THE NORTH EAST FRONTIER OF INDIA

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE

Prefatory Introduction B K Roy Burman

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Prefatory Introduction to the New Edition
by
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Photographically reproduced from 1884 edition entitled *"History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal."*

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Prefatory Introduction to the New Edition

Prof. B. K. Roy Burman

MITTAL PUBLICATIONS has done a yeoman service to the students of tribal history of India and also to the students of 19th century colonial history by bringing out Alexander Mackenzie's "The North-East Frontier of India." It was originally published in 1884 under the title "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal." About four decades ago, when we were students this was a rare piece, and when we located one in the library, we certainly used to cast covetous eyes. A friend had discovered a copy in an old book shop on the footpath of College Street in Calcutta and I cannot say that I was too happy that it was he and not I, who did it.

Recently I was having a discussion with a leading tribal intellectual about this book. He remarked in disdain that what Mackenzie had recorded was a colonial administrator's view of events. It is however important to know whether this represented the personal perceptions of an administrator or the perceptions of the colonial administration. At the same time, for a holistic approach to the period, one has to know the context of the perceptions. This involves questions of philosophy of history; of social meaning and explanation of events.

In his review of explanation of social action, Skinner[1] referred to Wittgentein, according to whom forms of activities studied in social sciences are characteristically those "of which we can sensibly say that they have a meaning." Dilthey wants a different focus. As he would have it, the special feature of human studies is the concern "with a world which has a meaning for the actors involved." The phenomenologists concentrate on the act itself and not on the environment of the act. For them the aim of the social sciences must be to gain insight into the meaning

which social acts have for those who act. Weber also draws attention to the fact that the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his social behaviour.

Whatever may be the orientation, one has to examine facts of diverse levels. The philosopher of history Barnard Braudel[2] speaks of social mathematics which is made up of at least three languages: that of necessary "facts" (a given fact and its consequences) which is the domain of traditional mathematics, the language of "conditioned fact,' which is the domain of calculation of probabilities and finally the language of "conditioned fact," – neither determined nor contingent, but behaving under certain constraints tied to the rules of a game. The last one opens the way to qualitative mathematics and one can say that "political history is not bound to events, nor is it forced to be." History in the words of another philosopher of the discipline, Collingwood,[3] is perceived "as a succession of becoming".

In a nation, which has to traverse a long road to decolonisation and which is vulnerable to the combined onslaught of neocolonialism and internal colonialism the social historians have to examine the events documented by sources close to the colonial administration, with conscious intellectual tuning more or less on the lines indicated. As a part of the intellectual tuning some of the contextual matters will be briefly discussed here.

At the outset, a question was posed as to whether the chronicles recorded in this book represent the perceptions of Mackenzie as an individual administrator or whether these represent the dominant perceptions of the colonial administration. The answer to this question has been provided by Mackenzie himself in his preface. In 1869, at the request of the Lieutenant Governor Sir William Gray, he had prepared a "Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal." But as it soon had gone out of print, at the repeated and pressing demand of the Foreign Office, he supplemented and expanded his original memorandum, for official purposes and produced this volume. Obviously what Mackenzie reproduced and expanded, reflected the perception of the colonial administration, otherwise they would not have repeatedly pressed him to take up the task.

From the titles of the two publications, it however appears that there was a significant shift of focus from the one to the other. The primary focus in the title of the first report was on

the North East Frontier as a territorial unit; the primary focus in case of the second one was on the relations of the administration with the hill tribes. Even if the contents of the two publications were similar, the social meanings of the two messages they conveyed were not the same. In the first case, the territorial unit of North East Frontier, was the subject of interest, hill tribes living in the territory comprised an important constraint in pursuing the objectives of the British in respect of the region. In the second case, the tribes were projected as the objects of primary interest, the territorial dimension was ancillary to the primary interest.

One wonders whether this shift of focus was deliberate or not. As one compares the organisation of materials in the present volume with the writings of the scholars who have approached the history of the region, primarily with focus on its geopolitical aspect, one finds that Mackenzie has successfully projected the rationale of "white-man's burden" in Asia; correspondingly the story of relentless pursuit of colonial goal has by and large been diffused. This does not mean that Mackenzie was dishonest as a chronicler of events. He seems to have recorded events with meticulous care, in terms of a framework which is meaningful for a self-righteous colonial administration. Such an approach meets the requirement of Dilthey's historiography; at the same time, it casts a shadow over the adequacy of phenomenological approach to history. It also raises questions about the place of ethno-history for an in-depth understanding of a historical situation. The problem of ethno-history as it emerges from Mackenzie's treatment of the materials will be discussed in due course. First, a rapid appraisal will be made of Mackenzie's treatment of the materials.

The report on the history of relations of the Government with the hill tribes of the North-East has been organised in three parts. Part 1 deals with the Sub-Himalayan region starting from Bhutan to the present day Siang district of Arunachal. In this part Kingdoms and tribal communities have been discussed in different chapters. Part 2, covers the tribal communities of the Eastern Hills, starting from present day Tirap district of Arunachal to Manipur and then passes over to Mikir Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. The third part covers present day Mizoram, Tripura State and Chittagang Hill Tracts

of Bangladesh. Though Lohit district of present day Arunachal has been included in Part I, for drawing general conclusions, the population of this area have been treated separately from the the other ethnic-formations, which have been covered in this part. To a certain extent Lohit district has been treated as a transitional zone between the Sub-Himalayan region and the Eastern Hills.

It is significant that Mackenzie has given his conclusions and general observations in two stages. Towards the end of Part 2, before covering the enthnic-groups of Lohit district (in chapters IX, X and XI), in chapter VIII he has made a general review of the policy on Sub-Himalayan border and discussed the Inner Line Regulation. Again in the last chapter of part III (chapter XXIII) he has included a sub-chapter "Review of policy in continuation of chapter VIII." It is obvious that self-perception of Mackenzie was that of a simple chronicler of events. He placed himself in the role of a sophisticated interpreter of events, projecting the unfolding drama of shattered hopes, mainting agonies and non-stop operation of "iron fists in velvet gloves" as a "succession of becoming".

In the general review of policy in the sub-Himalayan region, Mackenzie makes out the following points:
(1) For those tribes who had long established claims upon the plains, the policy of the government has been one of fair and equitable dealing. It has been impressed upon them that the strong arm of British power is forever interposed between them and the ryots they once oppressed. (2) As a mark of British policy, whole communities of border bandits have been settled down into peaceful tillers of the soil. (3) Tribes like Akas and Duphlas who had remained turbulent for a long time could generally be trusted to behave properly so long as their posa is paid and they are not unduly interfered with, by the forest Regulations. (4) In case of the fierce tribes, the punishment for any outrage has usually been summary and severe, but the aim as a whole is conciliatory.

Thus what emerges is a picture of a civilizing mission carried out by the whiteman in this part of the world. But the anti-climax to the main thrust of the projection also comes out towards the end of the same chapter (p. 55). According to him while the policy of permanent occupation, and direct manage-

ment had been successfully carried out in Naga, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia and Chittagang Hill Tracts, annexation of Abor Hills in the same way was not possible as it "would only bring us into contact with tribes still wilder and less known, nor should we find a resting place for the foot of annexation till we planted it on the plateau of High Asia; perhaps not even them." While adventurism was eschewed, coming down from the high pedestal, Mackenzie advocated a policy of consolidation since "there was a pressing necessity of bringing under more stringent control the commercial relations of our subjects with the frontier tribes living on the borders of our jurisdiction. In Luckimpre specially the operations of speculators in caoutchoue had led to serious complications, not only interfering with the revenue derived by government from the India — rubber forests in the plains beyond the line of our settled mehals, but threatening disturbances with the wild tribes beyond. The spread of tea-gardens outside our fiscal limits had already involved the government in many difficult questions with the hillmen, and on the whole the government came to the conclusion that it was necessary to take special powers and lay down special rules. Accordingly a regulations was drawn up by the Lieutenant-Governor and approved by the Governor-General-in-Council, to give effect to this policy. The Regulation gives power to the Lieutenant-Governor to prescribe a line, to be called "the inner line" in each and every district affected beyond which no British subject of certain classes or foreign resident can pass without a license. The pass or license, when given may be subject to such conditions as may appear necessary. And rules are laid down regarding trade, the possession of land beyond the line, and other matters, which give the executive government, an effective control. The regulation also provides for the preservation of elephants and authorises the government to lay down rules for their capture.

In continuation of this review Mackenzie writes in the chapter on final conclusion: "Fate seems determined to prove that there shall be no rest for the English in India till they stand forth as governors or advisors of each tribe and people in the land" (p. 369). Mackenzie had however the honesty to admit that sometimes the Englishmen gave more than a helping hand to "fate". While stating that the policy of the Government to the tribes in its North-East frontier has been throughout in its main

feature, a policy of conciliation, and not a policy of repression or devastation, he is careful to observe that the actions of the local authorities may not always have been in full accordance with this (p. 373). Again in his words "It must be confessed that the Bengal Government had not in 1869, fully realized the limitations placed upon the system of direct management. "It was only in 1870 and 1871 that the Supreme Government declared in unmistakable terms its desire to assert no positive jurisdiction over communities not actually within the limits of our settled districts." But even before the echo of the declaration died out, deviations started taking place in Garo Hills, Naga Hills, Lushai Hills, Manipur. There were other compulsions of the situation. For instance, there were multiple interactions of administrative concern at the local level, commercial and industrial interests of capital and strategic interest of the empire of the macro-level. An analytical appraisal of these provides an insight into the historical situation, with reference to which the readers will have tc construe their own meanings of the narrations of Mackenzie and also discover the areas of gap of knowledge, which will have to be made up through systematic research.

From a rapid survey of the historical literature relating tc North East India in the 19th century and of the major trends in political economy and ideologies during the same period, the broad contours of the relevant macro-historical situation can be delineated as follows:

1. In his presidential address delivered at the sixth session of North East India Historical Association, H. L. Gupta pointed out that the modern history of North East India, roughly dates from the advent of British traders and the decline of its monarchical Kingdoms. The neighbouring Burma took advantage of the weak monarchies, divided ruling houses, self-centred ambitious, unscrupulous and faction-ridden nobility, internecine struggles for power and incessant tribal insurrections in the region and dislodged the ruling dynasties of Manipur and Assam and posed serious threat to Cachar and Bengal. The Burmese expansion in North East India caused considerable misgivings and alarm in the British minds. Being an expansionist power itself, the British got an opportunity and excuse in 1824 for imperial aggrandisement and colonial expansion eastward, where prospects of tea cultivation, a highly coveted and very lucrative article of

international commerce, existed and if necessary, pressure could be exerted on China from the vantage point on its frontier to grant favourable terms to the British traders in their overseas trade with Canton. The result was a prolonged military confrontation with the Burmese in North East India region, exculsion of the Burmese from Assam and Manipur, annexation of Assam by the British and expansion of their empire upto the strategic borders of Tibet, China and Burma.

All other Kingdoms of North East India accepted British protection and suzerainty. The British economic penetration into North East India which had commenced in the seventeen sixties, increased since the days Warren Hastings and Cornwallis, multiplied since 1826 and became general after the dissolution of the East India Company.

2. In the same waves length of perception, but highlighting a specific context, Chaube[5] points out that after the East India Company lost its monopoly of Indian trade in 1813, greater trading contact with China became a necessity. Search for additional trade with Assam was in pursuit of this need.

3. Guha[6] draws attention to a contingent fact within great Britain itself. By 1833, industrial capital gained ascendency over mercantile capital there and this gave a clear direction towards colonisation in Assam. By 1871 more than three lakh acres of wasteland in Assam were settled with the planters at fee – simple or nominal rate. At the same time, the burden of land revenue on the ordinary farmers was progressively increased to encourage their transfer from subsistence farming to plantation jobs. But to maximise surplus, labour and paid at below market rate. It was through such devices that the major portion of investment in tea was obtained from undistributed surplus and ploughed back dividends of the older companies in the field. There was hardly any multiplier effect on the economy of North-East India. It was the normal policy to purchase and bulk of the garden's requirements of stores in the United Kingdom was ship them to India. While the secondary sector of economy failed to come up, large scale immigration of labour took place in connection with tea-plantation and long before 1871, Assam became a deficit area in foodgrains.

From the picture of stagnation and deprivation in the wake of the colonisation policy pursued by the British that emerges from

the presentation of Guha, it is easy to perceive that a context East had come into existence in which the traditional ethnic processes and the age-old inter-ethnic relations would be liable to disruption in multiple manners.

4. Barpujari[7] provided another dimension to the historical back-drop. As observed by him, the Himalayan Frontier in the North had remained dead. When Russophobia dominated British foreign policy, under the then effete and weak Chinese monarchy, the autonomous Tibet provided excellent 'buffer' beyond the rampart of the Himalaya. While highlighting Russophobia as an inhibiting factor in British expansionist aims in the 19th century, Keetan[8] has referred to French threat as an additional factor in North-East India.

5. Relation of the British with Bhutan was guided by another consideration. It began in 1772 because of a desire to establish commercial relations with Tibet and its neighbouring countries. And as the researches of Santiswarup Gupta[9] suggest, the actual steps that the British took from time to time were largely related to the growth of Russian influence in Central Asia. It corrects the impression erected by the earlier writers that the problem posed by Bhutan and its neighbours to the British government in India on the North East Frontier in the 19th century was essentially a law and order problem.

6. In the annexation of Cachar Bhattacharya[10] finds a combination of strategic and mercantile interests. He quotes as follows Felix Carey, who was in the service of the King of Cachar in 1817: "Since the Burmans have become a formidable nation, the principal part of the trade in ivory, wax, lac, silk, cotton, mules, horse, copper, tin, lead, zinc, silver, gold, sapphire and rubies has been completely drained by that country and exported through that channel to Bengal and other parts of India, whereas a free trade opened through Kachar, in the course of a few years, the greatest part, if not the whole of this immense traffic rate, would be imported immediately into Bengal. Certainly then it must follow that these important articles of commerce, might be procured at a much cheaper rate, than what we must now get them from the Burmans who dispose of these articles to our merchants from their different sea ports, at a very enormous profit." Obviously it was commercial interest to bypass trade through the ports, then under the control of Burma, which

was the critical fact for determining the approach to various questions in that area. Other subsidiary facts included the raja's assuming monopoly right over external trade and the insistence of the company that the British must enjoy the privilege of supplying opium to the people of Cachar.

7. One common cause negatively orienting the attitude of the tribals towards the British rule also deserves mention here. The hillmen supplemented their poor economy by hunting, fishing, rubber-tapping and elephant catching in the land at the foot of the hills. But during the British rule this land was affected by the expansion of tea plantation and the creation of reserved forests. British claims on such lands became the most formidable source of tribal outrages.[11] It is reported that even now some persons belonging to Jaintia tribe refrain from eating potato because it was introduced in the area during the British regime.[12]

8. While tribal feelings were outraged by the encroachments on the so-called wastelands, they became intensely suspicious of the British intentions when some tribal areas, even away from their lands were annexed. As pointed out by Bhuiya,[13] complete subjugation of any of the tribes and annexation of their territories to the Ahom Kingdom were never envisaged by the rulers. The tribals were thus conditioned to a particular understanding of historical relations and their violent reactions, as depicted by Mackenzie, can to a considerable extent be understood with reference to the same.

9. Opportunist shifts in British policy in respect of the local lower elites was another fact of the situation.[14] After the third and final Moamaria rebellion, Matak Rajya was established in the present Dibrugarh district with its capital at Bengmara(present Tinsukia town). By an agreement made in 1805, the Ahom government recognised the autonomy of the Matak Kingdom headed by Matibar, with his title to 'Barsenapati', on condition of his paying an annual tribute. During the annexation of Assam, David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General, suggested to utilise the territories of the Mataks and the Khamptis as political screens between the Burmese and the newly acquired possession of the Company. Accordingly Barsenapati was placed in a 'semi-independent possession of the Matak Country' and Scott entered into an agreement with him

on 13th May 1826.

But after the British position was fully consolidated in Assam and the political danger from Burma had considerably receded, the existence of the Matak Kingdom as a buffer state was no longer required. At the same time the Matak area had attracted the attention of the British officials as the best tea-growing area of Upper Assam. The local British authority therefore, wanted to revise the liberal conditions of the agreement extended to the Barsenapati. The political agent made a proposal to the Barsenapati to commute the services of the contingent he supplied to the British government for an amount of Rs. 10,000. While this would have increased the burden of tax on the subjects, the British made an alluring offer of conferring the title of raja on him with an assurance of safe succession to his heirs. But unlike many other Indian rulers who became prey to such temptation, the Barsenapati emphatically turned down the proposal. The British, however, managed to take over the area, shortly after his death.

10. Contradictory British policies in the transformation of the internal social relations within the tribal and non-tribal communities constitute another conditioning factor of the history in the region. For quite some time in the nineteenth century the British policy was to consolidate the control over the tribals in the borders of Burma and Cachar through the King of Manipur. At that stage, the British officials advanced the theory that the King was the owner of all lands within his jurisdiction, but when there was a shift of policy towards direct management of the tribal areas, the theory also underwent a corresponding reversal. Similarly in Tripura British influence can be traced in the assertion of the King as being the superior landlord of all lands within this political jurisdiction. Feudal rights were promoted by the British which were responsible for much of the subsequent upheavals. In fact the seeds of confusion sown by the British at the time continued to yield their bitter harvests even after independence of the country.[15] But when seen in isolation, without reference to their overall economic and political goal, some actions of the British seem rather progressive in content. In a recent publication an Assamese scholar has described the British administration as revolutionary in character.[16] "The claim of right of the nobility to get back their heriditary

privileges was terminated by a principle of common welfare and justice." "Giving priority to the improvement of the general condition of the people, Jenkins suggested, it could be done by the operation of the land survey by ascertaining and fixing every man's possession and defining the demand of the government upon each individual." "The common people who were not involved in the resentments of the nobility for deprivation of rights and privileges but had to suffer from a miserable life due to political turmoil, devastation caused by famine and economic oppression, were naturally satisfied with the change of administration". After saying all these the scholar however admits that "a newly adopted measure of the European Government to impose tax on all kinds of lands including the wastelands and those so far considered as tax-free, created dissatisfaction among some people". Such an appraisal of the situation, entirely drawing upon colonial sources fails to take note of the fact that what was given to the people by the right hand was taken away by the left hand. Mention has been made earlier of leasing out land to tea-gardens and of reservation of forests. Besides, dispute between the hillmen and the government regarding the possession of the land at the foot of the hills north of the Brahmaputra was a chronic problem. All evidences indicate that the tribals enjoyed an effective power in this tract before the British annexed Assam. It does not require much imagination to consider that all people would not have accepted the altruistic claims on behalf of the British administration, as advanced by Mackenzie and Jenkins and as accepted unwittingly even by some Indian scholars.

To point out the limitation of Mackenzie's chronicle is not to undermine its importance. This certainly remains one of the most important sources of the history of the region in the nineteenth century. But one has to make use of the materials with an awareness of the context.

Though Mackenzie has discussed the various events with reference to wider policy formulations at various levels, the policies he has discussed are generally administrative and political management policies. Occasionally economic management policies at the operational level have been touched upon. But in the absence of an analytical appraisal of the issues of political economy, what Mackenzie has presented is a

succession of events and not the flow of historical progression. In a way Mackenzie has presented a constellation of micro-histories; each complete within its narrow focus and incomplete in a wider societal meaning. It is not geographical range that makes a history micro or macro. It is the scale of universalism that gives qualitative stamp to the treatment of any historical material.

As the general tenor of Mackenzie's treatment of materials is in terms of relations of specific tribes or ethnic formations with the British, one might think that the present volume contains a series of ethno-histories. Mackenzie has certainly provided rich material for ethno-histories, but it cannot be called ethno-histories even in the limited sense of the term. In fact there is no general agreement about the scope and method of ethno-history.

Cohn[17] considers ethno-history as the historical study of any non-European peoples utilizing documentary, oral and archaeological sources and the conceptual framework and insight of cultural and social anthropology. These studies attempt to reconstruct the history of indigenous peoples before and after European contact. Cohn differentiates ethno-historians from colonial historians. As he puts it, an ethno-historian usually has firsthand experience and knowledge of indigenous society and of how it functioned or functions. He thinks in systemic, functional terms, rather than only in terms of accidents and particulars. He uses general knowledge of social and cultural organization and constructs his units in terms of such concepts as 'segmentary lineage-based society','peasant society," "patrimonial society." Besides he tries to perceive historical events from the position of the aborigins rather than that of European administrators. He is more interested in the impact of the colonial policy and practice than in the genesis of these policies in the metropolitan society.

Trigger[18] however suggests that significant social and ideological implications are inherent in the distinction between history and ethno-history. Basing on Nancy Lurie, he suggests that ethno-history in the sense of a self-conscious study of change among native people or even a critical awareness of the problems involved in using historical date for ethnographic purposes is a recent development. At first ethno-historical

research was carried out almost exclusively by ethnologists. Some argued that ethno-historians had to remain practising ethnographers. Others tended to treat written sources as they would use a native informant. But later scholars with training primarily in history entered the field. It is however not enough simply to have a respectable knowledge of historical and anthropological data and methodology. Ethno-historians must master the art of using these two approaches in an integrated fashion. They are also expected to ensure that interpretations are tested against a sufficiently comprehensive corpus of data and that evidences that do not support the interpretation are taken into account no less than those that do.

Thus according to Trigger it is not a particular type of data or a particular vantage point of observation that marks ethno-history from conventional history. Reflecting on the various perspectives, it appears that ethno-history is the total history centering an ethnic-formation. While it discusses the nature of responses, both in overt behaviour and in structural arrangements, to the challenges and contradictions from without and within, it also examines the nature of the challenges and contradictions in their temporo-spatial locus: It is, however, not clear, whether Trigger and other ethno-historians would like to perceive the scope and method of ethno-history in the manner it is presented here. In any case, any ethno-history is a chip of world history, illustrated in the history of an ethnic-formation or a community. There can be ethno-history not only of the non-Europeans but also of local communities in Europe or America or anywhere in the world. Notwithstanding the difference suggested by Cohn between colonial historians and ethno-historians, such difference would not be of much significance unless the influences bearing from outside are also fully analysed and taken into consideration.

Mackenzie was not however an ethno-historian even in the sense in which Cohn has used the term. He was a chronicler of events which were relevant from the point of view of colonial administration of the time. As one goes through the book, one feels that he has done the job competently. He has provided materials which no historian or even no ethno-historian interested in the region can afford to ignore.

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PREFACE.

FROM 1866 to 1873 I had immediate charge of the Political correspondence of the Bengal Government. In 1869, at the request of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Grey, I wrote for office purposes, and as I could snatch the time from other more pressing work, a "Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal." Since Pemberton's Report in 1835, no general survey had been taken of the political relations of the Government with the hill tribes of Assam, Cachar and Chittagong; and my 'Memorandum' proved to be extremely useful, both to the local officers and to the Foreign Department of the Government of India. It was, however, at best, a mere Sketch; and was wanting in those precise references to the original records which are essential for many official purposes. Accordingly, in 1871, I began a fresh and detailed examination of all the records from 1780 up to date, both of the Bengal Secretariat and of the Foreign Department, which bore in any way upon the political history of the North-East Frontier. I made full notes and references as I went along, and in 1873 I saw my way, as I thought, to preparing, when I could find leisure or get leave, a work, which, while treating exhaustively of all the frontier tribes in that quarter, in respect of their relations to the Government, their manners, customs, and ethnological affinities, would at the same time serve as a permanent hand-book for the Government and its local officers. But the close of 1873 brought us face to face with the Famine, and in the vortex of "special duty" arising out of that, all personal plans sank out of view. In 1874 my sight gave way under the pressure of compiling Famine Narratives; and my leave, when it came, was spent in

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

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

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

From the lips or pens of them and many others—Dalton, Hopkinson, Agnew, Haughton, Graham, and Power—to say nothing of the untiring officers of the Survey, for whom no peak is inaccessible, no jungle impenetrable, and no tribe too rude to be faced, I had stores of gathered material which cannot now be used. I had, indeed, hoped at one time to have had the aid of some of them in putting the

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

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

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

26th January 1884. A. M.

P. S.—A brief notice of recent events among the Akas (who are treated of in Chapter IV) will be found in the concluding Chapter. It was necessary to print off the book by instalments, which made it impossible to write up to date any of the earlier Chapters.

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

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

CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXTRA-BHUTAN BHUTIAS—

CHAPTER IV.

THE AKAS—HAZARI-KHAWAS AND KAPACHORS—

CHAPTER V.

THE DUPHLA TRIBES—

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABORS AND MIRIS—

CHAPTER VI.—*concluded.*

THE ABORS AND MIRIS—*concluded.*

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISHMIS—

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL REVIEW OF POLICY ON THE SUB-HIMALAYAN BORDER—

CHAPTER IX.

THE KHAMPTI CLANS OF SADIYA—

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

PART II.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NAGA TRIBES. B.—THE SEEBSAUGOR NAGAS— PAGE.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NAGA TRIBES. C.—THE ANGAMI NAGAS—

CHAPTER XIV.—*concluded.*

CHAPTER XV.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPTER XVI.—*continued.*

MANIPUR—*continued.*

CHAPTER XVI.—*concluded.*

CHAPTER XVII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHAPTER XVIII.—*concluded.*

CHAPTER XIX.

PART III.

CHAPTER XX.

CHAPTER XX.—*concluded.*

CHAPTER XXI.

CHAPTER XXI.—*concluded.*

CHAPTER XXII.

CHAPTER XXII.—*concluded.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

APPENDIXES.

APPENDIX K.—*concluded.*

HISTORY

OF THE RELATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

WITH THE HILL TRIBES

OF THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER OF BENGAL.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

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

The North-East Frontier. Definition.

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

Early History of Assam.

Into the dim history of the Hindu kingdom of Kamrup, the most notable precursor of the later Governments of Assam, there is no need to enter. Nor is it necessary to suggest any curious disquisitions on the origin and progress of that amorphous empire of Pong* whose victorious Generals are said to have extended the power of the Shans from Sadiya to the Monass. It is enough for us to know that in the eighth century after Christ, the Brahmaputra Valley was invaded by a vigorous and warlike race of Burmese Shans, which had by the commencement of the thirteenth century wrested the whole country from its Hindu rulers and arrogated to its own dynasty and people the title of 'Ahom,†—the unequalled'—destined in the softened form 'Asam' to become the modern name of the province.

The Shan Invasion.

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

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

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

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

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

‡ Dalton's Ethnology of Bengal.

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

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

In 1788, Gourinath made a desperate effort to retrieve his fortunes, but apparently to little purpose. Beaten back from Gowhatty, after days of fruitless fighting, he applied to Mr. Raush who farmed the salt revenues at the British frontier station of Goalpara, begging him to procure the assistance of the British Government. The farmer, probably on his own responsibility, sent over a body of burkundazes, or locally enlisted fighting men, but these were, as the histories tell us, cut off to a man by the Moamariahs in the first encounter. Nor had an expedition despatched in aid of Gourinath by the State of Manipur any better success; 1,500 men out of a force of 4,500 which crossed the hills from Manipur being slain by the rebels.

British intervention.

Assam was now given over to confusion and misery. All the turbulent ruffianism of the great bazars of Bengal flocked thither. Large bodies of disbanded sepoys and bands of fighting fanatics from Hindustan pillaged the villages and laid waste the fields. The Raja once more, therefore, appealed to the British, demanding that they should at least aid in expelling the lawless robbers who had come over from Bengal. Lord Cornwallis, admitting the obligation, ordered a detachment of sepoys, under Captain Welsh, to enter Assam. This force completely routed the Moamariahs and other rebellious Chiefs in the cold season of 1792-93, and succeeded in recovering possession of Gowhatty. Enquiries then instituted made it manifest that much of the discontent prevalent in the province had its origin in the tyranny and mismanagement of Raja Gourinath and his advisers. Accordingly with the sanction of the Supreme Government, Captain Welsh, in communication with the principal nobles and officers of the kingdom, took steps to put affairs on a sounder basis; and, as a necessary guarantee for the maintenance of order in the future, arrangements were made for the retention in the province of a brigade of British troops, the revenues of Lower Assam being pledged for their maintenance. Unfortunately for the country, before these projects could be fully matured, Captain Welsh was recalled to Bengal by Sir John Shore, whose cautious policy of non-interference and retrenchment was opposed to such an enterprise as had been sanctioned by the more imperial spirit of Cornwallis. In July 1794, Assam was deliberately relegated to anarchy and civil war.*

Withdrawal of British troops, 1794.

Distracted state of Assam—Burmese intervention.

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

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

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

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

War between the British and Burmese Governments, March the 5th, 1824.

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

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

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

Organisation of the administration in British Assam.

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

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

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

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

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

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

a tribute of Rs. 50,000 annually to the Government. The experiment did not succeed. Purunder Sing's administration proved a failure, both financially and generally, and in October 1838 his territories were placed under the direct management of British officers, and Assam as a whole became a Non-Regulation Province of the Indian Empire.

Assam becomes a Non-Regulation Province.

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

In Assam not only the soil but the dwellers thereon were treated as being the property of the State. All the free population was divided, according to caste or calling, into *khels*, or clans, numbering from 1,000 to 5,000 able-bodied men in each. The *khels* were sub-divided into *ghôts* of three or four *paiks*, or freemen, each, and one *paik* of each *ghôt* was bound to render personal service throughout the year to the Raja or to any officer of State to whom he might for that purpose be assigned. The Raja on his part allowed to each *paik* in the *ghôt* two *poorahs* of rice-land, the land of the *paik* absent on service being cultivated for him by the rest of the *ghôt*. This allotment was known as *goamutti* or 'body land.' The *paik* also received a piece of land for garden and homestead *(bâri)* free of assessment; in acknowledgment of which he paid one rupee annually either as house-tax or poll-tax or hearth-tax, as the custom of the district might determine. If a *paik* cultivated any rice-land in excess of his two *poorahs*, he paid the State one rupee annually for each *poorah* so tilled. Artizans and other non-cultivating classes paid a higher rate of poll-tax. The aboriginal and other wild tribes occupying the low jungly hills within the province paid a hoe-tax on their cotton cultivation. The salaries of all Government officers, favourites, and retainers, and the maintenance of the numerous religious institutions of Assam, were provided for by assignments of *paiks* along with their *goamutti* lands to the persons to be benefited. The estates of the Native gentry were universally formed in this way, and were supplemented by the *khels*, or lands, which they had themselves reclaimed from waste by slave labor, and which were held by them rent-free and as hereditary in their families.

The Revenue System of Assam.

The British Government commuted all the *paik* service for an annual cash payment to the State of Rs. 3 per man, and released the slaves—measures which, however wise and proper in the abstract, had the effect of reducing the Native gentry to poverty, and left no class, either in fact or theory, intermediate between the cultivator of the soil and the supreme authority. The mode and amount of assessment of the cultivators, now no longer called *paiks* but *ryots*, have undergone many changes since that time; but the idea of personal service due to the State by the subject has never revived, and the practice of cash payments to and by Government has always been thoroughly established.

Nothing could have been more wretched than the state of Assam when the valley was first occupied by our troops. Thirty thousand Assamese had been carried off as slaves by the Burmese. Many thousands had lost their lives, and large tracts of country been laid desolate by the wars, famines, and pestilences, which for nearly half a century had afflicted the province. The remnant of the people had almost given up cultivation, supporting themselves chiefly on jungle roots and plants. The nobility and priestly families had retired to Goalpara or other refuges in British territory, often after losing all their property; and with them had gone crowds of dependents glad to escape from the miseries of their native land.

State of the province at annexation.

Such was Assam as we found it, and such the revenue system that prevailed there. The old records give much curious information in regard to both, which it would be interesting to set out at length; but I have confined myself to a summary of salient facts as detailed in the ordinary histories, this being sufficient for my present purpose. So much as has been stated it was desirable to bring into prominence, that there might be a clear understanding of the circumstances under which a frontier policy first became necessary for us in the north-east. These will be made more apparent as we deal with the history of each tribe. But I may here remark, by way of general preface, that we found the Assam Valley surrounded north, east, and south by numerous savage and warlike tribes whom the decaying authority of the Assam dynasty had failed of late years to control, and whom the disturbed condition of the province had incited to encroachment. Many of them advanced claims to rights more or less definite over lands lying in the plains; others claimed tributary payments from the villages below their hills, or the services of *paiks* said to have been assigned them by the Assam authorities. It mattered of course little to us whether these claims had their basis in primœval rights from which the Shan invaders had partially ousted the hillmen, or whether they were merely the definite expression of a barbarian cupidity. Certain it was that such claims existed, and that they had been, to some extent and in some places, formally recognised by our predecessors. The engagements under which the Native Governments lay were transferred to us with the peculiar revenue system above described; and it was one of our earliest tasks to endeavour to reconcile such arrangements, where we could discover them, with the requirements of enlightened policy. But it was not always easy to discover them, for the tribes asserting them knew nothing of our intentions, and seldom in the earlier years of our administration referred their claims directly for acknowledgment or compromise. When we did arrive in any case at a definite understanding as to the rights of any tribe, we were ready, as a rule, to treat them fairly and liberally; and, on the whole, we have no reason in this respect to be ashamed of the general bearings of our policy upon the North-East Frontier. But we are met to this day by difficulties arising from

The Frontier Tribes.

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

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS.

Proceeding westward from the Naga Hills and North Cachar we come to the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The story of our early connection with this tract has been already written by Pemberton, and as his report is scarce and out of print, I cannot do better than reproduce here the portion* relating to the acquisition of the Khasi-Jaintia Country the accuracy of which I have verified from the Records :—

Pemberton's account of Jaintia.

"From the few scattered notices which are found in the works of Buchanan and Hamilton, little more information can be gleaned than that the State of Jynteeah is situated between Cachar and Sylhet ; and until the Burmese war, our knowledge was almost entirely derived from those authors ; the Rajahs of the country having uniformly shewn the same unwillingness to admit foreigners within their boundaries as had been exhibited by the neighbouring princes of Assam and Cachar.

"In 1774, Jynteeah is said to have been attacked by a force under a Major Henniker, but of the causes which led to this step there appears to be no record in the archives of Government, though from its being one of the most considerable of the Cossya States it is probable that some aggressions against the inhabitants of the adjacent plains of Sylhet had rendered the chastisement necessary. It continued unnoticed until the year 1821, when some emissaries from this State were detected and punished in an atrocious attempt to carry off certain British subjects from the Sylhet District, for the purpose of immolating them : the circumstances were brought to the notice of the Supreme Government, and a solemn warning was given to the Rajah, that any repetition of so horrible an offence would be followed by the immediate confiscation of his territory.

"The invasion of Kachar by the forces of Ava in 1824, and the information that they were likely to march through Jynteeah to Assam, rendered some precautionary measures immediately necessary to prevent such an intention being carried into effect, which, if successful, must have seriously compromised the security of Sylhet. Mr. Scott, the Governor General's Agent, opened a negociation with the Rajah of Jynteeah, proposing that he should enter into a treaty of alliance with the British Government ; but this, with the usual procrastinating policy of all natives, he declined doing, until the necessity for such a measure became more apparent. He was promised the assistance of the Government troops, if his own resources were actively employed in repulsing

* Pemberton's Report : sub-sections 2 and 3 of section 2. See also volumes 27 and 38 of the Calcutta Review ; and Reports by Mills (1853) and Allen (1858). Reference should be made to these Reports for information as to the revenue and judicial administration of the Hills.

the enemy, and threatened with punishment if he admitted the Burmese into his territory. He had collected a force, which was said to consist of several thousand archers, but which most probably amounted to only a few hundreds; and he was conjectured to be favourable to the British power, though unwilling to compromise his independence by any engagements, until the destruction of his country, or compliance, became the only remaining alternatives.

"On the 2nd of February 1824, a letter was addressed by Mr. Scott to the Commander of the Burmese force in Kachar, prohibiting his entering the Jynteeah territory, on the ground that the Rajah's ancestor had received that country as a gift after conquest from the Honourable Company; that he had himself sought British protection; and that the Burmans having openly threatened war, they could not be permitted to occupy that, or any other favourable position, for commencing hostilities. Notwithstanding these representations, a letter was addressed by the Burmese Commander to the Rajah of Jynteeah, requiring his presence in the Burmese camp, on the affirmed ground of his known vassalage to the princes of Assam, which latter country had become tributary to Ava; and a party of Burmese appearing shortly afterwards near the Jynteeah frontier, a detachment of 150 men, under a British officer, was sent to reinforce the Rajah's troops, on which the Burmese force withdrew.

"In the course of the following month of March, the Rajah of Jynteeah entered into a treaty with Mr. Scott, who marched through his territory early in April, from Sylhet to Assam, with an escort of three companies of the 23rd Regiment Native Infantry, under Captain Horsburgh. On this occasion, Mr. Scott represents the reception he met with from the Rajah as most cordial; and his personal exertions in procuring porters for the party, and pacifying some differences amongst them, are said to have greatly exceeded any thing that could have been expected from a person of his rank. In the treaty formed with the Rajah, he formally acknowledged his dependence on the British Government, pledged himself to abstain from all independent negociations with any foreign power, and to aid us with a military contingent in any wars waged east of the Burhampooter. None of these conditions, however, did he fulfil with sincerity; and it was notorious that during the war he permitted a Burmese detachment from Assam to occupy his territory, in direct violation of the treaty which had preserved his country from the calamities that overwhelmed the less fortunate States of Kachar and Munipore.

"During the unsettled state in which Assam continued for some time after the Burmese war, the Rajah of Jynteeah is affirmed to have appropriated considerable tracts of land, which properly belonged to the former province; and in 1830, he was repeatedly, but fruitlessly, ordered by Mr. Scott to remove a chokey, which he had established without authority at Chapper Mookh, at the confluence of the Kopili and Dimla rivers; and the remonstrances of Mr. Robertson, at a subsequent period, on the same subject, were treated with similar indifference.

"In 1832, four subjects of the British Government were seized by Chuttur Sing, the Rajah of Goba, one of the petty chieftains dependent on Jynteeah, to whom the order was conveyed from the heir apparent (the present Rajah) by the chiefs of Nurtung; they were carried to a temple within the boundaries of Goba, where three were barbarously immolated at the shrine of Kali; the fourth providentially effected his escape into the British territories, and gave intimation of the horrible sacrifice which had been accomplished. The culprits were immediately demanded by the Supreme Government from Ram Sing, the Rajah of Jynteeah, by whose express order, the seizure of the people was said to have been made; and two years of fruitless negotiation were expended in endeavouring to obtain them. The death of the Rajah Ram Sing, in November 1832, was followed by the accession of his nephew, Rajundur Sing, then about 20 years of age, upon whom the demand for the surrender of the culprits was pressed, with the earnestness which retributive justice so imperiously demanded. He was reminded of the consequences of refusal, and of the solemn warnings which had been given before, when similar, but unsuccessful, attempts were made on the lives of British subjects in the district of Sylhet, in the years 1821, 1827, and 1832. The requisitions of Government were met with the same evasive spirit which had characterised the conduct of his predecessor, and every minor expedient having been unsuccessfully resorted to, it was finally resolved to mark the atrocious nature of the crime, by proceeding to the extreme measure of dispossessing the Rajah of such portions of his territory as were situated in the plains, and confining him to the hilly tract, where fewer opportunities would be offered of again committing so serious an offence.

"Firm, however, in his determination not to surrender the guilty perpetrators of this most barbarous sacrifice, and led by a few crafty Bengallees to believe that they possessed influence sufficient to effect the restoration of his principality, he refused to continue in possession of any reduced portion of it. On the 15th of March 1835, Captain Lister, with two companies of the Sylhet Light Infantry, took formal possession of Jynteeahpoor, the capital of the country; and the determination of Government, to annex the plains to the British territory, was made known by proclamation.(1) The whole of the Rajah's personal property, amounting to more than a lakh and a half of rupees, was made over to him; and in the following month of April the district of Goba, in which the sacrifice had been perpetrated, was taken possession of by a detachment of the Assam Light Infantry.* The Rajah of Jynteeah retired to Sylhet, where he has since continued to reside; and the severe example will doubtless effectually check the repetition of a crime, which, there is every reason to believe, had been also frequently perpetrated in the adjoining provinces of Kachar and Assam, while they remained subject to native rule.*

Annexation of Jaintia.

* Orders of the 30th March 1835 placed Jaintia under the Political Agent, Khasi Hills. Act VI of 1835 provided for the judicial control of the Khasi Hills and Jaintia.

(1) Revenue Proceedings, 14th April 1835, No. 11.
Ditto, 28th " Nos. 17—30.

"The country which has thus become annexed to the British territories embraces an area of about 3,850 square miles, which, like that of Kachar, consists of three principal divisions: the first, comprising a very fertile and well cultivated tract of level country, extending from the foot of the hills to the north bank of the Soormah river, and a small portion on the southern bank, known by the name of the Seven Reaches, which are supposed to contain about 4,500 koolbas of the best description of land; the central division includes all the hills bounded by Kachar on the east, and the districts of various Cossya tribes on the west; the northern portion stretches from the foot of the inferior heights, to the south bank of the Kullung river, and is a tract of tolerably open level country, little if at all inferior in fertility to the southern plains, which form by far the most valuable portion of the principality.

"The boundaries of this State are formed, on the east, by the Keeroowah and Kopili rivers, which separate it from Kachar; the former flowing from the southern face of the mountain chain into the Soormah; and the Kopili, on the north, into the Kullung, which latter river separates Jynteeah from Assam, on the north: on the west, it is bounded principally by the hill district of the Kyrim Rajah, from whence the line runs south along the Pian nullah, and, on reaching the plains, is deflected in a south-easterly direction, crossing and skirting several other streams, until it reaches the Soormah, which river, with the exception already mentioned, forms the southern boundary of the whole district.

* * * * *

"The whole of the mountainous country, until within a few miles of the descent into the plains of Assam, is inhabited by the people called by us Cossyas, but who denominate themselves Khyee. They are a handsome, muscular race of men, of an active disposition, and fond of material exercises. They always go armed; in general with bows and arrows, and a long naked sword and shield, which latter is made very large, and serves them occasionally as a defence against rain."

* * * * *

Pemberton's account of the Khasi Hills.

"Between the State of Jynteeah and the hills on the west, occupied by the Garrows, is a tract of mountain territory inhabited by the Cossyas, which, until the year 1826, had never been visited by any European, although the fierce tribes who occupied it had at different times descended into the plains both of Assam and Sylhet, and ravaged, with fire and sword, the villages which stretched along the base of this lofty region: night was the time almost invariably chosen for these murderous assaults, when neither sex nor age was spared; and long before the dawn of day the perpetrators, glutted with slaughter, and loaded with plunder, were again far among the fastnesses of their mountains on the way home.

"On the side of Assam, from the year 1794, many of the various tribes on the southern borders of that valley, had gradually established themselves in the plains, from whence the Government of that country was unable to dispossess them; and conscious of its weakness, was glad to compound with them for an acknowledgment of supremacy, which they spurned and disavowed, whenever its exercise appeared likely to encroach on that independence of action which they rarely permitted to be controlled.

"On the Sylhet or southern side, the establishment of British supremacy brought these fierce marauders into immediate contact with a power which they in vain attempted to resist; they were driven back from the plains to the mountains, and redoubts were built along the line of frontier, in which guards were permanently stationed for the protection of the country. The most effectual check upon their conduct, however, was found in excluding them from the frontier markets, to which they had habitually resorted for the sale of their produce and purchase of grain; and this measure, when rigorously enforced, rarely failed to extort from them some compensation for the property they had plundered, though they never would consent to surrender the culprits.

"When the fate of war had transferred Assam to British rule, the expediency of endeavouring to open a direct communication between it and the more southern provinces of Sylhet and Kachar, was not likely to escape the penetration of Mr. Scott; and his march through the Jynteeah territory in 1824, to which allusion has been already made, afforded a striking practical proof of the value of such lines of intercourse between the remote districts of our eastern frontier.

"It was not, however, until the year 1826, that negociations to effect this desirable object were entered upon by Mr. Scott with the Cossya chieftains; when Teerut Sing, the Rajah of Nungklow, having expressed a desire to rent some lands in Assam, which had once been held by his ancestors under the native princes of that country, Mr. Scott promised compliance with his request, if he would endeavour to obtain from his people permission for the unrestricted passage of British subjects through his territory, from and to Sylhet, and Assam. The Rajah agreed to convene a meeting for the purpose of considering the subject, at which Mr. Scott's presence was requested. The principal chieftains of his own and the adjacent States having assembled at Nungklow, a debate, which lasted for two days, was followed by a decision in favour of Mr. Scott's proposition, and a treaty was concluded with the British Government, the Cossyas agreeing to aid in the construction of a road which was to pass through their territory.

Mr. Scott's negociations with Nungklow.

"For upwards of eighteen months after the ratification of his agreement, the most cordial understanding appeared to exist between the British authorities and their new friends. Bungalows had been constructed at Nungklow, a road had been cleared, improved systems

of agriculture and gardening with many new vegetable products had been introduced, and the most sanguine anticipations of the benevolent spirit which influenced every act of Mr. Scott's life, appeared already realized. On the 4th of April 1829, these bright prospects were obscured by an act of the most atrocious cruelty, which completely changed the character of the existing intercourse, and converted the powerful friends of the Cossyas into formidable and irresistible enemies.

The Khasi insurrection, 1829.

"The immediate cause of the dreadful massacre, which consigned two most promising officers, Lieutenants Bedingfield and Burlton, with about 50 or 60 native subjects, to an untimely grave, is supposed to have been the speech of a Bengallee chuprassee, who in a dispute with the Cossyas had threatened them with Mr. Scott's vengeance, and told them that they were to be subjected to the same taxation as was levied on the inhabitants of the plains. False as was the declaration, it proved sufficient to excite the suspicions of the Cossyas, and to fan the flame of dissatisfaction which had been already kindled by the insolent demeanour and abuse of the subordinate native agents who had accompanied Mr. Scott into the hills.

"The vengeance of a savage is never satiated but in the blood of his opponent, and a general confederacy was formed for the extermination of the low-land strangers. Lieutenant Bedingfield, the first victim of this most atrocious conspiracy, had, from the first hour of his intercourse with the Cossyas, evinced the liveliest interest in their welfare; he had studied their language as the best avenue to their affections, and the great aim of his residence among them appeared to be an anxious desire to improve their condition, to instruct them in the arts of civilized life, and to create a relish amongst them for its humanizing enjoyments. This spirit of comprehensive benevolence was united to an amenity of manner, eminently calculated to conciliate regard; and so sensible did the Cossyas appear of his kindness, that an intercourse of the most friendly and intimate nature existed between them, the very moment preceding that in which their guilty hands were imbrued in his blood. He was invited to attend a conference, and disregarding the prophetic warnings of his companion Burlton, who suspected treachery, he entered the assembly unarmed, and was barbarously slaughtered.

"Lieutenant Burlton, with the aid of a small military guard, defended himself in his bungalow against vastly superior numbers, and at night succeeded in effecting his retreat a considerable distance on the road towards Assam; his route was, however, discovered on the following morning, and his exhausted party rapidly overtaken by their bloodthirsty pursuers. Even under these depressing circumstances, the cool determination and unerring aim of Burlton, long protracted the struggle, and they were at length only overpowered, when a heavy fall of rain had rendered their firearms nearly useless: unable longer to keep their assailants at bay, the party dispersed; Burlton fell covered with wounds, and the faithful naick who commanded the small military party

refusing to desert him in his extremity, perished by his side. The remaining fugitives were overtaken and butchered by their merciless pursuers, with the most aggravated circumstances of diabolical cruelty, and few survived to describe the horrors that had been perpetrated by these misguided and infuriated savages.

"The unexpected departure of Mr. Scott from Nungklow for Churra Poonjee, saved him from the dreadful fate which befel his valued friends, and faithful followers, and some days had elapsed before he was made acquainted with the afflicting reality. Troops were immediately called up from Sylhet and Assam to avenge the atrocious murders which had been committed, and a harassing warfare commenced, in which the lives of many most valuable officers were sacrified, and which continued to be waged up to a very recent period. The Cossyas, conscious that they had violated every pledge which even savages are accustomed to regard with superstitious reverence, viewed with suspicion every pacific overture; and despairing of pardon, protracted a contest, which their first skirmishes with our troops proved to be hopeless.

"Captain Lister, commanding the Sylhet Light Infantry, with a mere handful of men, drove the Cossyas from post to post, stormed their intrenchments, penetrated into their caves and fastnesses, and by the rapidity of his movements, and the boldness of his assaults, completely destroyed the confidence in their own prowess with which they had commenced the contest, that they latterly confined themselves to attacks upon small parties of five or six individuals, for whom they lay in ambush, and rarely ventured to contend openly with any detachment, however inferior to them in numbers.

"On the night of the 5th of January 1831, a most serious assault was made by the chiefs of Ramryee (one of the Cossya States, which overlooks the Assam Valley), and a party of Garrows, amounting altogether to about 200 men, on the people of Pantan, Bogaee, and Bongaung, three Dowars in the plains. Zubbur Sing, the chief of Ramryee, had tendered his submission to the British Government in October 1829, and was murdered in November of the following year, by his kinsmen Nychan Koonwur and Lall Chund, who were supposed to have instigated this outrage on the British territory. It has always been doubtful whether the murder of Zubbur Sing was the consequence of dissatisfaction at his submission to an authority which they disliked, or was the result of a conspiracy to usurp his authority; but Mr. Scott, in a letter of the 17th January, written very shortly after he had received intelligence of the outrage, gives a brief sketch of the relations of the British authorities with the occupants of the several southern Dowars, which accounts in some degree for an attack, the most serious that had taken place since the catastrophe at Nungklow in 1829.

Outbreak of 1831.

"'The estates in question,' says Mr. Scott, 'were under attachment; the first, in consequence of the part which the Rajah had taken against us in the hills, and the two latter, for the recovery of

arrears of revenue; and there is every reason to think, that the irruption of the mountaineers was favoured and connived at by the local authorities, most of whom are necessarily ill affected towards our Government, owing to the strict control now exercised over them, and to the deprivation of the illicit emoluments they used to derive from fines from criminals, and other illegal cesses, which they were in the habit of levying under the Assam Government.'

"'The treacherous and refractory disposition of the people of the Dowars was frequently evinced during the Assam Government, and petty revolutions attended with the murder of rival chiefs and their adherents, was matter of frequent occurrence. Such acts the Assamese were latterly under the necessity of tolerating; and practically speaking, at the time of our accession to the government of the country, the chiefs of the Dowars exercised criminal jurisdiction, and made war upon each other with perfect impunity, or at the worst, subject to the payment, for forgiveness, of a fine.'

"'As it was impossible to tolerate such proceedings under our Government, and as it clearly appeared that the chiefs of the Dowars possessed no legitimate independent authority in the plains, they were subjected, like other Assamese subjects, to the ordinary laws; but in order to conciliate them as far as practicable, and to ensure to them the observance of the peculiar customs of the tract in question, a separate court was established, composed of the chiefs themselves, and a few of their principal local functionaries, before which all civil and criminal cases have hitherto been tried.'

"'Under the Assam Government, the estates forming the Dowars had not paid any regular annual revenue, but large sums were exacted on the accession of a new chief, and raised by contribution on the people, and they were bound to furnish poyiks for the public service. This arrangement was commuted for a money payment; a few working poyiks only being retained for local purposes; but although the revenue was fixed at a very low rate, and abatements made in favour of the chiefs, in some cases amounting to nearly 50 per cent. upon the jumma, few of them have been able to fulfil their engagements, owing chiefly to their total incapacity for business, and the roguery of their servants, under which circumstances, the temporary attachment of several of their estates became indispensable, and it has probably in some degree led to the recent catastrophe.'

"'Under the above circumstances,' adds Mr. Scott, 'I am of opinion that the only course that can be advantageously pursued is that of reducing to practical subjection the tribes bordering on the Dowars, who have perpetrated the late outrages, and who are at present independent of our authority; and establishing amongst them the same sort of internal Government which has been maintained amongst the Garrows of the north-east parts of Lungpoor since the year 1817.'

"A reward was offered for the apprehension of Lall Chund, the leader of the attack on the Dowars, but apparently without effect, as it was not until September of 1833 that he voluntarily surrendered

himself to the native officer in charge of the post at Nungklow, and of his subsequent fate there appears to be no trace. A heavy fine of Rs. 5,000 was imposed upon the eight villages composing the State of Ramryee, and Rs. 10,000 on the chiefs of six other States who were associated in the attack on the Dowars, making altogether a sum only equivalent to the estimated amount of loss incurred by the inhabitants of the plundered villages.

"A very few days after the attack on the Dowars in Assam, the border villages near Kanta Kal, in the Sylhet District, were invaded by a party of the same inveterate tribe, headed by Munboot, and some other less celebrated leaders of the petty States on the western confines of the Cossya territory. They were pursued and defeated by Captain Lister, and this appears to have been the last attempt made upon the settlements in the plains, though the unequal contest was still partially waged in the hills by a small band headed by Munboot.

"This, the most daring and successful leader among the Cossyas, and whose unconquerable spirit tended to perpetuate a contest from which almost every other had withdrawn in despair, was originally a slave to the Rajah Teerut Sing, but had risen by the force of innate courage and great personal prowess to considerable distinction amongst his comrades; and though frequently defeated, as constantly renewed the contest in some spot far removed from the scene of his recent disaster; with inconceivable rapidity he traversed his native mountains in every direction, wherever there appeared a probability of inflicting injury on his powerful foes; descending, as we have seen, even to the border villages in the plains, where his very name struck terror to the hearts of their timid inhabitants.

"He was opposed, however, to men of courage and perseverance fully equal to his own; and the names of Lister, Townsend, Vetch, and Brodie became so formidable to his followers, that seeing the hopelessness of his cause, they gradually deserted their leader, and left him to the destiny which appeared inevitable. In a quarrel with one of the followers of Teerut Sing, his immediate chieftain, he either killed or severely wounded him; and dreading that Teerut Sing would punish him with death, sought an asylum in the remote villages of his countrymen; but having at length obtained a promise that his life should be spared, he surrendered himself in October 1832 to Lieutenant Townsend, then commanding at Nungklow.

"The conspicuous gallantry which he had displayed on every occasion naturally excited a more than ordinary interest on his behalf in the minds of his generous opponents, and he was entrusted with the command of a small detachment of Cossyas, and received a monthly stipend for his subsistence. Secure of life, and raised to a situation of comparative affluence, the quondam patriot immediately commenced rendering his position subservient to his pecuniary advantage; and having been convicted of numerous acts of oppression, and of levying heavy

fines on his countrymen in the name of the Government, he was discharged two years afterwards, and appears to have again fallen to the degraded and menial condition which he originally occupied.

"Teerut Sing, the principal culprit, for whose apprehension large rewards had been offered, still eluded the pursuit of justice, and found a temporary asylum among the different chieftains, whose feelings of honour prevented their surrendering him to the British Government; but his situation becoming daily more precarious, as they tendered their submission, he was at length compelled to treat for his surrender through Sing Manick, the Rajah of Kyrim.

"On the 19th of September 1832, Captain Lister and Lieutenant Rutherford, with a party of 30 sepoys, were deputed by Mr. T. C. Robertson, the Governor General's Agent, to Nongkreem, the residence of Sing Manick, for the purpose of negociating for the surrender of Teerut Sing; the latter, still apprehensive that treachery was intended, refused to meet the officers, except at the residence of Sing Manick, and with the stipulation that they should go unarmed.

"On the 23rd an interview, at which Teerut Sing was present, took place, but without producing any effect, as the only proposition he made contained a requisition for the restoration of his country, and the abandonment of the line of road which had been cleared through it; neither of which could of course be granted. On the 24th, as the deputies were about to return to Charra, Sing Manick begged that they would grant another audience to two of Teerut Sing's principal Muntrees, Man Sing and Jeet Roy, which was conceded. From Man Sing they learnt 'that they were tired of opposing us, but that their fears of our wrath, the despair of some of the most hot-headed among them, and exaggerated ideas of our implacable enmity, kept up by the Churra and other interested parties, deterred them from coming in.'

"Although no definite arrangement was made for the surrender of Teerut Sing, the interview was not unattended with advantages: the most prominent of which were thus stated by the officer who had been deputed to treat with the disaffected parties.

1st. "They were satisfied that Manick Sing was sincere in his intentions of effecting an amicable arrangement, and that he was deserving of confidence and encouragement.

2nd. "That although it would not be advisable to place much reliance on Teerut Sing, yet that an arrangement might be entered into for a peaceable adjustment of differences with his followers.

3rd. "That a schism would be effected amongst them, after witnessing our good faith, and finding that we were not so implacable as they had been led to suppose.

4th. "That should hostilities be renewed, the interview had afforded an opportunity of observing, and again recognizing the countenances of Teerut's followers.

5th. "They had ascertained that the rebels were enabled to continue their opposition by the people of Churra and other avowedly friendly States, from whom they obtained supplies."

"Subsequently to the interview on the 24th of September, several communications had taken place between Mr. Robertson and Sing Manick, the result of which was a second deputation of the same officers to Nongkreem, on the 20th of the following month, with permission to treat on the following terms:—

1st. "Teerut Sing to be given up, on an assurance that his life would be spared; but with no other condition whatever, and to be dealt with as the Government might direct.

2nd. "In the event of his being so given up, the confederate Rajahs were authorized, in conformity with the customs and usages of their tribe, to select a person to occupy his place, and a promise given, that the election would be sanctioned by the British Government, and the person selected be confirmed in all the possessions and privileges formerly enjoyed by Teerut Sing, subject only to such modifications as might be subsequently noticed.

"To all of the other chieftains full amnesty was offered on the following conditions: First—"That the British Government shall have a right to carry a road, in whatsoever direction it may think proper, across the whole extent of country lying between Churra and the plains of Assam.

Secondly.—"That the British Government shall be at liberty to construct bridges, and to erect halting bungalows, stockades, guardrooms or store-houses, at any point along this line of road." To render this condition less objectionable, the deputies were authorized to promise, if necessary, that no building should be erected at a greater distance than a hundred yards from the line of road.

Thirdly.—"That each chieftain shall engage to furnish as many workmen as shall be required, on their receiving the usual remuneration for their labour, to assist in the completion and keeping in repair of the road, and other works, above detailed.

Fourthly.—"That the posts of Myrung and Nungklow, with an extent of territory of not less than — cross or miles (the exact limits of which are to be fixed hereafter, and accurately marked out) shall be ceded in absolute sovereignty to the British Government.

Fifthly.—"That the chieftains shall engage to furnish, on being paid for the same, the undermentioned articles for the use of any establishment which Government may set on foot, either at Nungklow or Myrung: timber, stone, slate, and lime, for building.

Sixthly.—"That in consideration of no revenue or tribute being exacted of them, the chieftains shall engage to furnish grazing land for as many cattle as Government may deem it necessary to keep on the hills, and for which it may be impossible to find pasturage within the

limits laid down in the fourth article. The chieftains are severally to be responsible for the proper care of such cattle, as may be sent to graze on their lands.

Seventhly.—"The chieftains shall engage to arrest, and hand over to the British authorities, any person accused of committing an offence within the limits of the posts of Myrung and Nungklow; and to assist in apprehending any convict or other person who shall abscond from either of these posts.

Eighthly.—"The chieftains shall engage to pay such fine as may be imposed upon them by the Governor General's Agent for any breach of the preceding conditions of which they may be convicted.

Ninthly.—"In the event of their acceding to the preceding terms, the chieftains are to be at liberty to return to, and re-occupy, their respective villages; and to exercise over the inhabitants of the same, whatever authority belonged to them, according to the established practice of the country, before they placed themselves in a state of hostility towards the British Government."

"As an additional motive for accepting these terms, the deputies were authorized to promise that the Agent's influence should be exerted, in case of their compliance, to obtain from Government restitution of all the lands formerly held by them in the valley of Assam; and, in the event of failing to effect a pacific negociation, Captains Lister and Rutherford were instructed to direct an immediate cessation of intercourse on the part of those chiefs who professed to be friendly with those whose contumacy it would be necessary to punish by a renewal of hostilities.

"This negociation, like the former one, failed to produce any beneficial result. Teerut Sing's illness was alleged in excuse for his non-attendance; but our officers had every reason for believing this to be a fabrication, and they were only met by chieftains of inferior note. Objections to the different articles of the proposed treaty were made; and to the most important one, which stipulated for the surrender of Teerut Sing, it appeared certain they would never subscribe. On this occasion it was that the chiefs, in justification of the catastrophe at Nungklow in 1829, mentioned the insolent tone and oppressive conduct of the inferior officers and servants belonging to our establishment at that time, and which, if not strictly guarded against, would, in the opinions of Captains Lister and Rutherford, inevitably create fresh cause of disturbance. Unable to effect any satisfactory arrangement, our officers returned to Churra, and a renewal of hostilities appeared inevitable.

"Before the expiration of the period for which a truce had been granted, Sing Manick again waited on Mr. Robertson, at Churra Poonjee, accompanied by Jeedur Sing, a relation of the fugitive Rajah Teerut, and one of the most influential persons among them, who had been actively opposed to our authority. In the interview which took place on the 25th of October, the principal object of Jeedur Sing

appeared to be the attainment of the Raj, forfeited by the misconduct of Teerut Sing, to which he affirmed the latter had consented, on the ground, that 'he had virtually ceased to live, from the moment that Mr. Scott's existence was terminated.' Large as was the prize at stake, Jeedur Sing steadily refused to purchase it by the surrender of Teerut, or the payment of an annual revenue, levied upon those villages in the hills over which his sway might be established; the one act would have effectually destroyed his popularity with the inferior members of his clan, and to taxation, he said, they would never submit.

"On the following day, the conference was renewed, when the friendly negociator, Sing Manick, denounced Rajah Bur Manick, Dewan Sing Dobashee and Oojee Kconwur, both of Churra and Oolung, a servant of the Rajah of Jynteeah, as the secret fomenters of the existing quarrel, from an apprehension that the surrender of Teerut Sing would be followed by a disclosure of the treacherous part they had been acting. This conference terminated with an assurance of protection to Jeedur Sing, if he accepted of Mamloo and its dependencies, on a tribute of Rs. 1,500 annually. He was allowed a further period of ten days for the purpose of going back to negociate with the other members of his party; and he announced his intention of either returning with them or sharing the dangers to which their continued hostility might expose them.

"At the expiration of the ten days, nothing further having been heard from the party, measures were immediately taken for coercing the refractory chieftains, and instructions were issued by the Governor General's Agent, Mr. Robertson, to Captain Lister, in which he was desired to respect the territory of Sing Manick, whose conduct had lately evinced so friendly a spirit; but he was directed, if necessary, to apprehend the neighbouring chief Bur Manick, who, there was every reason to believe, had not only originally counselled the attrocious massacre at Nungklow, but had ever since secretly fomented the spirit of disaffection. Measures were adopted for opening a friendly communication with the chiefs of Mahran and Dwara (from whom petitions to that effect had been received), on the western frontier of the Cossya territory; and to enable such detachments as might be stationed along the foot of the hills to co-operate with the parties acting against the insurgents above.

"The consequences of this comprehensive and vigorous policy were very soon apparent. Teerut Sing, hemmed in on every side and unable longer to elude the vigilance of his pursuers, renewed his overtures for surrender; and on the 9th of January 1833 deputed Jeet Roy, his confidential Muntree, to treat with Mr. Inglis, who commanded the post of Oomchillung. The only condition required was, that the life of his master should be spared, and this having been promised, and ratified by the Khasia oath, of eating salt from the blade of a sabre, the 13th was the day finally determined upon for his surrender; the place to be named two hours before meeting, and Teerut Sing and Mr. Inglis to be each attended by only two unarmed serv ants.

"On the day appointed, the Rajah Teerut Sing met Mr. Inglis at Nursingare, a mile east of Oomchillung; but instead of the unarmed attendants, which by the terms of the agreement were the only persons who should have accompanied him, he was escorted by a party of 30 bow and spear men, with 11 musqueteers. This was complained of by Mr. Inglis as a breach of the agreement, but he was assured by Teerut Sing's wily counsellor, that it would not have been respectful in his master to come attended by a smaller retinue, and was necessary to convince the people that he had not been made captive, but had voluntarily surrendered. Mr. Inglis, to allay the suspicions of the Rajah, at his request, repeated the ceremonial form of oath he had before taken, and Teerut Sing was conveyed to Myrung, from whence he was taken to Gowhattee in Assam, and eventually confined in the jail of Dacca, where he remains a State prisoner for life.

Final pacification of the hills, 1833.

"The submission of Teerut Sing was almost immediately followed by a general pacification; the other chiefs had, with few exceptions, previously adopted the sagacious policy of withdrawing from an unprosperous cause, and the few who had supported him were glad to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by his surrender to throw themselves on the clemency of the paramount power.

"As, however, there had been a marked difference in the conduct of the various chieftains, it became necessary to distinguish those who had been friendly from the guilty participators in the crimes of Teerut Sing. To have inflicted capital punishment upon the culprits, would have involved nearly all the principal leaders of the different clans in one common execution, which, though perhaps demanded by inflexible justice, was repugnant to the considerate mercy of a Government more anxious to reclaim than destroy.

"The more humane and hardly less effectual measure was adopted of subjecting all those who were proved to have participated in the murders and plunderings which had been perpetrated, both on our subjects in the hills and the villages in the plains, to the payment of pecuniary fines; this description of punishment was sanctioned by immemorial usage amongst themselves, and from it, a fund, it was anticipated, would accrue, which could be devoted to the improvement of the country, in the construction of roads, bridges, and other works of public utility. Subject to the previous sanction of the Government, this plan has been adopted with the best effects, and individual crime has been made an instrument of public benefit.

"Though grossly outraged by the wanton murder of its servants and subjects, the policy of the Government had been uniformly dictated by a wish to conciliate the misguided inhabitants of these hills; and the great obstacle to its accomplishment having been removed by the surrender of Teerut Sing, measures were shortly afterwards adopted for restoring the district of Nungklow to some member of the same family, who was undefiled by participation in the massacre of 1829."

"Rujun Sing, the nephew of Teerut Sing, a lad of between 13 and 14 years of age, fulfilling this condition, and being the heir apparent, according to the established Cossya law of succession, it was determined to confer the dignity upon him, and he was installed by Captain Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor General at Nungklow, on the 29th of March 1834, on the following conditions, which had been previously prepared and submitted for the approval of Government by Mr. T. C. Robertson, the preceding Agent:

1st. "That the British Government shall have a right to carry a road in whatsoever direction it may think proper across the whole extent of country lying between Sylhet and the plains of Assam.

2nd. "That the Government shall be at liberty to construct bridges, and to erect halting bungalows, stockades, guard-rooms, or store-houses, at any point along the line of road.

3rd. "That the Rajah and his Muntrees shall engage to furnish as many workmen as shall be required to assist in the completion, and keeping in repair, of roads and other works, above detailed

4th. "That the Rajah and his Muntrees shall engage to furnish, on being paid for the same, the undermentioned articles for the use of any establishment, which Government set on foot at any place within the country ceded to him: timber, stone, lime, fire-wood for building, and such other articles as may be procurable in the country.

5th. "That the Rajah and his Muntrees shall engage to furnish grazing land for as many cattle as Government may deem it necessary to keep on the hills. The Rajah and his Muntrees to be responsible for the proper care of such cattle as may be sent to graze on their lands.

6th. "The Rajah and his Muntrees shall engage to arrest and hand over to the British authorities any person accused of committing an offence within the limits of any British post, and to assist in apprehending any convict or other person who shall abscond from any of these posts.

7th. "The Rajah and his Muntrees shall engage to pay such fines as may be imposed upon them by the Governor General's Agent for any breach of the preceding conditions of which they may be convicted."

To these articles, which had been prepared by Mr. Robertson, the following was added by Captain Jenkins:—

8th. "On condition of Rujun Sing agreeing to and fulfilling the several articles already stated, the Government promises to continue his stipend of Rs. 30 sicca per month for one year after the date of this agreement, which will tend to settle his country in a quiet and comfortable manner; the above Rs. 30 being given him for his support."

These conditions were signed on behalf of Rujun Sing by eight of his principal counsellors, and Nungklow has ever since remained under his authority.

Account of Khasi Chiefs.

"Of the remaining chieftains, who contribute to the formation of the confederated Cossya States, the only authentic account, at present obtainable, is found in an official report from Mr. T. C. Robertson to Government, dated the 14th of December 1832, where the principal amongst them are said to amount to seven, and are thus described.

Kyrim.

"'Sing Manick, the ruler of the country of Kyrim, is one of the most powerful, and apparently the most friendly of these mountain chiefs. He has lately done his utmost to effect an accommodation between us and the hostile party, and is perhaps the only man of influence connected with the hills (excepting the ruler of Churra), against whom there is not clear evidence of participation in the massacre at Nungklow. Circumstances enable him to exercise an authority by far more despotic than is enjoyed by most of the Cossya Rajahs, who generally have a council, without whose sanction no business of importance is undertaken. A feud of long standing between Sing Manick and the Rajah of Jynteeah renders it of importance to the former to obtain our countenance; but the immediate objects at which he aims are the possession of a rich village, called Sodparpoonjee, lying between Churra and the plains, and the recovery of Moosaee, a strongly situated village, placed by Mr. Scott under the charge of the Rajah of Jynteeah, in consequence of some hostile chiefs having, though without Sing Manick's privacy, taken refuge in it. The armed force at this chieftain's command must be nearly commensurate with the adult male population of his domain, and that I have no means of very accurately computing. That he is friendly in his disposition towards us I have already said; but it would be a mere delusion to expect any active co-operation from him, excepting, perhaps, in the case of our wishing to put down his neighbour of Jynteeah.' The number of villages subject to his authority is said to be seventy, his armed followers to about 3,000 men, and he pays no contribution to Government.

"'Bordering upon Sing Manick's domain and forming a part of the Province of Kyrim, stands that of Bur Manick. A large, and from what I saw of it near Moleem, I should say, for the hills, a fertile tract of this territory was reserved to the Government, when Bur Manick, after having been carried as a prisoner to the plains, was restored by Mr. Scott to a portion of his former possessions. The disposition of this chieftain is decidedly hostile, and I reckon upon it as probable that we shall soon have to treat him as a foe.' Twenty-eight villages acknowledge subjection to this chieftain, and his armed followers amount to between four and five hundred. He pays no contribution to Government, and lately compounded for a fine of Rs. 5,000 levied upon him by Mr. Scott, by agreeing to pay Rs. 1,000 immediately, and constructing for the remainder a good road from Churra, *vid* Moleem, to Myrung.

"'The Rajah of Churra, with whom Mr. Scott treated, has long been dead,' and his sister's son, Soobha Sing, according to the Cossya law of succession, now occupies his place. It is difficult for one in the habit of seeing this little chief, inferior as he is in appearance to many a menial, to elevate him to the dignity of an ally of Government. As such, however, he has been, and is still recognized. The disposition of the Rajah and his councillors may be called friendly, because they know our power, and fear to provoke us, and are so sensible of the benefit of a connection with us, that they are anxious to debar all others from sharing in it. Their conduct, however, has, on one or two recent occasions, been so equivocal, that I should not feel much surprised at their ere long striking, by some folly of their own, their chieftain's name out of a catalogue, in which it is so much their advantage that it should continue.' Twenty-five villages are dependent upon Churra, whose population is estimated at 30,000 souls, of whom 2,000 may be assembled as armed followers. Nothing is contributed by this petty State to the Government.

Churra.

"Omeer Sing, of Nurtnng, is the next on the list. Of this chieftain, Mr. Robertson says—"he has large possessions in the direction of Goalparah, where he, last year (1831), made an inroad, in consequence of which several of his villages on that frontier were taken from him and annexed to our dominions. But little is known of the state of the interior of his domain.

Nurtung.

"The Kala Rajah of Nuspung, to whom about 20 villages are subject; the Oolar Rajah of Muriow, whose sway extends over twenty-five, and the Omrap Rajah of Murram, who has twenty-four villages, are the only other chieftains meriting particular notice, and of these, little more than the sites they severally occupy appears to be known.

Nuspung, Muriow, and Murram.

"'Among the many peculiarities' (says Mr. Robertson) "'apparent in the form of society and government, existing among the Cossyas, the absence of any recognized organ of supreme power is very remarkable. The nation or horde presents the appearance of a congregation of little Oligarchical Republics, subject to no common superior, yet of which each member is amenable, in some degree, to the control of his confederates. It was, he adds, to an oversight as to this feature of their political system that the massacre at Nungklow may perhaps be traced, since Teerut Sing seems to have been merely an instrument on that occasion, of executing the will of the confederates, who were displeased at a treaty which he had without their sanction entered into.' A treaty in this case was, in my opinion, a superfluous formality; for such were the aggressions annually committed by the Cossyas, on the districts of Sylhet and Assam, that the British

Constitution of the Khasi States.

Government, when possessed of both of these countries, became entitled to take possession of the hills as a measure of retaliation, and the only means of securing their subjects on the plains from molestation.

'In alluding to the subject of tribute, Mr. Robertson adds—"It may be as well to observe that the revenue of the hill chieftains appears to arise from duties on bazars in the plains, on the borders of their territory, from fines imposed for offences, and in some parts from offerings of various articles of consumption. As an example, I may mention that I am informed by a native officer, who was at Nungkreem during the late conferences, that while he was there, Sing Manick imposed a fine of Rs. 300 on one of his subjects for speaking disrespectfully of one of his female relatives.'

"All opposition having been at length overcome, and the principal chieftains having tendered their submission to the British Government, it was resolved to place the whole mountain tract under the superintendence of the officer, whose skill and gallantry had so largely contributed to its pacification; and Captain Lister was shortly afterwards appointed Political Agent for Cossya affairs, over which he exercises a general control. The judicial customs, which prevailed among the tribe, previous to the establishment of our supremacy, continue to be observed with such occasional modifications, as experience proves necessary to temper the sanguinary nature of their penal enactments; and there is now reason to hope that the tranquillity they at present enjoy will be productive of a more extended intercourse with the inhabitants of the plains than has hitherto been practicable; and that conscious of the advantages to be derived from so intimate an association with superior civilization and wealth, the Khasia will carefully avoid the commission of any act likely to interrupt the existing harmony.

"That they can yet view us with any but feelings of apprehensive jealousy, is most improbable; and the lamentable catastrophe at Nungklow clearly shows that they are subject to sudden ebullitions of feeling against which it will always be necessary to be prepared; and that the most prompt and energetic measures, in checking any future exhibition of a refractory and hostile spirit, will be no less necessary than a mild and conciliatory policy to those who are more amicably disposed.

Description of the Hills and Plateau.

"One of the most important objects contemplated by Mr. Scott in establishing a post at Nungklow was the acquisition of a salubrious spot, to which the European inhabitants of the plains might occasionally resort for the renovation of health, and the eventual establishment of sanatory depôts for invalid soldiers. His own experience, derived from a residence of some duration, on the lofty table-land of these hills, in the cold weather of 1826, appeared to confirm the favourable reports that had been made upon it; and the most extensive schemes were rapidly formed for the improvement of this hygeian land of promise, and the civilization of its wild and independent tribes.

"The tract of country, in which the various scenes that have been described were enacted, forms an irregular parallelogram, the length of which, from north to south, may be assumed at about 70 miles, and its average breadth at 50, giving an area of about 3,500 square miles: on the north, it is bounded by the plains of Assam; on the south, by those of Sylhet; on the west by the Garrows; and on the east, by the central portion of Kachar. This area consists of three portions of unequal breadth and diversified character: the first or most northern is a closely wooded tract, rising from the Assam Valley, and stretching by a succession of gentle undulations for 20 miles, to the heights on which stands the village of Mopea, 2,746 feet above the sea, and from which, the northern crest of the more elevated central plateau is seen, resting at an elevation of between four and five thousand feet above the same level.

"From Nungklow, which stands on the edge of the northern crest, to Moosmye, which is similarly situated on the southern verge of this elevated region, the direct distance is about 35 miles: and it is within these limits that the region is included, whose salubrity has been so much extolled by its friends, and so much questioned by its opponents.

"Between Moosmye and Tara Ghaut, at the foot of the hills, a distance of about seven miles, is comprised the third division of this mountain tract, which consists of the steep face of the range, and like that on the Assam side, is densely wooded, and at certain seasons of the year, highly insalubrious. Viewed from the country below, it appears to spring almost perpendicularly from the plains to an elevation of five thousand feet; in some places, deep chasms are seen penetrating far into its massive flanks, forming the natural channels of numerous torrents, which reach the open country by a succession of rapids and falls, over rocky beds, of considerable depth. In other spots, during the cold and dry seasons of the year, the sites of numerous cataracts are marked by a thin silvery line, extending in some instances from the very crest of the elevated central plateau, nearly one-fourth down the perpendicular face of the ascent; and in the rains these attenuated and glittering lines become foaming cataracts, which pour a vast column of water over the rocky ledges of the table-land. The one most celebrated is situated near the village of Moosmye, where there is an unbroken perpendicular descent of one thousand feet, through which the column of water is precipitated, upon the rocky masses below.

"The groves or plantations, from which the whole of Bengal is supplied with oranges, occupy a belt of from one to two miles in breadth, at the sloping base of the mountains, and in a soil formed of the detritus of the limestone, which constitutes the principal rock on this side of the range; limes and pine-apples, the jack-fruit and mangoes, betul-nut and plantains also grow luxuriantly, to an elevation of nearly 2,000 feet above the plains, when the character of the products indicates a change, from a tropical to a more temperate region; and the wild raspberry and strawberry are detected, on the borders of the numerous small springs, which issue from fissures in the rocks.

"Throughout the whole of this ascent, from the base of the mountain to the crest of the table-land, the most luxuriant vegetation is seen; and the road, by which the more elevated regions are attained, has been so much improved, that the whole distance from Teerea Ghaut to Moosmye may now be traversed on horseback with perfect safety. The country at the foot of the ascent is during the rainy season almost entirely inundated and remarkably unhealthy; but even at an elevation of about 1,300 feet, this character of insalubrity ceases to exist, and the inhabitants of Soopar Poonjee appear to be altogether exempt from the diseases, which prevail in the country immediately below them.

"On the Assam side, the inferior hilly tract, which unites the lofty table-land and the plains, is covered with dense jungle, as far as the village of Oongswye, where it becomes more scanty, and is succeeded by a more open tract, in which the fir begins to appear, extending from the village of Mopea to the Sari or Bor Panee, which rushes over its granitic bed, at the foot of the ascent, leading up to Nungklow, on the northern crest of the central plateau. This tract, extending from Ranagaon to Mopea, is so decidedly insalubrious, that it can only be traversed with safety between the months of November and March; and this, which, from a very early period, was fatally manifested, almost entirely neutralized the advantages anticipated by the residents of Assam, from the vicinity of so elevated and temperate a region.

"The superior facility of access, and the shorter distance from the plains to the table-land, where alone health was to be obtained, soon marked the southern side of the range, as the one best adapted for the object in view; and Nungklow ceased to be considered more than a convenient intermediate post, for those, who, anxious to escape the evils of a protracted residence in Assam, were proceeding in search of health to Churra or Myrung.

"The central tract, which for want of a more appropriate word has been called "table-land," is very imperfectly described by such a designation; for though unmarked by any very lofty elevations, still it is so much undulated, and diversified, by numerous hillocks and knolls, valleys and chasms, that it resembles much more strongly the troubled surface of the ocean, than the flat extended plateau indicated by the term "table-land," but which, for want of a better, we shall probably still continue to use.

"Within the limits which have been examined from Nungklow to Moosmye, and from the road through Jaintiah, to the domains on the west, of the Oomap and Oolar Rajahs, the elevation of this lofty region appears to vary from four to six thousand feet above the sea; which would give an annual mean temperature of from 59° to 65° of Fahrenheit, or from 19° to 13° lower than that of Calcutta, which is nearly 78°. At such an elevation, and with such a temperature, the change, from a residence in the plains, to one on the hills is,

during the hot and cold seasons of the year, the most delightful it is possible to conceive. In the month of May, when the exhausted inhabitants of Calcutta were panting under a temperature which fluctuated from 90° to 100°, the parties which were pursuing the Cossyas, over this elevated region, found woollen clothing essential to comfort, and fires were almost invariably kindled at night, with the same object. During the rains, the climate, from excessive moisture, has been considered far less salubrious than was anticipated, from an experience of its effects at other seasons of the year: but I am inclined to think, that a conclusion so completely at variance with the opinions of men unquestionable talent and observation, has been deduced from imperfect data; and that a judgment condemnatory of the whole tract has been pronounced from a few observations made at Cherra Poonjee, situated almost on the southern verge of the table-land, and peculiarly exposed, from this circumstance, to the unmitigated severity of the south-west monsoon."(1)

Present condition of the Khasi States.

At the present day the Government recognizes twenty-five petty States in the Khasi Hills, fifteen of the first class presided over by "Siems"* who, though taken always from one family, are chosen by popular election; one confederacy under elected officers styled Wahadadars; five under Sirdars; and four under Lyngdohs, both of

* The native title was first officially recognised in 1867—cf. Political Proceedings, March 1867, No 14.

(1) The following are the principal references to the earlier records for the period treated by Pemberton:—

Secret Proceedings,	5th September	1828, Nos. 11-14.
Secret Proceedings,	20th June	1829, No. 2.
Territorial Cons.,	14th April	1829, Nos. 27-28.
Political Proceedings,	7th May	1830, Nos. 49-50.
Political Proceedings,	18th June	1830, No. 52.
Political Proceedings,	11th February	1831, Nos. 26-32.
Political Proceedings,	25th February	1831, No. 59.
Political Proceedings,	22nd October	1832, Nos. 60-61.
Political Proceedings,	3rd December	1832, Nos. 100-101.
Political Proceedings,	5th November	1832, Nos. 56-58.
Political Proceedings,	12th February	1833, Nos. 24-26.
Political Proceedings,	30th March	1833, No. 110.
Political Proceedings,	13th June	1833, Nos. 83-84.
Political Proceedings,	5th September	1833, Nos. 71-72.
Political Proceedings,	10th September	1833, Nos. 3-6.
Political Proceedings,	12th December	1833, Nos. 85-93.
Political Proceedings,	10th April	1834, Nos. 135-138.
Political Proceedings,	8th May	1834, Nos. 61-76.
Political Proceedings,	14th August	1834, No. 79.
Political Proceedings,	30th October	1834, Nos. 25-27.
Revenue Proceedings,	7th March	1835, No. 110.
Revenue Proceedings,	14th July	1835, Nos. 6-10.

which classes of offices are entirely elective. The names of the States as now settled are these :—

A.—Under Siems.

1. Bhawál, or Warbah ;
2. Cherra, or Sohrah ;
3. Khyrim, or Nongkrem ;
4. Lyngkin, or Langrin ;
5. Malái-Soh-Mat ;
6. Maháram ;
7. Máriao ;
8. Máoiong ;
9. Máo-syn-rám ;
10. Mylliem ;
11. Nong-soh-phoh ;
12. Nongkláo ;
13. Nongspung ;
14. Nongstain ;
15. Rámbrai.

B.—Under Wahadadars (4 in number).

1. Shellá.

C.—Under Sirdars.

1. Dwárá Nong-tyr-men ;
2. Jirang ;
3. Máolong ;
4. Máodon ;
5. Nonglong.

D.—Under Lyngdohs.

1. Lyniong ;
2. Máoflang ;
3. Nong-lywái ;
4. Sohiong.

The constitution of the States is democratic, the chiefs being in no sense territorial sovereigns, but merely elected heads of village confederacies. The appointment of the chiefs and headmen is in every instance subject to the confirmation of the Government, which reserves to itself the right of removing them in case of oppression and misconduct. The States of Cherra, Khyrim, Nongstain, Lyngkin, and Nongspung were originally classed as semi-independent, having always been friendly or never having been actually coerced by a British force. In practice, however, no important distinction has been recognised between their position and that of the dependent States.* Up to the year 1858 it was the custom to report to the Government of India only the succession to the State of Cherra. In that year it was arranged that successions to the five semi-independent States and the four principal dependent communities (Mylliem, Maharam, Mariao, and Nongklao) should be reported for confirmation. This was the practice until 1878 when it was decided that the sunnuds(1) of succession should in all cases be granted by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The form of sunnud prescribed in 1878 binds the chief to be subject to the orders and control of the

* The Nongstain Chief in 1861 asked to be treated as entirely subject and to receive by sunnud the title of Rajah Bahadur. (*Political Proceedings, February* 1861, *Nos.* 86-88, *April* 1861, *No.* 13, *May* 1861, *Nos.* 28-30.

(1) Political Proceedings, (India) May 1878, Nos. 60-66.

Deputy Commissioner of the District, who will decide any dispute between the chief and the chief of any other State. It empowers the chief to adjudicate and decide all civil cases and all criminal offences, except those punishable under the Indian Penal Code with death, transportation, or imprisonment for five years and upwards, which may arise within the limits of the State and in which only subjects of the State are concerned. Cases excepted as above and cases concerning subjects of other States are to be referred for the orders of the Deputy Commissioner. The Government of India is declared at liberty to occupy rent-free lands required for sanitaria, cantonments and posts. The right of Government is recognized in all lime, coal, and other mines, metals and minerals, in all wild elephants, and waste lands subject to payment of half profits to the chief.(1) The chief is bound not to mortgage State property: and is to set apart reserved areas for forests as Government may require. He is declared liable to punishment at the pleasure of Government for violation of the conditions of his sunnud, using any oppression, or acting contrary to established custom.

Results of British administration.

In 1853 the results of our occupation of the Khasia and Jaintiah Hills were thus summarized:—The simple character of the Khasias had to some extent become corrupted by civilization and increased wealth; civil wars which continually distracted the country in old times had been put down; trade had been augmented; an increasing demand for hill products had set in; the condition of the people, materially, had vastly improved; education had taken a start; while we had also reaped the benefits of our position in having obtained an entire cessation of the murderous inroads which these mountaineers constantly made into the plains, murdering our subjects and pillaging our villages.

Since that date the trade of the hills has gone on increasing; the Khasias have become altogether reconciled to our rule, and the district is now one of the last in which Government would expect to hear of any outbreak or disturbance beyond the management of the local police.

Later history of Jaintia.

It will be remembered that when the Rajah of Jaintia was deprived of his possessions on the plains, he preferred to give up entirely the tract in the hills which was nominally subject to him, and to become a pensioner of Government. This hill tract contained nineteen petty districts, fifteen of which were each under a Dolloie or headman elected by the villagers; the other four being managed by thirteen hereditary Sirdars.

The only tribute derived by the Jaintia Rajah from the hills was one he-goat from each village, with a few seers of parched rice, and firewood for his annual religious ceremonies. The villages were also bound to cultivate by turns the Raj lands. It is possible that dues levied on hill produce imported to the plains formed a further source of income.

(1) Political Proceedings, August 1867, Nos. 25-26.

On the resumption of the hills by the British Government, from 1835 to 1855, the Sintengs, as the Jaintias are called, were left almost entirely to their own devices. The Dolloies heard all civil cases,—at first without exception, and after 1841 up to a certain limit,—and all criminal complaints not of a heinous character in which only people of their own villages were concerned. Their administration was, however, flagrantly corrupt: and they managed to secure for themselves most of the Raj lands of which no accurate inventory had been taken by Government. No taxes of any kind were imposed by us in the Jaintia Hills for many years. The tribute of he-goats continued to be annually paid, and in 1853 credit was given to the officers at Cherra for effecting a slightly more favourable sale of these offerings than had been usual theretofore. In that year Mr. Mills, a Judge of the Sudder Court, who had been deputed to enquire into certain abuses in the Khasia Hills, judicial administration, drew attention to the state of the Jaintia Hills. He pointed out that in 1849 Colonel Lister had suggested the imposition of a house-tax "in consequence of the disposition evinced by some of the people to assert their independence." This had, however, been negatived by Government. Mr. Mills strongly urged that the error should be repaired, and a more intimate knowledge of the people acquired by the English officers. He also advocated the establishment of a Police Thannah to check the lawless proceedings of the Dolloies. Lord Dalhousie quite concurred in these views. In neighbouring Hill Tracts house-tax was paid, and we were acting unwisely and inequitably in exempting Jaintia. The Agent was directed to proceed into the Jaintia Hills and prepare a full report on Revenue, Civil, and Criminal Justice, and all other matters connected with the Jaintia Territory. On receipt of these orders a thannah was established at Jowai, but not much else was actually done at this time to give effect to them, so far as I have been able to discover.

Mr. Mills' deputation.

In 1858 Mr. Allen, another high official from the Presidency deputed to enquire into local matters, submitted another elaborate report upon the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. After the fullest consideration he came to the conclusion that the Sintengs should be required to contribute something in acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Government. He said—"I am of opinion that a light and judicious taxation would contribute to the preservation of tranquillity and good order in the Jaintia Hills. A moderate taxation had a very beneficial effect upon the savagery of the Lurka Coles of the Singhbhoom district of the south-west frontier agency. It was found to make them less turbulent and aggressive, and more thrifty, diligent, and submissive to the authorities; and I am disposed to think that a very moderate taxation, fixed for a term of years, would improve the condition and strengthen the peaceful and industrious inclinations of these wild mountaineers also." He proposed a moderate house-tax, to be collected through the village

Mr. Allen's proposals.

authorities. Enquiry was also suggested into the condition of the Raj lands, and the allotment of waste to European settlers was discussed. But Mr. Allen insisted strongly on the necessity of stationing a European Civil Officer in the centre of the tract to administer justice to the people, and be to them a visible representative of that Government of which they then knew almost nothing. Unfortunately, the proposal to levy a house-tax was adopted, while the Sintengs were left as before to the management of their Dolloies.

Sinteng rebellion, 1860.

In 1860 the house-tax was imposed, and, within a few months, the people were in open rebellion. Fortunately, a large force of troops was close at hand, and before the revolt could make any head, it was stamped out, and the villages were awed into apparent submission. It was supposed at the time that the ex-Rajah had been in some way mixed up with this movement in the hills, but to this idea little weight should be attached. For five and twenty years the Sintengs had been content to pay their tribute of he-goats to the British officers. They never respected the Rajah while he did rule over them; and they had openly affronted his family more than once since his abdication.

On the suppression of this partial rising measures were taken for the improvement of the administration. The Civil Officer at Cherra was empowered to remove the Dolloies for misconduct, while at the same time the powers of those functionaries were increased. All crimes were to be reported by them to the Police, who were not, however, to interfere vexatiously in village affairs.

The income tax.

Scarcely had the agitation of this disturbance had time to settle, when the necessities of Imperial Finance imposed the income tax throughout British India. The local officers applied to Government to know whether this new impost was to be levied in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills: and if the last named tract was to be affected by it, whether the house-tax was also to be maintained. It was ruled that the house tax was not to be given up on account of the income tax, the incidence of the two being different, and that the income tax "was to be introdnced only in those parts of the hills where taxes had been previously levied, *i. e.*, in the Jaintia Territory, and those other villages near the station of Cherra Poonjee which belong to the British Government." It seems to have been the belief at Calcutta that, practically, the tax would be inoperative in the hills. Fortunately, the whole of the Khasi States escaped it, and the loyalty of their chiefs was not tried by this severe and practical test.

In the Jaintia Hills 310 persons were taxed, on whom the whole amount assessed was Rupees 1,259. The highest rate levied, and that only in one case, was Rupees. 9. One person paid Rupees 5; twenty-seven paid Rupees 4-8 each; and the rest were taxed the minimum amount, Rupees 4 each per annum. The tax for 1860-61 was paid without a murmur. The Deputy Commissioner travelled through the hills in 1860-61, and again in November 1861 without

detecting a sign of disaffection. But the material was all there. The mass of the people had been subjected to the house tax in 1860. The leaders were further brought under the income tax in 1861. There were rumours of pân and trade taxes in the air.* What spark actually began the conflagration it is hard to tell. Whether it was the rash talk and interference of some bullying policeman, or an injudiciously executed order against the use of arms, we do not clearly know. There is some evidence to show that the Police had made themselves very offensive at Jowai, by getting restrictions imposed on the burning of the dead near the station house, and by interfering with some religious ceremonies. There were doubtless many concurrent causes. The small number of troops then available gave an opportunity which had been wanting in 1860; and on the 20th of January 1862, the Sintengs rose in fierce rebellion. "A people who had neither been left to their own guidance, nor yet fairly brought under ours; upon whom our yoke had pressed with just sufficient force to gall, but not to break into order; who had been denied the boon of having our rule represented among them by an English Officer, and of all our institutions, who had known only our system of Police as illustrated by a thannah on the Bengali model, and our latest experiments in taxation; who, just after they had been taught the lesson that they could only be compelled to pay an obnoxious tax by the application of military force, are straightway further taxed, the means of compulsion being at the same time withdrawn, when such a people rise in rebellion" (said the Commissioner *ex-post facto*) "it may not be difficult to explain its origin and object, without searching after recondite causes."

Second rising, 1862.

Into the history and progress of the rebellion there is no need to enter. Crushed apparently in four months after its outbreak, it again almost immediately burst out afresh, and it was not till November 1863, when every glen and jungle had been searched out by our Troops and Police, that the last of the rebel leaders surrendered, and the pacification of Jaintia could be said to be complete.

It fell to the lot of Sir Cecil Beadon who had inherited this rebellion, as well as various other disturbances on the frontiers and elsewhere, from his predecessors, to re-organize the Hill Administration. The policy laid down by him was thus represented—

"A main principle to be adopted in dealing with these people when they have been made to understand and feel the power of the Government and have submitted to its authority is not to leave them in their old state, but, while adopting a simple plan of Government suitable to their present condition and circumstances, and interfering as little as possible with existing institutions, to extend our intercourse with them, and endeavour to introduce among them civilization and order."

* See Bengal Record Selections No. XXXIX for a full account of these disturbances

An English Officer with full powers was accordingly posted to the Jaintia Hills, where he was personally to reside. He was to visit every village in his jurisdiction at least once a year, and, with his subordinates, was required to qualify in the Khasia language sufficiently to dispense with all interpreters. The village Dolloies were to be chosen by the people, subject to the civil officer's approval, and to hold office during good behaviour. With other village officers they were to form punchayets, by whom specified civil and criminal powers were to be exercised, subject to the revision of the British officer in important or heinous cases. The Dolloies and Sirdars were to be responsible for the Police of their respective jurisdictions, and the Regular Police were only to interfere to repress disturbance or support the authority of the Dolloies. Proceedings were to be *vivâ voce* as far as possible. Education was to be liberally encouraged; the Welsh Mission already established in the hills being made the instrument of its extension. The country was to be thoroughly opened up by eight lines of road, aggregating in length 218 miles. The income tax had been virtually withdrawn by the Act repealing it on all incomes below Rs. 500 a year. The house tax was to be retained, due care being taken that no inequality or injustice was allowed in its assessment.

On these general principles the administration of the Jaintia Hills has been reformed, and the policy of direct management, by resident European Officers, has, here, as in the Naga Hills, proved successful. Their history has for years past been uneventful. A complete and detailed settlement of the land in Jaintia has recently been carried out, due care being taken to avoid overassessment.

Shillong.

The head-quarters of the Chief Commissioner of Assam have been located at Shillong in the Khasi Hills. The station is on a plateau 4,000 feet above sea-level and 67 miles south by road from Gowhatty on the Brahmaputra. It is conveniently situated between the Assam valley districts on the one side and those of Cachar and Sylhet on the other. The climate is mild and equable, the rainfall averaging 83·65 inches in the year. The District Officer of the Khasi Hills moved his head-quarters there from Cherapoonjee* in 1864 to avoid the excessive

* David Scott lies buried at Cherra Poonjee. The following is the inscription on his tomb:—

In Memory

Of David Scott, Agent to the Governor General of the North-East Frontier of Bengal, and Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit in the District of Assam, North-Eastern part of Rungpore, Sheerpore, and Sylhet, died 20th August 1831, aged 45 years and 3 months.

This monument is erected by order of the Supreme Government as a public and lasting record of its consideration for the personal character of the deceased, and of its estimation of the eminent services rendered by him in the administration of the extensive territory committed to his charge. By his demise the Government has been deprived of a

rainfall of the latter place, where although only 30 miles south of Shillong the average rainfall is 368 inches and in 1861 amounted to as much as 805 inches. The transfer to Shillong has been from every point of view advantageous, and the Chief Commissioner of Assam has perhaps the most desirable head-quarters of all the Local Governments.

most zealous, able, and intelligent servant, whose loss it deeply laments, while his name will long be held in grateful remembrance and veneration by the Native population, to whom he was justly endeared by his impartial dispensation of justice, his kind and conciliatory manners, and his constant and unwearied endeavours to promote their happiness and welfare.

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