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FOR CONSULTATION ONLY  
OUR BURMESE WARS

AND  
RELATIONS WITH BURMA:

BEING AN ABSTRACT OF MILITARY  
AND POLITICAL OPERATIONS, 1824-25-26, AND 1852-53.

WITH VARIOUS

LOCAL, STATISTICAL, AND COMMERCIAL INFORMATION,  
AND A SUMMARY OF EVENTS FROM 1826 TO 1879, INCLUDING A SKETCH  
OF KING THEEBAU'S PROGRESS.

BY

COLONEL W. F. B. LAURIE,

AUTHOR OF "RANGOON," AND "PEGU," NARRATIVES OF THE  
SECOND BURMESE WAR.

"As long as the sun shines in the Heavens, the British flag shall wave over those  
possessions."—MARQUIS OF DALHOUSIE (1854).

"Arakan, Pegu, and Tenasserim are British, and British they will remain for many  
generations of men. We govern in order that you should live in peace, pro-  
sperity, and happiness."—EARL OF MATE, at Rangoon (1872).

SECOND EDITION.

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TO

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HILL, K.C.S.I.,

WHOSE GALLANT DEFENCE OF PEGU

WILL EVER BE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE EVENTS

IN THE HISTORY OF OUR BURMESE WARS,

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.





## GENERAL PREFACE.



It seems almost superfluous to ask the attention of intelligent Britons to a region little known among them, but one, most assuredly, that has "a greater future before it than any country in Asia." Experience, however, has shown the necessity of so doing; for if we do not yet nearly realise the immense interests we possess in our old and "loved India"—the most splendid dominion under the sun—how is it to be expected we should do so in our comparatively new portion of Chin-India? That people often require to be reminded as well as informed, is another reason for the appearance of this volume, the greater portion of which is devoted to the operations of our Burmese Wars, and much of the remainder to the bright and hopeful effect. As regards the Military portion, the object of the present "Abstract" is two-fold. It is to supply the place of a new edition of the Author's former Narratives, by giving a considerable part of what seemed

GENERAL PREFACE.

best worth preserving, and a few additional incidental remarks, with an especial view to interest those who served in the last war, and to make it in some degree useful in case of future operations.

In his preface to "Rangoon," the first Narrative of the Second Burmese War (August 1852), it was stated as one of the Author's principal objects, "to give the reader as much information regarding Burma, and take from him as little time, as possible. Wherever it is a soldier's lot to roam, the pleasant duty may be frequently performed of attempting to gather and afterwards to diffuse knowledge. It is a duty which our age demands of every man who thinks he has a sufficiency of capacity." Again, he added, while the war was not yet finished :—" Apart from the extreme probability of the cause of civilisation being advanced, in a distant and comparatively unknown land, by the Second Burmese War, which should make the subject one of general interest, there must be a vast number of readers at home and in India who have friends and relatives in Burma. This is the grand key to the interest of Englishmen in the war. The possession of Rangoon may be said to have put nine-tenths of the Burmese Empire at our disposal. The conquest of the remainder of the country may ensue, and other pens will probably describe the course of events. But on account of the liberal encouragement bestowed on the present undertaking, the Author may be disposed, if all goes well, to write another volume."

"Pegu," the concluding volume—written after the Author reached Toungoo—completed an account of





the conquest of the province; and the book, more than double the size of "Rangoon," with more plans and sketches, originally appeared under circumstances far from favourable. The adverse influence of the time—the outbreak of the Crimean War—operated on his Oriental military narrative in much the same manner as that bewailed by a famous sensation novelist, who brought out one of his great works in 1854, but which had no great sale while England was watching a serious national event, and new books, in consequence, "found the minds of readers in general pre-occupied or indifferent." Still, "Pegu" struggled on, being the only authoritative standard of reference on the subject; and, aided by Government patronage, the book eventually became out of print. It is now, doubtless, to be found in many libraries throughout England and India; and not the least pleasing retrospect in a rather eventful life, is to the time when the writer travelled with his father in Sweden, and personally presented a copy of "Pegu" to King Charles the Fifteenth—soldier and artist—thereby making sure of at least one Narrative of the Second Burmese War being honoured by a place in the royal library at Stockholm.

It was gratifying, some years ago, to learn from a distinguished member of Her Majesty's Indian Council that "Pegu" had been found "useful and interesting"; and various officers, from time to time, notwithstanding (as remarked in the preface) the difficulty of producing a good book with the heat, the din of war, and the frequent impossibility of procuring correct information to contend against, have signified their





approbation. The Author having considered it most important at the present time—when Burma promises to be of far more than usual interest to the military as well as to the commercial world—to give a summary of events during the First Burmese War, in order that the conduct of the two wars, and our relations with Burma, may be better understood than hitherto, of course it comes first in order. The very brief account of that now famous war given in the Introductory Sketch will, it is to be hoped, tempt the reader, should he have time, to go through the more lengthy abstract which is contained in the second and third chapters (Part I.), of which the present writer appears, in a very great measure, as editor rather than author or compiler. The First Burmese War will also be found alluded to, and occasional extracts given, in connection with the operations of the Second; but the study of a connected sketch of such eventful Burmese Campaigns as those of upwards of fifty years ago, will enable military readers to better understand the few remarks on the operations, given in the fourth chapter. Again, Pegu and the Irawady being now ours—forming our grand base of operations—in the event of another war we should probably have to make use of (and of course improve) the same theatre of action as that in which the gallant first Army of Ava played so distinguished a part.

There is no desire in this work to advocate an annexation—far less an aggressive policy; and such a desire is hostile to the intentions of a wise Government; but no intelligent Englishman will deny—and if he has





denied it hitherto, it is to be hoped he will do so no longer—that the First Burmese War was vigorously prosecuted because we sought to save Bengal at least from invasion. And if, during the Mutiny of 1857, we had not possessed the lower provinces of Burma, there is no saying what trouble might have been created on our south-eastern frontier, and what the consequences might have been. When the Mahomedan began to discover he had lost his military and the Brahman his social sway, they might also have discovered that Pegu was a very convenient province for the game of murder and rebellion. The Second War, followed by the grand political stroke of annexation—which was forced on us—prevented the chance of Burma aiding the fiends engaged in the Mutiny!

Talking one day with that eminent Anglo-Indian writer, the late Sir John Kaye, on the subject of annexation, and having incurred his displeasure by alluding to “the force of circumstances,” of course it was useless to point out to the Political Secretary how valuable the possession of British Burma was to us during the Indian rebellion; how the isolation of Burma kept the Court of Ava out of the influences of the mutinies altogether; how the Bengal sepoy regiment stationed in Pegu found no sympathy from such a different race as the Burmese in the matter of disaffection; how we could spare British troops from the province at such a critical time; or how the Golden Foot sent a handsome donation of one thousand pounds to relieve the sufferers by the Mutiny! All was lost on Sir John, who conscientiously—like his





admirable friend, Sir Henry Lawrence, denounced annexation.

As the time is probably near at hand when, if the Golden Foot does not make a better wheel into the ranks of civilisation, there may no longer be a King of Burma, it is curious to notice that the last of the so-called "Great Moguls," the King of Delhi, died while a State prisoner at Rangoon on the 11th November 1862, and was buried the same day—the Mahomedans of the town being heedless of the event. Such was the end of the Mogul, who disputed the Empire of India with us, but now had been so long harmless, realmless, and "a prince without the shadow of power," that even at his death the pious Mahomedans deemed him hardly worthy of notice!

One word more about "Annexation"—a word frequently used in the following pages—a word which should never be connected with "party" where its realisation is meant for the good of mankind. Thinking of the great Canning's remark about the tremendous power Great Britain is destined to wield in the world, it is almost impossible not to fall in with Paley's observation on the cases in which the extension of territory may be of real advantage to both parties. The moral and political Archdeacon writes of the case where "neighbouring states"—one of them Upper Burma, for instance—"being severally too small and weak to defend themselves against the dangers that surround them, can only be safe by a strict and constant junction of their strength: here conquest will effect the purposes of confederation and alliance; and





the union which it produces is often more close and permanent than that which results from voluntary association."

This is a very "pithy" sentence and one well worthy of study. How could Upper Burma ever keep back China, or Russia, or, perhaps, Germany—if she is to be allied with the flowery land—single-handed, and probably with a hostile league of tribes against the Golden Foot, in case of an attack from the northward?

When a much younger man, the Author was all in favour of annexation. Like many other sanguine patriots, he thought we should be everywhere, and annex every country that fell out with us; but time has sobered down his ambitious views; and he now adopts the more Conservative principle of non-interference, when it can possibly be adopted without injury to our *prestige*. On the point of annexing only a part of a country, the writer, it will be seen, has expressed his decided views. He may further add that, as Euclid teaches us—"the whole is greater than its part"; so, in political result, the axiom is—If annexation *must* come, the whole is safer than a part! Commercial activity and enterprise also are seldom safe when dealing with fractions.

The fourth part of his work will probably possess more interest for the general reader and the merchant than the others. To get a good general knowledge of Burma, the Author must refer his readers to the interesting volumes of Colonel Yule, General Fytche, Dr. Mason, Dr. Anderson, Captain Forbes, and a few others of less pretensions, such as Surgeon-General





Gordon, Colonel McMahon, and Mr. Wyllie (in his "Essay on the External Policy of India"). Mr. St. Barbe, in reviewing the latter book, which has "nothing specially to do with Burma," says that the essays are "valuable for the most part as founding a policy which is fast becoming effete—the policy of masterly inactivity, which their author was the first to designate and describe." Of course, in times like the present, when so much ambition among European Powers is afloat, "masterly inactivity" is simply ridiculous and impossible.

It is to be hoped that commerce in Burma, and its enemy, the eccentric, cruel, and obstructive King Theebau, have received the attention they deserve. Doubtless, there is a brighter day at hand for the country, at which, of course, London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Calcutta—above all, Rangoon—will especially and naturally rejoice. The foreign trade of British Burma—unparalleled in the annals of Eastern Asia—notwithstanding the disadvantages under which it has recently laboured, affords a prospect most bright and advancing.

In conclusion, the author is pleased at being able to add to the utility of his work by giving an excellent map by that safe and experienced geographer, Mr. Trelawney Saunders. With reference to the numerous plans and sketches which enriched his former volumes—among the artists being Lieutenant (now Major-General\*) Alexander Fraser, of the Bengal Engineers,

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\* R.E., and Secretary to the Government of India. To this officer the author was indebted for military sketches of Shwégyeen and Gongoh.





whose light-houses and other engineering works will ever honourably connect his name with British Burma—only two illustrations have been selected—the scene Donabew, where the greatest of all Burmese generals died, and where a distinguished British general of the present day first saw active service—which will give some idea of Burmese forest or jungle warfare.

W. F. B. L.

1, *Oxford Gardens, London, W.*  
*December 1879.*

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## ERRATA.

- Page 17, line 14. *For Irawady read Irawādi*, the correct spelling of the great river, which is, in the original Sanskrit, *Airāvati*, feminine of the god Indra's elephant, from *aira*, "moisture," and *vati*, "like."—See *Ashé Pyee*, p. 81.
- " 44, line 32. *For Ma read Maha*, Bandoola.
- " 170, note. *For Thebau read Theebau*; and *for Santama read Gautama*.
- " 174, note. *For peninsular read peninsula*.
- " 357, line 11. *For something wrong read considerable difficulty in the framing of the Burmese Treaty of 1862, &c.*
- " 390, line 12. *For Ramathayu read Ramathayn*.
- " 393, line 17. *For Meuhla read Menhla, or Minhla*.

NOTE.—A distinguished London critic pointed out an error in the author's rendering of the meaning of the word "Moozuffer," as applied to one of the grand old East India Company's frigates. It does not signify a "traveller," but "victorious," which is written, in the original Arabic, *Muzaffar*. The word *Musáfir*, "a traveller," is Arabic also, which in this case was wrongly applied. (Page 187, line 8.)





# OUR BURMESE WARS AND RELATIONS WITH BURMA.

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## PART I.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

It is still an interesting problem to solve, whether the Mongolian race, up to the present time, has retarded the beneficial progress of the world. Taking an extensive yet fair view of the question, the mind is puzzled by its numerous intricacies, till at length we are obliged to fall back on a somewhat similar conclusion formed by Gibbon regarding the Mogul Empire,\* that, perhaps, it has been rather the scourge than the benefactor of mankind. From childhood we learn the lesson that war is only justifiable when defensive and unavoidable, not when it is offensive and unnecessary. Common sense teaches us that the barter of commodities is "necessarily coeval with the first formation of society," and that trade and commerce form

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\* The Mogul Empire generally. We agree with the author of "Burma, Past and Present," in considering the Mogul dynasty in India a misnomer, as Baber and his descendants were not Moguls, but of the kindred race of Turks.



the very key-stone of progressive civilisation. In the matters of war and barter, therefore, the Mongolian race has been largely to blame, inasmuch as it has given to the world far too much of the one and far too little of the other. Wellingtons and Richard Cobdens have been required from time immemorial in Asia. And yet, perhaps, had similar luminaries, especially during the last two centuries, for their hour, become lords of the ascendant in China and Chin-India (or Indo-China), a bombastic general of the flowery land could never have mastered the art of war on just principles, nor an arrogant Burmese sovereign the soothing influences and mighty advantages of free trade. Of course a strong natural love of exclusion lies at the root of the evil; and this is more evident in the Mongolian race than among the other varieties of mankind.

Friendly relations with Eastern countries, among us, as with other European empires and kingdoms, have ever been few and far between. Even in Europe shrewd and practical statesmen know well that what is styled "a supposed community of interest" must form a chief ingredient in the friendships, and especially in the commercial relations, of empires and states; and not balancing this consideration properly, the result must ever be a monopolizing tendency, which must in the end generally lead to war. Of course this is very lamentable, and very derogatory to human nature; but it cannot be helped, particularly in the case of nations less civilised than our own.

It is curious to think what the result would now have been had the little band of zealots who, tired of the excellent yet bare morality of Confucius, left China, early in the Christian era, in search of a new religion, brought back (65 A.D.), instead of Buddhism from India, Christianity from Palestine. There is one thing almost certain, that, were the four hundred millions of Chinese (Buddhists), and say the eight or ten millions of Indo-Chinese, Christians at the present time, there would be an almost entire absence of a deep love of seclusion among them; the possession of an eager and continual thirst for barter





on the largest scale; no fear to zealous members of the Senate regarding the crippled finances of India, and, perhaps, Chinese Burmese, and Siamese firms in London rivalling the British houses.

But China and Indo-China are still Buddhistical, and India is still the land of the Veda and the Koran—the principle of life apparently still so strong within these creeds as to make it difficult to think when they are to perish. So we proceed at once to give some popular information regarding our Burmese wars and relations with Burma.

As early as the middle of the sixteenth century the Burmese had conquered the inhabitants of Pegu, their former masters, and had established a strong independence. This brave and warlike nation speedily assumed a high rank in the East. The Burmese accession of power and territory naturally produced a desire for increased traffic; and, as regards the British, about the middle of the seventeenth century—not many years after the surgeon, Boughton, had done his country service by obtaining for the English nation permission to traffic, free of duty, in Bengal—our trade with Burma flourished to a considerable extent. Grain, oil, timber, ivory, and other valuable commodities, were not to be neglected in the early fervour of commercial speculation.

The fertile delta of that magnificent river, the Irawady, was visited by our countrymen under great disadvantages. The European *barbarians*—for the offensive term was used in the same sense by Burmese and Chinese—dared not sail up the Rangoon river, or any other of Burma's noble waters, without acknowledging the supreme authority of the Lord of the White and all other Elephants, whose trunks "put a girdle round about the earth," while under the shade of their master's golden umbrella the spheres steadily and gracefully reposed. But our merchants too frequently made respect for local authorities a secondary consideration, which, perhaps, first inclined the higher order of Burmese to look upon us in no very favourable light.





Far different was the conduct of the early servants of the East India Company. These functionaries, we are told, knew well how to humour the Burmese national vanity; and even governors of Fort St. George addressed the "Golden Feet" in terms of great humility. An old letter has recently been discovered, filled with what the writers in the "Spectator," had the gorgeous epistle come in their way, might have denounced as a brilliant example of an effort to be ridiculous for a political purpose. It is impossible to mistake the "studied ornaments of style"\* in a letter from Nathaniel Higginson, Esq., &c., Governor of Fort St. George, to the King of Ava, dated the 10th September 1695.

"To His Imperial Majesty, who blesseth the noble city of Ava with his Presence, Emperour of Emperours, and excelling the Kings of the East and of the West in glory and honour, the clear firmament of Virtue, the fountain of Justice, the perfection of Wisdom, the Lord of Charity, and Protector of the Distressed; the first mover in the Sphere of Greatness, President in Council, Victorious in War; who feareth none, and is feared by all: Center of the Treasures of the Earth, and of the Sea, Lord Proprietor of Gold and Silver, Rubys, Amber, and all precious Jewells, favoured by Heaven, and honoured by Men, whose brightness shines through the World, as the light of the Sun, and whose great name will be preserved in perpetual memory. . . .

. . . "Your Majesty has been pleased to grant your especial favours to the Honourable English Company, whose Servant I am; and now send to present before the footstool of your Throne a few toys, as an acknowledgment of your Majesty's goodness, which I beg your Majesty to accept; and to vouchsafe an Audience to my Servants, and a gracious Answer to my Petition."

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\* "Spectator," essay on "Metaphors."





Let us now hear the object of the petition, one of curious interest at the present time.

"I humbly pray your Majesty's fountain of goodness to continue your wonted favours to the Right Honourable English Company, and to permit our Factors to buy and sell, in such Commodities, and under such Privileges, as your Royal bounty shall please to grant; and allow us such conveniencys, as are necessary for the repair of Shippes, whereby I shall be encouraged to send my Shippes yearly to your Majesty's Port, having orders from the Honourable Company, to send Shippes and Factors into all parts of India, when their Service requires it."

It was well said, early in 1852, "We shall look with additional interest for the Burmese Blue Book, that we may have an opportunity of comparing the humble, cringing, obsequious memorial presented by the Agent of the Governor, on his knees, to the Lord of the White Elephant, with the cold and imperious missive of the present Governor-General. These two letters would of themselves form no incorrect index of the difference between the Company Bahadoor, as a pedlar, and as an emperor."

And now, before inviting the reader's attention to a slight historical retrospect, let us ask him to turn to the map of Asia, and mark how the country of Arakan and the province of Chittagong are situated relatively to Calcutta and the countries of Ava and Pegu.

Every one knows that the Portuguese were the first regular European traders in India, round the Cape of Good Hope.

Many of these adventurers, about the year 1600, had settled on the coast of Chittagong and Arakan. Ten years after their arrival, the Portuguese and Arakanese, acting in concert against the Subahdar of Bengal, agreed to invade his Subah by land and by water. The limited forces went boldly to the attack; but the invaders were entirely defeated. The perfidious commander persuaded the Governor of the Portuguese settlement





in India, who resided at Goa, to equip a large fleet, and upon its arrival on the coast Gonzales joined the admiral in attacking the city of Arakan. They were repulsed with great loss, reckoning their naval leader among the killed, while the captain escaped to the island of Sundeeep, defeated, disgraced, and ruined. It is remarked, by a competent authority, that the attempt of the Arakanese to revenge themselves against the inhabitants of Sundeeep and all the neighbouring coasts, with succeeding inroads of a similar nature, created the Soonderbuns,\* which region once flourished as the abode of wealthy and industrious men.

We next hear that the Assamese, occupying a fertile country to the north of Ava, were repulsed, and the Arakanese driven off by the occupants of Sundeeep, to secure the peace and prosperity of Bengal. It is curious to compare the progress of an expedition set on foot by Meer Joomla, the Subahdar, in the year 1661, against Assam, with the British martial adventures during the first Burmese war. Having crossed the Brahmapootra, with his stores and provisions, at Rungamutty, Meer Joomla, forming a road as he went,† marched his army by land. The march was tedious, seldom exceeding one or two miles a day; the army was harassed by the enemy. Meer Joomla shared every privation with the troops. At length, coming to conclusions, the Mogul army struck terror into the hearts of the Assamese. Their Rajah fled into the mountains, and many of the chiefs swore allegiance to the conquerors. Meer Joomla, in the plenitude of his triumph, contemplated planting the Mahomedan flag on the walls of Pekin. But reverses now fell upon the Mussulman. The valley of the Brahmapootra, from

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\* "History of Bengal," by Marshman, p. 39.

† This system of making war in a wild country was much in favour with the late Duke of Wellington, and he ascribed Sir Harry Smith's failure at the Cape of Good Hope entirely to his neglect of so salutary a precaution.





the violence of the rains which set in, became one vast sheet of water. The cavalry were rendered useless by want of forage, and the enemy cut off the provisions of the invaders. At length dire pestilence ravaged the camp; but with the change of season the land dried, disease disappeared, the Moguls regained health and courage, and, resuming the offensive, forced the Rajah to solicit peace. Meer Joomla was happy to grant this, for he was suffering from disease brought on by exposure.

A large sum of money was paid to the Moguls; but yet was Assam unconquered.

Burmese supremacy over the once independent kingdom of Pegu continued till about the middle of the eighteenth century. The Peguese (or Peguers\*), however, having obtained assistance from the Dutch and Portuguese, at length took up arms against their oppressors, gained many victories, reduced the far-famed capital, Ava, and took prisoner Dweepdee, the last of a long line of Burmese kings.†

But the fallen people were naturally too brave and energetic to remain long in a state of vassalage. The history of European countries presents us with more than one instance of a nation long prostrate throwing off a foreign yoke through the powerful and seemingly magical agency of one man; and such a fortune Burma was destined to realise. About the year 1753, Alompra, the hunter, arose. He was a man of humble birth, but through the exercise of an indomitable will acquired the

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\* They are also styled Peguans, whom the Burmese call Talains or Talaings. The Burmese, Karens and Shans are the other chief distinct races.

† Bonna Della, or Beinga Della, the Pegu Sovereign, after the conquest of Ava returned to his own country. "Renegade Dutch" and "Native Portuguese" are the terms applied to the European powers above noted. We mention this because "the Portuguese, in the middle of the sixteenth century, assisted the Burmans in their wars against the Peguese, and continued to exercise an influence in the Burman and Pegu countries, and still greater in Arracan."—"Account of the Burman Empire."





possession of a fort in the neighbourhood of the capital. At first he carried on a sort of guerilla warfare against his enemies the Peguese, and his forces speedily increasing, he suddenly attacked and took Ava. Alompra afterwards invaded Pegu, became master of its capital, extinguished the Pegu or Talaing dynasty, and founded the great empire which has existed to this day (1852). It was during Alompra's reign that the British Government was first brought into political relationship with the Kings of Burma.

During the war of conquest against the Peguese, we find the French and English traders playing conspicuous parts. M. Bourno, beyond the Ganges, appears to have been as zealous in his way as was the great Dupleix when in his glory at Chandernagore or Pondicherry. The former, no doubt, had an eye to the acquisition on the part of France of the capitals of Ava and Pegu, while the latter plodded over his favourite scheme of reducing Madras and Calcutta to their original condition of fishing towns. The Frenchman intrigued with both parties; the Englishman, Mr. Brooke,\* declared for Alompra.

Alompra appears to have entertained considerable respect for the English character, notwithstanding that the conduct of some of Brooke's countrymen was highly discreditable; and it is difficult to believe that the great Burmese leader participated in the massacre of the English at Negrais, on the 16th of October 1759. This tragedy seems to have been brought about through a combination of French treachery and jealousy. The massacre was contrived by an Armenian named Gregory, who, jealous of the growing influence of the English, found a ready agent in a young Frenchman named Lavine. This Lavine had been left by his treacherous friend, Bourno, as a hostage, during one of the pretended negotiations with Alompra.

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\* Resident at Negrais, then the company's chief timber-station.





## INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

Lavine and Gregory projected the extermination of the English in Burma. At an entertainment given by one Southby, the successor of Brooke, a Portuguese interpreter, well known to Lavine, was present as a guest. At a signal given during the evening the room was filled with armed men. Southby and his English friends were instantly murdered, and soon after all the Indian servants of the factory, upwards of one hundred in number, shared a similar fate. The guns of the fort were turned on the British ships by Lavine, who of course gloried in having performed the chief part in a treacherous and cowardly act, while he beheld our vessels steering for Bengal. Happily in the latter part of our Eastern possessions events were occurring of a cheerful character.

Since the commencement of 1757 Admiral Watson and Clive had regained Calcutta, Chandernagore had been taken from the French, Plassey had been won, and in the same year as the above massacre Clive wrote his famous note previous to the entire defeat of the Dutch at Chinsurah :—

“DEAR FORDE,—Fight them immediately; I will send you the Order in Council to-morrow.”\*

It was not long after Clive had fixed the destiny of India that the famous Alompra died.† One of his last actions was to invade Siam, a great valley at the head of a wide gulf, shut in by two ranges of mountains. Death arrested the sword of the conqueror just as he had commenced the siege of the capital. It was left for future adventurers to possess the rich plain of Siam. The inhabitants of this country, unlike the Burmese, are indolent and wanting in courage. It was, therefore, in

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\* Clive received the Colonel's letter while he was playing at cards. Without quitting the table, he wrote the reply in pencil. (History.) This is, perhaps, the shortest order to fight a battle ever written,—no words lost, all to the point.

† 15th May 1760.





their destiny to become the prey of the valiant and enterprising.

For many years after the affair at Negrais, English traders confined their operations to Rangoon, "where traffic with the natives was comparatively uninterrupted, except when the ships were impressed by the Burmese to be employed as transports during successive Pegu rebellions."

Shemburen (or Shembuan), who may be said to have succeeded Alompra, crushed one of these serious revolts. He further added to the glory of the empire by defeating a large army of Chinese; but failed in an attempt to possess the territory of Siam, excepting that part which is at present styled the Tenasserin Provinces, including Mergui.\* Shemburen's brother afterwards succeeded in annexing the province of Arakan,† reaching about five hundred miles along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal to the Burmese Empire, which now embraced Ava, Arakan, Pegu, a portion of Siam, and various minor territories bordering on the British possessions. The town and district of Chittagong had been finally lost to the Arakanese in 1666, and annexed to the Subah of Bengal.

The Burmese and British territories now coming into contact, a series of misunderstandings commenced; the seeds of future war were sown. At the conclusion of a dispute concerning some refugees from Arakan, who had, about the year 1794, found their way into the British territory, Colonel Symes was sent by the Bengal Government on a mission to the Court of Ava. His object was to establish "amicable relations between the two Powers, and especially to procure for British

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\* Our landing at Rangoon in 1824 gave the Siamese hopes of recovering these lost possessions, which our capture of them entirely destroyed.

† This was the work of the famous Minderajee Praw, fourth son of Alompra, who, in 1783 (corresponding with the Burman year 1145), sent a fleet of boats against, and conquered Arakan. The surrender of Cheduba, Ramree, and the "Broken Isles," followed the conquest.





## INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

traders immunity from the oppression and extortion to which they were constantly exposed in their visits to Burmese ports." By the treaty thus concluded, this oppression and extortion was lessened; but only for a short time.

Some years after the mission, about 1811, a serious rebellion having broken out in Arakan, the King of Ava believed that it had been instigated by the English, and accordingly laid an embargo on all British vessels at Rangoon.

Here was sufficient cause for hostilities. But the cost of the wars in India, promoted during the government of the Marquis Wellesley, had rendered it imperative upon the local rulers who succeeded him to avoid such an expensive alternative; and another mission was, therefore, in the first instance, preferred. What other inference could an ignorant and isolated potentate draw from this apparent acceptance of indignity than that the English were powerless to resent, or rated an amicable intercourse with Burma too highly to risk a permanent rupture? He mistook a prudent policy for fear, founded on inherent weakness, and his arrogance proportionately increased. At first his designs were cloaked by an appearance of inaction, and the time of the British Indian Government was too much occupied by the quarrels with Nepaul and the Mah-rattas, to allow of its watching the movements of any Power in the south-east. But gradually the King of the White Elephant unfolded his schemes of aggrandisement, invaded Assam, reduced Munnipoor\* through the agency of his general, one Bandoola, and, although at peace with the British, sent troops into the Company's territories, oppressed our traders, and insulted our flag and country in every possible way.

Thus we were forced into preventing the future encroachments of a very warlike and ambitious neighbour whose "arrogant pretensions and restless character" had so frequently interrupted the peaceful relations subsisting between India

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\* Then an independent state lying between Burma and Assam.



OUR BURMESE WARS.

and Burma, keeping "the frontier provinces in constant dread and danger of invasion." Then we were just beginning to learn that in India we must be "everything, or nothing."

At this juncture Lord Amherst landed in Calcutta, on the 1st of August 1823, as Governor-General of India. He gave his immediate attention to the conduct of the Burmese. An explanation was demanded of the numerous offences committed against the British Government; but the haughty and independent reply betrayed a spirit of aggression, and every attempt at an honourable and satisfactory adjustment was met with scornful silence. The Governor-General then declared war against the Burmese. The declaration was dated the 5th of March 1824, and operations commenced by the advance of a British force, which had been collected at Goalparah, into Assam, while arrangements were made to vigorously prosecute the war in other quarters. We should state that the Assamese were subjugated by the Burmese in 1822, when their General was proclaimed Rajah of Assam, subordinate to the Emperor of Ava.

It will give some idea of how British tenure of India was valued by the Rajah of Burdwan at this period, to relate that at the time of the Burmese war Lord Amherst asked the Rajah for a loan of a certain sum of money, promising to repay it at the end of twenty-five years. The Rajah declined, saying, he did not know whether twenty-five years hence the Company would possess the country. And now commenced the most expensive and harassing war in which the British had ever been engaged in India. Almost totally unacquainted with the character and resources of the country into which our arms were to be carried—unaware of the nature of the climate, which in the marshy districts scarcely yielded to Walcheren in the pestiferous quality of the atmosphere—the Government entered upon its arrangements with a recklessness of expense, and a disregard of the future, which ignorance might account for, if it did not wholly excuse.





## INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

Steam, at this time, had scarcely asserted its wonderful agency. As an engine of war it was certainly unknown everywhere, although steamers peacefully traversed all the rivers of Great Britain and some parts of the continent of Europe; and in India, so backward had been the endeavours of the Government to honour the enterprise of "James Watt," that not more than two or three vessels had begun to boil and bubble through the seas which washed the coasts of Coromandel and of Burma. Slow-sailing trading-vessels were consequently the only means of transport available for one portion of the army destined to invade Burma; and such were the difficulties of the country lying between Calcutta and Arakan, that the other part of the force, despatched by land, was three months in reaching its destination.

Rangoon, situated on a branch of the Irawady called the Rangoon river, about thirty miles from the sea, was captured by the British in May 1824, and a movement was soon afterwards made into the interior; for the Governor-General of India had resolved to dictate terms to the haughty Burmese ruler only at his capital, in presence of an army prepared to dethrone him as the penalty of refusal. A gallant and stubborn resistance was made by the Burmese throughout the war, which actually lasted nearly two years.

About the opposing army not the least interesting feature was that of a body of eight thousand Shans forming a part of it. These were opposed to the British in 1825; and the troops were accompanied by three young and handsome women of rank, who were believed to be prophetesses and invulnerable. These females rode on horseback at the head of the troops, encouraging them to victory. At length they were utterly defeated, and two of the heroines were killed in action. The Ranee of Jhansi in 1857-58 appears to have had something of this mysterious bravery about her.

Formidable stockades, consisting entirely of timber, everywhere presented a barrier to our advance, and cover to the



enemy, who employed musketry and cannon as well as the more savage implements of war in the prolonged contest. The heavy periodical rains, flooding the land, impeded operations for several months; and during this period of inaction disease, the result of malaria, penetrated the British camp, and nearly decimated the regiments. Not less than one-half the invading force was destroyed by the combined agencies of fever and patriotic resistance.

It appears by a return drawn up by Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly, the Deputy Adjutant-General, that during the first year  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the troops were killed in action, while 45 per cent. perished from disease. In the ensuing year the mortality from the same causes had decreased one-half; but the total loss during the war amounted to  $72\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the troops engaged. There were present at Rangoon on the 1st of January 1825, officers included :—

Artillery, including rocket-troops	.	1,071
European infantry	. . . .	4,146
Native infantry, &c.	. . . .	7,628
Total	. . . .	12,845 men.

At Arakan and the South-east Frontier, on the 1st February 1825, there were 9,937; and at Prome, on the 11th August of the same year, 12,110. The loss from the commencement to the close of the war was :—

	Killed.	Deceased.	
Grand total of officers	24	41	= 65
Native commissioned	6	28	= 34
Non-commissioned rank			
and file, Europeans	105	3,029	= 3,134
Ditto, Natives	90	1,305	= 1,395
Extra, killed, deceased, and missing			450
Total casualties			5,078

(According to the Deputy Adjutant-General's return, 5,080.)





The mortality was frightful ; the country, devastated or unfriendly, yielded nothing in the way of sustenance to the troops, and supplies were therefore continually forwarded from India, increasing the cost fearfully, and rendering the condition of the army extremely precarious. By dint of perseverance, and the courage which never deserts British or native troops, ably commanded, and with a grand object in view, Assam, Arakan, and Mergui, fell into our hands ; the Burmese were defeated at Prome, on the Irawady, and elsewhere ; and the troops approaching Ava, the monarch, terrified at the prospect of losing his capital, and perhaps his empire, met them at Yandaboo, where he signed a treaty consenting to pay one million sterling towards the expenses of the war, and ceding Assam and all the places on the Tenasserim coast. This contribution and these cessions fell far short of indemnifying the British India Government for the outlay, which, from first to last, had exceeded twelve millions sterling.

The territorial acquisitions, though by no means productive, have not been without their advantages in a commercial and political view. Extending from about  $17^{\circ} 35'$  to  $10^{\circ}$  north latitude, and from  $97^{\circ} 30'$  to  $99^{\circ} 30'$  east longitude, the "Tenasserim Provinces" as they have since been called, embrace a distance of five hundred miles in length, and forty to eighty miles in breadth, according as the sea-coast approaches or recedes from the range of mountains which forms the eastern boundary of the British territory. This chain of mountains, rich in tin ores and other valuable minerals, runs, under different names, from north to south, and, draining its eastern slopes into the Gulf of Siam, and its western slopes into the Indian Ocean or Bay of Bengal, forms a clear, well defined boundary between the kingdom of Siam and our Indian possessions.

The town of Tenasserim was once famous ; it is now of less importance. Not far from it are tin mines, worked by Chinese,





which may arrest the attention of the inquiring traveller. These mines are farmed from our Government; but are understood to be generally unprofitable to the merchants. In Siam, the cultivation of the soil is chiefly carried on by Chinese. Brass and rubies form the principal treasures of this strange country, which, on account of various misunderstandings between the king and other nations, has now an insignificant traffic. After the conclusion of the treaty of Yandaboo, Sir A. Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, selected the commanding position of Maulmain, at the point of junction of the Salween, the Gyne, and the Attaran rivers, for the permanent cantonment of a British force.

The town of Maulmain has gradually become of considerable commercial importance, and with a good port for shipping, and every prospect of an extended timber trade, there is hope that it may one day rise to the dignity of an enlightened and wealthy city.

But why should only one town gain happiness and prosperity in such a land as this? Let us hope that Rangoon, and the other towns of Pegu, once a mighty and independent kingdom, may likewise soon prosper through the blessings of an extensive and well-protected commerce, doing honour to our government, and adding glory to the name of Great Britain in India beyond the Ganges.

The above remarks, which may give some historical interest to his pages, include, with some other matter, the whole of the original sketch with which the writer introduced his readers, during the second Burmese war, to "Rangoon." Since then, the enterprising and munificent East India Company has given way to Her Majesty, who, in April 1876, assumed the title of "Empress of India." And, as will be fully seen towards the close of this volume, what a change has come over Rangoon! It is now the Liverpool of Chin-India, the commercial capital of Burma, which only wants a greater development of trade with the





upper portion of the country, and south-west China, to increase the wealth of Pegu, which chiefly requires a larger population, and which even now is the most hopeful princess among all Her Majesty's Eastern provinces. The Burmese hereafter will, doubtless, be glad to learn that we entertained this strong view of their golden land's excellence, especially if our hopes should be realised; for we learn from high authority that, in speaking of their country, they often call it Ashé-Pyee, the Eastern country—"the country before, or superior to all others."\*

It may here be useful to introduce the reader of this sketch to the correct spelling of Burma. In the present volume we have taken two letters out of the next most important word, Irrawaddy—in the Arabic *wádí* we find only one *d*—now presenting it as Irawady, although Irawadi, or Irawadee, may be better. From Burmah we have also lopped off the final and most unnecessary *h*. There is no *h* in the original Burmese word, which is "Myamma"; or Burma is a corruption of Mrumma. By all Burmese scholars the word is written Burma; and it must be clearly understood that the spelling of Indian words, as now used, has nothing to do with that of Chin-Indian. "Burma," however, is strictly used in the India Office. We were glad to notice this spelling adopted in a popular journal some six years ago; but on the death of the late king, in particular, the intruding *h* came forth again, and has been universally wrong ever since. The peculiarly Hindustani word *súbah*, a province, may be so written in English because it ends with an *h* in the original character; although *súba* is quite sufficient, and looks better or more simple when coupled with *dár*,—*súba-dár*, the chief of a province. But for the *h* in Burmah there is no possible excuse, except that worst of all, bad habit. So let it be written BURMA in the English language for the future! It is good to turn attention even to such "trifles," especially when

\* General Albert Fytche's "Burma, Past and Present," vol. i., note, p. 212.



CSL

OUR BURMESE WARS.

Oriental notice them, and when we are so forcibly reminded, by a well-known statesman,\* that we are an Eastern as well as a Western Power !

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\* Viscount Cranbrook, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

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## CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST BURMESE WAR. FROM THE OUTBREAK OF THE  
WAR TO THE DEATH OF BANDOOLA AT DONABEW.

WE now purpose to cite the chief military and political operations during the First Burmese War. But first it may be stated that, as a reason for an earlier rupture not taking place, the Burman emperor's hereditary enemies, the Siamese, in 1822 engrossed the greater part of his attention. Subsequent events, however, speedily showed that the pacific or conciliatory disposition evinced by the East India Company only tended to increase the insolence and rapacity of the Burmese.

In 1823 various acts of aggression were systematically committed. Several of our Mugh subjects (Arakanese emigrants) were attacked and killed on board their own boats in the Naaf river; and a party of the Company's elephant hunters were taken from within the British boundaries and carried prisoners to Arakan. Even these insulting acts might have been overlooked; but an attack made upon the British guard in the island of Shuparee, of which we had retained possession for many years, was of a still more serious kind, and could be regarded in no other light than as an explicit declaration of undisguised hostility.



The attack was made on the 24th of September by a body of six hundred Arakanese troops, who killed and wounded several of our soldiers, upon whom they came altogether unexpectedly. They were, however, speedily reinforced, and the enemy was driven out of the island. A remonstrance was also immediately addressed to the Court of Amarapura, but no answer was deigned to be returned. The Governor-General now became aware that there was but one line of conduct left for him to follow, and that further forbearance on his part would have been attributed to pusillanimity, and advantage taken of it accordingly. On the 5th of March 1824, therefore, an official declaration of war was issued by the Government of Fort William—characterised not more strongly by its temperate firmness than by its British frankness and honesty.

This step excited, as was to be expected, no inconsiderable sensation throughout our possessions in British India, as well as in England, as soon as the news arrived. It was at Calcutta, however, from its vicinity to the Chittagong frontier, that its importance was principally felt.

It was known there that one of the Burmese generals had already gasconadingly announced his intention of taking possession of the town, preparatory to his *march to England!* It was destined, however, that ere long the arrogance of this haughty nation should be effectually tamed. The war opened with military operations on the frontiers of Sylhet and Chittagong, to both of which districts troops were speedily marched. It was in Sylhet and Assam that affairs of greatest consequence took place. Our troops there were under the command of Major Newton, who, in several engagements with the far superior forces of the Burmese, gained decisive advantages over them. The first success obtained by the enemy was in an affair which took place at Doodpatlee, after Colonel Bowen had arrived to the assistance of Major Newton with a force from Dacca. The Burmese, amounting to about two thousand, had, according to their invariable custom, stockaded themselves with





unusual strength and care, and "fought," says Colonel Bowen, "with a bravery and obstinacy which I had never witnessed in any troops." The action lasted from early in the day till night-fall, when the British were obliged to retire with a severe loss.

The Burmese, however, also suffered much; and soon after, evacuating their stockades, retreated in the direction of Assam. Fresh troops were sent into Assam under the command of Colonel M'Morine, who, by the latter end of March, had penetrated as far as Gowahati. The Burmese Government, finding it necessary to concentrate their force in another quarter, withdrew the greater part of their troops from Assam, and left Colonel M'Morine in quiet possession of the country. In Chittagong, in the meantime, affairs were going on less successfully. Captain Noton held the chief command on this frontier, but an error seems to have been committed in intrusting too few men to his charge. The small corps he commanded was attacked in May by a powerful body of Burmese, and totally defeated, Captain Noton and most of his brother officers being slain in the engagement. The alarm speedily reached Calcutta, before which it was imagined the Burmese would instantly make their appearance, there being no intermediate force to oppose their advance. In this emergency, the European inhabitants formed themselves into a militia, and a large proportion of the crews of the Company's ships were landed to aid in protecting the town. But the panic was soon discovered to be greater than the occasion required.

The enemy did not think of approaching one step nearer than Ramoo, where, for a time, they took up their headquarters.

While these events were passing on the northern frontiers of the Burman Empire, a plan was matured by the Bengal Government, the execution of which was to effect an entire change in the features of the present war. Hitherto we had been acting principally on the defensive; but it was necessary, con-





sidering the enemy we had to deal with, to make it a leading object not more to repel aggression than to humble arrogance and intimidate foolhardiness. It was necessary to show the Burmese that we could not only endure, but inflict; that as we were not easily roused into anger, so our animosity was only the more fearful when it at length broke forth. The measure which was about to be carried into effect was that of despatching a considerable force by sea to make a descent upon some part of the enemy's coast, where probably such a visitation was but little expected. The force destined for this important expedition was supplied by the two Presidencies of Bengal and Madras; and, when united, was put under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Archibald Campbell.

The place of rendezvous was the Port of Cornwallis, in the Andaman Islands, where the troops arrived by the 3rd of May 1824. From thence Sir Archibald Campbell sailed on the 5th direct for Rangoon, detaching one part of his force under Brigadier M'Reagh, against the island of Cheduba, and another, under Major Wahab, against the island of Negrais. On the 10th the fleet anchored in the Rangoon river, and on the following morning sailed up to the town in order of attack, receiving little or no molestation by the way.

The Burmese at Rangoon seem to have been taken completely by surprise; and when the news of the arrival of a British fleet spread over the country, nothing could exceed the wondering consternation of the inhabitants. In whatever virtues, however, the Burmese may be deficient, certainly courage is not of the number; and as soon as their first emotions of astonishment had subsided, they prepared at all hazards for a resolute, and, in this instance, we ought perhaps to say patriotic, defence. Perceiving their feebleness, and being not as yet sufficiently aware of their hardihood and folly, the British commander humanely forbore opening a fire upon the town, in expectation that its governor would offer him some terms of capitulation. But it was soon discovered that no such





intention was entertained. A feeble and ill-directed fire was commenced upon the ships from a sixteen-gun battery, which was in a very short time effectually silenced. The troops were then ordered into the boats to effect a landing, and in less than twenty minutes the British flag was seen flying in the town, without the loss of a single life, or the discharge of a single musket. It was only the houses of Rangoon, however, that were thus got possession of. The inhabitants had all betaken themselves to the jungles in the neighbourhood, and our troops found nothing but a collection of empty habitations to refresh themselves in after their fatigues. The quantity of ordnance captured was indeed considerable, but in general of a very imperfect description. The islands of Cheduba and Negrais fell into our hands much about the same time, though not without a spirited opposition on the part of the inhabitants of both.

The prospects of our little army, now quartered in Rangoon, were anything but encouraging. The town was empty, in the most literal sense of the word. Every attempt to establish any intercourse with the native Burmese, for the purpose of obtaining provisions, was found to be fruitless. The rainy season was just setting in, which in Eastern climates is always peculiarly unhealthy to European constitutions; and, as far as any accurate information could be procured, it was ascertained that his golden-footed Majesty was making preparations, on the most magnificent scale, "to cover the face of the earth with an innumerable host, and to drive back the wild foreigners into the sea from whence they came!" To add still further to the discomfort of Sir Archibald Campbell's situation, some disagreements unfortunately took place between the naval and land forces. It had been expected, it is true, that the mere capture of Rangoon, together with the two other maritime possessions of the Burmese, already alluded to, would have produced such an effect on the Court of Ava that terms of peace would have been immediately proposed.

Nothing, however, was further from the intentions of that





proud Court ; and subsequent events proved, that though the Burmese may be beaten, they will die rather than confess they have been so.

The Commander-in-Chief, therefore, finding that as yet no practical benefits had resulted from his success, and that, on the contrary, the almost impenetrable jungles which surround Rangoon were rapidly filling with troops from all quarters, admirably skilled in every species of desultory warfare, and prepared to drive him either once more into his ships, or, if he thought of advancing, to dispute every inch of ground with him, saw the necessity of having recourse immediately to bold and vigorous measures. His first object was to ascertain the possibility of obtaining a sufficient number of boats, manned by skilful pilots, to convey a considerable portion of his force up the Irawady. This river may be set down as the great high road of the Burman Empire. Indeed, all the knowledge which we possess of that country was gathered by Colonel Symes, and our other envoys, upon its banks. It runs from north to south, through the whole of the kingdom of Ava ; and to it alone is to be attributed the internal commercial prosperity of the empire.

Every village on its banks is obliged to furnish one or more war-boats, carrying from forty to fifty men each ; and of these His Majesty can muster, on the shortest notice, four or five hundred. An impression appears to have been entertained by our Indian Government that, from the spirit of dissatisfaction which they supposed must necessarily exist in the minds of many of the inhabitants against the tyranny of their despotic monarch, they would be found, in numerous instances, willing to give all the aid in their power to the British. It was recollected, besides, that Rangoon was a town of Pegu, one of the conquered provinces of the Burman Empire, and that, for a long period of years, the most determined hostility had existed between the two countries. There was perhaps nothing irrationally sanguine in the hopes which these considerations





gave rise to, but they were entirely fallacious. Whatever complaints the Burmese might have among themselves against their government, and however severely the Peguers might continue to feel the subjection into which they had been reduced from a state of independence, yet, like the people of ancient Greece, at the appearance of a common foe all these causes of internal dissension were forgotten.

Not a single boatman acquainted with the navigation of the Irawady was to be procured ; and whether inspired with fear or patriotism, but one desire was manifested, from the throne to the hovel,—to shun all intercourse with the English. It would probably also have been dangerous to have ventured far up the Irawady unless the co-operation of a land force could have been depended on ; and before that could be the case, it would be necessary to clear the way by some hard fighting. The design, therefore, was for the present abandoned. In the meanwhile, the rainy season set in with all its attendant evils. The rain fell in such torrents that it was impossible for our troops to keep the field and act upon a regular system. Harassed, too, by continual incursions of the enemy, threatened with an approaching famine, and reduced by an epidemic which broke out amongst them to a state of the greatest debility, it seemed almost impossible for them to achieve anything of importance. Neither the hostility, however, of the Burmese, nor of the climate, could subdue British courage. For six months, from May to December, our operations were confined to Rangoon and its vicinity, it being the determination of the enemy to prevent us, if possible, from advancing a step into the country. Our ultimate success in compelling them to retreat further into the interior, and thereby affording us an opportunity of following them, depended not so much on the decisive advantage gained in any one action, as on the continued judgment and skill which regulated the whole system of our military tactics. We never advanced a few miles out of Rangoon for the purpose either of dislodging the enemy





from a position they had taken up, or of gaining possession of some post which appeared of importance, without being almost sure of achieving our object. But as soon as a certain resistance had been made, the Burmese were accustomed to retreat leisurely from their stockades into the jungles, where, though we knew we had beaten them, it was impossible for us to follow. Many rencontres of this description took place, into the details of which it is unnecessary for us to enter. A short account of one or two of the most remarkable will suffice as a description of the whole.

On the 28th of May the British and Burmese troops came into contact for the first time. Sir Archibald Campbell led his forces about five miles up the Rangoon river, and found the enemy had taken a position in one or two scattered villages, flanked on both sides by a jungle. Confident in the strength of their situation, they received the British with shouts and cries of "Come! come!" A heavy fire was immediately commenced upon our troops, whose muskets, having suffered from rain, were so inefficient that it was necessary for them to close without loss of time. The Burmese were altogether unable to withstand the violence of our charge; but, shut in as they were in their own encampment, and thrown into irretrievable confusion by the impetuosity of our attack, their only alternative was to continue fighting with desperate resolution until they were cut to pieces. Being unaccustomed to give, they did not expect quarter; and in self-defence, therefore, our soldiers were unfortunately obliged to disregard the dictates of humanity. Having taken possession of the villages, in which about four hundred Burmese lost their lives, Sir Archibald re-conducted his troops to Rangoon.

Soon after this affair two deputies arrived from the Burmese camp under pretence of negotiating a peace, but in reality only with the view of gaining time for the main body of the enemy to strengthen themselves as much as possible at Kem-mindine, a village three miles above Rangoon, on an elevated





situation, with a thick forest in its rear. They were intended, perhaps, to act also as spies, and report upon the condition and spirits of the British army. Whatever was their object, nothing satisfactory was proposed by them in the interview they had with our commissioners.

Determined to convince the Burmese that we were not to be lulled into a treacherous security, our commander, on the morning of the day after their departure (10th June), ordered a general advance upon Kemmindine. The road was not left undisputed. About half-way a strong stockade ran across it, the fruitless attempt to defend which cost the enemy two hundred men.

The way being cleared, the column again moved forward, consisting of about three thousand men, and by nightfall the troops had taken their position in many places within a hundred yards of where the enemy was posted. At daybreak on the following day, firing commenced, which upon our part, in less than two hours, produced a very visible breach in their fortifications. This, together with the recollection of their discomfiture the day before, operated so powerfully on the Burmese, that, notwithstanding the still existing strength of their stockade, they thought proper quietly to evacuate the place during the cannonade. It was this facility of securing a retreat, assisted as they were by the chain of posts which they occupied, and the thickness of the surrounding jungle, that particularly annoyed our troops, who, just in the very moment of victory, constantly found that their enemy had slipped as it were from between their very fingers. The object, however, which Sir Archibald Campbell had in view in making this attack was fully accomplished.

A terror of the British arms began to pervade the country; and, in the course of a few days, every stockade in the immediate vicinity of Rangoon was abandoned. In this, as well as in all his other expeditions on the banks of the river, the Commander-in-Chief received most effective and valuable





assistance from the co-operation of the naval part of his force. A short cessation from active hostilities took place after the affair of Kemmindine; but both parties were preparing to renew operations with increased vigour. A reinforcement arrived at Rangoon from Madras; and the detachments which had taken possession of Cheduba and Negrais, returned very seasonably to the main army, now a good deal weakened from various causes. The Burmese, on their part, were not idle. Their former generals having failed in driving "the wild foreigners into the sea," had fallen into disgrace, and were succeeded by a senior officer of some reputation, who brought with him a considerable body of fresh troops.

His object was, not so much to meet the British in open fight, as to hem them in within a limited space and harass them with a protracted system of desultory warfare. To such proceedings it was of course not our interest quietly to submit; and accordingly, various expeditions were undertaken for the purpose of breaking through the cordon which the enemy was attempting to form round us. In one of these, ten stockades were taken in one day, and the new general, with many other chiefs of rank, were killed. Still, however, no thoughts of peace were entertained by the Burmese; and it was now evident that, whatever successes were gained, as long as our operations were confined to the neighbourhood of Rangoon no effect would be produced by them on the Court of Ava. Unprovided, therefore, as Sir Archibald Campbell was with the means of advancing into the interior, he resolved to have recourse to the only other alternative left him, which was to intimidate the Burmese still further by the capture of some of their southern maritime possessions. An expedition was fitted out for this purpose, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Miles, who, in the course of a few months, made himself master of Tavoy, Mergui, and Tenasserim, seaports of much importance on the eastern shores of the empire. Two of the King's brothers, the Princes of Toungoo and Sarawuddy, now took the command of





the army. The one fixed his head-quarters at Pegu, and the other at Donabew, both at a considerable distance from Rangoon. Along with them came a body of astrologers, who were most probably kept in pay by the Burmese Government, as useful engines by which to act on the superstition of the people; and likewise a party of troops called the King's Invulnerables, from the belief entertained, or affected to be entertained, both by themselves and their countrymen, that the fire of an enemy could not injure them. Notwithstanding the extensive nature of their preparations, however, and the confidence they expressed in their own success, the operations of this new armament ended as disastrously as those of any which had preceded it. Instead of gaining any advantage over the British, they were invariably driven back with considerable loss as often as they attempted to approach our encampments. Yet it is not to be denied or concealed that the Burmese are no contemptible antagonists; they are constitutionally brave, they are trained to arms from their cradle, and there is a persevering obstinacy in their style of fighting, which, with troops less perfectly disciplined than those of England, would have every chance of being ultimately crowned with success.

But the golden-footed monarch of Ava had found out, at length, that however he might at first have affected to despise the small army which had taken possession of Rangoon, five or six hundred miles distant from his capital, it was more than a match for the best generals he could send against it, followed by thousands of his favourite troops. He saw the necessity, therefore, of collecting his energies for a yet more powerful effort. His forces, he found, were too much scattered; he was convinced that he was attempting to do too much at once. He recalled, therefore, the armies he had sent into Assam and Arakan; and, concentrating the whole military power of his kingdom, he gave the entire command to Maha Bandoola, the well-known Burmese general, whose reputation, from his partial successes over the British in



Chittagong, stood exceedingly high. Bandoola had advanced to Ramoo, where he was probably making preparations for an expedition into Bengal; and it is not unlikely that he found it exceedingly disagreeable to be awakened from his dream of future victory, by being recalled to defend his own country from invasion.

His retreat from Ramoo, and subsequent march through Arakan (which, in the midst, as it was, of the rainy season, must have been a peculiarly arduous one), relieved the inhabitants of Calcutta from considerable anxiety; and, shortly afterwards, enabled our troops in that quarter to advance with little opposition into the very interior of Arakan, taking possession of the capital itself.

As soon as Maha Bandoola arrived at Ava, every honour and attention was conferred upon him by his sovereign; and after a short delay in the capital, he set out for Donabew, accompanied by a large fleet of war-boats, which carried down the river strong reinforcements of men and military stores. We were not, however, unprepared to receive these new enemies; and some overtures of a friendly nature which we had a short time before received from the Siamese tended to inspire us with additional confidence.

As it was now also clearly foreseen that an advance towards the capital of the empire would be necessary before we could expect to intimidate the Burman monarch into a desire for peace, five hundred native artisans had been sent to Rangoon from Chittagong, who were busily employed in preparing boats to convey our troops up the Irawady. The arrival, likewise, of several battalions of British and native infantry, as well as of some troops of cavalry, added considerably to our numerical and actual force. Towards the end of November the largest and best appointed army which the Burman Government had yet sent into the field marched down from Donabew, and made their appearance in the neighbourhood of Rangoon, with the intention of driving us first from our position at Kemmindine,





and then of forcing the scattered remains of our army to seek for safety in their ships.

The name of the Commander-in-Chief, Bandoola, was in itself a tower of strength; and there was not probably a Burman into whose imagination the thought ever for a moment entered that this invincible leader could, by any possibility, be unsuccessful. Both armies met for the first time on the 1st of December; and as the particulars of their first engagement, where so much talent was displayed on both sides, cannot fail to be read with interest, we shall make no apology for introducing in this place an extract from the "London Gazette Extraordinary" of April 24, 1825, consisting of—

"Copy of a letter from Brigadier-General Sir A. Campbell, K.C.B., to George Swinton, Esq., dated Head-quarters, Rangoon, 9th December 1824.

"SIR,—The long-threatened, and, on my part, no less anxiously wished for event, has at length taken place. Maha Bandoola, said to be accompanied by the Princes of Tonghoo and Sarawuddy, appeared in front of my position on the morning of the 1st instant, at the head of the whole united force of the Burman Empire, amounting, upon the most moderate calculation, to from fifty to sixty thousand men, apparently well armed, with a numerous artillery, and a body of Cassay horse. Their haughty leader had insolently declared his intention of leading us in captive chains to grace the triumph of the Golden Monarch; but it has pleased God to expose the vanity of his idle threats, and crown the heroic efforts of my gallant little army with a most complete and signal victory.

"The enemy had assembled his forces in the heavy jungle in our front during the night of the 30th ult., and, being well aware of his near approach, I had previously made every necessary arrangement for his reception, in whatever way he might think proper to leave his impervious camp. The absence of

Lieutenant-Colonel Godwin\* at Martaban, and of a strong detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Mallet, which I had sent to display the British flag in the ancient capital of Pegue, had much weakened my force; but I had been too long familiar with the resolute resolution of British troops to have felt any regret that fortune had given me an opportunity of contending with Bandoola and his formidable legions, even under circumstances of temporary disadvantage.

“Early in the morning of the 1st inst., the enemy commenced his operations by a smart attack upon our post at Kemmindine, commanded by Major Yates, and garrisoned by the 26th Madras Native Infantry, with a detachment of the Madras European Regiment, supported on the river by as strong a naval force as could be spared. As the day became light it discovered numerous and apparently formidable masses of the advancing enemy issuing from the jungle, and moving, at some distance, upon both our flanks, for the purpose of surrounding us, which I allowed them to effect without interruption, leaving us only the narrow channel of the Rangoon river unoccupied in our rear.

“Bandoola had now fully exposed to me his plan of operations, and my own resolution was instantly adopted of allowing, and even encouraging him to bring forth his means and resources from the jungle to the more open country on his left, where I knew I could at any time attend him to advantage.

“The right corps of the Burmese army had crossed to the Dalla side of the Rangoon river, and in the course of the morning was observed, in several divisions, crossing the plain towards the site of the ruined village of Dalla, where it took post in the neighbouring jungle, sending on a division to occupy

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\* Afterwards Major-General Godwin, C.B., commanding “the army of Ava” in the second Burmese war.





the almost inaccessible ground on the bank of the river, and from which they soon opened a distant fire upon the shipping. Another division immediately took ground in front of Kem-mindine, and for six successive days tried in vain every effort that hope of success and dread of failure could call forth, to drive the brave 26th and a handful of Europeans from this post; while tremendous fire-rafts, and crowds of war-boats, were every day employed in the equally vain endeavour to drive the shipping from their station off the place.

“The enemy’s right wing and centre occupied a range of hills immediately in front of the great Dagon pagoda, covered with so thick a forest as to be impenetrable to all but Burman troops; and their left extended nearly two miles further, along a lower and more open ridge to the village of Puzendoon, where their extreme left rested. They were no sooner thus placed in position, than muskets and spears were laid aside for the pick-axe and shovel, and in an incredibly short space of time every part of their line out of the jungle was strongly and judiciously entrenched.

“In the afternoon of the 1st, I observed an opportunity of attacking the enemy’s left to advantage, and ordered Major Sale, with four hundred men from the 13th Light Infantry, and 18th Madras Native Infantry, under Major Dennie of the former and Captain Ross of the latter corps, to move forward to the point I had selected; and I never witnessed a more dashing charge than was made on this occasion by His Majesty’s 13th, while the 18th Native Infantry followed their example with a spirit that did them honour, carrying all opposition before them. They burst through the entrenchments, carrying dismay and terror into the enemy’s ranks, great numbers of whom were slain; and the party returned loaded with arms, standards, and other trophies. Having correctly ascertained everything I required, I now, as I originally determined, abstained from giving any serious interruption to the indefatigable labour of the opposing army, patiently waiting until



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I saw the whole of their material fully brought forward and within my reach. About sunset in the evening, a cloud of skirmishers were pushed forward close under the north-east angle of the pagoda, who, taking advantage of the many pagodas and strong ground on our front, commenced a harassing and galling fire upon the works. I at once saw we should suffer from their fire, if not dislodged; therefore ordered two companies of the 38th Regiment, under Captain Piper (an officer I have often had occasion to mention), to advance and drive them back. Were it permitted, on such an occasion, to dwell upon the enthusiastic spirit of my troops, I would feel a pleasure in recounting the burst of rapture that followed every order to advance against their audacious foe; but it is sufficient to remark that the conduct of these two companies was most conspicuous. They quickly gained their point, and fully acted up to the character they have ever sustained. At daylight on the morning of the 2nd, finding the enemy had very much encroached during the night, and had entrenched a height in front of the north gate of the pagoda, which gave them an enfilading fire upon part of our line, I directed Captain Wilson of the 38th Regiment, with two companies of the corps and one hundred men of the 28th Madras Native Infantry, to drive them from the hill. No order was ever more rapidly or handsomely obeyed. The brave sepoy, vying with their British comrades in forward gallantry, allowed the appalled Burmese no time to rally, but drove them from one breastwork to another, fighting them in the very holes they had dug, finally to prove their graves.

“In the course of this day Colonel Mallet’s detachment returned from Pegue, having found the old city completely deserted, and gave me the additional means of attacking the enemy the moment the time arrived.

“During the 3rd and 4th the enemy carried on his labours with indefatigable industry; and but for the inimitable practice of our artillery, commanded by Captain Murray in the





absence, from indisposition, of Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, we must have been severely annoyed by the incessant fire from his trenches.

“The attacks upon Kemmindine continued with unabating violence; but the unyielding spirit of Major Yates and his steady troops, although exhausted with fatigue and want of rest, baffled every attempt on shore; while Captain Ryves, with His Majesty’s sloop ‘Sophia,’ the Honourable Company’s cruiser ‘Teignmouth,’ and some flotilla and row gun-boats, nobly maintained the long-established fame of the British navy in defending the passage of the river against the most furious assaults of the enemy’s war-boats, advancing under cover of the most tremendous fire-rafts, which the unwearied exertions of British sailors could alone have conquered.

“Captain Ryves lost no opportunity of coming into contact with the much-vaunted boats of Ava; and in one morning, five out of six, each mounting a heavy piece of ordnance, were boarded and captured by our men-of-war’s boats, commanded by Lieutenant Kellett of His Majesty’s ship ‘Arachne,’ and Lieutenant Goldfinch of the ‘Sophia,’ whose intrepid conduct merits the highest praise.

“The enemy having apparently completed his left wing with its full complement of artillery and warlike stores, I determined to attack that part of his line early on the morning of the 5th. I requested Captain Chads, the senior naval officer here, to move up to the Puzendoon creek during the night, with the gun flotilla, bomb-ketch, &c., and commence a cannonade on the enemy’s rear at daylight. This service was most judiciously and successfully performed by that officer, who has never yet disappointed me in my most sanguine expectations. At the same time two columns of attack were formed, agreeably to orders I had issued on the preceding evening, composed of details from the different regiments of the army. The first, consisting of one thousand one hundred men, I placed under the orders of that gallant officer Major



Sale, and directed him to attack and penetrate the centre of the enemy's line ; the other, consisting of six hundred men, I entrusted to Major Walker of the 3rd Madras Native Light Infantry, with orders to attack their left, which had approached to within a few hundred yards of Rangoon. At seven o'clock both columns moved forward to the point of attack ; both were led to my perfect satisfaction, and both succeeded with a degree of ease their intrepid and undaunted conduct undoubtedly insured ; and I directed Lieutenant Archibald, with a troop of the Governor-General's body-guard, which had been landed the preceding evening, to follow the column under Major Sale, and take advantage of any opportunity which might offer, to charge.

"The enemy were defeated and dispersed in every direction ; and the body-guard, gallantly charging over the broken and swampy ground, completed their terror and dismay. The Cassay horse fled, mixed with the retreating infantry ; and all their artillery, stores, and reserve depôts, which had cost them so much toil and labour to get up, with a great quantity of small arms, gilt chattahs, standards, and other trophies, fell into our hands. Never was victory more complete or more decided ; and never was the triumph of discipline and valour, over the disjointed efforts of irregular courage and infinitely superior numbers, more conspicuous. Majors Dennie and Thornhill of the 13th Light Infantry, and Major Gore of the 89th, were distinguished by the steadiness with which they led their men ; but it is with deep regret I have to state the loss we have sustained in the death of Major Walker, one of India's best and bravest soldiers, who fell while leading his column into the enemy's entrenchments ; when the command devolved upon Major Wahab, who gallantly conducted the column during the rest of the action ; and I observed the 34th Madras Native Light Infantry, on this occasion, conspicuously forward.

"The Burmese left wing thus disposed of, I patiently waited





its effect upon the right, posted in so thick a forest as to render any attack in that quarter in a great measure impracticable.

“On the 6th I had the pleasure of observing that Bandoola had brought up the scattered remnant of his defeated left to strengthen his right and centre, and continued day and night employed in carrying on his approaches in front of the great pagoda. I ordered the artillery to slacken its fire, and the infantry to keep wholly out of sight, allowing him to carry on his fruitless labour with little annoyance or molestation. As I expected, he took system for timidity; and on the morning of the 7th instant, I had his whole force posted in my immediate front—his first line entrenched so close that the soldiers in their barracks could distinctly hear the insolent threats and reproaches of the Burman bravoos.

“The time had now arrived to undeceive them in their sanguine, but ill-founded, hopes. I instantly made my arrangements, and at half-past 11 o'clock everything was in readiness to assault the trenches in four columns of attack, under the superintendence of Lieutenant-Colonel Miles, my second in command, and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels Mallet, Parlby, Brodie, and Captain Wilson of the 38th Regiment. At a quarter before 12 I ordered every gun that would bear upon the trenches to open, and their fire was kept up with an effect that never was surpassed; Major Sale at the same time, as directed, making a diversion on the enemy's left and rear. At 12 o'clock the cannonade ceased, and the columns moved forward to their respective points of attack. Everything was done under my own immediate eye, but, where all behaved so nobly, I cannot particularise; but I must in justice state that Captain Wilson's and Lieutenant-Colonel Parlby's divisions first made an impression, from which the enemy never recovered. They were driven from all their works without a check, abandoning all their guns, with a great quantity of arms of every description; and certainly not the least amusing part of their formid-



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able preparations was a great number of ladders for escalading the great pagoda, found in rear of their position. The total defeat of Bandoola's army was now most fully accomplished. His loss in killed and wounded, from the nature of the ground, it is impossible to calculate; but I am confident I do not exceed the fairest limit when I state it at five thousand men. In every other respect the mighty host, which so lately threatened to overwhelm us, now scarcely exists. It commenced its inglorious flight during last night. Humbled, dispersing, and deprived of their arms, they cannot for a length of time again meet us in the field; and the lesson they have now received will, I am confident, prove a salutary antidote to the native arrogance and vanity of the Burmese nation.

"Thus vanished the hopes of Ava; and those means which the Burmese Government were seven months in organising for our annihilation, have been completely destroyed by us in the course of seven days. Of three hundred pieces of ordnance that accompanied the grand army, two hundred and forty are now in our camp, and in muskets their loss is to them irreparable.

"Our loss in killed and wounded, although severe, will not, I am sure, be considered great for the important services we have had the honour to perform.

"Of my troops I cannot say enough; their valour was only equalled by the cheerful patience with which they bore long and painful privations. My Europeans fought like Britons, and proved themselves worthy of the country that gave them birth; and I trust I do the gallant sepoy justice when I say that never did troops more strive to obtain the palm of honour than they to rival their European comrades in everything that marks the steady, true, and daring soldier.

"My obligations to Captains Chads and Ryves, and the officers and seamen of His Majesty's navy, are great and numerous. In Captain Chads himself I have always found that ready alacrity to share our toils and dangers that has





ever characterised the profession he belongs to, and the most cordial zeal in assisting and co-operating with me on every occasion. I have also to notice the good conduct of the Honourable Company's cruisers, the gun-flotilla, and row-boats. Nor ought I to omit mentioning the handsome conduct of Captain Binny, acting agent for the Bengal transports, in volunteering both his European crew and ship for any service. On the present occasion she was anchored off Dalla, and sustained some loss from the enemy's fire. I may also add that every transport in the river was equally anxious to contribute every possible assistance to the public service."

Notwithstanding the defeat, so unexpected on his part, which Bandoola thus sustained, not many days elapsed before that indefatigable leader succeeded in rallying his scattered forces, and with a body of about twenty-five thousand men returned to within three miles of the pagoda alluded to in Sir Archibald Campbell's despatch, and "commenced entrenching and stockading," in the words of that general, "with a judgment in point of position such as would do credit to the best instructed engineers of the most civilised and warlike nations." This position,\* however, Sir Archibald determined to attack on the 15th of December; and from the admirable manner in which the fire of the artillery was directed, in less than fifteen minutes the columns destined for carrying the breach were in possession, not only of the enemy's work, but of his camp, which was left standing, with all the baggage, and a great proportion of his arms and ammunition. "When it is known," says the Commander-in-Chief, "that one thousand three hundred British infantry stormed and carried by assault the most formidable entrenched and stockaded works I ever saw, defended by upwards of twenty thousand men, I trust it is un-

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\* Kokeen, four miles from the great pagoda at Rangoon.



necessary for me to say more in praise of soldiers performing such a prodigy ; future ages will scarcely believe it."

It is proper, however, to mention that upon this occasion Bandoola did not command in person ; the chief to whom he had entrusted that duty was mortally wounded whilst gallantly defending the stockade.

On the same day on which this very brilliant action took place, under the superintendence of Captain Chads, the senior naval officer at Rangoon, an attack was made upon a fleet of thirty-two of the enemy's war-boats. Of these, principally through the aid of the " Diana " steamboat, which accompanied this expedition, and the celerity of whose motions, even against wind and tide, inspired the Burmese with the greatest consternation, thirty were captured, having been previously abandoned by their crews, who, upon the approach of the steamboat, threw themselves into the river, and were either drowned or swam ashore, apparently in an agony of terror.

In consequence of these continued disasters, Maha Bandoola found it necessary to lead back his army, much shattered, to Donabew.

It was now for the first time that the British army at Rangoon found itself in undisturbed possession of a considerable district of country, and active preparations were immediately made for taking every advantage of this new situation of affairs. Orders were issued to prepare for a speedy advance into the interior ; and besides the continual arrival of transports from the Presidencies, this object was not a little favoured by the return of many of the inhabitants of the country to their former places of residence in Rangoon and its vicinity, and by their consenting to open a regular traffic with the British in all articles of consumption. Some of the native watermen, too, volunteered into our service, by whose assistance we were enabled to obviate many of the difficulties which our ignorance of the navigation of the Irawady would otherwise have occasioned.





Certainly at this moment the situation of the Burmese monarch was anything but enviable. The most numerous armies, headed by the most skilful generals he could send into the field, had been defeated again and again. The victorious troops at Rangoon were about to march for Ava; and from the north-east frontier of Arakan a large force under Brigadier-General Morison was preparing to enter his empire, and, if possible, to co-operate with Sir Archibald Campbell's division; from Sylhet, another army, under Brigadier-General Shouldham, threatened to advance to the capital through Cassay; in Assam, Lieutenant-Colonel Richards was busy with a small but active corps; and on the south the Siamese, who had already manifested their friendly dispositions towards the British, held out hopes of their making a movement in conjunction with our columns which were to march up the Irawady. His celestial Majesty, however, is not easily terrified, or, if he is, he has too much pride to show it. Upon the present occasion he boldly stood at bay, and manfully prepared for resistance at whatever cost.

It was on the 13th of February 1825 that the general advance of the British troops commenced. They were divided into two columns; the one, about two thousand strong, proceeding by land, under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell; and the other by water, under Brigadier-General Cotton, consisted of about one thousand European infantry, with a powerful train of artillery, which was embarked in a flotilla of sixty boats, commanded by Captain Alexander. The land column was to proceed, in the first place, up the Lain river, and effect a junction with Brigadier-General Cotton as near Donabew as possible. A smaller force, under Major Sale, was also ordered to take possession of Bassein, after which it likewise was to join the main body at Donabew. Brigadier M'Reagh, with the remainder of the troops, was left in command at Rangoon, and was to employ himself in superintending the fortification of that town, which went on briskly. The land force, under General Campbell, marched to Lain, without meeting any resistance





whatever. Its distance from Rangoon is about fifty miles ; but, owing to the uncultivated state of the country, and the absence of everything like regular roads, the troops, though in high health and spirits, could seldom advance more than eight miles a day.

They left Rangoon on the 14th, and did not reach Lain till the 23rd of February. The town, though the capital of a pretty extensive district, was found quite deserted, and a halt was made at it for only a single night ; after which, the column resumed its march towards Donabew with all possible expedition. By the 7th March it was near enough that place to hear distinctly the sound of a cannonade which the marine division under General Cotton, having arrived first, had already opened upon it. The operations of this division, in passing up the Irawady, had necessarily been much more arduous than those of the land column. Various stockades and entrenchments had been thrown up upon the banks to oppose its progress. At Panlang, in particular, a very spirited affair took place, where between four thousand and five thousand Burmese were driven back from very powerful fortifications with considerable loss. Upon this and other similar occasions, the shells and rockets used by the British were found of the greatest service, both as tending to throw the enemy into confusion and to save the lives of our men.

After these successes, Brigadier-General Cotton proceeded direct to Donabew ; and though Sir Archibald Campbell had not yet come up, he determined upon attacking the enemy, who, headed by Bandoola, mustered about fifteen thousand strong, and had fortified their position in the most skilful and soldier-like manner. An outer stockade, which our marine force first attacked, was carried with a loss to the enemy of about four hundred men. The attempt made upon the second stockade was less successful ; and, after being exposed for a considerable time to a heavy fire, General Cotton found it necessary to re-embark the troops he had landed for the purpose of making the assault, and dropped down four miles





below Donabew, there to wait until reinforced. Our loss in this second affair was serious.

In the meanwhile, Sir Archibald Campbell, not altogether aware of the formidable resistance which was to be made at Donabew, had pushed on several days' march towards Prome, a city of some magnitude, and which he understood was the head-quarters of the enemy. On the 11th of March he received despatches informing him of the failure of the attack upon the outworks at the former place, and, after some deliberation, he judged it proper to retrace his steps to the assistance of General Cotton. On the 14th, and four following days, his troops were employed in crossing the Irawady, which it was necessary to do before they could reach Donabew. The task was one of no slight difficulty; but, in the words of Major Snodgrass, "energy and perseverance, aided by the cheerful and hearty exertions of the soldiers, finally triumphed over every obstacle." It was not, however, till the 25th that the army arrived within gun-shot distance of Donabew.

The main stockade at the fort of Donabew was upwards of a mile in length, composed of solid teak beams, from fifteen to seventeen feet high, and from five hundred to eight hundred yards broad. Behind this were the brick ramparts of the place, surmounted by a large deep ditch filled with spikes, nails, and holes; and the ditch itself was shut in with several rows of strong railings, together with an abatis of great breadth. Our camp was hardly pitched before a sortie was made from the fort, which, though of a formidable appearance at first, ended in smoke. For several days skirmishes of a desultory kind took place before the works, without producing any serious impression on either side. On the 1st of April a continued fire of rockets was kept up on our part, with little or no return from the enemy, a circumstance which occasioned some surprise. The cause, however, was satisfactorily enough explained next day. The fort of Donabew was nearly evacuated; for, on the morning of the 1st, Maha Bandoola, while going his rounds,



had been killed on the spot by a rocket ; and such was the panic which instantly took possession of the garrison, that the surviving chiefs found it utterly impossible to keep it any longer together.

Just as the enemy's rear-guard flew towards the neighbouring jungle on the 2nd, our army took possession of the place, and found in it a great store not only of guns and ammunition, but of grain sufficient for many months' consumption. The death of Maha Bandoola was probably the greatest misfortune which the Burman monarch had yet sustained. There can be little doubt that he possessed talents of no mean order ; and the respect, approaching to awe, which he had inspired in his soldiers, made them a great deal more formidable when under his command than that of anyone else. One of the prisoners found in the fort related the particulars of his general's death in these words : " I belong to the household of Menghi Maha Bandoola, and my business was to beat the great drums that are hanging in the verandah of the Wongee's house. Yesterday morning, between the hours of nine and ten, while the chief's dinner was preparing, he went out to take his usual morning walk round the works, and arrived at his observatory (that tower with a red ball upon it), where, as there was no firing, he sat down upon a couch which was kept there for his use. While he was giving orders to some of his chiefs, the English began throwing bombs, and one of them falling close to the general, burst, and killed him on the spot. His body was immediately carried away and burnt to ashes. His death was soon known to everybody in the stockade, and the soldiers refused to stay and fight under any other commander. The chiefs lost all influence over their men, every individual thinking only of providing for his own personal safety."

*Mah Bandoola.*

The death of Bandoola, which was the turning-point of the First Burmese War, forces Major Snodgrass, in his excellent





narrative, to dwell at some length on the character of the greatest of all Burmese generals; and some points therein suggest a comparison with our clever and wily warlike enemy at the Cape, King Cetawayo, who, strange to say, may now (August 1879) be bearded in his den, or *kraal*, wherever that may be, by Sir Garnet Wolseley, who, as will be seen hereafter, in the Second Burmese War first distinguished himself while, as a dashing and fearless ensign, leading a storming party in the land of the Golden Foot\* at Donabew.

Before giving the Major's summing-up of Bandoola's character, it may be remarked that, in our opinion, two qualities reigned pre-eminent in him, namely, vainglory—according to Bacon an essential point in commanders and soldiers—and a superstitious fear, inseparable from a Burman and a believer in Gautama, in which religion spirits, charms, transmigrations, *Niebban* or Nirvâna—annihilation, and yet, as Gautama mentions an “eternal city,” hardly perfect annihilation—form the leading features. We know that, East and West, superstition has been the confusion of many States, and we also know that (to support the philosopher's theory) its practical effect, during the last fifty or sixty years in Upper Burma, has been to bring in a new *primum mobile* that has “ravished all the spheres of government.” Bandoola was certainly, without intending it, a man glorious for mischief. The biographer of Charles XII. considers conquerors a species between good kings and tyrants; and we are ever eager to know the most minute circumstances of their lives. The Burman, like many great European warriors in history, must needs be violent to “make good his own vaunt”; and

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\* When a Burmese subject means to affirm that the King has heard anything, he says “It has reached the golden ears”; he who has obtained admittance to the royal presence has been at the “golden feet.” The perfume of otto of roses is described as being grateful to the “golden nose.” Gold is the type of excellence among Burmans—as Shakspeare says, “Gold—yellow, glittering, precious gold!” Yet, although so highly valued for ornament, it is not used for coin in the country.



it was probably in this state of mind that, sometime before a similar threat, already mentioned, with regard to Calcutta, Bandoola marched with his army through the Aeng pass into Arakan—asserting Burmese rights to Bengal—taking with him *a pair of golden fetters to bind the Governor-General* (Lord Hastings) !

Another anecdote of him, bringing forth the superstitious fear, may be related :—

During an early period of the operations, Bandoola, having heard so much of the destructive properties of a shell, desired that one should be brought to him for inspection. A shell, with a very long fuse, having been projected by the British, the live *creature* was being brought, fizzing at a dreadful rate, to the chief. This they thought to be a decided failure, and the thing might be examined. The warrior, at some distance, surveyed, with great curiosity, the unfortunate men bringing the fiery fiend along. Another second or two, and it burst, killing the carriers and everyone beside it. Bandoola was thunderstruck : and, for the whole of that day, his courage left him.

The civilised “Swedish Charles” comes to the mind at this juncture ; and we think of his placid air on the bursting of the bomb in the house at Stralsund, where he was dictating, and his cool remark,—on the consternation of his secretary, after the latter’s “Ah, Sire, the bomb !”—“What has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating ? Go on.”

True enough, in the case of Charles, the shell had killed no one ; but, would Bandoola, like him “who left a name at which the world grew pale,” have exposed his own life to save a fellow-creature, as he did to protect one of his generals (Liéven) at Thorn ?\* We think not. And this forms an important

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\* This is one of the most remarkable instances of true courage in military history. As the general had on a blue coat, richly trimmed with gold, thus inviting destruction, Charles, in his plain blue with brass buttons (which, as well





difference in the military character of the Asiatic and the European.

It, doubtless, does so also in that of the African warrior and the British officer or soldier; for we have not yet heard of the renowned King Cetawayo, on any occasion, emulating the gallant and noble lord who has received the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery in saving the life of a sergeant, at the risk of his own, during a reconnaissance before the battle of Ulundi.

We now turn from this perhaps pardonable digression to Major Snodgrass's character of Bandoola, with the remark that no other leading Burman has since displayed similar warlike capacity and energy, although the nearest approach to him in the second war was the powerful robber chieftain Myat-htoon, who gave us so much trouble at and around Donabew. Major Snodgrass writes :—

“The character of Maha Bandoola seems to have been a strange mixture of cruelty and generosity, talent with want of judgment, and a strong regard to personal safety, combined with great courage and resolution, which never failed him till death. The acts of barbarous cruelty he committed are too numerous to be related; stern and inflexible in all his decrees, he appears to have experienced a savage pleasure in witnessing the execution of his bloody mandates; even his own hand was ever ready to punish with death the slightest mark of want of zeal in those he had intrusted with commands or the defence

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as the cocked hat with a bullet-hole in it, the writer saw religiously preserved in a glass case at Stockholm), placed himself before his “subject,” entirely screening him, to save him from being hit; but a volley of cannon, which came in flank, “struck the general dead on the spot which the King had scarcely quitted.” The death of this officer, apparently killed exactly in his stead, made him, says his biographer, believe in “absolute predestination,” and that he was reserved for yet greater things—an idea which Bandoola may also have cherished, till what was probably a *shell* Congreve rocket caused his death.



of any post. Still his immediate adherents are said to have been sincerely attached to him; uncontrolled license to plunder and extort from all who were unfortunate enough to meet Bandoola's men, may no doubt have reconciled them to their situation, and confirmed them much in their attachment to their leader. The management of a Burmese army, for so long a period contending against every disadvantage to which a general can be subjected, evinced no small degree of talent; while the position and defences at Donabew, as a field-work, would have done credit to the most scientific engineer. But it is difficult to account for his motives, or give credit to his judgment, in giving up the narrow rivers of Panlang and Lain, where a most effectual opposition could have been given, to fight his battle on the banks of the broad Irawady, where the ground was favourable to the regular movement of disciplined troops. During the days of his prosperity Bandoola seldom exposed his person—in the battles of Rangoon and Kokeen he was never under fire; but he did not hesitate, when circumstances required it, to allow himself to be hemmed in at Donabew, where he boldly declared he would conquer or die, and, till he actually fell, set his men the first example of the courage he required in all."

It is not probable that Upper Burma will furnish another Bandoola; but, under any circumstances, we must be prepared for him, and never be so mad as to despise our enemy!

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## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE ADVANCE ON PROME TO THE CONCLUSION OF A  
TREATY OF PEACE AT YANDABOO, 24TH FEBRUARY 1826.

THE British force now pushed on to Prome with as little delay as possible, well aware that decisive measures alone would produce any effect on the obstinate and arrogant Court of Ava. No hostile interruption was attempted to be made; but "letters were received, in the course of the march, from the Burmese authorities at Prome, intimating the willingness of the Government to conclude a peace." "As it was suspected, however," continues Mr. Bell,\* "that this was merely a stratagem for the sake of gaining time, Sir Archibald Campbell replied that as soon as he had taken military possession of Prome, he would be happy to listen to any overtures of an amicable nature which might be made to him." The prudence of this determination was very clearly perceived when the army arrived before that city, where every preparation was making for a vigorous defence. The celerity of our motions, however, was too much for the enemy, who, being taken by surprise before

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\* The Calcutta publisher (in 1852) of "An Account of the Burman Empire," compiled from various standard works, thus alludes to Mr. Henry G. Bell's succinct and clear narrative:—"The Account of the Burmese War of 1824, by Mr. H. G. Bell, which concludes the work, will be a good substitute for the voluminous narrative of Snodgrass, to those who have not access to the latter volume."—The greater portion of Mr. Bell's narrative is contained in the present Abstract.

their fortifications were completed, retired during the night of the 24th of April, and, on the 25th, General Campbell entered the place without firing a shot. As the rainy season was about to set in, and the campaign therefore necessarily near a close, our head-quarters were fixed at Prome, from whence a detachment marched, during May, towards Toungoo, taking possession of the intermediate country, and returning about the end of May to Prome. The Prince of Sarawuddy, who now headed the remnant of the Burmese army, fell back upon Melloon, and busied himself in raising recruits, to the number of about thirty thousand, for the ensuing campaign.

During the stay of the British at Prome, everything was done to conciliate the good-will and secure the confidence of such of its native inhabitants as returned to it. The consequences were particularly happy. The tide of population flowed back; and not only at Prome, but in all the towns and districts which had been already passed, an active and cheerful people returned to live in unmolested quiet, perfectly satisfied of the good faith and honesty of their invaders. In fact the whole of Pegu, as well as a considerable portion of Ava Proper, may be considered as having, at this time, been under the jurisdiction of the British. We had certainly conquered the country so far; and, without attempting any material alteration of their ordinary modes of civil government, we found it necessary to supply the place of their magistrates and other creatures of the crown, who had for the most part absconded, by organising a system of official authority, to which we gave the sanction of our approval and assistance. Into the details of these arrangements it is unnecessary here to enter. It is sufficient to say that they were at once simple and effective; and reflect no small credit on our Commander-in-Chief and his advisers.

The resources of the Court of Ava, great as their efforts had already been, were yet far from being exhausted. During the period in which there was a necessary cessation of hostilities,





a new army was organised, amounting to seventy thousand men, and all thoughts of peace appeared to be laid aside. It was the earnest desire, however, of our Commander-in-Chief to avoid, if possible, the shedding of more blood; and, in the beginning of October, he despatched a letter to the Burmese head-quarters, urging strongly upon the chiefs the propriety of advising their sovereign to listen to the lenient terms of peace he proposed. In consequence of this letter a meeting took place at Neoun-Ben-Zeik, between commissioners appointed on both sides; but after much useless conversation, prolonged to a ridiculous length by the Burmese, it was found impossible to prevail upon them to agree to the proposals we made; and soon after the Burmese commissioners had returned to head-quarters, the army advanced, in battle array, to the very gates of Prome, its general having previously honoured Sir Archibald Campbell with the following laconic epistle:—"If you wish for peace, you may go away; but if you ask either money or territory, no friendship can exist between us. This is the Burman custom."

It was not long before "Burman custom" underwent a change. To oppose the formidable force which now threatened to shut us in, and bury us among the ruins of Prome, we were able to muster an army of only five thousand men, of whom only three thousand were British. It seemed to be the wish of the Burmese leaders not to risk a general engagement, but to proceed by the slower, though perhaps more certain, method of blockade. As soon as these intentions were discovered, it was resolved to attack the enemy at once, without allowing him more time for strengthening his position. On the 1st December our marine and land forces advanced at the same moment; and, after a well-contested fight of some hours, the Burmese were driven back, with much slaughter, to a stockade they had erected some miles distant on the heights of Napadee. It was remarked, as a curious feature of this engagement, that three young and handsome women, evidently of high rank, fought with the most persevering obstinacy and





courage among the ranks of the Burmese, recalling to the recollection of our officers all they had ever read of the Amazons of earlier ages. It was believed that at least two of these ladies perished in the field. The Burmese general, Maha Nemion, and many of the Chobwas, or tributary princes, who had grown grey in the service of their sovereign, also lost their lives on this day. But, after all, our troops had only achieved half of what it was necessary for them to do. Until the enemy was driven from his formidable position at Napadee, we could not congratulate ourselves on having gained any decisive victory. On the 2nd of December, therefore, and the four following days, the army was employed in probably the most arduous duty it had yet undertaken—that of forcing the heights of Napadee. They were fortified with unexampled strength, although the natural obstacles they presented made artificial means of defence almost unnecessary. All things considered, we do not think we can be accused of giving way to national vanity when we assert that none but British soldiers, powerfully assisted by a flotilla commanded by British sailors, could have succeeded in steadily advancing from one stockade to another, under the continued volleys of the Burmese, and in driving at the point of the bayonet, without returning a shot, their opponents from a position three miles in extent. On the 5th the victory was complete. Every division of the Burmese army, and these were several, had been beaten in succession; and, completely disheartened, the fugitives dispersed themselves in all directions, wherever the woods or the jungles seemed to offer concealment.

It was now determined to lose no time in advancing to Ava itself, which is about three hundred miles distant from Prome; and on the 9th of December the march was commenced. On the 29th our army reached Melloon, about halfway between Ava and Prome, having seen nothing on the way but a deserted country, covered with the wounded, the dead, and the dying. The Burmese monarch was at last awakened to some-





thing like a becoming knowledge of the situation in which he stood; and at Melloon a flag of truce was sent to meet us, and to intimate the arrival of a commissioner from Ava, with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace. That this was really the case was attested by the amicable conduct of the enemy's troops who were assembled at Melloon. Our army, therefore, halted on the opposite side of the river, and a barge was moored in the middle, where the first meeting with the new delegate was to take place.

On the 1st of January, the commissioners of both nations met. The demand made upon our part of a crore of rupees, as well as of the cession of Arakan and the restoration of Cassay, was what principally startled the Burmese commissioners; but at length, finding it impossible to make us alter our terms, the treaty was agreed to and signed, fifteen days being allowed for obtaining the ratification of the King. At the expiration of that period it was communicated to us from Melloon that no answer had yet been received from Ava, and a further delay of some six or eight days was requested. But as this must evidently have been a preconcerted scheme, suspicions were aroused of the sincerity of that designing Court, and Sir Archibald Campbell gave the Burmese the choice of only two alternatives—either to evacuate Melloon, and allow him to take possession of it, in which case he would remain quiet for a short time longer; or to prepare for an assault, which he would make upon it that very night. The Burmese, with much courage, instantly prepared for their defence. Though not inferior in bravery, however, the military tactics of the Burmese will not for a moment bear any comparison with ours. Early on the 19th January 1826, the British standard was erected on the walls of Melloon, fifteen thousand men having been driven out of the town by comparatively a mere handful. In the house of Prince Memiaboo, a half-brother of the King, who had taken the command, was found money to the amount of from thirty thousand to forty thousand rupees; and what was still more



surprising, though perhaps not quite so agreeable, both the English and Burmese copies of the treaty lately made, signed and sealed as they had been at the meeting, and bearing, consequently, undeniable evidence of their never having been perused by the King.

"It is no easy matter," says an officer from whose work we have already quoted, "to divine what object the Court of Ava could have had in view in opening negotiations they had no intention of abiding by, or what possible result they could have anticipated from a short and profitless delay, which to us was in every point of view desirable, as much to allow the men to recover from the debilitating effects of their late fatigue, as to afford time for collecting cattle from the interior and sufficient supplies of every description for prosecuting our journey along a sacked and plundered line of country." "Memiaboo and his beaten army," adds Major Snodgrass, "retired from the scene of their disasters with all possible haste, and the British commander prepared to follow him up without delay. Before, however, commencing his march he despatched a messenger with the unratified treaty to the Kee Woongee, as well to show the Burmese chiefs that their perfidy was discovered, as to give them the means of still performing their engagements; but merely telling the latter in his note that, in the hurry of departure from Melloon, he had forgotten a document which he might now find more useful and acceptable to his Government than they had a few days previously considered it. The Woongee and his colleague politely returned their best thanks for the paper, but observed that the same hurry that had caused the loss of the treaty had compelled them to leave behind a large sum of money, which they also much regretted, and which they were sure the British general only waited an opportunity of returning."

Our army now resumed its march upon Ava. On the 31st of January it was met by a Doctor Price, an American missionary, and an Englishman of the name of Sandford,





assistant-surgeon of the Royal Regiment (who had been taken prisoner some months before), and who were now sent on their parole of honour to communicate the sincere desire which his celestial Majesty at last entertained for peace, and to ascertain the lowest terms upon which it would be granted. The terms offered at Melloon were renewed, and, the British general having promised not to advance for twelve days nearer their capital than Pagahm-Mew, the two delegates returned to Ava.

There can be little doubt that the Burmese monarch now saw the necessity for peace, and was therefore anxious to secure it; but the terms proposed, lenient as they were, he found dreadfully galling to his pride. At all hazards, therefore, he resolved upon one effort more; and if that failed, peace was to be immediately concluded. On the fall of Melloon, he made an appeal to the patriotism and generosity of his subjects. He represented himself as tottering on his throne, and the immortal dominion of Ava as about to pass away into the hands of strangers. To the troops which he now collected, to the amount of about forty thousand men, he gave the honourable appellation of "Retrievers of the King's Glory"; and a warrior, bearing the formidable titles of "Prince of the Setting Sun," "Prince of Darkness," and "King of Hell," was entrusted with the command of this force. He took his position at Pegahm-Mew, where he was attacked by the British on the 9th of March. The result was the same as had attended all our engagements with the Burmese. We took possession of the place, and the "Retrievers of the King's Glory" fled in detached parties over the country. The unfortunate "Prince of the Setting Sun" ventured to return to Ava after his defeat, where he was immediately put to death by order of the King.

Peace was now inevitable, unless it had been resolved to allow Ava itself to fall into our hands. The army, which continued to advance, was met only forty-five miles from that city by Dr. Price and Mr. Sandford, accompanied by two Ministers of State and all the British prisoners who had been taken, during



## OUR BURMESE WARS.

the war, and bringing the first instalment of the money payment (twenty-five lakhs of rupees), as well as an authority under the sign-manual, to accept of such terms of peace as we might propose. These were finally settled and signed on the 24th of February 1826. This important Treaty of Peace between the Honourable East India Company on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava on the other, consisted of the following Articles, to which we have much pleasure in giving a place in this work :—

“ART. I.—There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable Company on the one part, and the King of Ava on the other.

“ART. II.—His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims, and will abstain from all future interference with the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jynteea. With regard to Munnipore, it is stipulated, that, should Ghumbeer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof.

“ART. III.—To prevent all future disputes respecting the boundary between the two great nations, the British Government will retain the conquered provinces of Arracan, including the four divisions of Arracan, Ramree, Cheduba, and Sandoway, and His Majesty the King of Ava cedes all right thereto. The Unnoupectowmien, or Arracan mountains (known in Arracan by the name of Yeematoung, or Pokhingloun range), will henceforth form the boundary between the two great nations on that side. Any doubts regarding the said line of demarcation will be settled by the commissioners appointed by the respective Governments for that purpose, such commissioners from both Powers to be suitable and corresponding in rank.

“ART. IV.—His Majesty the King of Ava cedes to the British Government the conquered provinces of Yeh, Tavoy, and Mergui and Tenasserim, with the islands and dependencies thereunto appertaining, taking the Salween river as the line of





demarcation on that frontier. Any doubts regarding their boundaries will be settled as specified in the concluding part of Art. III.

“ART. V.—In proof of the sincere disposition of the Burman Government to maintain the relations of peace and amity between the nations, and as part indemnification to the British Government for the expenses of the war, His Majesty the King of Ava agrees to pay the sum of one crore of rupees.

“ART. VI.—No person whatever, whether native or foreigner, is hereafter to be molested by either party, on account of the part which he may have taken, or have been compelled to take, in the present war.

“ART. VII.—In order to cultivate and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two Governments, it is agreed that accredited ministers, retaining an escort or safe-guard of fifty men from each, shall reside at the durbar of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase or to build a suitable place of residence, of permanent materials; and a commercial treaty, upon principles of reciprocal advantage, will be entered into by the high contracting Powers.

“ART. VIII.—All public and private debts contracted by either Government, or by the subjects of either Government, with the others previous to the war, to be recognised and liquidated, upon the same principles of honour and good faith as if hostilities had not taken place between the two nations; and no advantage shall be taken by either party of the period that may have elapsed since the debts were incurred, or in consequence of the war; and according to the universal law of nations, it is farther stipulated that the property of all British subjects who may die in the dominions of His Majesty the King of Ava shall, in the absence of legal heirs, be placed in the hands of the British Resident or Consul in the said dominions, who will dispose of the same according to the tenor of the British law. In like manner, the property of Burmese subjects dying under the same circumstances, in any part of the British domi-



OUR BURMESE WARS.

nions, shall be made over to the Minister or other authority delegated by his Burman Majesty to the Supreme Government of India.

“ART. IX.—The King of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels in Burman ports that are not required for Burman ships or vessels in British ports; nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon river, or other Burman ports, be required to land their guns, or unship their rudders, or to do any other act not required by Burmese ships or vessels in British ports.

“ART. X.—The good and faithful ally of the British Government, His Majesty the King of Siam, having taken a part in the present war, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards His Majesty and his subjects, be included in the above treaty.

“ART. XI.—This treaty to be ratified by the Burmese authorities competent in the like cases, and the ratification to be accompanied by all British, whether European or Native, American and other prisoners, who will be delivered over to the British commissioners; the British commissioners, on their part, engaging that the said treaty shall be ratified by the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, and the ratification shall be delivered to His Majesty the King of Ava, in four months, or sooner if possible; and all the Burmese prisoners shall, in like manner, be delivered over to their own Government, as soon as they arrive from Bengal.

(Signed)

“LARGEEN MIONGA,

Woongee, L.S.

Seal of the Lotoo.

(Signed)

“SHWAGUIN WOON,

Atawoon, L.S.

(Signed)

“A. CAMPBELL,

Major-General and Senior  
Commissioner.

(Signed)

“T. C. ROBERTSON,

Civil Commissioner, L.S.

(Signed)

“H. D. CHADS, Captain, R.N.





"ADDITIONAL ARTICLE.—The British Commissioners being most anxiously desirous to manifest the sincerity of their wish for peace, and to make the immediate execution of the fifth article of this treaty as little irksome or inconvenient as possible, His Majesty the King of Ava consents to the following arrangements with respect to the division of the sum total, as specified in the article before referred to, into instalments, viz. :—Upon the payment of twenty-five lakhs of rupees, or one-fourth of the sum total (the other articles of the treaty being executed), the army will retire to Rangoon. Upon the further payment of a similar sum at that place, within one hundred days from this date, with the proviso as above, the army will evacuate the dominions of His Majesty the King of Ava with the least possible delay ; leaving the remaining moiety of the sum total to be paid by equal annual instalments in two years, from this 24th day of February 1826, A.D., through the Consul or Resident in Ava or Pegue, on the part of the Honourable East India Company.

(Signed)

"LARGEEN MIONGA,

Woongee, L.S.

Seal of the Lotoo.

(Signed)

"SHWAGUIN WOON,

Atawoon, L.S.

(Signed)

"A. CAMPBELL,

Major-General and Senior  
Commissioner.

(Signed)

"T. C. ROBERTSON,

Civil Commissioner, L.S.

(Signed)

"H. D. CHADS, Captain, R.N."

Such, then, was the end of the First Burmese War, which altered the territories or relations of the British in India, and first made us acquainted with the Burmese in the eastern peninsula. However much the various writers on this interesting war may differ as to the conduct or justice of it on our part, they all agree as to the matchless coolness and arrogance of the Burmese history which records it. The victory cost us dear.





The King of Ava had been compelled to renounce all claims on Assam, Cassay, Arakan, Martaban, Tavoy, and Tenasserim, and to pay a crore of rupees—one million sterling—as an indemnity for the expenses of the war. The following is from the Royal Chronicle of the Burmese:—"In the years 1186 and 1187" (of the Burmese era) "the *Kula pyu*, or white strangers of the west, fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took that place and Prome" (properly Pyê Myo), "and were permitted to advance as far as Yandaboo; for the King, from motives of piety and regard to life, made no preparation whatever to oppose them. The strangers had spent vast sums of money in their enterprise, so that by the time they reached Yandaboo their resources were exhausted, and they were in great distress. They then petitioned the King, who, in his clemency and generosity, sent them large sums of money to pay their expenses back, and ordered them out of the country."

Thus did the Burmese, ignoring the fact of their being the aggressors, cleverly and resignedly register their case in the national archives, according to Burman custom! The boastful character of the Burmese, as with the Chinese, and in a lesser measure with the Siamese, fifty years ago, made it more difficult than at present for the Western nations to bring them to their complete senses, and cause them to acquire that degree of civilisation to which such ingenious people might otherwise have speedily aspired. Throughout this long war the British and native soldiers deserved and received the gratitude of their country. On the 8th of May 1827, Mr. C. W. Wynn moved in the House of Commons, and on the 14th Lord Goderich in the Lords, "That the thanks of each House be given to the officers and men engaged in the late glorious successes in India" (or rather in India beyond the Ganges, or, as Malte-Brun styles it, Chin-India). The remark by the British Parliament, "glorious successes in India"—erring on the right side—is apt to raise a smile when compared with that of a popular historian





of British India, who, after asserting that the Burmese war was the principal event of Lord Amherst's administration, and that by the successful operations the Company gained a large extent of territory on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, writes:—"As this conquest, however, was carried on entirely beyond the limits of India proper, it does not belong to the subject of the present work!" This is a remarkable statement. The war was actually undertaken to protect Bengal, or give us a better "scientific frontier" to the eastward (or south-east) than formerly; and yet even the principal operations of such an important war did not require to be handed down to posterity! As well might we say that Canada or South Africa should be excluded from a History of the British Empire. Regarding our Eastern Empire, we must ever consider each square mile or even acre of it an important part of "the stupendous whole!"

It is impossible to consider the effects of the first Burmese war without thinking of the foreign policy of the illustrious statesman and orator, Mr. Canning. Having gained a considerable knowledge of Indian affairs at the Board of Control, he had been selected to proceed to India as Governor-General. But he could ill be spared from Europe; the people of England especially could not spare him; so Lord Amherst went in his stead. It was during his mighty achievements as Foreign Secretary, therefore, that he could only hear at a distance of the war and our relations with Burma; and it is curious to reflect what policy he might have recommended to the Court, or himself adopted, had the Lord of the White Elephant and the Golden Foot come under his special control. The great political "adventurer"—as he was styled by his enemies—might in a burst of eloquent enthusiasm—as Viceroy he would have exhibited the ready writing genius, vigour, and foresight of Lord Dalhousie, combined with the statesman-like moderation of Lord Mayo—have informed the people of both Upper and Lower Burma, that he called the British or New power in portions of their golden land into existence "to redress the

balance of the Old,"\* which robbed them of independence, and made them the slaves of tyranny and oppression. Mr. Canning's remarks on war as well as politics—say, the balance of power—appear to be equally just: they are especially so when we regard the progress of British power in the East. On the uncertainty of war he says:—"How seldom in the whole history of the wars of Europe has any war between two great Powers ended in obtaining the exact, the identical object for which the war was begun!" May not the same be said with regard to our Indian wars against minor powers? And again—particularly applicable at the present time (1879), when the encroachments of Russia in certain quarters have been arrested by that stern sentry, a "scientific frontier"—he exclaims:—"The balance of power! . . . Is it not a standard perpetually varying as civilisation advances, and as new nations spring up and take their place among established political communities?"

During two centuries the balance of power has been adjusted over and over again. Upwards of half a century ago, as in later times, there were revolutions and counter-revolutions, Greek and other settlements in Europe, and a boundary dispute in Europe and America; and in Africa and Chin-India the Ashantee and Burmese wars. Time moves rapidly on; vast changes throughout the world are now on the eve of being accomplished, till, at no distant period, universal civilisation may be found emerging from chaos.

The balance of power in the East will soon be a very difficult problem to solve, especially if Russia and Germany† (which

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\* The great statesman's celebrated sentence, with which the above liberty is taken, the reader may recollect, was uttered in allusion to his being the first European minister to recognise South American independence:—"I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old." In 1827 Mr. Canning became Premier, and died in August of that year.

† In 1879 styled "the natural ally of China."





seems probable) become mixed up with China; and Russia, with the usual steadiness of purpose, becomes too eager about establishing a profitable inland trade with the flowery land—the vast region whose people are still exclusive, but now more progressive and wonderful and pliable than at any former period! With so many “coming events” casting their “shadows before,” it becomes almost an imperative duty on Great Britain to keep a watchful eye on Upper Burma, as Chinese relations\* with the Golden Foot may expand at any moment; and during some great crisis, or sudden convulsion, we might lose the chance of better securing our eastern and south-eastern frontier, and thus risk those vast commercial interests for which the way has been so admirably paved by the first and second Burmese wars.

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\* Burma is a sort of vassal of China.

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OUR BURMESE WARS.

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON THE OPERATIONS.

"How true it is that in military operations time is everything!"

WELLINGTON.

IN the event of a third Burmese war, or any future military operations in Chin-India, it may be well to gather a few lessons from the experiences of the old campaigns. The first grand failure of the Burmese in opposing or standing against us has been attributed to their ignorance of the *art of war*, or at least to their knowledge of the *art* being very limited. But even had they possessed a general-in-chief like Baron De Jomini among them, without the feeling that it is the discipline of an army that makes the multitude act as one man, the result would have been the same. Such a Burmese strategist must have worked after his own fashion, the proper use of jungles, fastnesses, trees, stockades, rivers, swamps, old guns, and jinjals,\* being to him what field-works teeming with improvements in engineering and artillery science are to us; the

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\* Wall pieces, carrying small balls, varying from half a pound to two or three pounds in weight.





above forming a large portion of his idea of the *art* of war—as we found to our cost, no very bad one.

The Burmese, when the first war broke out, and fifteen years before, had a very exalted idea of their knowledge of the art of war; so much so that in 1810 one of the ministers at Ava informed Captain Canning, the British envoy, that if application had been originally made in a proper manner, His Burman Majesty would have sent an army, and put the British nation in possession of the whole of France, thus ending the revolutionary war in Europe. Another absurdity of the same period is given in a draught of a letter to the Governor-General, composed by the Ava ministers, declaring the King of England to be a vassal of the Burman monarch; but this, it is written, “was too much even for the despotic Minderajee Praw, who ordered it to be expunged.”

During the long series of operations in which we were engaged throughout the first war, exemplary patience under difficulties, and admirable conduct in retreat, among the Burmese, were especially observable. The retreat of Maha Bandoola from Rangoon was managed with considerable skill. When, with the remnant of his army, he retreated finally upon Donabew, he left posts on the Lain and Panlang rivers, to harass and detain the British force in moving forward. And even after their hero's death, in a desultory and disorderly flight, we are informed that the characteristic cunning and caution of the nation was conspicuous, as Major Snodgrass writes, “effecting their retreat with such science and circumspection as would have been a lesson to the best disciplined army in Europe.”\*

Variety of resource to facilitate operations is also strikingly apparent in the Burmese tactics. For instance, what could be more ingenious than converting a huge tree into a battery?

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\* Major Snodgrass's "Narrative of the Burmese War," p. 175.





Bandoola's look-out tree at Donabew—mounting four guns—was certainly an extraordinary work, on which even Vauban or Cormontaigne could never have calculated, and which would have raised a smile on the calm visage of Linnæus, the father of the peaceful science of botany. From an engraving, the tree appears to be cleft in twain, all the smaller branches being lopped off, and a series of props or arms left of considerable dimensions. Across and resting on these are three tiers, the lowest mounting one gun in the centre; on the second, a gun left and centre; and on the top tier, a gun left; the whole surmounted by a shed, with strong posts and a well-matted roof, in which warlike domicile are seated two warriors, armed with muskets, apparently engaged in feeling if their powder is dry. So much for Bandoola's look-out tree at Donabew. The Burmese operations during the war, as will have been seen, were offensive as well as defensive, of course chiefly the latter; the stockade—in the construction of which they are perfectly wonderful, and in making which even women and children assisted—being given them, as it were, by Nature for their own fortification. In attack, the Burmese varied considerably; at times being very feeble, but occasionally very desperate, as will be seen from the general's account of the attack on the British post at Kemmindine, where the First Madras Fusiliers\* and the gallant 26th Madras Native Infantry so greatly distinguished themselves. The Burmese attack on Pegu—gallantly defended by Major (now General Sir William) Hill—in the second war was the only approach to the determined assault on Kemmindine of the first.

But the most desperate Burmese attacks during the first

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\* Her Majesty's 102nd Royal—"The Royal Tigers"—*spectamur agendo*—bearing on its colours glories commencing at Arcot and Plassey, down to "Ava," "Pegu," and "Lucknow." This was the famous Neill's regiment—General Neill, the "avenging angel of the Indian Mutiny."





campaigns were those made at Watty-goon\* (or Watty-goung) before we forced the heights of Nepadee. The veteran chief, Maha Nemiow, had at length arrived from the Court of Ava as if to supply the place of a Bandoola, and direct the general operations of the army. Two brigades had been ordered to dislodge the enemy. They were to be assaulted in flank and rear, while the main body attacked in front. The Burmese, obtaining information of this plan, did not wait "to be visited in their position," but met the British columns halfway, commenced an animated and continual skirmish, and thus frustrated the simultaneous attack of the three corps. When Watty-goon was reached it was found to be strongly stockaded. Colonel M'Dowall was killed while reconnoitring the place. So at length, finding the position far too strong for a divided force, "a retreat was ordered, and conducted with steadiness and regularity"; but we met with severe loss, "the enemy closely following it up for several miles." The caution of Maha Nemiow was remarkable for a Burman. Advancing direct upon Prome, he moved slowly, stockading himself at *every mile* as he advanced.

Regarding the British operations during this war, of course they were, as usual, chiefly successful through bold and dashing attack; and considering the length of the campaigns, and the local disadvantages (chiefly from the want of a good intelligence department) we laboured under, we managed admirably, and committed very few mistakes. Our attacks were generally, as they ever should be in such regions, sharp, short, and decisive. Taking into account the natural obstacles of the country, and the mode of warfare adopted by the Burmese, we could hardly have done more. As will have been seen, the enemy seemed to favour a position flanked on both sides by a jungle; but the British charge, even through this obstacle,

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\* Sixteen miles from Prome, in a north-east direction.