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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

HISTORY

RELATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

WITH THE

HILL TRIBES

OF

THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER OF BENGAL:

BY

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PREFACE.

From 1866 to 1873 I had immediate charge of the local correspondence of the Bengal Government. In 1866, at the request of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Pitt Rivers, I wrote for office purposes, and as I could snatch the time from other more pressing work, a "Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal." Since Pemberton's report in 1835, no general survey had been taken of the local relations of the Government with the hill tribes of Assam, Cachar and Chittagong; and my 'Memorandum' proved to be extremely useful, both to the local officers and the Foreign Department of the Government of India. It was, however, at best, a mere Sketch; and was wanting in those precise references to the original records which are essential for many official purposes. Accordingly, in 1871, I began a fresh and detailed examination of all the records of 1780 up to date, both of the Bengal Secretariat and of the Foreign Department, which bore in any way upon the local history of the North-East Frontier. I made full notes and references as I went along, and in 1873 I began, in my way, as I thought, to preparing, when I could find leisure or get leave, a work, which, while treating exhaustively of all the frontier tribes in that quarter, in respect of their relations to the Government, their manners, customs, and ethnological affinities, would at the same time serve as a permanent hand-book for the Government and its local officers. But the close of 1873 brought us face to face with the Famine, and in the vortex of "special" business arising out of that, all personal plans sank out of sight. The work at first gave way under the pressure of compiling Famine narratives; and my leave, when it came, was spent



absolute severance from pen, ink, and type in every sense. Since my return to India in the end of 1875, I have unremittingly engaged in duties far too arduous to any dream of authorship. Meantime my Memorandum has gone out of print, and the Foreign Department repeatedly suggested that a fresh and revised edition was very desirable. Hitherto I have evaded compliance with all hints of the kind, hoping against hope for a time to compile a work in which the public as well as the offices of Government might take some interest. But the pressure has of late become more severe; and finding that, if the Foreign Office could get nothing better, it meant to re-print the old Memorandum, I volunteered to supplement and expand this, for official purposes only, by such of my notes, so long lying by me, as could in this way be utilised. The task of working these into a form been much heavier than I anticipated, and when the Press had got fairly started the labour was doubled by a request that I would bring down the Narrative to the best I could, to the present time, or at any rate to the year 1882. This involved an examination of the Bengal Government monthly Proceeding volumes for about twenty years, for which I had no notes, and of the Assam Proceedings for nine years, besides the reading of numerous local files kindly supplied by the Foreign Department. Under the circumstances, I have felt justified in borrowing freely for these later years from the text of the Annual Administration Reports; but every paragraph has been verified, and much additional matter introduced. The whole has been prepared and carried through the Press in little over a year, and in the midst of the full ordinary work of the House of Commons. I mention these facts, not by way of boasting, but because I wish emphatically to disclaim any literary



pretensions for a volume produced under such conditions. It is meant to be useful to Government and its officers, nothing more. For any inferences or comments not avowedly quoted from the records I alone am responsible.

I have reproduced in a series of Appendixes various papers which seemed to me likely to be useful for reference, but were too voluminous to be incorporated in the text. I have also ventured to reprint some articles on Frontier topics which I wrote in 1870-72 for the *Pioneer* and *Observer*, not because they are of any special merit in themselves, but because some of them throw a certain amount of contemporaneous side-light on questions discussed in the preceding pages, while some of them give sketches of the work and personality of our Frontier officers, with many of whom I have had the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance. To the task of reclaiming the Nagas and Garos of the North-east Frontier my friends Gregory, Butler and Williamson sacrificed their lives. My friend as to thank the Lushais for his well earned honours. Jhittagong Hill men my friend Lewin, in his happy at, has many a curious tale to tell: and my school-mate, Edinstone, has excellent reputation by the hold he has won in Manipur. Notices of these men and their found in the articles.

From the lips or pens of them and many others, n, Hopkinson, Agnew, Haughton, Graham, and Power y nothing of the untiring officers of the Survey, f m no peak is inaccessible, no jungle impenetrable, and ne too rude to be faced, I had stores of gathered material ich cannot now be used. I had, indeed, hoped at one e to have had the aid of some of them in putting th



CSL

IV.]

PREFACE.

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wild story of this frontier into complete and fitting dress. As it is, any frontier officer who cares to undertake the task is welcome to appropriate anything in the following pages that may suit his purpose.

It only remains to explain that the references to 'Judicial', 'Revenue' and 'Political' Proceedings, and to the earlier 'Consultations' are to the records of the Bengal Government, save where it is specifically stated that the records belong to the Government of India. The 'Secret Proceedings' are those of the Foreign Department of the Supreme Government. The 'Assam Proceedings' are those reported by that Administration to the Foreign Office of the Government of India.

I have to thank Lieutenant-Colonel Deprée, the Surveyor General, for the map attached. I would also express my indebtedness to the Superintendent of the Home Office Press for the skill and patience with which he and his staff have deciphered what was unavoidably at times the remotest of all rough 'copy'.

23rd January 1884.

A. N.

—A brief notice of recent events among the Akas (see in Chapter IV) will be found in the concluding Chapter. It is necessary to print off the book by instalments, which makes it impossible to write up to date any of the earlier Chapters.

(2.) The Cachar officials will, at the present time, read with interest and profit Mr. Edgar's valuable Reports in the Appendix, especially his views on the Kookie Levy and the importance of keeping a strict eye on Kookies settled in Cachar. (See pages 441—443).

(3.) The reader must overlook occasional variations in the spelling of proper names. Every local officer has his own way, sometimes several ways. It has not been possible to reduce all to any uniformity of spelling.



CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—	PAGE.
The North-East Frontier—Definition	1
Early History of Assam	2
The Shan Invasion	<i>ib.</i>
The Moamariah Dissenters and their struggles with the Native Government of Assam	<i>ib.</i>
British intervention	3
Withdrawal of British troops, 1794	<i>ib.</i>
Distracted state of Assam—Burmese intervention	<i>ib.</i>
War between the British and Burmese Governments, March the 5th, 1824	4
Organisation of the administration in British Assam	5
Purunder Sing and his Government of Upper Assam, 1832-33	<i>ib.</i>
Assam becomes a Non-Regulation Province	6
The Revenue System of Assam	<i>ib.</i>
State of the province at annexation	7
The Frontier Tribes	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER II.

SKETCH OF BRITISH RELATIONS WITH BHUTAN PROPER—

The Bhutan Terai, Dwars, or Straths	9
The Assam Dwars of Bhutan	10
Arrangements between the Assamese Government and the Bhutias	<i>ib.</i>
The British mode of dealing with the Bhutias	<i>ib.</i>
Bhutia outrages, 1828	11
Raids in 1836	<i>ib.</i>
Futile attempts at regular negotiation	<i>ib.</i>
Pemberton's mission, 1837	<i>ib.</i>
Final attachment of the Dwars by the British, 1841	12
Further aggression of the Bhutias, 1854	<i>ib.</i>
Warnings given to the Bhutias	<i>ib.</i>
Mr. Eden's mission	<i>ib.</i>
The Bhutan War	13
Character of the existing treaty with Bhutan	<i>ib.</i>
Demarcation of boundary	14
Later events	<i>ib.</i>



CHAPTER III.

THE EXTRA-BHUTAN BHUTIAS—	PAGE.
The Kuriapara Dvár	15
Trade between Assam and Thibet	<i>ib.</i>
The Kuriapara Fair	16
Cession of the Dvár for an annual payment, 1843-44	<i>ib.</i>
Story of the Gelling Raja	<i>ib.</i>
Later events	18
Demarcation of boundary	<i>ib.</i>
The Bhutias of Char Dvár	<i>ib.</i>
The Thebengea Bhutias	19

CHAPTER IV.

THE AKAS—HAZARI-KHAWAS AND KAPACHORS—	
Divisions and allies of the Akas	21
The right of <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Commutation of the <i>posa</i> of the Hazari-Khawas	22
The outrages of the Kapachors	<i>ib.</i>
Agreements with the Akas, 1842	23
Later events	25

CHAPTER V.

THE DUPHLA TRIBES—	
Early notice of the Duphlas	27
Their troublesome character	<i>ib.</i>
Partial submission of the Duphlas of Char Dvár	28
Submission of the Noadvár Duphlas	<i>ib.</i>
Final commutation of the <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Duphla disturbances in 1870	29
A Duphla's love troubles... ..	<i>ib.</i>
Further raids in 1872-73	31
Later events	32

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABORS AND MIRIS—	
Close connection between the Abors and Miris	33
Their local distribution	<i>ib.</i>
Visits to the Abor country	34
The Abors have no claim to <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Early notices of the Abors and Miris	<i>ib.</i>
Abor claims to revenue from gold-washers and fishermen	35

CHAPTER VI.—*concluded.*

THE ABORS AND MIRIS— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
Captain Vetch's negotiations in 1847	36
First collision with the Abors, 1848	<i>ib.</i>
Further unpleasantness on the Abor Frontier	37
Measures of conciliation ordered by Government	<i>ib.</i>
Dalton's visit to Membo	<i>ib.</i>
Serious Abor raid, 1853	<i>ib.</i>
Preparation for an expedition	39
The expedition and its progress	<i>ib.</i>
Causes of its failure	40
The second Abor Expedition, 1859	<i>ib.</i>
Continued hostility of the Meyong Abors	41
Proposals for guarding the Luckimpore District	42
Submission of the Abors	<i>ib.</i>
Later events	44

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISHMIS—

Local distribution of the Mishmi Tribes	47
Early visits to the Mishmi country	<i>ib.</i>
Dr. Griffith's account	48
Murder of a wandering ascetic	<i>ib.</i>
Murder of French missionaries by Mezho Mishmis	<i>ib.</i>
Eden's expedition into the hills	49
Good behaviour of Tani Mishmis	<i>ib.</i>
Troublesome character of the Chulkattas	<i>ib.</i>
Defence of the Khampai villages	50
Submission of a Chulkatta Chief	51
Later events	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL REVIEW OF POLICY ON THE SUB-HIMALAYAN BORDER—

The Inner Line Regulation	55
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER IX.

THE KHAMPTI CLANS OF SADIVA—

Early history of the Assam Khamptis	57
Their official recognition by Mr. Scott	<i>ib.</i>
Continued immigration of Khamptis	58
Deposition of the Khampti Chief	<i>ib.</i>
The Khampti insurrection	59
Dispersion of the Khampti Settlement	60



CHAPTER III.

THE EXTRA-BHUTAN BHUTIAS—	PAGE.
The Kuriapara Dwār	15
Trade between Assam and Thibet	<i>ib.</i>
The Kuriapara Fair	16
Cession of the Dwār for an annual payment, 1843-44	<i>ib.</i>
Story of the Gelling Raja	<i>ib.</i>
Later events	18
Demarcation of boundary	<i>ib.</i>
The Bhutias of Char Dwār	<i>ib.</i>
The Thebenges Bhutias	19

CHAPTER IV.

THE AKAS—HAZARI-KHAWAS AND KAPACHORS—

Divisions and allies of the Akas	21
The right of <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Commutation of the <i>posa</i> of the Hazari-Khawas	22
The outrages of the Kapachors	<i>ib.</i>
Agreements with the Akas, 1842	23
Later events	25

CHAPTER V.

THE DUPHLA TRIBES—

Early notice of the Duphlas	27
Their troublesome character	<i>ib.</i>
Partial submission of the Duphlas of Char Dwār	28
Submission of the Noadwār Duphlas	<i>ib.</i>
Final commutation of the <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Duphla disturbances in 1870	29
A Duphla's love troubles	<i>ib.</i>
Further raids in 1872-73	31
Later events	32

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABORS AND MIRIS—

Close connection between the Abors and Miris	33
Their local distribution	<i>ib.</i>
Visits to the Abor country	34
The Abors have no claim to <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Early notices of the Abors and Miris	<i>ib.</i>
Abor claims to revenue from gold-washers and fishermen	35



CSL

CONTENTS.

[iii.]

CHAPTER VI.—*concluded.*

THE ABORS AND MIRIS— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
Captain Vetch's negotiations in 1847	36
First collision with the Abors, 1848	<i>ib.</i>
Further unpleasantness on the Abor Frontier	37
Measures of conciliation ordered by Government	<i>ib.</i>
Dalton's visit to Membo	<i>ib.</i>
Serious Abor raid, 1853	38
Preparation for an expedition	<i>ib.</i>
The expedition and its progress	40
Causes of its failure	<i>ib.</i>
The second Abor Expedition, 1853	41
Continued hostility of the Meyong Abors	42
Proposals for guarding the Juckimpore District	<i>ib.</i>
Submission of the Abors	44
Later events	

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISHMIS—

Local distribution of the Mishmi Tribes	47
Early visits to the Mishmi country	<i>ib.</i>
Dr. Griffith's account	48
Murder of a wandering ascetic	<i>ib.</i>
Murder of French missionaries by Mezho Mishmis	<i>ib.</i>
Eden's expedition into the hills	49
Good behaviour of Tain Mishmis	<i>ib.</i>
Troublesome character of the Chulkattas	<i>ib.</i>
Defence of the Khampati villages	50
Submission of a Chulkatta Chief	51
Later events	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL REVIEW OF POLICY ON THE SUB-HIMALAYAN BORDER—

The Inner Line Regulation	55
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER IX.

THE KHAMPTI CLANS OF SADIYA—

Early history of the Assam Khampis	57
Their official recognition by Mr. Scott	<i>ib.</i>
Continued immigration of Khampis	58
Deposition of the Khampati Chief	<i>ib.</i>
The Khampati insurrection	59
Dispersion of the Khampati Settlement	60



CHAPTER X.

THE SINGPHOS OF SADIYA—

PAGE.

Hannay's account of the Singphos ...	61
Their first appearance in Assam ...	62
First notice of them in our records ...	<i>ib.</i>
Singpho invasion of Sadiya, 1825 ...	<i>ib.</i>
The political view of the situation ...	63
Submission of four Chiefs—Burmese Invasion ...	<i>ib.</i>
Neufville's Expedition ...	64
Submission of the Singphos ...	<i>ib.</i>
Proposals to open up Patkoi trade route ...	<i>ib.</i>
Recusancy of the Duffa Gam ...	65
Invasion from Bor-Khampti ...	<i>ib.</i>
Discussions of Assam Policy ...	66
Continued raids by the Duffa Gam ...	<i>ib.</i>
Negotiation regarding him with the Burmese Government ...	67
Second Burmese embassy to the Patkoi frontier ...	68
Further Singpho disturbances ...	<i>ib.</i>
Submission of Ningroola ...	<i>ib.</i>
Fresh general outbreak of Singphos ...	69
Enquiry into its causes ...	70
Final report on the rebellion ...	71
Later events ...	72

CHAPTER XI.

THE MOAMARIAHS OF MUTTUCK—

Early history of the Moamarlahs ...	73
Relations with the Burmese and British ...	<i>ib.</i>
Arrangements made on the death of the Bor Senapati ...	74

PART II.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NAGA TRIBES. A.—THE PATKOI NAGAS—

Extent of the Naga country ...	77
Distinction between the tribes east and west of the Dhunsiri ...	<i>ib.</i>
Butler's account of the Naga tribes, 1873 ...	<i>ib.</i>
First notice of these Nagas, 1835 ...	88
Their sufferings from the Singphos ...	<i>ib.</i>
Proposals for their protection ...	<i>ib.</i>
The Inner Line ...	89



CHAPTER III.

THE EXTRA-BHUTAN BHUTIAS—	PAGE.
The Kuriapara Dwār	15
Trade between Assam and Thibet	<i>ib.</i>
The Kuriapara Fair	16
Cession of the Dwār for an annual payment, 1843-44	<i>ib.</i>
Story of the Gelling Raja	<i>ib.</i>
Later events	18
Demarcation of boundary	<i>ib.</i>
The Bhutias of Char Dwār	<i>ib.</i>
The Thebengua Bhutias	19

CHAPTER IV.

THE AKAS—HAZARI-KHAWAS AND KAPACHORS—

Divisions and allies of the Akas	21
The right of <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Commutation of the <i>posa</i> of the Hazari-Khawas	22
The outrages of the Kapachors	<i>ib.</i>
Agreements with the Akas, 1842	23
Later events	25

CHAPTER V.

THE DUPHLA TRIBES—

Early notice of the Duphlas	27
Their troublesome character	<i>ib.</i>
Partial submission of the Duphlas of Char Dwār	28
Submission of the Noadwār Duphlas	<i>ib.</i>
Final commutation of the <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Duphla disturbances in 1879	29
A Duphla's love troubles	<i>ib.</i>
Further raids in 1872-73	31
Later events	32

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABORS AND MIRIS—

Close connection between the Abors and Miris	33
Their local distribution	<i>ib.</i>
Visits to the Abor country	34
The Abors have no claim to <i>posa</i>	<i>ib.</i>
Early notices of the Abors and Miris	<i>ib.</i>
Abor claims to revenue from gold-washers and fishermen	35

CHAPTER VI.—*concluded.*THE ABORS AND MIBIS—*concluded.*

	PAGE.
Captain Vetch's negotiations in 1847	36
First collision with the Abors, 1848	<i>ib.</i>
Further unpleasantness on the Abor Frontier	37
Measures of conciliation ordered by Government	<i>ib.</i>
Dalton's visit to Membo	<i>ib.</i>
Serious Abor raid, 1853	39
Preparation for an expedition	<i>ib.</i>
The expedition and its progress	40
Causes of its failure	<i>ib.</i>
The second Abor Expedition, 1853	41
Continued hostility of the Meyong Abors	42
Proposals for guarding the Luckimpore District	<i>ib.</i>
Submission of the Abors	44
Later events	

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISHMIS—

Local distribution of the Mishmi Tribes	47
Early visits to the Mishmi country	<i>ib.</i>
Dr. Griffith's account	48
Murder of a wandering ascetic	<i>ib.</i>
Murder of French missionaries by Mezho Mishmis	<i>ib.</i>
Eden's expedition into the hills	49
Good behaviour of Tain Mishmis	<i>ib.</i>
Troublesome character of the Chulkattas	<i>ib.</i>
Defence of the Khampiti villages	50
Submission of a Chulkatta Chief	51
Later events	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL REVIEW OF POLICY ON THE SUB-HIMALAYAN BORDER—

The Inner Line Regulation	55
---------------------------	----

CHAPTER IX.

THE KHAMPTI CLANS OF SADIYA—

Early history of the Assam Khampitis	57
Their official recognition by Mr. Scott	<i>ib.</i>
Continued immigration of Khampitis	58
Deposition of the Khampiti Chief	<i>ib.</i>
The Khampiti insurrection	59
Dispersion of the Khampiti Settlement	60



CHAPTER X.

THE SINGPHOS OF SADIYA—

PAGE.

Hannay's account of the Singphos ...	61
Their first appearance in Assam ...	62
First notice of them in our records ...	<i>ib.</i>
Singpho invasion of Sadiya, 1825 ...	<i>ib.</i>
The political view of the situation ...	63
Submission of four Chiefs—Burmese Invasion ...	<i>ib.</i>
Neufville's Expedition ...	64
Submission of the Singphos ...	<i>ib.</i>
Proposals to open up Patkoi trade route ...	<i>ib.</i>
Recusancy of the Duffa Gam ...	65
Invasion from Bor-Khampti ...	<i>ib.</i>
Discussions of Assam Policy ...	66
Continued raids by the Duffa Gam ...	<i>ib.</i>
Negotiation regarding him with the Burmese Government ...	67
Second Burmese embassy to the Patkoi frontier ...	68
Further Singpho disturbances ...	<i>ib.</i>
Submission of Ningrook ...	<i>ib.</i>
Fresh general outbreak of Singphos ...	69
Enquiry into its causes ...	70
Final report on the rebellion ...	71
Later events ...	72

CHAPTER XI.

THE MOAMARIAHS OF MUTTUCK—

Early history of the Moamariahs ...	73
Relations with the Burmese and British ...	<i>ib.</i>
Arrangements made on the death of the Bor Senapati ...	74

PART II.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NAGA TRIBES. A.—THE PATKOI NAGAS—

Extent of the Naga country ...	77
Distinction between the tribes east and west of the Dhuxsiri ...	<i>ib.</i>
Butler's account of the Naga tribes, 1873 ...	<i>ib.</i>
First notice of these Nagas, 1835 ...	88
Their sufferings from the Singphos ...	<i>ib.</i>
Proposals for their protection ...	<i>ib.</i>
The Inner Line ...	89

CHAPTER XIV.—*concluded.*

THE NAGA TRIBES. C.—THE ANGAMI NAGAS— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
The Bengal Government proposal	119
Lieutenant Gregory occupies Samoogooding	120
Razapanah raids	121
Interneine feuds of the tribes	122
The Manipur boundary question	<i>ib.</i>
Captain Butler presses for a bolder policy	123
Sir G. Campbell's views of policy	124
Survey operations in the Hills	<i>ib.</i>
Extension of British protectorate to Naga villages	127
Change of policy proposed	128
Death of Butler	129
Forward policy finally resolved upon	<i>ib.</i>
Definite orders as to policy issued	130
Expedition of 1877-78	131
Occupation of Kohimah	132
Mr. Damant's diaries	133
Indications of pending trouble	134
Mr. Damant's murder	135
Siege of Kohimah	<i>ib.</i>
Punitive expedition, 1879-80	136
Subsequent operations	137
Raid on Baledhan	<i>ib.</i>
Measures adopted for defence and punishment	138
Assessment of revenue	140
Revised boundary of the district	141
State of affairs in 1880-81	<i>ib.</i>
State of affairs in 1881-82	142
Description of Nagas and their villages	143

CHAPTER XV.

NORTH CACHAR—

Hill Tribes in North Cachar	145
The Kookies	146
Present composition of North Cachar	147
Samphudan's Insurrection, 1881-82	<i>ib.</i>
The Kookie Militia	149

CHAPTER XVI.

MANIPUR—

Reasons for noticing Manipur	149
Position of Manipur	<i>ib.</i>
Condition of Manipur and the surrounding hill tribes	<i>ib.</i>
Rise of our political relations with Manipur: formation of the Manipur Levy	150

CHAPTER XVI.—*continued.*

MANIPUR— <i>continued.</i>	PAGE.
Treaties of 1833 and 1834 : death of Gambheer Sing, 1834 ...	151
Minute of Lord William Bentinck, 1835 : first appointment of a Political Agent ...	152
Intermittent wars for the succession, 1834-1850 ...	153
Special recognition and guarantee of Chander Kirtee Sing to the Raj of Manipur by the British Government, 1851 ...	ib.
Condition of Manipur under Chander Kirtee Sing, 1851 to 1861 ...	155
Proposed abolition of the Political Agency in Manipur, 1861 ...	ib.
Memorandum by Major MacCulloch, 8th July 1861 ...	ib.
Opinion of the Bengal Government upon the retention of the Political Agency ...	158
Position of the Agency ...	159
Modern raids on Manipur ...	160
The Lushais ...	ib.
Policy to be pursued by Manipur towards the Lushais ...	161
The Political Agent not to visit the Lushai country without sanction ...	ib.
Manipur deputation to the Lushai country in 1877 ...	162
Relations with the Kamhows or Sooties ...	163
Manipur Expedition against the Kamhows in 1857 ...	164
Aggressions by the Sooties reported in 1859 ...	ib.
Relations between Manipur and the Sooties up to 1871 ...	165
Friendly assurances of the Sooties previous to the Lushai Expedition ...	ib.
Capture of the Kamhow Chief Kokatung by the Manipur Contingent ...	166
Affairs from 1872 to 1875. Policy to be pursued by Manipur towards the Kamhows ...	167
Manipur Expedition of 1875 against the Kamhows ...	169
Further Kamhow raids on Manipur Territory ...	170
Migration of the Sooties into Manipur ...	171
Position of the Sooties with regard to Burma ...	ib.
Proposal to make the Sooties tributary to Manipur ...	175
The Kuba Valley and Affairs on that Frontier ...	ib.
Dispute with Burma regarding the right of Manipur to the Kuba Valley ...	176
Cession of the Kuba Valley to Burma ...	181
Compensation to Manipur for the loss of the Kuba Valley ...	186
Aggressions in Burmese territory by the Manipur village of Loochoopa ...	ib.
Raid on the Manipur village of Mokoo ...	187
Alleged raid on the Manipur village of Nat-tseng-nga ...	ib.
General Nuthall's visit to the frontier in 1871 in connection with the boundary question ...	188
Colonel Mowbray Thomson's visit to the frontier in connection with the boundary question ...	189
Alleged raid by Manipur Nagas on the Burmese village of Beetooop ...	192
Complaints by the Burmese against Manipur. Burmese Government asked to correspond through the Resident at Mandalay on Manipur-Kuba frontier matters ...	ib.
Alleged raid by Manipur Kongjais on the Burmese village of Nampee ...	193
Dr. Brown's visit to the frontier to investigate the case ...	195

CHAPTER XVI.—*concluded.*

MANIPUR— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
Attack by Burmese on the Manipur out-post of Kongal ...	196
Aggressions of the Chasád Kookies ...	203
Arrest of six Manipuri sepoys by Chasád Kookies ...	204
Events of 1879-80 ...	<i>ib.</i>
Chasád raid on Chingsao ...	205
Raids by Sooties, 1879-80 ...	206
Affairs on the Burmese border, 1879-80 ...	<i>ib.</i>
Sootie Kookies ...	208
Lushais ...	<i>ib.</i>
Events of 1881-82 ...	<i>ib.</i>
Affairs on the Burmese Border ...	<i>ib.</i>
Other events of the year ...	210
Account of the Chasád Kookies ...	211
Submission of the Chasáds ...	212

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MIKIRS AND RENGMA NAGAS—

The Mikirs ...	213
Raid on Hurlock Parbat ...	214
The Rengma Nagas ...	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS—

Pemberton's account of Jaintia ...	217
Annexation of Jaintia ...	219
Pemberton's account of the Khasi Hills ...	220
Mr. Scott's negotiations with Nungklow ...	221
The Khasi insurrection, 1829 ...	222
Outbreak of 1831 ...	223
Final pacification of the hills, 1833 ...	230
Account of Khasi Chiefs ...	232
Kyrim ...	<i>ib.</i>
Churra ...	233
Nurtang ...	<i>ib.</i>
Nuspung, Muriow, and Murram ...	<i>ib.</i>
Constitution of the Khasi States ...	<i>ib.</i>
Description of the Hills and Plateau ...	234
Present condition of the Khasi States ...	237
Results of British administration ...	239
Later history of Jaintia ...	<i>ib.</i>
Mr. Mills' deputation ...	240
Mr. Allen's proposals ...	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER XVIII.—*concluded.*

THE KHASI AND JAINTELA HILLS— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
Sinteng Rebellion, 1860	241
The income tax	<i>ib.</i>
Second rising, 1862	242
Shillong	243

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GAROS—

Early history of the Garo frontier	245
Mr. Scott's Report of 1816	247
Mr. Scott's proposals for settlement	248
The orders of Government thereupon	249
Legislative proposals	<i>ib.</i>
The 'Paghul' riots in Mymensingh	254
Rivalry of troubles on the Assam side, 1836	255
Raids of 1852	257
Lord Dalhousie's views on Garo policy	<i>ib.</i>
Views of Colonel Jenkins and Mr. Mills	258
Renewed raids, 1856—1859	<i>ib.</i>
Proposals for direct management, 1861	259
Expedition of 1861	<i>ib.</i>
Orders of the Home Government on Garo policy	260
Extension of Luskur and Zimmadar system	<i>ib.</i>
Raids of 1866	261
Appointment of a special Officer to the Hills	<i>ib.</i>
Enacting of Act XXII of 1869	262
Case of Loosung case	263
Events of 1872 and final reduction of the Bemulwa Garos	265
Appointments	266
Legislation	267
System of 'dai'	<i>ib.</i>

PART III.

CHAPTER XX.

HILL TIPPERAH—

Mythical history of Tipperah	269
Annexation by the British	271
The hills become Independent Tipperah	272
Disputed successions	273
Description of the country in 1808	275
Succession between 1813 and 1870	<i>ib.</i>

CHAPTER XX.—*concluded.*

HILL TIPPERAH— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
Aggressive policy of Rajahs in the Hills	276
Notices of Tipperah in 1824	<i>ib.</i>
Encroachments in Sylhet	277
Measures to restrain these	278
Relations with the Kookies	279
Kookie murders in 1826	<i>ib.</i>
Tipperah Raid on Kundul, 1836	280
Anomalous arrangements for extradition	<i>ib.</i>
Correspondence regarding dues on hill produce	281
Further discussions regarding the Sylhet boundary	282
Survey of Tipperah boundary	284
Later disputes as to boundary	<i>ib.</i>
Question of the Chittagong boundary	285
Appointment of a Political Agent	286

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LUSHAI OR KOOKIE TRIBES—

Description of the Lushais as known in 1853	287
Raids of 1844	288
Blackwood's Expedition	289
Raids on Kookie villages in Cachar	290
Reports from Manipur, 1847	291
Massacres of 1847	292
Raids of 1849	293
Punitive measures	294
Lister's Expedition, 1850	295
Orders of Government on Lister's Report	296
Negotiations in 1850-51	297
Kookie embassies between 1855 and 1861	298
Raids of 1862	299
Negotiations with Sookpikal, 1864	300
Negotiations with Vompilal	301
Proposed Expedition, 1865-66	302
Raids in 1868-69	303
Punitive measures	<i>ib.</i>
Expedition of 1869	<i>ib.</i>
Failure of central and western columns	302
Proceedings of the eastern column	<i>ib.</i>
Proposals for second Expedition negatived	<i>ib.</i>
Mr. Edgar's tour, 1869-70	304
Policy proposed by him	<i>ib.</i>
Raids of 1871	305
Raids on Cachar	<i>ib.</i>



CHAPTER XXI.—concluded.

THE LUSHAI OR KOOKIE TRIBES—concluded.	PAGE.
Raids on Sylhet	307
Raids on Hill Tipperah	<i>ib.</i>
Raids on Manipur	<i>ib.</i>
Identity of raiders	308
Discussion of measures to be adopted	309
Expedition of 1871-72	310
Arrangements for carriage	312
Operations of the Cachar column	313
Operations of the Chittagong column	314
Survey operations	316
Defensive posts	317
Future policy	<i>ib.</i>
Effect of the expedition	<i>ib.</i>
Movement of the tribes northward	318
Policy of defence and conciliation	<i>ib.</i>
Sir R. Temple's proposal to control Sookpila from the south	<i>ib.</i>
Mr. Johnson's tour, 1877	320
Quarrels between Eastern and Western Lushais	321
Events of 1878-79	322
Events of 1879-80	323
Events of 1880-81	324
Events of 1881-82	325
The Lushai famine	<i>ib.</i>
Visits to Lushai-land by Government officials	326
Gradual cessation of famine	327
Exports to and imports from Lushai-land	<i>ib.</i>
Cost of Government relief	<i>ib.</i>
Events of 1882-83	<i>ib.</i>
Apprehension at present time, January 1884	328

CHAPTER XXII.

CHITTAGONG FRONTIER TRIBES—

The Chittagong Hill Tracts	329
Lewin's sketch of the Hill peoples	<i>ib.</i>
Revenue system of the Hill Tracts	332
History of the Phru family and their dissensions	333
Proposals for defence of country by the Phrus	<i>ib.</i>
Mr. Bicketts' settlement	334
Shindu raids in 1847-48	335
Hopkinson's Expedition, 1847	336
Raids of 1849-50	<i>ib.</i>
Raids in 1850-51	337
Discussion of policy	338

CHAPTER XXII.—*concluded.*

CHITTAGONG FRONTIER TRIBES— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
Views of Government in 1854	338
Arrangements made in 1858	340
Creation of the Hill Tracts District	341
Great Kookie Invasion of 1860	342
Expedition against Rutton Poa	344
Submission of Rutton Poa	345
Defiance of the Howlongs and Syloos	346
Sir C. Beadon's policy	<i>ib.</i>
Graham's negotiations with the tribes, 1862-63	347
Raids in 1866	351
Captain Bowie's deputation	354
Captain Bowie's proposals	355
Kassalong Meeting of December 1877	<i>ib.</i>
Raids in 1868-69	356
Raids in 1869-70	<i>ib.</i>
Raids	357
Frontier defence	<i>ib.</i>
Reconnoissance of the Lushai country	<i>ib.</i>
Outrage committed by Rutton Poa	358
Policy to be followed laid down, 1870	359
Policy adopted in 1871-72	362
Survey operations	363
Proposals of the Bengal Government in 1873	<i>ib.</i>
Subsequent events	365

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION—

The Aka Expedition of 1883-84	367
Review of policy in continuation of Chapter VIII	369

APPENDIXES.

APPENDIX A.

WELSH'S REPORT ON ASSAM, 1794	377
--------------------------------------	-----

APPENDIX B.

NOTIFICATIONS DEFINING THE "INNER LINE" OF BRITISH JURISDICTION IN FRONTIER DISTRICTS	395
---	-----

APPENDIX C. PAGE.

THE SEEBSAUGOR NAGAS IN 1873	399
------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

APPENDIX D.

ORDERS OF 1838 ON HILL TIPPERAH TRANSIT DUES	405
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

APPENDIX E.

PAPERS REGARDING THE LUSHAI COUNTRY AND POLICY—

I.—Mr. Edgar's Notes on his tour among the Lushais in 1871	...	...	...	...	415
Mr. Edgar's Notes on the Lushai and other Kookies	...	...	...	...	426
II.—Report of the Political Officer with the Left Column of the Lushai Expedition	...	...	...	...	437
III.—Report of the Political Officer with the Right Column of the Lushai Expedition	...	...	...	...	465
IV.—Selection of correspondence subsequent to the Lushai Expedition	...	...	...	...	471

APPENDIX F.

CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE FRONTIER DEFENCE OF ASSAM	495
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

APPENDIX G.

HOPKINSON'S EXPEDITION UP THE KOLADYNE	525
--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

APPENDIX H.

HOPKINSON'S REVIEW OF POLICY ON THE CHITTAGONG FRONTIER IN 1856	531
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

APPENDIX J.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ASSAM CENSUS REPORT, 1881	537
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

APPENDIX K.

ARTICLES ON FRONTIER WORK AND POLICY, 1870-72—

Act XXII. of 1869	...	...	...	...	551
The Garo Hills District	...	...	...	...	553
More about the Garos	...	...	...	...	554
The Naga Hills District	...	...	...	...	556
The Chittagong Hill Tracts	...	...	...	...	557
North-East Frontier Defence	...	...	...	...	559
Hill Tipperah	...	...	...	...	561
The Lushais	...	...	...	...	562
More about the Lushais	...	...	...	...	564
Mr. Edgar among the Lushais	...	...	...	...	566

APPENDIX K.—*concluded.*

ARTICLES ON FRONTIER WORK AND POLICY, 1870-72— <i>concluded.</i>	PAGE.
The Lushais	568
The Lushais conciliated	570
The Lushai Policy	572
What the Left Column did in Lushai-land, No. I.	576
What the Left Column did in Lushai-land, No. II.	578
What the Right Column did in Lushai-land	580
Work in Bengal Jungles	583
Lewin's Proverbial Philosophy	584



HISTORY

OF THE RELATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

WITH THE HILL TRIBES

OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER OF BENGAL.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE north-east frontier of Bengal is a term used sometimes to denote a boundary line, and sometimes more generally to describe a tract. In the latter sense it embraces the whole of the hill ranges north, east, and south of the Assam Valley, as well as the western slopes of the great mountain system lying between Bengal and independent Burma, with its outlying spurs and ridges. I propose to trace, with such fulness of detail as the materials warrant, the political relations of the Indian Government with the tribes inhabiting these hills. In doing this it will be convenient to proceed in regular order, first traversing from west to east the sub-Himalayan ranges north of the Brahmaputra, then turning westward along the course of the ranges that bound the Assam Valley on the south, and, finally, exploring the highlands interposed between Cachar and Chittagong, and the hills that separate the maritime District of Chittagong from the Empire of Ava.

Before attempting to record the dealings of the Government with the numerous savage races of this portion of its dominions, it may be well very briefly to refer to the events which led up to the occupation of Assam by the British, and to give some general idea of the state of that Province when we first entered it. This will tend to make clear the manner in which we were originally brought into contact with the hill tribes, and will serve to explain some facts and anomalies that might otherwise prove stumbling blocks to the student of frontier policy.



Into the dim history of the Hindu Kingdom of Kamrup, the most

Early History of Assam.

notable precursor of the later Gov-

ernments of Assam, there is no need to enter. Nor is it necessary to suggest any curious disquisitions on the origin and progress of that amorphous empire of Fong* whose victorious Generals are said to have extended the power of the Shans from Sadiya to the Monass. It is enough for us to know that in the eighth century after Christ, the Brahmaputra Valley was invaded by a

The Shan Invasion.

vigorous and warlike race of Burmese Shans, which had by the commence-

ment of the thirteenth century wrested the whole country from its Hindu rulers and arrogated to its own dynasty and people the title of 'Ahom,†—the unequalled'—destined in the softened form 'Assam' to become the modern name of the province.

With the consolidation of their rule the fate of all eastern conquering tribes overtook the Shans. In the sleepy hollow of Assam, they lost the qualities which had won them power and prestige, while by adopting the language, customs, and religion of their Hindu subjects, they speedily sank into the position of a mere ruling caste, and ceased to present the characteristics of an alien‡ race. It was indeed owing chiefly to intestine troubles brought about by their fanatical Brahmanism, and their bigoted persecution of the Moamariah dissenters that the British were first led to take cognizance of Assam affairs.

The Moamariahs§ were a tribe of proselytes to Hinduism as preached

The Moamariah Dissenters and their struggles with the Native Government of Assam.

by the Sudra sectarians, Sankai and Madhit, who denied the supremacy of the Brahmans and rejected the worship of Siva. For long years

they were treated with tolerance, and so gathered numbers and strength, until they occupied nearly the whole tract of Upper Assam known as Mutuek in Luckimpore, while they had also many adherents in other parts of the province, especially about Jorhath. The oppressions of the later Ahom Kings drove them at last into rebellion, and about 1770 A. D., led on by their high priest, they attacked, captured, and succeeded in holding for nearly six months Gowhatty, the capital of the kingdom, taking possession also of the person of the reigning prince. Expelled at length by stratagem, their leaders slain and their bands at the same time broken and dispersed, the Moamariahs were for fourteen years but little heard of. In 1774, when Gourinath Sing was reigning Raja, they again rose in arms, and after a severe struggle, attended by

* See Pemberton's Reports on the Eastern Frontier of British India, Section 5.

† Assam is commonly supposed to be derived from "A-sam-a," the 'peerless,' 'unequalled,' and Ahom is said to be equivalent to Assam. The point is, however, open to doubt.

‡ Dalton's Ethnology of Bengal.

§ For a fuller notice of this sect, see Chapter XI. below.



many vicissitudes, succeeded in driving the Raja and his party from the seat of his Government.

In 1783, Gourinath made a desperate effort to retrieve his fortunes, but apparently to little purpose. Beaten back from Gowhatty, after days of fruitless fighting, he applied to Mr. Raush who farmed the salt revenues at the British frontier station of Goalpara, begging him to procure the assistance of the British Government. The farmer, probably on his own responsibility, sent over a body of burkundazes, or locally enlisted fighting men, but these were, as the histories tell us, cut off to a man by the Moamariaks in the first encounter. Nor had an expedition despatched in aid of Gourinath by the State of Manipur any better success; 1,500 men out of a force of 4,500 which crossed the hills from Manipur being slain by the rebels.

Assam was now given over to confusion and misery. All the

British intervention.

turbulent ruffianism of the great bazars of Bengal flocked thither.

Large bodies of disbanded sepoy and bands of fighting fanatics from Hindustan pillaged the villages and laid waste the fields. The Raja once more, therefore, appealed to the British, demanding that they should at least aid in expelling the lawless robbers who had come over from Bengal. Lord Cornwallis, admitting the obligation, ordered a detachment of sepoy, under Captain Welsh, to enter Assam. This force completely routed the Moamariaks and other rebellious Chiefs in the cold season of 1792-93, and succeeded in recovering possession of Gowhatty. Enquiries then instituted made it manifest that much of the discontent prevalent in the province had its origin in the tyranny and mismanagement of Raja Gourinath and his advisers. Accordingly with the sanction of the Supreme Government, Captain Welsh, in communication with the principal nobles and officers of the kingdom, took steps to put affairs on a sounder basis; and, as a necessary guarantee for the maintenance of order in the future, arrangements were made for the retention in the province of a brigade of British troops, the revenues of Lower Assam being pledged for their maintenance. Unfortunately for the country, before these projects could be fully matured, Captain Welsh was recalled to Bengal by Sir John Shore, whose cautious policy of non-interference and retrenchment was opposed to such an enterprise as had been sanctioned by the more imperial spirit of Cornwallis. In July

Withdrawal of British troops, 1794.

1794, Assam was deliberately relegated to anarchy and civil war*.

The miseries of the country reached their climax in the reign of Raja Chunder Kant, which commenced in 1809. The principal ministers of State, who had themselves seated Chunder Kant on the throne, headed a rebellion against him of the most formidable character, and contended in arms with varying

* The probable effect of the withdrawal of our troops was clearly pointed out by Captain Welsh. See an interesting report by him in the Appendix, with notes by Mr. Scott, afterwards the first Commissioner of Assam.



fortunes for the possession of the capital and the control of the revenues. Failing to obtain aid from the British, who continued to hold aloof from Assam affairs, the Raja's party had recourse to the Burmese; and Chunder Kant was twice indebted to that power for material assistance. Purunder Sing, a prince of the royal house, the most able among the various pretenders who sought to get possession of the throne, was driven out by the Burmese in 1816 and took refuge in British territory. The Burmese proved, however, to be but dangerous allies. The price demanded by them for their aid was more than Chunder Kant was willing or able to pay, and he soon became anxious to get rid of them. A futile attempt to shake them off resulted in the expulsion of Chunder Kant himself, and the elevation, by the Burmese, of a new Raja in the person of Jogeshwar Sing.

There were thus at this time (1821) in British territory two scions of Assamese royalty, Chunder Kant and Purunder, each busily engaged in organising means for the invasion of Assam. Chunder Kant had left behind him in the province many faithful adherents on whose efforts he chiefly relied; while Purunder sought to get together a mercenary army from the hill passes of Bhutan and Bijni. Chunder Kant was the first to make an aggressive effort, and was for a time successful; but fresh reinforcements from Ava again turned the scale in favour of the Burmese, and the unfortunate prince became once more an exile. The Burmese General followed up his success on this occasion by sending an insolent message to the British Officer commanding at Goalpara, warning him that if protection was afforded to Raja Chunder Kant, the Burmese troops would invade the Company's territories and arrest the fugitive wherever he might be found. This demonstration was answered on the part of the Indian Government by the despatch to the frontier of troops from Dacca; and by a distinct intimation that any advance of the Burmese would be at their certain peril.

Meanwhile, events at another part of the North-East Frontier were rapidly hurrying the British Government into collision with the ignorant and overbearing Court of Ava. The Raj of Cachar which lay directly in the way of any force invading Eastern Bengal from Burma, had some time previously placed itself under British protection. In the face of repeated warnings and expostulations the Burmese, who then held the valley of Manipur, persisted in advancing upon Cachar and threatening Jaintia (a bordering dependency of Bengal); and no resource was at length left to the Indian Government save to declare war. To re-conquer Assam from the Burmese was a natural and necessary part of the consequent operations.

In less than a year from the commencement of hostilities, the British troops had driven the Burmese from the valley of the Brahmaputra; and on the 24th February 1826, when the operations of the campaign elsewhere had been brought to a close, the King of Burma, by the treaty of Yandaboo, renounced all claim upon, and covenanted to abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam.



and its dependencies, and the contiguous petty States of Cachar and Jaintia.*

While the military conquest of Assam was thus being effected by our troops, the direction of all civil matters in connection with the province was entrusted to Mr. David Scott† as Governor General's Agent on the North-East Frontier. Subsequently, as regarded Upper Assam alone, the Officer in command of the troops was associated with Mr. Scott in a Commission for general administration. When the conquest was complete, Upper Assam was formally placed under Captain Neufville in subordination to Mr. Scott. Captain Neufville also held military charge of the Assam Light Infantry, a corps organised for the purpose of holding the outposts of the valley looking towards Burma.

Very little change was made at first in the Native mode of administration. In fact, it was long debated whether the British Government should retain Assam in its own hands, or restore it altogether to its Native rulers. The Government in Calcutta was strongly averse to taking absolute possession of the province; and had any of the Native royal house shown real capacity or ability to govern with acceptance to the people, there can be no doubt, from the tenor of the Secret Consultations in the Foreign Office, that he would have been forthwith installed as Raja. The Assamese princes were, however, mere worthless debauchees, and the security of our eastern districts made it necessary to retain strong military control of this part of the frontier. But, having provided for this, the Government was anxious to hand over to Native management all that part of the valley which was not required for military purposes or for the maintenance of the British troops. Accordingly in 1832, after much deliberation, Upper Assam, with the exception of the tract about Sadiya and Muttuck, was made over to Purunder Sing, who was believed to be morally and otherwise the most

Purunder Sing and his Government of Upper Assam, 1832-33.

eligible representative of the royal stock. Purunder Sing was placed in the position of a protected prince, guaranteed against invasion, and entrusted with uncontrolled civil power, on condition of his paying

* Aitchison's Treaties, Vol. I., p. 213.

† Mr. Scott died in August 1831, and was succeeded by Mr. T. C. Robertson, and he again by Captain F. Jenkins in January 1834.

The name and fame of David Scott are still green on the North-East Frontier. He was one of those remarkable men who have from time to time been the ornament of our Indian services. Had the scene of his life's labours been in North-West or Central India, where the great problem of Empire was then being worked out, instead of amid the obscure jungles of Assam, he would occupy a place in history by the side of Malcolm, Elphinstone, and Metcalfe. As it is, his writings lie buried amid the dust of official record-rooms, and though his name is known to most of our Frontier Officers, his work in its extent and power is still but little understood. The most interesting and personally instructive part of my task in preparing the present volume has been the perusal of Scott's admirable Reports and Letters. My only regret is that I have not been able to afford time to collect or tabulate these for a volume of official "Selections".



a tribute of Rs. 50,000 annually to the Government. The experiment did not succeed. Purunder Sing's administration proved a failure, both financially and generally, and in October 1833 his territories were placed under the direct management of British officers, and Assam as a whole became a Non-Regulation Province of the Indian Empire.

The foregoing is a brief sketch of the mode in which the Government obtained possession of Assam. It is necessary for the purposes of this narrative to add some few facts as to the state of the country and the revenue system in force there at the time of the British occupation.

In Assam not only the soil but the dwellers thereon were treated as being the property of the State. All the free population was divided, according to caste or calling, into

The Revenue System of Assam. *khets*, or clans, numbering from 1,000 to 5,000 able-bodied men in each. The *khets* were sub-divided into *ghôts* of three or four *paiks*, or freemen, each, and one *paik* of each *ghôt* was bound to render personal service throughout the year to the Raja or to any officer of State to whom he might for that purpose be assigned. The Raja on his part allowed to each *paik* in the *ghôt* two *poorahs* of rice-land, the land of the *paik* absent on service being cultivated for him by the rest of the *ghôt*. This allotment was known as *goamutti*, or 'body land.' The *paik* also received a piece of land for garden and homestead (*bâri*) free of assessment; in acknowledgment of which he paid one rupee annually either as house-tax or poll-tax or hearth-tax, as the custom of the district might determine. If a *paik* cultivated any rice-land in excess of his two *poorahs*, he paid the State one rupee annually for each *poorah* so tilled. Artizans and other non-cultivating classes paid a higher rate of poll-tax. The aboriginal and other wild tribes occupying the low jungly hills within the province paid a hoe-tax on their cotton cultivation. The salaries of all Government officers, favourites, and retainers, and the maintenance of the numerous religious institutions of Assam, were provided for by assignments of *paiks* along with their *goamutti* lands to the persons to be benefited. The estates of the Native gentry were universally formed in this way, and were supplemented by the *khets*, or lands, which they had themselves reclaimed from waste by slave labor, and which were held by them rent-free and as hereditary in their families.

The British Government commuted all the *paik* service for an annual cash payment to the State of Rs. 8 per man, and released the slaves—measures which, however wise and proper in the abstract, had the effect of reducing the Native gentry to poverty, and left no class, either in fact or theory, intermediate between the cultivator of the soil and the supreme authority. The mode and amount of assessment of the cultivators, now no longer called *paiks* but *ryots*, have undergone many changes since that time; but the idea of personal service due to the State by the subject has never revived, and the practice of cash payments to and by Government has always been thoroughly established.



Nothing could have been more wretched than the state of Assam when the valley was first occupied by our troops. Thirty thousand

Assamese had been carried off as slaves by the Burmese. Many thousands had lost their lives, and large tracts of country been laid desolate by the wars, famines, and pestilences, which for nearly half a century had afflicted the province. The remnant of the people had almost given up cultivation, supporting themselves chiefly on jungle roots and plants. The nobility and priestly families had retired to Goalpara or other refuges in British territory, often after losing all their property; and with them had gone crowds of dependents glad to escape from the miseries of their native land.

Such was Assam as we found it, and such the revenue system that prevailed there. The old records give much curious information in regard to both, which it would be interesting to set out at length; but I have confined myself to a summary of salient facts as detailed in the ordinary histories, this being sufficient for my present purpose. So much as has been stated it was desirable to bring into prominence, that there might be a clear understanding of the circumstances under which a frontier policy first became necessary for us in the north-east. These will be made more apparent as we deal with the history of each tribe. But I may here remark, by way of general preface, that we found the Assam Valley surrounded north, east, and south by numerous

The Frontier Tribes. savage and warlike tribes whom the decaying authority of the Assam

dynasty had failed of late years to control, and whom the disturbed condition of the province had incited to encroachment. Many of them advanced claims to rights more or less definite over lands lying in the plains; others claimed tributary payments from the villages below their hills, or the services of *paiks* said to have been assigned them by the Assam authorities. It mattered of course little to us whether these claims had their basis in primeval rights from which the Shan invaders had partially ousted the hillmen, or whether they were merely the definite expression of a barbarian cupidity. Certain it was that such claims existed, and that they had been, to some extent and in some places, formally recognised by our predecessors. The engagements under which the Native Governments lay were transferred to us with the peculiar revenue system above described; and it was one of our earliest tasks to endeavour to reconcile such arrangements, where we could discover them, with the requirements of enlightened policy. But it was not always easy to discover them, for the tribes asserting them knew nothing of our intentions, and seldom in the earlier years of our administration referred their claims directly for acknowledgment or compromise. When we did arrive in any case at a definite understanding as to the rights of any tribe, we were ready, as a rule, to treat them fairly and liberally; and, on the whole, we have no reason in this respect to be ashamed of the general bearings of our policy upon the North-East Frontier. But we are met to this day by difficulties arising from



the indefinite nature of the connexion subsisting between the Assam sovereigns and their savage neighbours. These difficulties, as they arise, have not been lessened by the fact that here, as elsewhere in British India, the Government has had an active policy forced upon it uniformly against its will; and while anxious in the extreme to leave the tribes alone, if they would but consent to be let alone, it has been compelled from time to time by the mere force of events to take up questions it would have gladly overlooked, and to govern actively where it would have been content to be at peace. A strong, systematising, aggressive despotism would have found a policy and enforced it long years before the British Indian Administration could be brought to confess that a definite policy on this frontier was either necessary or desirable.



CHAPTER II.

SKETCH OF BRITISH RELATIONS WITH BHUTAN PROPER.

It forms no part of my design to describe in detail the political relations of the Indian Government with tribes or peoples admittedly independent of its rule and dwelling outside the recognized limits of the Empire. The history of British intercourse with Bhutan as a foreign power has already been well and fully told in the admirable reports of Pemberton, Eden, and others; and there is no need again to traverse the same ground. But inasmuch as Bhutan marches with the most westerly districts of Assam, and seeing that the occupation of that province brought us into peculiar revenue relations with the Bhutias both of Bhutan proper and of its neighbouring highlands, it is necessary to say something of that uncouth race, to give completeness to the history of the frontier administration.

Along the base of the Bhutan hills and sloping downwards to the plains, there stretches from west to east a narrow tract of fertile land varying in breadth from ten to twenty miles, the possession of which has always, to the inhabitants of the barren hills above, been a matter of importance. Cotton, rice, and other staples grow there, the value of which was always greatly appreciated both by them and by the Native Assamese Government. But the malarious and deadly character of the tract and their own feebleness of late years prevented the Assam Rajas from giving efficient protection to the indigenous cultivators or establishing an undisputed dominion over the soil and its products; while by means of the passes or broad straths leading from the hills and intersecting this belt of *terai* the highlanders held the practical command of the border, and in course of time established what they considered rights over the whole of the debatable tract.

Along the frontier of Bhutan proper lay eighteen of these passes, straths, or dwars, eleven on the frontier of Bengal and Cooch Behar, seven on that of Assam. The land at the foot of the Bengal and Cooch Behar Dwars had long since been forcibly annexed by the Bhutias; and the Assamese rulers, though always keenly alive to the value of this malarious Goshen which lay upon their border, and never to the last resigning their claim to be at least paramount owners of the plains up to the actual mountain ridges, were in their decay unable fully to vindicate their claims. Accordingly to the hill tribes here, as well as to those on other parts of the border, concessions were made by the Assamese authorities, which it is probable could not have been refused, but which would undoubtedly have been retracted had opportunity made this possible.



The Assam* Dwārs, with which alone we are at present concerned,

The Assam Dwārs of Bhutian were these :—

Five in Kamrup	...	{ Bijni.
		{ Chappakhamar.
		{ Chappaguri.
		{ Bauska.
Two in Durrung	...	{ Ghaukolla.
		{ Kalling.
		{ Booreeguma.

These seven Dwārs, including the tract below them already described, were made over by the Assam Government to Bhutian in consideration of an annual payment of tribute. This tribute was to consist of yak tails, ponies, musk, gold-dust, blankets, and knives, of an estimated value of Naraini Rupees 4,785-1 yearly. So long as this was paid, the Kamrup Dwārs were to remain in the hand of the Bhutias all the year round, but, by a curious arrangement, the Durrung Dwārs were to be annually surrendered to the Assam Government from July to November. This anomalous provision of course led to trouble. The subordinate collecting agencies, whether Assamese or Bhutian, were not very careful in giving effect to the stipulation; and the unfortunate peasants were in the end harassed by two sets of tax-gatherers equally obnoxious and equally oppressive in their mode of dealing. A further and endless source of dispute was the fact that the tribute was paid in kind, while its value was fixed in specie. Instead of operating as a permanent settlement of claims and liabilities, this arrangement opened out an annually recurring topic for disputation and bargaining.

So long as the weak rule of the later Ahoms lasted, such quarrels were probably settled by the Bhutias in their own favour and without much trouble. But a British Government is of all others most tenacious of its rights in matters of bargain, and, though it confined to the Bhutias the arrangements made with them by the Assamese, it would not consent to be periodically swindled even in such things as yak tails and piebald ponies. Dealing with the question as a mere matter of business, the Governor General's Agent put up the Bhutian tribute as it came in to public auction, and debited the highlanders with the difference between the price realised and the amount due at the treaty valuation. In this way a constantly accruing balance mounted up, which the Bhutias could never be induced to adjust, and which probably they were never able to understand. Demands for payment were met by evasion, or by aggression,

* The Dwārs in Goalpara are not noticed here, inasmuch as Goalpara, though afterwards made a district of Assam, was long ere our conquest of that province a part of the British district of Rungpore.



and the plunder and abduction of British subjects. In 1828 outrages committed by the Jongpen or Bhutia official in charge of the Booreeguma Dwār led to the attachment by the Government of the tract so-called. It was restored in 1834 on payment of a fine, and in consequence of an assurance that the principal offenders had died in the interim.

Fresh outrages in the Bijui Dwār in the following year, coupled with a refusal to pay even the current tribute, led to threats of further attachment, which were not, however, at that time carried out. But the enrolment of the Assam Sebundy Corps for frontier defence proved that the Government was gradually being driven to the conclusion that energetic measures of repression or retaliation might shortly be called for.

Raids in 1836.

Wanton incursions from the Banska Dwār into North Kamrup in 1836 led to the attachment of that Dwār and ultimately to armed collision with the Bhutias, in which the hillmen suffered heavy loss. With savages, as with children, punishment brings about a speedy, though not always a lasting repentance, and the Central Government of Bhutan, with its local representatives, speedily making submission, the attached lands were again given up. There was much reason to fear, however, that our officers were in this matter capoled into negotiations with irresponsible agents, for the Deb Raja of Bhutan never formally ratified the treaty purporting to have been made in his name. Unable to realise a state of complete anarchy where all

Futile attempts at regular negotiation. the forms of Government existed, the Calcutta Secretariats seem always to have believed that could the central authority in Bhutan be only reached, the peace of the border would be effectually secured. The local officers knew better than this, but time after time they had to become the channels for solemn remonstrances which had no result, and to advise as to the conduct of negotiations for which they could only anticipate failure.

In 1837 Captain Pemberton, then the great authority on all Eastern

Pemberton's mission, 1837.

Frontier matters, was sent on a special mission to the Dhurm and Deb Rajas, and his report is still our chief source of information regarding the interior of this barbarous State. He was instructed "to settle terms of commercial intercourse between British India and Bhutan, and, if possible, to effect such an adjustment of the tribute payable for the Dwārs as might diminish the chances of misunderstanding arising from that source." The impression derived by Captain Pemberton from what he saw of the country was that the Central Government was powerless to control the Penlows or local authorities of the outlying districts, and that it was mainly owing to the conduct of these men, and notably of the Tongso and Paro Penlows, the Governors, respectively, of East and West Bhutan, with their subordinate local officers, that the peace of the frontier had been so often disturbed.

No effectual or permanent result accrued from the mission. The treaty proposed by the envoy the Bhutan Durbar was afraid to sign, bearing somewhat severely as its stipulations did upon the Tongso Penlow.



Bhutan continued to be racked by intestine troubles, and the border outrages remained unchecked. Kail-
Final attachment of the Dwars by the British, 1841. ing, Booreeguma, and Ghaukolla Dwars were soon again attached, while the others were now deserted by the cultivators. In 1841 the Government made up its mind to attach finally the whole of the Assam Dwars, as the only means of securing tranquillity for that part of the frontier; a sum of Rs. 10,000 being thereafter annually paid to the Bhutan Government as compensation for the loss of revenue entailed on them by the resumption.

This measure, which added 1,600 square miles of territory to Assam, proved on the whole effectual as regards the country lying under this portion of the Bhutan hills. But along the Bengal section of the Dwars, outrage followed upon outrage, in all of
Further aggression of the Bhutias, 1854. which the Bhutia officials, or robbers openly harboured by them, had an undoubted share. The forbearance shown by the Government seemed to the Bhutias merely proof of weakness and ineptitude. Remonstrance elicited only insolence, covert or overt, and at length in 1854 the Durbar sent a rude intimation that the compensation paid for the loss of the Assam Dwars was insufficient and must be increased. The Indian Government, as a matter of course, refused to comply with the demand, and the refusal was followed by Bhutia raids on Assam in which the Dewangiri Raja and his superior, the Tongso Penlow, were shown to have been concerned. A feeble attempt by the Deb Raja to call Tongso Penlow to account provoked from that chieftain a most insolent communication addressed to the Governor General's Agent in Assam. Lord Dalhousie, before whom it was laid, was the last Governor General likely to overlook an insult. He at once directed that the Durbar should be told through Tongso Penlow himself that the value of all property plundered by the Bhutias would in future

Warnings given to the Bhutias. be deducted from the sum annually paid on account of the Assam Dwars, and that any farther outrage would lead to the permanent annexation of the Dwars on the Bengal side also. In the position occupied by Tongso Penlow, these measures would, it was conceived, affect him even more directly than they affected the Central Government of Bhutan.

Threats, however, had no permanent effect upon a people so barbarous as the Bhutias. Year after year fresh violations of British territory were perpetrated till the Government was at last driven into action. In 1860 it attached the estate of Fallacotta, the revenues of

Mr. Eden's mission.

which had long been paid to Bhutan, in virtue of an old arrangement, and was fully prepared to give effect to the scheme of finally annexing the Bengal Dwars. But, before taking this extreme step, the Governor General—that no shadow of excuse might be left to the Durbar—thought it well to send a fresh mission to explain to the Deb and Dhurm Rajas the light in which the British Government of India was compelled to view the acts of officials, who, whatever their real position,



were nominally subordinate to the Durbar. Accordingly in 1863 a Native emissary was despatched to Poonakha, the capital of Bhutan, to announce the Governor General's intention of sending an envoy and to make preliminary arrangements for a mission. On the return of this messenger, the Honourable A. Eden, Secretary to the Bengal Government, was, in August 1863, appointed to conduct a special embassy to Bhutan to explain to that Government the reasons which had led to the annexation of Fallacotta, to demand the surrender of all captives taken from British Territory, and to negotiate some stable arrangements for the better conduct in future of the relations between the two States. The mission proved a failure. The envoy, in compliance with the instructions of the Foreign Office, penetrated through many difficulties to Poonakha and the Bhutia Court, only to meet with insult and annoyance, and purchased the safe return of his escort by signing under protest a preposterous treaty, which it became the first duty of his Government to disavow.

War with Bhutan followed, and the allowance paid on account of

The Bhutan War.

the Assam Dwārs and Ambari Fallacotta was of course stopped. After

a campaign, which if not uniformly satisfactory was in the end entirely successful, the Bhutias were compelled to make humble submission. As a lasting lesson to them, they were thereupon finally and absolutely deprived of all the lands they had held below the hills—the Bengal Dwārs being formally annexed by the British Government. It was, however, arranged that as some compensation for the loss of this valuable territory, a sum of Rs. 25,000 should be annually paid to officers deputed by the Central Government of Bhutan, and in this grant the older grant of Rs. 10,000 on account of the Assam Dwārs may be considered to have merged.

The wisdom of making any such payment to a State which had so

Character of the existing treaty with Bhutan.

often offended has been frequently called in question by irresponsible critics. It has been urged that con-

cessions of this nature are viewed by barbarous enemies as tokens of weakness and signs of fear; that the long course of outrage in which the Bhutan Durbar and its feudatories had indulged should have called forth such emphatic marks of our displeasure and such a lasting demonstration of our power to punish, that there could have been thereafter no hope left to the hillmen of successful aggression. These views though popular are not, I believe, held by any responsible officers having full cognizance of the true facts of the case. It must be remembered that from the Dwārs the whole aristocracy of Bhutan had for many years drawn their chief support. Deprived of the income they received from these lands they lost at once the means of supporting their own position, and of maintaining their crowds of habitual dependents. Had the Indian Government taken possession of the Dwārs without granting any equivalent, it would have established on a most vulnerable frontier a stronghold of needy and desperate men, having nothing to lose, but much to gain by repeated raids upon our defenceless villages and



border farms. It is true that all our expectations in regard to the effect of the payment have not been realized. It has not yet created a strong central power able and willing to control at all times the outlying Chiefs. Internal dissension has been rife and fatal to the advance of the country. The feudatories who formerly shared in the distribution of the Assam stipend, or who levied their own shares therefrom as it passed their hands, now see themselves overlooked. But they find it a safer and more profitable enterprise to wrest what they can from the authorities at Poonakha than to attempt any further violations of British territory. They limit their lawless efforts to internecine struggles for power and place, seeking each for himself to be the chief recipient of the British bounty. On more than one occasion it has been found that a threat to stop the treaty payment has produced amid the contending factions a ready unanimity to comply with our demands. And so long as this is the case, and the peace of the border is maintained, it hardly seems the duty of the British Government to interfere in the internal concerns of a foreign people however barbarous, even on the ground that our doing so would confer on them material benefit. Our frontier relations with the Bhutan Durbar are now extremely simple. We hold the Dwaras and permit no interference with our subjects there settled; but so long as the Bhutias behave themselves peaceably, we pay to the central power for the time being the sum of Rs. 25,000 as compensation for the loss of its only fertile territory, and for the due maintenance of the *de facto* rulers of that State. When the results of this policy are shown to be unsatisfactory, it will be time to change it.*

The boundary line between British Territory and Bhutan from the Monass river on the west to the Deosham river on the east (where the territory of Independent Bhutan ends) was laid down in 1872-73. It was found that the Bhutias had again taken possession of Dewangiri and were making collections from the traders there. These sums were deducted from the next Treaty payment, and a warning given them future encroachments would be seriously regarded. No further complications have since been reported.

Towards the close of 1874 the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir R. Temple, received a visit from the Deb Raja at Buxa, when friendly sentiments were interchanged. Late in 1876 news came of civil war in Bhutan, and the Poonakha Jongpen and Paro Penlow took refuge in British territory, where they and their followers were provided with subsistence by the Government; their extradition, which was demanded, being refused. The only question now likely to disturb our amicable relations with Bhutan is this matter of the extradition of offenders, the principles upon which we demand or refuse this not being understood by uncivilised highlanders unacquainted with the rudiments of international law.

* In 1874 a deduction was made from the Treaty payment on account of atrocities committed by Bhutias in Kamrup. The arrangement thus places in our hands an effective means of dealing with border crime as well as with State aggression.



CHAPTER III.

THE EXTRA-BHUTAN BHUTIAS.

The five Dwárs of Bijni, Chappakhamar, Chappaguri, Banska, and Ghankolla lie on the northern face of the District of Kamrup. Crossing the Bornadli river eastward, we come to the District of Durrung, and to the Dwárs of Kalling and Booreeguma. Of these seven Dwárs, held formerly by the Bhutias of Bhutan Proper, enough has been said in the preceding chapter. To the east of Booreeguma is another Dwár called Kuriapara, formerly held by hillmen of the Bhutia stock in more or less direct subjection to Thibet and owing no allegiance to the Poonakha Darbar.

Many interesting facts regarding the state of commercial intercourse between Assam and Thibet are collected by Pemberton in his Report on the North-East Frontier. There we find quoted the following

Trade between Assam and Thibet.

description of the trade as given by Hamilton: "At a place called

Chouna, two months' journey from Lassa, on the confines of the two States, there is a mart established, and on the Assam side there is a similar mart at Geegunshur, distant four miles from Chouna. An annual caravan repairs from Lassa to Chouna, conducted by about 20 persons, conveying silver bullion to the amount of about one lakh of rupees, and a considerable quantity of rock salt for sale to the Assam merchants at Geegunshur, to which place the latter bring rice, which is imported into Thibet from Assam in large quantities; Tussa cloth, a kind of coarse silk cloth, manufactured by the Native women in Assam from the queen downwards; iron and lac found in Assam, and other skins, buffalo horns, pearls, and corals, first imported from Bengal." In 1809 this trade amounted in value to two lakhs of rupees, even although Assam was then itself in a most unsettled state. The imports from Thibet, in the shape of woollens, gold dust, salt, musk, horses, chowries, and Chinese silks, were especially noticeable. The protracted troubles of Assam ultimately affected the traffic, but even in the year before the Burmese invasion, the Lassa merchants were said to have brought down gold amounting in value to Rs. 70,000. The Burmese occupation put a stop to this annual fair for a time. In 1833 a successful attempt was made to revive it by Lieutenant Rutherford, who then had charge of Durrung. Of all this trade the Kuriapara Dwár is the principal channel.* Udalgiri is now the place where the fair is held,

* Less important fairs for the Bhutan Bhutias are held at Kerkaria on the Lukmi River just beyond the borders of Durrung; and at Daimara, north of Udalgiri.



and a very interesting spectacle may be seen there annually. Traders

The Kuriapara Fair.

from all parts of Thibet, from Lassa and places east, west, and even north of it are present in crowds, some of them clad in Chinese dresses, using Chinese implements, and looking to all intents Chinese. Many have their families with them, and carry their goods on sturdy ponies, of which some hundreds are brought down the fair yearly. In 1852 the Government sanctioned a proposal to move the site of the gathering to Mungledye which was expected to be more convenient for the Bengal and Assam traders.⁽¹⁾ It was found, however, that such a change would not be popular. The hill caravans would not venture so far into the plains, and existing arrangements were left undisturbed.

The Bhutias of Kuriapara are under the direct government of a body of Chiefs known as the "Sath Rajas"* who call themselves subordinates of the Towang Raja, a tributary of Lassa. Between 1830 and 1840, these Bhutias gave as much trouble as their neighbours on the west, and in consequence of outrages committed by them, the Dwar was resumed by the authorities of Durrung. In the cold season of 1843-44, the Sath Rajas, in company with representatives of the Towang Durbar, had an interview with Captain Gordon, Assistant to the

Cession of the Dwar for an annual payment, 1843-44.

Governor General's Agent, and formally relinquished all claim to the lands of the Kuriapara Dwar in

consideration of an annual payment of Rs. 5,000; this sum very nearly representing the amount which they used to realise from the tract by direct collection during the eight months of the year for which they held it. The annual stipend of the Sath Rajas is spent at the Udaiguri fair, and finds its way in the shape of cotton and other goods towards Towang and Lassa.

In 1852 a misunderstanding arose between the British and Thibetan Governments on account of one of these Sath Rajas, known as the Gelling or Gelong, who had been entrusted by the Lassa

Story of the Gelling Raja.

authorities with control over the other Chiefs and jurisdiction in the hills near Kuriapara. The Gelling took advantage of his position to declare himself independent, and to intercept the money paid by the British authorities. Troops were sent against him from Lassa, and, though at first able to hold his own, he was eventually driven across the border into Durrung. His extradition was demanded by the Thibetans in the most peremptory terms, perpetual war being the lightest penalty threatened in the event of refusal. An army was pushed down towards the plains, and there was at one time imminent prospect of a Thibetan invasion of Assam. Four hundred light

* "Seven Princes":—a common title of the Bhutia Chiefs in this quarter, not necessarily implying the existence of the precise number seven.

(1) Judicial Proceedings, 9th September 1852, No. 93.



infantry and a couple of six pounders were hurried up to the frontier, and served to check the ardour of the hillmen, who after much bluster and many demands for the Gelling's head, said they would be content with a document from the Governor General's Agent, certifying that the Gelling was no longer in life. They were not particular as to the actual fact; but wished to save their honor by an appearance of success; in this being perhaps not less diplomatic than more civilised nations. The desired certificate they did not obtain; but eventually peace was made by a treaty* ratifying, on the one hand, the former payment of Rs. 5,000, and guaranteeing, on the other, to the followers of the Gelling Raja immunity for their rebellion. It was agreed also that the Gelling himself should live under British protection and restraint to the south of the Brahmaputra. The Thibetans did not respect the stipulations of the treaty as regards the Gelling's partizans, for seven of these were brutally murdered as soon as they returned to the hills. The Government did not think it necessary to take notice of this, as the event took place outside British Territory. The Gelling himself continued for several years to reside at Gowhatty. About 1861 he became reconciled to the Towang Deo or Deb Raja of Towang, and returned to the hills. There he soon again became involved in quarrels with the Sath Rajas, whom he defrauded of certain dues upon caoutchouc (an important staple in those parts) and once more he had to fly into Durrung, where till 1864 he occupied a house near Kuriapara. In April of that year 50 or 60 Bhutias came down by night, surrounded his dwelling and murdered him in cold blood. This was presently ascertained to have been by order of the Sath Rajas, under instigation of the Towang Deo, with whose summons to attend him the

* The text of the treaty is subjoined. (Political Progs., October 1853, No. 64.) For the earlier treaty of 1844, see Aitchison, Vol. I., pp. 143.

Treaty signed by Captains REID and CAMPBELL, and CHANGDANDOO NAMANG LEDEN, and DAO NURHOO, Bhutia Rajas, on the 28th January 1853, at Kurreahparah, Zillah Durrung.

We, Changdandoo Raja, Namang Leden Raja, Dao Nurhoo Raja, being deputed by the Daba Rajas to carry letters of friendship to the Agent, Governor General, North-East Frontier, desiring that the former friendly relations which existed between the Government of India and our Lassa Government (lately disturbed by the misbehaviour of one of our Gellings) should be again resumed, and being ourselves desirous above all things that peace should exist between our Government and that of India, do (now that we are assured the Government of India do not intend to invade our country) hereby solemnly declare that all military force in excess of what is required to maintain order in our own country shall be immediately withdrawn, and the soldiers sent to their houses; and should the peace be ever broken by us, we shall consider that all claim to the Rs. 5,000, hitherto yearly paid to our Government by the Government of India, shall be forfeited, and that our trade with the people of the plains shall be put a stop to.

And all this we of our own good will agree to and swear to in the presence of Captains Reid and Campbell, signing the agreement as copied out in Bhutia language from the Bengali copy made by Tuckha Mahomed Darogah.

And, moreover, with regard to the followers and others of the Gelling who have come down to the plains for protection, we promise not to molest them, but hope, with the good help of the Agent, Governor General, to make friends with them and persuade them to return to their own country.



Gelling had refused to comply. No very decided action was taken by Government upon this violation of its territory. Towang being nominally under Thibet, the Government of India sanctioned a reference to Lassa on the subject, but this was never actually made; and the idea of stopping payment of the annual allowance of the Sath Rajas was deprecated by the local authorities as being likely to lead to further raids.⁽¹⁾ The Rajas were, it was urged, mere savages who looked on the Gelling as one of their own tribe, and could not realise that they did any injury to us by dealing out punishment to a kindred Bhutia, even in British territory. The Government of Bengal ordered a demand to be made for the surrender of the murderers, and the Government of India pointed out afresh that political refugees should not be allowed to live near the frontier; but the demand was never pressed, and the advice could only be noted for future guidance; and so the matter dropped.

In the cold weather of 1867 there was an unfounded alarm that⁽²⁾ the Thibetan Thalong Bhutias intended to attack Assam, but as a fact the relations of the Bengal Government with these tribes have for many years been perfectly amicable, and limited mainly to payment of the annual stipend, and the commercial intercourse of the Udalgiri fair.

The restrictions placed on free intercourse with the hills under the Inner Line Regulation (described in Chapter VIII below) gave rise to some complaint in 1876-77, but the grievance was met by the issue of passes to all persons *bonâ fide* engaged in supplying the hillmen. In 1878 the provisions of the Regulation were suspended along their frontier, and in 1880 the good offices of the Deputy Commissioner of Durrung were effectual in settling a quarrel between these Bhutias and those of Kukaniâ subject to Bhutan proper.

In 1872-73 the boundary between Assam and the Towang Bhutias was formally laid down from the Deosham river on the west to the Rowta river on the east. The line proposed by the British officers was readily accepted by the Bhutias and by certain Thibetan officials who came down to inspect it.

Eastward of Kuriapara lies the extensive division of Char Dwâr or "the four passes," on the borders of the Bhutias of Char Dwâr. which are the Rooprai Ganw and Sher Ganw Bhutias, who claim to be independent of Towang. Their Chiefs, like those of the Kuriapara Bhutias, are called "Sath Rajas," the principal one having the title of Durji Raja. In common with all the other tribes on this frontier, these Bhutias claimed a tribute or

(¹) Political Proceedings, June 1864, Nos. 3-6.

(²) Political Proceedings, October 1864, Nos. 18-21.

(³) Political Proceedings, December 1867, No. 57.



payment from the plains which they collected annually.* In February 1826, an arrangement was made with them by Captain Matthie, in virtue of which the Durrang authorities resumed the right of direct collection and paid the Bhutias Rs. 2,526-7 as compensation on that account. In 1839, however, this payment was stopped in consequence of their having murdered one Madhoo Sykeah, a British subject. The Durji Raja with the rest made in the usual inconsistent way the most earnest protestations of innocence of present guilt and promises to behave better for the future, and as usual they were eventually pardoned, and a reduced allowance of Rs. 1,740 guaranteed them. The boundary line of the Char Dwār Bhutias was laid down in 1872-73 from the Rowta river on the west to the Ghabroo river on the east. The Bhutias here put forward extravagant claims to lands on the plains, which were rejected by the officers demarcating the boundary. At a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of Durrang in February 1876 their Chiefs expressed themselves satisfied with this decision. They have come down regularly every cold season to trade, establishing themselves at a place called Dármará, two miles north of our boundary. In the case of these Bhutias also the Inner Line Regulation has been kept in abeyance.

The most easterly tribe of Bhutias are the Thebengeas. These live in the interior of the hills, and formerly collected dues in Char Dwār along with the Rooprai clans. A feud, however, sprang up between them, and for years they only entered Assam to trade by the circuitous route of the Kuriapara Dwār. Their annual visit to purchase goods was made to a mart called Mazbat in Char Dwār. Their chief village is 16 days' journey from the plains, and they have always been peaceably behaved. They receive an annual stipend of Rs. 145-13-0 only.

Satisfactory evidence of the friendly relations existing between our officers and the Thibetan Bhutias will be found in the following incident, which is reproduced from the Assam Administration Report for 1879-80 :—

At the beginning of February a difference occurred in British territory between the Thibetan and the Kherkeria Bhutias, subjects of Bhutan Proper, which was amicably arranged by the Sub-Divisional Officer of Mangaldai. The circumstances of this affair are as follows :—

One Pema Thallong Bhutia, a resident of Bhutan Proper, made his way last year to the Towang Bhutia encampment at Amratol (the first stage in the hills after leaving British territory), and, it is alleged, stole a pony belonging to the Towang people. He was caught and taken before the Gelleng Raja, who sentenced him to pay a fine of Rs. 20 in cash, 4 pieces of cloth, and 4 brass pots. Pema Thallong, feeling aggrieved at the punishment awarded him last year by the Gelleng Raja, sought his opportunity for revenging himself, and on the 1st February last, while one of the Gelleng Raja's personal attendants was trading in a village in the neighbourhood of Udalguri, suddenly appeared with a companion, seized him, and forcibly took

* Their agreement, similar in terms to that of the Towang Bhutias, is printed in Aitchison's Treaties, Volume I., pp. 146. The precise amount of the allowances, as given in Aitchison, differs from the figures in the text: but the point is unimportant.

from him a pony and a silver waist-belt which were in the servant's charge. Pema then returned to Kherkeria, leaving a letter with the Gelleng Raja's man, stating that he (Pema) had done this in return for the fine the Gelleng Raja had sentenced him to pay in the previous year. On the above facts being reported to the Sath Rajas, who were at the time at Udalguri, by the Gelleng Raja's servant, they at once sent 25 followers to the scene of the occurrence to search for Pema and arrest him. Mr. Driberg, the Sub-Divisional Officer at Mangaldai, immediately sent instructions to Prem Gaimbo, the Chief of the Sath Rajas, to recall his men and not to make any disturbance in British territory, and himself went promptly to Udalguri to inquire into the matter. Mr. Driberg found that Pema had retired to the hills after selling the pony for Rs. 45, and had taken the waist-belt with him. He had a long discussion with the Sath Rajas, pointing out the impropriety they had committed in sending their men to attempt the arrest of Pema in British territory, and that had Pema been reinforced from Kherkeria a serious disturbance between the Towang and Bhutan people would probably have followed, for which they would have been held responsible. Having thus convinced the Rajas of the mistake they had made in attempting to take the law into their own hands while they were guests of the British Government, and on its territory, Mr. Driberg obtained from them an ample apology, and a promise to leave the settlement of the matter in his hands. He thereupon wrote to the Radi Dumpa, the Bhutanese Raja of Kherkeria, with whom he was well acquainted, and at a meeting with him succeeded in obtaining from him not only a written apology, but also the payment of Rs. 45, the price at which Pema had sold the pony, and Rs. 55, the estimated value of the waist-belt, as well as a promise to restore the stolen belt within twenty nights and to procure the exemplary punishment of Pema. With this satisfaction Mr. Driberg expressed himself content, and, re-purchasing the stolen pony from the person to whom Pema had sold it, restored it to its owner. [The belt was subsequently recovered and restored to the Gelleng.]



CHAPTER IV.

THE AKAS—HAZARI-KHAWAS, AND KAPACHOES.

Eastward of the Bhutias, and between them and the Bhoroli (or more correctly the Desseraï) river, live the Akas or Arkas, known among themselves as Hrusso.* The Akas are of two clans—(1) the Hazari-Khawa, or “eaters at a thousand hearths,” and (2) the Kapachors, or “thieves who lurk amid the cotton plants.”

Divisions and allies of the Akas.

These are a most energetic and savage tribe, who for twenty years were the pests of Char Dwâr. With the aid of the Migis, a fierce and cognate race in the interior, they long defied the power of the Towang Deo in the hills. Both clans of Akas together did not, however, in 1844 number over 260 families. Of the Migis there were from three to four hundred households. The Hazari-Khawas were the only branch of this tribe to whom the Assamese conceded formally any right to share in the produce of the Dwârs. The Kapachors had no such rights, and anything that they received from the cultivators was simply extorted from their fears. To the Hazari-Khawas the Assam Government had granted the right of *posa*,

The right of *posa*.

or, as it is often rather inaccurately called, “black-mail.” The

nature of this right will be easily understood from the description already given of the old revenue system of Assam in Chapter I. Certain sets of *paiks* were assigned to the hillmen, and made liable to pay to them instead of to the State their fixed annual contributions.

It is a mistake to suppose that the *posa*, which, as we shall see, was paid to most of the hill tribes bordering on the plains, was an uncertain, ill-defined exaction, depending in amount upon the rapacity of the different hordes who might descend to levy it.⁽¹⁾ It was really a well-ascertained revenue payment, on account of which a corresponding remission was made in the State demand upon the ryot satisfying it. It may have had its origin in encroachment, or it may have been based upon customary and primeval rights asserted by the hillmen; but it was a distinct feature in the revenue system of the country when the British annexed Assam. As stated in Chapter I it was at first the object of our local officers to maintain intact the arrangements of their Native predecessors, and to avoid the appearance of anything like radical or unexpected change; and Mr. D. Scott, the British Governor of Assam for some years after its annexation, was peculiarly cautious

* Heselmeier, *Apud Dalton in loco*. See also Asiatic Society's Journal, XXXVII—194.

(1) Revenue Proceedings, 11th August 1834, No. 5.

in dealing with the rights, fancied or real, of the hill tribes. He explicitly continued to them the right of realizing their respective shares of *posa* from the ryots direct.

According to the records of 1825, it would seem that the Hazari-Khawas were entitled to receive from each house⁽¹⁾ of their allotted khels "one portion of a female dress, one bundle of cotton thread, and one cotton handkerchief." At this period the Kapachors (or Koppaturas as the old records style them) were probably not looked upon as a separate clan, for we read that the Hazari-Khawas were excepted to give 'a part' of their collections to the Kapachors.

The inconvenience of permitting a horde of savages to descend annually upon the cultivated lands for the purpose of collecting petty dues from each household was very soon felt by the British Government to be unbearable. Quarrels and outrage were the natural concomitants of such a custom, and

Commutation of the *posa* of the Hazari-Khawas.

at a very early period of our management orders were given to invite the hillmen to surrender their right of direct collection for an annual lump payment in lieu. In many instances no difficulty was found in introducing this reform; in others the proposals were looked upon with suspicion. The claims of the Hazari-Khawas were at last commuted for a yearly sum of Rs. 175. This, however, they did not long continue to draw, their connection with the Kapachors having brought them into trouble with Government in 1835. For nine years after that they kept aloof from any intercourse with our officials, and it was not till 1844 that they were finally brought to terms.

The Kapachors under their leader, the Tangi or Taghi Raja, were long the terror of Durrung and of all the neighbouring clans. Although they numbered only about 80 families, they were able, from the nature of the country and their local knowledge, to defy both the Assam and British Governments for many years.⁽²⁾ Shortly before the annexation the Taghi Raja murdered the Native official in charge of Char Dwár, with twenty of his immediate followers. For this the clan was outlawed, and Mr. D. Scott, the first Commissioner of Assam, forbade their entering the plains, styling them a set of lawless brigands; but they nevertheless extorted from the ryots of Burgong a contribution of cloths year by year, just as though they were legally entitled to *posa*. In 1829 they were worsted in a quarrel with their brethren, the Hazari-Khawas, and their leader fled into Assam, where he was captured and sent to Gowhatty Jail. Here he became devout, and placed himself under the ghostly teachings of a Hindu* spiritual guide,

* Dalton.

(1) Political Proceedings, 5th February 1825.

(2) Political Proceedings, 13th March 1835, Nos. 7-8.



on whose security he was somewhat rashly released by the Governor General's Agent in 1832. Once free he fled to the hills, rallied his broken clan, murdered all who had been in anyway concerned in his capture, and brought his career to its⁽¹⁾ climacteric on the 3rd February 1835, by cutting up and burning the Assam Light Infantry outpost at Baleepara, massacring 17 souls—men, women, and children. In this outrage it was believed that the Taghi Raja had been assisted by the Hazari-Khawas, and there were good reasons for suspecting that his energy and daring had made him at this time virtual Chief of both clans of Akas, and given him influence even over the Duphlas in the neighbouring hills. At any rate the payment made by Government to the Hazari-Khawas was stopped, as already noted. For seven years after the Baleepara affair, this successful brigand haunted the border jungles, evading every effort made for his capture, and leading repeated forays into Char Dwār.⁽²⁾ In December 1837 he carried off several captives, and outposts of troops had to be moved up into stockades at the very foot of the hills to protect the low country from his depredations. Again in 1838-39, and yet again in March 1841, similar raids took place, and Government was seriously contemplating an expedition in force, when suddenly either weary of a hunted life, or distrustful of his ability to face of a regular attack, he came in and surrendered. It was alleged that offers of pardon had been unauthorisedly held out to him by the "Kotokies" (an officially recognised class of interpreters and clan agents), and looking to the bad effect any ostensible breach of faith might have, the Raja was released on his binding himself by solemn oath not to injure our ryots again. He gave hostages for his good conduct, the Kotokies on this occasion becoming his formal sureties. He even agreed to live permanently on the plains, and a small allowance of Rs. 20 was settled upon him. Through his influence, the other leaders of the Akas came in and accepted stipends, at the same time binding themselves to preserve the peace of Char Dwār.

The whole amount to be disbursed to the Akas was at that time fixed at Rs. 360 per annum. The oaths taken by them "on the skins of a tiger and bear, on elephant's dung, and by killing a fowl," have on the whole been faithfully observed, though they have made several attempts, not always unsuccessful, to get their allowances raised. In April 1857, for instance, it was reported that they had refused to accept their stipends which had gradually been increased to a total of Rs. 668. The Taghi Raja was believed to be at the bottom of this combination, the object of which was avowedly to obtain a further increase. Government at once stopped the whole allowances pending further orders,

(1) Political Proceedings, 13th March 1835, Nos. 7-8.
Political Proceedings, 4th May 1835, Nos. 2-3.

(2) Political Proceedings, 17th January 1838, Nos. 46-48.
Political Proceedings, 16th January 1839, Nos. 52-53.
Political Proceedings, 20th July 1840, Nos. 114-15.
Political Proceedings, 19th April 1841, Nos. 80-1.
Political Proceedings, 27th September 1841, Nos. 95-6.
Political Proceedings, 14th February 1842, Nos. 11-12.



closed the Dwárs to trade, and kept a sharp outlook for the first indication of disturbance. These measures had the desired effect: several of the Chiefs were detached from the Taghi Raja's influence, and early in 1859 sued for pardon. In 1860 the Raja himself submitted, and as he had committed no active aggression, he was, almost too considerably, allowed to draw his former pension with all arrears.⁽¹⁾

The Akas* have given no trouble of late years, a fact which may, perhaps, be accepted as proving the success of the policy of Government in dealing with this tribe. Their frontier line was demarcated with those of the tribes west of them in 1872-73; and the Deputy Commissioner of Durrung who carried out this duty reported that both they and the other hillmen came down in considerable numbers to the plains to trade and graze cattle. To this privilege of grazing they all attach cardinal importance, and Sir G. Campbell was of opinion

* Their agreements run as follow (Aitchison Vol. I., pp. 148-49) :—

*An Agreement entered into by the TAGHI RAJA of the Aka Purbat, dated 26th
Maug 1250 B. E.*

Although I entered into an Agreement on the 28th January 1842 A. D., that I should in no way injure the ryots in my dealings with them, and have received from the British Government, since 1842, a Pension of 20 Rupees, and traded in all the villages in Char Dwár, it being now considered that my trading in this way is oppressive to the ryots, and therefore required to be discontinued, I bind myself to confine my trade to the established market places at Lahabarree and Baleepara, and to adhere to the following terms :—

1st.—Myself, with my Tribe, will confine ourselves in our trade exclusively to the markets in Lahabarree, Baleepara, and Tezpor. We will not, as heretofore, deal with the ryots in their private houses.

2nd.—I will be careful that none of my Tribe commit any act of oppression in the British Territories.

3rd.—We will apply to the British Courts for redress in our grievances, and never take the law in our own hands.

4th.—From the date of this Agreement I bind myself to abide by the foregoing terms, on condition that the following Pensions are regularly paid :—

To Seemkolee Aka Raja	...	...	32 Rupees.
To Soomo Raja	...	...	32 "
To Nesoo Raja	...	...	26 "
Total	...	...	120 Rupees.

5th.—In the event of my infringing any of the foregoing terms, I subject myself to the loss of my Pension of 20 Rupees, and shall also forfeit the privilege of visiting the Plains.

(True Translation.)

FRANS. JENKINS,
Agent, Governor General.

(1) Political Proceedings, 25th June 1857, Nos. 305-7.
Political Proceedings, 19th May 1859, Nos. 6-7.
Political Proceedings, June 1860, Nos. 55-56.



that, if given as a privilege and not allowed as a right, it afforded a valuable means of securing their good behaviour. The Hazari-Khawas took no objections to the boundary; and in 1873 the Government gave them a grant of 49 acres of land in the plains which much gratified them. But the Kapachors refused at first to recognise the line between the Bhoroli and Khari Dikrai rivers, and put forward extravagant claims. Their Chief, Midhi, eventually however gave in, and the line was demarcated in 1874-75: the Chief also agreeing to send two of his relations to the school at Government expense. In March 1878, Midhi's people

Later events.

gave some trouble on their annual visits to the plains, and three of them were whipped for theft. In January 1882, the forest guards reported that a large body of Kapachor Akas and Duphlas had come down and set up boundary marks in the forests at Potashali, Diju, and Naminimukh, declaring that they would allow no one to pass those points which were all within our territory. Midhi was sent for and denied the fact; and as it was afterwards discovered that a number of

An Agreement entered into by CHANGJOE, HAZARI KHAWA AKA RAJA, CHANG SEMLY HAZARI KHAWA, KASOOLOO HAZARI KHAWA AKA RAJA, and NJUM KAPASORAH AKA RAJA, on the 29th May 1250 B. E.

We hereby swear, according to our customs, by taking in our hands the skin of a tiger, that of a bear, and elephant's dung, and by killing a fowl, that we will never be guilty of any violence or oppression towards any of the ryots of the British Government, and that we will faithfully abide by the following terms:—

1st.—Whenever any of us come down into Char Dwar, we will report our arrival to the Patgarre, and fairly barter our goods, being guilty of no theft or fraud in any way with any of the ryots.

It shall also be our particular care that none of our people shall be guilty of any crimes in the territories of the Honourable Company.

2nd.—We also engage never to join any parties that are or may hereafter be enemies to the British Government, but pledge ourselves to oppose them in every way in our power. We will also report any intelligence we may get of any conspiracy against the British Government, and act up to any order we may receive from their authorities. Should it ever be proved that we have participated in any conspiracy, we shall have forfeited our privilege of coming into the British Territories.

3rd.—In coming into the Plains we will always appear unarmed, and confine ourselves exclusively to the haunts or market places established at Lahabarree, Balcepara, Corung or Tezpor, and not, as heretofore, traffic with the ryots at their private dwellings; neither will we allow our people to do so.

4th.—All civil debts with the ryots shall be recovered through the Courts, as we acknowledge ourselves subservient to the British laws in their country.

5th.—I, Kapasorah Aka Raja, agree to take in lieu of the Black Mail of Char Dwar a yearly Pension of 60 Rupees; and I, Hazari Khawa Aka Raja, a Pension, in like manner, of 120 Rupees; This will be considered to deprive us of any connection with Char Dwar and of exacting anything from the ryots. We pledge ourselves to abide strictly by the above terms, or forfeit our Pension.

(True Translation.)

FRANS. JENKINS,

Agent, Governor General.

19813



Nepalese were trying to get passes from our officers permitting them to go into the Aka hills to collect rubber, it was supposed that the movement of the tribesmen was directed against them. The passes desired by the Nepalese were refused. In this year Midhi's brother who had read at Baleepara School since 1876 suddenly left it. The cold season of 1883-84 has witnessed the first Aka raid since our early connection with the tribe and our first expedition into their hills. There seems to be little doubt that there has been some local misunderstanding in respect of forest matters.



CHAPTER V.

THE DUPHLA TRIBES.

Eastward of the Bhoroli river, and occupying the hills north of

Early notice of the Duphlas.

Naodwâr (the Nine Passes) in Durrung, and Chedwâr (the Six Passes) in Luckimpore, as far east as the upper courses of the Sundri, lie the numerous cognate tribes of Duphlas.* Of them wrote Mohammed Kazim in the days of Aurungzeb—"The Duflehs are entirely independent of the Assam Raja, and, whenever they find an opportunity, plunder the country contiguous to their mountains."† They are, however, not so much a single tribe as a collection of petty clans independent of each other, and generally incapable of combined action. To show the extent of inter-tribal sub-division among them, Dalton notes that two hundred and thirty-eight gams or chiefs of Duphlas are in receipt of compensation for loss of *posa*, amounting altogether to only Rs. 2,543. Their form of Government is oligarchical, there being sometimes thirty or forty chiefs in a clan. The Duphlas call themselves only "Bangni," meaning "men." The tribes on the border of Durrung are now generally called 'Paschim' or Western Duphlas; and those on the border of North Luckimpore, 'Tagin' Duphlas.

From the beginning of our occupation of Assam the Duphlas gave

Their troublesome character.

much trouble to the local officers, and many fruitless efforts were made to induce them to resign the right of collecting *posa* directly from the ryots. From an account bearing date the 13th May 1825 it appears that the Duphlas were entitled to receive, from every ten houses, one double cloth, one single cloth, one handkerchief, one dâo, ten head of horned cattle, and four seers of salt. The *paiks* of the 'Duphla Bohotea Khel,' or that section of the Assamese cultivators which had originally been partially assigned to the Duphlas as responsible for their dues, being subject to this heavy impost⁽¹⁾ paid only Rs. 3 instead of Rs. 9 per *ghôt* to Government, the balance being remitted to enable them to meet their engagements. The different clans of Duphlas did not interfere with each other on the plains. Each knew the villages to which it had to look for *posa*. But they claimed a right to collect from their allotted *paiks* wherever these might migrate, and they demanded full dues whether the *paiks* could pay or not. This exacting spirit made them very difficult to deal with. Such indeed was the dangerous character of this tribe that Government

* A report of 1861 puts them between the Bonga Nadi and Kuchoo Jan, extending over an area of 200 square miles, and numbering 8,000 souls. The figures are of little value.

† Asiatic Researches, Vol. II.

(1) Revenue Proceedings, 11th August 1834, No. 5.



did not for many years see its way to insisting upon commutation of *posa* where the clans objected to it. The Duphlas of Char Dwâr in Durrung were the first to come to a settlement.⁽¹⁾ Early in 1835 they had raided, probably under the instigation of the Taghi Raja, and as a punishment had been forbidden to enter the plains to collect their dues. In November following, some few months after the Taghi Raja's successful raid near Balcepara, the Duphlas attacked that place and carried off several British subjects. An expedition, consisting of a small military force, was sent into the hills and rescued the captives, taking at the same time several Duphla prisoners. Of the thirteen Duphla clans north of Char Dwâr, the names of which are given on the

Partial submission of the Duphlas of Char Dwâr.

(a) Pykewooleah.
Upertakooleah.
Upertakooleah.
Lantakooleah.
Rukhoorooleah.
Upertakooleah.
Lantakooleah.

Salaho-coleah.
Lantapoo-coleah.
Ramboc-coleah.
Runghee-coleah.
Saroo Dhunneah.
Bor Dhunneah.

margin, (a) eight upon this came in and submitted to Captain Matthie, the Officer in charge of Durrung. They agreed to resign the right of collecting direct from the ryots, and consented for the future to receive the articles of *posa* from the malguzar or revenue officer of the villages according to a revised tariff.

Any complaints they might have against the malguzars they promised to refer to the Magistrate.⁽²⁾ They undertook not to aid the enemies of the Government, and to help to arrest offenders. One Chief was to live on the plains near the Magistrate, to be a medium of communication and represent their interests. Their *posa* was fixed at one coarse arkut sheet, one long cotton handkerchief, two seers of salt, one dao, and one goat for every ten houses. The other clans shortly afterwards made similar agreements.

The Duphlas of Naodwâr were longer in coming to terms.⁽³⁾

Submission of the Naodwâr Duphlas.

They did indeed in 1837 consent to receive their dues through the malguzars, but they claimed a right to two-thirds of all the revenues paid by the *palks* of the Duphla Bohotea Khel already mentioned, who were, they insisted, their hereditary slaves. In 1838-39 they became very actively troublesome, and it was at one time thought probable that a military force would have again to be sent into the hills. The collection of *posa* was entirely stopped for a time. Somewhat unexpectedly this measure had the effect of bringing the clans to order.

It appeared⁽⁴⁾ from facts that came to light at this time that the nearer Duphlas were practically sub-

Final commutation of the *posa*.

ordinate to the Abor Duphlas of the

higher ranges, and these remote clans, feeling the loss of the regular

(1) Political Proceedings, 20th February 1834, Nos. 23-24.

(2) Political Proceedings, 8th May 1837, Nos. 62-63.

(3) Political Proceedings, 16th January 1839, Nos. 52-53.

Political Proceedings, 20th January 1839, Nos. 1-2.

Political Proceedings, 6th March 1839, Nos. 135-136.

Political Proceedings, 13th May 1839, Nos. 10-11.

(4) Political Proceedings, 15th May 1837, Nos. 20-11.



payments, and perhaps not understanding what the borderers were haggling for, had insisted on submission being made. It was not, however, till 1852 that the *posa* was finally commuted for a money payment,⁽¹⁾ and then only because the Court of Directors at home insisted on this being done, if the local officers could enforce it without causing disturbances.

Up to that time the Duphlas had been a source of frequent anxiety, and military posts along the frontier had been necessary to secure its peace. From 1852, however, the Duphlas much to the relief of the local officials and somewhat to their surprise, settled quietly down, many of them devoting their attention to agriculture and residing permanently as our subjects on the plains. The payments made to them stood as follow at the time of Mill's inspection of Assam (1853-54):—

	Rs.	As.	P.
From Tezpur treasury to Duphlas of Char Dwār and Naodwār ...	2,494	0	0
From Luckimpore treasury to Duphlas of Char Dwār ...	1,243	14	5
Ditto ditto ditto of Banskotta ...	392	1	6

with 24 maunds of salt to the last-named in lieu of certain *hāth* or market dues.

The tribe remained quiet and gave no cause of anxiety up to 1870, when parties of Duphlas from the hills committed,⁽²⁾ on two occasions, outrages on certain Duphla villages lying in Naodwār within the District of Durrung.

In one case their object was said to be to recover an absconding slave. This action on the part of the Hill Duphlas did not indicate any ill-feeling towards British authority, but it was nevertheless deemed necessary to visit them with some mark of displeasure.⁽³⁾ Accordingly the annual allowances of all supposed to have been implicated in the transactions were withheld, and a reward was offered for the capture of the principal offender. At the same time it was pointed out to the local officers that runaway slaves ought not to be allowed to settle in villages near the frontier where their presence incited to attempts at recapture.

The secret of the other raid was not so easily found out.⁽⁴⁾ The facts, as at last discovered, appear to have been these:—The Chief of one of our Duphla villages sought as a wife for his son the daughter of a neighbouring Chief. The proposals were accepted, and to close the transaction presents were made in Duphla fashion to the lady's relatives. Probably some wealthier suitor appeared, for very shortly afterwards the intending bridegroom was told that his alliance was not desired. To this he might have become reconciled; but to the insult was superadded material injury—his presents were not returned. He was mulcted not

(1) Judicial Proceedings, 8th April 1852, No. 171.

(2) Political Proceedings, January 1870, Nos. 1-2.

(3) Political Proceedings, February 1870, Nos. 12-21.

(4) Political Proceedings, February 1870, Nos. 12-21.
Political Proceedings, November 1870, Nos. 3-9.



only of his first betrothed, but of the means of procuring a second. He laid his wrongs before the Deputy Commissioner of Durrang, and was by that officer referred "to the civil court". The fatuity of thus treating the grievances of a Duphla savage will be evident to most minds, and drew forth eventually strong censure from Government. The Deputy Commissioner should of course have dealt with the case in his political capacity, summoning a Duphla punchayet and dispensing equal justice in a simple way. The injured man failing to get redress in the plains (for to him "the civil court" was a meaningless phrase), betook himself to the hills. His brethren there took a more practical view of the case, descended one night with swift primitive retribution on the village of the dishonest marriage-mongers, and carried off as hostages all on whom they could lay hands. The mere fact of the raid was at first all that the Government came to know. The allowances of all supposed to be concerned in it were stopped, and a reward was offered for the capture of the ringleader.⁽¹⁾ The Duphlas in the course of a few months settled their private quarrel: the marriage presents were returned, and the hostages restored. But when they had so settled their feud, they were astonished to find that Government, or its local representatives, were still dissatisfied and not disposed to overlook the way in which the affair had been conducted. After waiting a time they threatened that, if the allowances were not restored, they would raid upon the plains. A foolish foray made by the Deputy Commissioner into the hills in search of the proclaimed Chief still further irritated them, and at one time the political prospects were reported so doubtful that fresh stockades were established and the police guards increased. Eventually, however, amicable relations were restored. The Duphlas were not apparently at that time prepared to violate the peace they had so long to their own advantage preserved; and though the ringleader in the raid escaped capture and punishment, the tribe as a whole gave no further trouble. Instructions⁽²⁾ were issued by Government which, it was hoped, would for the future lessen the chances of the occurrence of such raids.*

* The following extracts from these, drafted in the characteristic style of Sir G. Campbell, may be given (Political Proceedings, June 1871, No. 28):—

"There may be, and no doubt are, difficulties about the application of ordinary law in Assam and other districts peculiarly situated; but the Lieutenant-Governor considers that district officers should not raise and suggest difficulties. It is not for them to pick legal holes and find legal flaws, and to affect a pedantic legality. They should make the best of the situation. Some districts have been exempted from the Regulations and Acts to such a degree as to place the procedure, and even the substantive law, very much within the discretion of local officers, and to enable them to administer a broad equity; and even where the law is more defined, the combination of civil, criminal, and revenue powers in the same officer gives much opportunity for tempering a too harsh administration of any law.

"Above and beyond, or it may rather be said before law, is the legitimate influence which a good district officer may and should exercise. There are very many cases in which, by a judicious personal interference, matters may be arranged, or in which the

(1) Political Proceedings, March 1871, Nos. 19-30.

(2) Political Proceedings, June 1871, No. 28.



The Duphlas have not yet been brought to see that they are not at liberty to attack men of their own race living within our territory.

Further raids in 1872-73.

The Administration Report of 1872-73 gives the following account of another outrage committed by them in that year, and of the views of Sir G. Campbell upon it:—

The Duphlas along the Durrung and North Lakhimpore borders had not for many years past given much trouble, though the report for 1870 described an outrage committed for private reasons by one hill Duphla upon another man of the same tribe living on the plains. Many Duphlas have settled as colonists in our territories, and a few even occasionally work on tea gardens. The tribe of Tagin Duphlas living in the hills on the borders of East Durrung and part of Lakhimpore have, however, this year placed themselves in an attitude of positive hostility to the Government, and perpetrated a raid which, though directed against Duphla colonists in the plains, and not against the Assamese, was far too serious to be overlooked. On the night of the 12th February 1872 the village of Amtolla, two miles north of the Gohpore police station of Durrung, and seven miles from the foot of the hills, was attacked by a body of two or three hundred hillmen. The village was sacked, two persons—a man and a woman—who resisted the being tied up, were murdered, and 44 persons—men, women, and children—with their property, were carried off. The villagers who were taken away were all western Duphlas (not Tagins), while a few settlers belonging to the Tagin Duphlas were left unharmed—a circumstance which tended to confirm the belief, since supported by ample evidence, that the aggressors were chiefly men of the Tagin tribe. The guard at Gohpore made an attempt to follow the raiders, but did not succeed in overtaking them. Orders were, however, sent to reinforce the district police with troops. All the Duphla passes to the east of Durrung and along the Lakhimpore frontier were blockaded, and payment of the allowances annually made to the Tagins was stopped. Spies sent into the hills traced the raiders to their homes, and by their reports and the statements of one or two captives who escaped, the position of their villages has now been pretty well ascertained. The cause assigned for the outrage is a curious one. The hillmen had, it seems, been much troubled by an epidemic, which they believed to have been imported from the plains. They called upon the Duphlas of the plains to compensate them for the loss they had sustained in children and adults from the disease; and because the Duphlas of Amtolla declined to meet their wishes, they came down to recoup themselves by seizing them all as slaves. The Tagins refuse to surrender the captives save on ransom paid, and even threaten further raids if the blockade is maintained. The blockade has of course been strictly maintained, and it is believed that this exclusion from all trade with the plains has been felt by the hillmen, though as yet they show no signs of giving in. The Lieutenant-Governor, after personal consultation with the Deputy Commissioner,

path of law (where a resort to law becomes absolutely necessary) may be smoothed over. Take the case of a run-away wife: that is, no doubt, one of the cases, perhaps the case, in which our law is least in accord with Native feeling. In such a case between our people and those beyond the frontier, the Deputy Commissioner may not only call the parties together and try to settle it, but may also, when necessary, put them in the way of the law as it were. Instead of harshly referring a foreign savage to the courts, the Deputy Commissioner might make a suit for the restitution of conjugal rights or a criminal case of adultery, or an action for breach of promise, a very simple affair for him, by making out his petition, summoning the opposite side promptly, and administering justice, which may be rapid and complete without ceasing to be legal. The Lieutenant-Governor does not think that to be within the law it is necessary to be slow, exacting, and unintelligible to simple people; on the contrary, he believes that if an officer knows how to go the right way about it, he may do much prompt and vigorous justice *within* the law, especially, as has been said above, when he combines all powers in his own person. The Lieutenant-Governor trusts that you will impress these views on the officers of your division, and try to make them act upon them in cases in which savage and simple people are concerned. There are legal difficulties enough without their being raised by the officers entrusted with the administration of frontier districts, and the Lieutenant-Governor will not permit them to raise unnecessary legalities."



Colonel Graham, has seen reason to hope that strict maintenance of the blockade during the ensuing cold weather may possibly bring them at last to terms. Precautions will be taken against any further raids; but it may be necessary to adopt more active measures of reprisal. The Duphla hills are not specially difficult of access. Elephant-hunters from Assam have been several days' march within them, going up one way and returning another. The villages where most of the captives are, are but four or five marches off, or at most perhaps seven marches. The tribes have no unity of organization; every village is separate, and if one is hostile, the next may be friendly. They have not fire arms, and for some years, as above remarked, they have not shown themselves hostile to our Government, but have yearly drawn allowances for loss of their practice of making collections from the Assamese ryots of the Dwaras or passes, and have done much profitable trade with our bazars and markets. There is reason to hope that a small expeditionary force might bring the contumacious to terms, and that the effect of such a settlement would be lasting. The Lieutenant-Governor has, however, rather shrunk from recommending a regular expedition owing to the chronic difficulty which exists in Assam in getting cooly carriage for troops. He has stated to the Government of India his belief that we ought to have for service on the North-Eastern Frontier a permanent cooly corps to be available for expeditions of this kind, which we must expect occasionally until the frontier difficulties are finally solved and the tribes come to find their interest in peace and trade. Such a corps could always be usefully employed in making roads when not required for hill service. Meantime what His Honor has proposed is that we should place on the Duphla frontier next cold season a sufficient number of troops and police to establish a rigorous blockade, and furnish, if called for, a small expeditionary force. Colonel Graham, the Deputy Commissioner, would be allowed, if he saw a good opportunity, and other means had failed, to make a dash into the hills with this force and with the elephant and local cooly carriage available. He would, while looking out for this and watching the blockade, superintend also the operations of the survey, which should carry eastward along the foot of the hills the line of demarcation, successfully settled along the Kamrup frontier, so as to mark distinctly for the future the territory which we claim as ours and within which we shall refuse to permit any outrage or encroachment.

That the blockade will probably secure the surrender of the captives, we may perhaps be encouraged to hope, from the fact that another Duphla village to the north of Luckhimpore, which had carried off in similar fashion last year one or two Duphlas of the plains, has lately restored them, when it found that Government insisted on viewing such conduct as a grave offence. In this instance the local officers had, however, been fortunately able to capture one of the offenders, and held him as hostage till his village sent back the captives.

The blockade proving ineffectual, a military force was sent into the hills in 1874-75, and the release of the captives followed, no active opposition being offered by the Duphlas. Since that year the Duphlas have as a clan given no trouble. Occasional offences by individual members of the tribe have been duly dealt with as matters of police; but our relations with the Chiefs have been uniformly amicable.