung to fight against the British. So far his case resembles, to some extent, that of Bo Swè, who was, however, a gallant gentleman and an honest citizen beside Ya Nyun.

His first step was to gather around him his former followers, and he started with about fifty ruffians as the leaders and stiffening of his gang. They had to live, and his methods were the same as those of other dacoit leaders. Money and food and women were demanded from the villages, and those who refused supplies were unmercifully punished, their property seized, their villages burnt, their women dishonoured, and their cattle driven off by hundreds. Those who in any way assisted the troops were the objects of special barbarities. If they could not be caught, their fathers or brothers were taken. One of his followers deposed that he was with Ya Nyun when three men who were related to a man who had assisted the British were ordered to be crucified in front of the camp. He says: "I saw the bodies after they were crucified.† They were crucified alive and then shot, their hearts cut open," &c. In another case "five men were caught. Nga Kè [one

* This was the Burman substitute for finger-prints. I have often seen men who have endeavoured to cut the brand out of the flesh.

† The usual practice was to kill the man and then tie the body to a bamboo railing, with the arms and legs stretched out.

of Ya Nyun's men] rode over them as they lay bound, and then shot them."

An Indian washerman, belonging, if I remember right, to the Rifle Brigade, straggled from a column on the march. This same witness, who acted as a clerk or secretary on Ya Nyun's staff, kept a diary and wrote letters and orders, goes on: "Ya Nyun ordered Aung Bet to cut a piece out of the Indian's thigh, morning and evening, and give it to him to eat. The flesh was fried. This was done three days. Six pieces were cut out, then Ya Nyun ordered him to be killed. He was killed. I saw all this with my own eyes."

The ill-treatment of women by these gangs was not unknown. Sometimes they were taken and ill-treated as a punishment to the village which had set at naught the Bo's order. Sometimes they were taken as concubines for Ya Nyun and his comrades. There is one case on record where seven young girls were selected from a village "on account of their youth," and after the dacoits had ill-used them, five were deliberately slaughtered for fear of their giving information. Two escaped. This occurred in January, 1890. The remains of the five girls were found in the jungle afterwards by our men.

The Deputy Commissioner, who examined 136 witnesses as to the doings of Ya Nyun's gang, concluded his inquiry in these words:—

"A perusal of the evidence shows that the organization, which had, perhaps, its first origin in a desire to resist the British Government, degenerated rapidly, as might have been expected from the disreputable persons who played the part of leaders, into a band of marauders who subsisted by terrorism, rapine, murder, dacoity, and other outrages. While remaining in open defiance of Government, they soon ceased to be political rebels, in any respectable sense, though they occasionally gathered in sufficient numbers to resist the troops or police, even so late as February, 1889. They showed no more mercy to their own countrymen than to foreigners. They can have no claim to the title of patriots, but merely to that of *damya*, dacoit, the title invariably applied to them by their own countrymen."

So wrote the Deputy Commissioner who made the inquiry in 1890. Ya Nyun has been in the Andamans

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ever since. I have been told that he has shown there a capacity for command, and is in charge of a gang of convicts. Then by all means let him stay where he is useful and harmless.

I have given the history of Ya Nyun's rise to power and some indications of the nature of his gang. In 1887 to 1888 it was frequently encountered by troops and police, and was more than once roughly treated, but the wilderness around Popa afforded a shelter from which the small and scattered parties of dacoits could not be driven.

In March and April, 1888, a series of combined operations was organized. Four columns of military police acted under Captain Hastings, Commandant of the Myingyan battalion. Several of Ya Nyun's men * were killed and many captured.

In the autumn murders, accompanied in some cases with atrocious cruelties, began again. Early in 1889 Ya Nyun, collecting several other leaders, mustered a strong force, and occupied a position near his own village of Welaung. A body of military police failed to dislodge him, and although the gang was met soon after by a party of the Rifle Brigade, and dispersed with heavy loss, the power of the organization was not destroyed.

After these events an experienced officer, with powers extending to all the country in which Ya Nyun and his accomplices acted, was given control of the operations against the brigands. At his suggestion a pardon was offered to Ya Nyun if he would surrender. I consented with much reluctance, but it seemed better to free the country from misery at any price. The man would not avail himself of it. Throughout the rains he and his men were more active than usual, and their raids were marked by more wanton cruelty and bloodshed than before; a symptom, as I have said before, that the people were becoming less submissive to the dacoits, who on their part were striving to retain their hold on them.

As little substantial progress was being made, I went to the Popa subdivision in January, 1890. I called up an

* Ya Nyun himself on this occasion had a narrow escape. His dah, or sword, was taken and presented to me by the officers and men of the Myingyan battalion. It is a handsome weapon, and was, I believe, presented to Ya Nyun by village headmen of the Yamethin district.

additional police force and saw that the utmost pressure was put, under the Village Regulation, upon the villages which harboured and assisted the dacoits. Some success against the smaller leaders followed, but at the end of April all the greater men, ten in number, for whose capture rewards had been offered, were still at large.

In the middle of April the Commissioner, Mr Symes (the late Sir E. Symes), advised that the time had come for adopting the procedure followed so successfully in Sagaing, Minbu, and elsewhere. This was done. Proclamations were issued much in the same terms as those used in other districts, offering pardon to the rank and file, and warning all concerned that villages assisting the gangs would be severely fined, and that sympathizers and relatives would be deported to a distance. The rewards offered for the capture of the leaders were doubled.

The success was extraordinary. The whole dacoit organization fell to pieces. It collapsed as a tiger shot in the head falls in his tracks. On the 30th of May, 1890, Ya Nyun surrendered. Eleven of his lieutenants or comrades had fallen in action, and forty-two men of note surrendered with him.

One very influential leader of the bands in the Myingyan district, whose name was well known in the years preceding, was not caught. Bo Cho had not shown himself since 1888, and was reported to have disappeared. He lay low until 1896, when he managed to get together some men and began his old game. But in 1896 the Government knew what to do and did it. An officer with sufficient military police was at once appointed and empowered to take action against him, the provisions of the Village Regulation were put into effect, and in a few days he was a prisoner. He was not given an opportunity for further mischief.

CHAPTER XIII

TROUBLE IN THE MAGWÈ DISTRICT

I HAVE alluded several times to the Magwè district. It was in a very bad state and was a blot on the administration, which gave me much thought. This district was called Taungdwingyi at first, and took the name of Magwè when the subdivision of that name lying along the left of the river was added to it. It was not until the end of 1888 that it began to be very troublesome. The leader of most influence at first was Min Yaung, who was killed by a party of troops in May, 1887. Another leader, Tokgyi, rose afterwards and gave much trouble, but he was captured in April, 1888. It seemed that no formidable leaders remained. Small raids and dacoities occurred here, as in most parts of the province, at that time. The revenue collections had increased largely, which was a good sign.

In August, 1888, however, a pretender with the title of the Shwekinyo Prince raised his standard, and was joined by a noted dacoit Bo Lè and others. They hatched their plots in a place on the border of the Magwè township, and began work in November, 1888. Unfortunately, everything in this district was unfortunate, at the very commencement the gang under Bo Lè encountered a party of thirty mounted men of the Magwè battalion, under a British Inspector of Police. The police were badly handled, and lost seven killed and two wounded, while six rifles and three ponies were taken by the dacoits. This gave the gang encouragement, while the police, who had not much cohesion, were for a time somewhat shaken. [See p. 96.]

After this event the gangs separated, probably because the country could not feed them, and took up points at a distance from each other. In January, 1889, some of the

leaders joining hands again, surprised a party of the Myingyan police, and inflicted some loss on them, but were soon afterwards punished by Mounted Infantry from Magwè.

Throughout March and April, the pursuit was kept up with varying success. At last in May, the Mounted Infantry got on to their tracks, killed Bo Lè, and dispersed the gang.

Hitherto the brigands had confined themselves to the west and north-west of the district, open dry country with a good deal of waste land offering a good field for the action of mounted troops.

After a time the Taungdwingyi subdivision also became disturbed, and dacoities became frequent. The conditions on the eastern side of the district were different. The hills known as the Pegu Yomas run along the eastern boundary dividing Magwè from Pyinmana for about sixty or seventy miles, from the Thayetnyo boundary on the south, to some distance beyond Natmauk on the north. From Natmauk the hills gradually diminish and slope away to the plains. The slopes of the Yomas are densely wooded, and between the Magwè boundary and the low country to the east there was much teak forest worked by the Bombay Burma Company. At that time there was also a good growth of the *Acacia Catechu*, and many of the Burmans employed in extracting cutch lived in the forests, and cultivated small cleared plots here and there. The richest villages and best rice-producing land in the district lay along the low lands at the foot of the Yomas, within raiding distance. No dacoit could have wished for better conditions, especially when an inefficient district officer and a poorly commanded police battalion were added.

At this period of the campaign I had lost by sickness and death some of the best and most experienced men. The strength of the Commission all told was not enough for the necessities of the province in its then state. I was compelled to place districts in charge of men who were unfit owing to inexperience and want of training.

It is a fact of which we may all be proud that the average young English gentleman when thrown into conditions which demand from him courage, energy, and

judgment, and the power of governing, answers to the call. Whether he comes from a good school or university, or from his regiment, from the sea or the ranch, whether he has come through the competitive system or has obtained his appointment by other means, he will in the majority of cases be found capable, and sometimes conspicuously able. It is necessary, however, that he should be taught and trained in his work. The Magwè district was in itself not specially hard to manage, not nearly so difficult as many others in Upper Burma. It was in charge of a junior man of the Indian Civil Service, clever but not very wise.

As it was necessary to take special measures against the Yoma gangs, an officer, who had been ten years in the police in Lower Burma and had done excellently in the adjacent district of Thayetmyo, was appointed to work on similar lines in Taungdwingyi.

He was in this matter independent of the Deputy Commissioner, who, although senior to him in the Commission, was much his junior in years and experience. One of the chief duties assigned to him was the removal of villages from which dacoits received their supplies. He removed those lying nearest the hills which harboured the brigands. No doubt the gangs were inconvenienced and exasperated by this measure. In April, 1889, the village of Myothit was attacked and the police post burnt. In May a large body of dacoits under the standard of Buddha Yaza, a pretended prince, who in preceding years had a large following in the Eastern Division, gathered in the Pin township in the north of the district east of Yenangyaung. A party of military police led by two Indian officers attacked them successfully, but they collected again in a stronger position and a second attack by one hundred rifles (military police), led by the Assistant Commissioner and the Assistant Superintendent of Police, neither of them trained soldiers, failed; but soon afterwards the gangs were again met and dispersed.

On the 1st of June, 1889, a small body of dacoits was encountered by Mr. Dyson, Assistant Commissioner, who had with him a party of police. A fight ensued, in which Mr. Dyson was killed. The man who led this gang

was killed afterwards and his followers surrendered. But this was no compensation for the loss of a promising young officer who could be ill spared.*

There was a force of police in the district quite able to hold it, if they had been properly handled, and they were supported by Mounted Infantry. There was evidently a want of some controlling authority which was not to be found in any of the local officers. Just at this time Colonel W. Penn Symons, who had been working in Sagaing, succeeded to the command of the Myingyan district, and at my earnest invitation he went to Magwè and assumed control over the operations for reducing the district to order. All civil and police officers were placed under General Symons absolutely so far as the operations were concerned.

A proclamation was then issued offering a pardon to all who were out, excepting only those who had committed murder and certain named leaders, on condition that they submitted and returned to a peaceful life. This proclamation had some effect, and more than 150 dacoits surrendered with their arms. Most of the men who came in belonged to the Pin and Yenangyaung townships.

In July (1889) I was able to devote a fortnight to this troublesome district and to meet General Symons at Magwè. With him and some of the local officials I marched round the district, going from Magwè to Taungdwingyi, and then up the east to the north, ending at Yenangyaung on the north-west.

I found the country in a better condition than the reports of crime had led me to expect. Going north from Taungdwingyi a good deal of land was lying untilled. But elsewhere every possible field was ploughed and sown, and cattle were plentiful and in good case. This part of the district was a fine open country divided into big fields with thorn hedges. There were, however, here and there tracts of very difficult scrub jungle broken by ravines from which it would be difficult to drive dacoit gangs.

* Mr. Dyson had come to us from the Public Works Department. He had been employed in the Ava subdivision of Sagaing and had shown himself keen and energetic, but he was still very inexperienced in this sort of work.

I had the principal men collected to meet me at all the halting-places and had much consultation with them. The people came readily with their petitions and spoke with perfect frankness of their grievances.

As a problem in administration the conditions differed much from those hitherto dealt with. In Sagaing, Minbu, and elsewhere, the lawlessness was universal and chronic. In Magwè the gangs were small and consisted mainly of professional criminals, not of peasants who had joined well-known leaders either to save their own lives and property or to resist the establishment of a foreign Government. Some of the leaders even were well-known outlaws from Lower Burma, and it was asserted that there were natives of India with the gangs. But only in one case was this substantiated. A native of India, a man of the sweeper caste, had been captured and he was in the Magwè jail. A note written a few days after I had left Magwè will give the impressions I brought away from my tour.

"The two main difficulties are the bad state of the Police Battalion and the nature of the country on the north and on the east of the district. These were aggravated by the injudicious action on the part of the subdivisional officer, for which I must take my share of the blame as I selected him and trusted him fully in consequence of his great success elsewhere. In his desire to force the dacoits to leave the slopes of the mountains, he moved villages too far from their fields and did not show a proper care and judgment in selecting the temporary sites for them to occupy. It was said that men joined the dacoit gangs in consequence. It may have been so in a few instances. The people spoke to me frankly and freely, and they did not allege this. Still it may be true. I debated much with myself whether I should say, 'Go back at once to your old sites.' This would have pleased all. . . . All the headmen I saw admitted that the villages moved were those which added and fed the dacoits, and they admitted unreservedly that if they returned they must continue to aid and feed them. General Symons was of opinion that the removal of these villages would prove of the greatest assistance in capturing the gangs. The mischief for that season had been caused and some of the more distant lands

must lie empty. To let the people return now (July) was useless, while it would prolong our work.

"Their argument was, 'There are fewer dacoits now than there used to be even in the King's time. We prefer dacoits to inconvenience and hardship.'"

That was their attitude everywhere, and if peace was to be established we could not accept it. I removed the incompetent officers and sent the best officer I had at my disposal (the late Mr. Todd Naylor) to take charge of the district. At the same time a competent Commandant was posted to the military police battalion.

General Symons undertook to remain in the district for another month. Minbu had been cleared of the gangs which had harassed it so long, and I was able to transfer Mr. G. G. Collins to Magwè to help Mr. Todd Naylor.

Having put matters in train, my duties took me to Mandalay and then up the Chindwin to arrange matters connected with the coming expedition against the Chins. General Symons was appointed to command the Chin-Lushai expedition, and Magwè had to be left to the local officers. Progress was slow. The dacoits lay up in the forests of the Yomas, and until they were driven out and destroyed there would be no peace.

For the last three months of the year my health compelled me to take leave to the Nilgiri Hills. There was no hill station in Burma at that time. The climate varying between a stokehole and a fern-house was not invigorating, and labour, physical and mental, such as we were all sustaining was somewhat exhausting.

During my absence Mr. A. P. MacDonnell,* Home Secretary to the Government of India, was appointed to act for me. He took up the Magwè business vigorously, and under his direction several columns were organized to operate simultaneously in the unsettled tract from Yamethin, Pyinmana, Magwè, and Thayetmyo. They commenced work in December, 1889. The party from Magwè encountered one of the gangs in the Yomas, but inflicted no punishment on them. One leader was driven out and captured or killed in the Yamethin district. But there was no marked success. The dacoits were able to get food

* Now Lord MacDonnell, P.C., G.C.S.I.