Far Cathay And Farther India Read Online

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There's a problem loading this menu right now. Learn more about Amazon Prime. Get free delivery with Amazon Prime. Back to top. Get to Know Us. Amazon Payment Products. To sum up, the conclusions of the Times as to the interest and importance of the frontier policy and the proper handling of the border tribes may be accepted in their entirety.

On the 1st of January, His Excellency, the Earl of Dufferin, issued the following notice: "By command of the Queen-Empress, it is hereby notified that the territories formerly governed by King Theebaw will no longer be under his rule, but have become part of Her Majesty's dominions, and will, during Her Majesty's pleasure, be administered by such officers as the Viceroy and Governor-General of India may from time to time appoint. The more thoughtful, however, knew that our political responsibilities were vastly increased thereby.

For, whereas before the whole breadth of the Himalaya range intervened between our Indian provinces and the boundary separating us from the outlying dependencies of the Flowery Land, we can now, as it were, shake hands across the border. The situation also had materially changed from the Chinese standpoint, for while India, in days of yore, was the Ultima Thule of Celestial geography, it had been brought to their very doors.

It was generally admitted that the purely military operations necessary for the occupation of Burma might be simple enough, yet no one imagined that a territory which had been subject to anarchy for many years could be reorganised without patience, trouble, and sympathetic treatment by officers of experience.

The campaign, as anticipated, proved to be a mere military promenade, and, for weeks after the arrival of our troops at Mandalay, the attitude of the people seemed all that could be desired. This lull after the storm seems to have taken our authorities off their guard, for they too long delayed the necessary precautions for the civil administration of the country which they had all along deemed inevitable.

Dacoity, or gang-robbery, was the natural result of revolution and anarchy. In its initial stage, and probably in its subsequent development, it never assumed a strictly political tendency.

Many who, under ordinary circumstances, were law-abiding people took to the nefarious calling for the mere love of excitement, or to be considered men of spirit by their sweethearts; others adopted it to escape starvation. Thus inoculated, they became more or less reckless and demoralised, and in organised gangs even ventured to confront our troops.
At last it came to such a pass that they found they must either make it their regular business to rob others, or be robbed themselves, for, excepting at our widely separated posts on the river Irrawadi, there was neither law nor dominant authority in the country. They were between Scylla and Charybdis, for they were a prey to professional dacoits on the one hand, and if found with arms required for protection they were harassed by our troops on the other. Over-zealous efforts to stamp out dacoity by shooting and flogging men and burning villages, coupled with a want of readiness to pardon offenders who repented the evil of their ways, hardened men of this stamp and aggravated the difficulty.

Brigandage may be said to have been normal in Upper Burma. Theebaw no doubt emphasised it, but it was also rife in his astute and respectable father's time. The late King Menglein, in his personal interest, preferred to pay his officials modest salaries rather than allow them to acquire enormous gains to the detriment of the Royal treasury which the farming out of appointments under the ordinary system entailed.

In the same selfish spirit, but presumably to keep them out of harm's way. His Majesty only allowed his sons miserable pittances in the way of pocket-money. The consequence was that many of his Ministers and some of the Royal Princes did not consider it beneath their dignity to be hand-in-glove with notorious free-booters in order to share the proceeds of robbery.

A dacoit gang was, in fact, as much a political necessity to a Burmese Minister as a newspaper organ is to Ministers in more civilised countries. During the prevalence of revolution and anarchy in our new inheritance, the attitude of China was a potent factor in the situation which could not be ignored. Had she elected to be hostile, the British authorities might have been involved in very serious complications.

Her friendship, or, at any rate, her neutrality was therefore well-nigh indispensable. The success of our diplomatists in securing the goodwill of the Son of Heaven was accordingly highly commendable. As far back as 'the reign of Taiwu b.

The Chinese annals, however, do not aid us on this point, and make no direct reference to foreign countries till a century or so before the Christian era, when India appears to have exercised as great a fascination for the Celestial imagination as it did in Europe fifteen centuries afterwards. The Son of Heaven was not a little impressed by Chang Kien's report, and, in the interests of commerce and a possible increase of imperial tribute, acted upon it at once by dispatching commissio- ners to report on the three routes, which, according to the commander's information, seemed the most promising.

All the exploring parties, however, returned discomfited, chiefly by reason of the impracticability of the 'barbarians' en- countered in every direction.

It is curious to notice how history repeats itself. Cooper elected to explore Chang Kien's route No. Arriving at Ssu-ch'uan from the Chinese seaboard, he managed to reach the most westerly point attained by any traveller from the Flowery Land. Unfortunately, however, just as he fancied himself certain of being able to pene- trate the 'iron wall' between Cathay and Shintu, his hopes were doomed by the prohibition of the Chinese authorities.

Major Sladen's expedition from Bham6 was unable to proceed further than Momein or Teng-yueh-chou, the frontier town of Yunnan. The governor treated its members very courteously, but objected to their proceeding farther, on the professed ground of danger to them- selves from the disturbed state of the country due to the Panthay rebellion.

This mission is also notable for the untoward fate of Augustus Raymond Margery, its capable and distinguished pioneer. The great effort of Captain Dondart de la Gr6e from Saigon vid Baang-hung, with the view of ex- ploring the head waters of the Mekhong, was not so easily baffled, though similar tactics were tried to prevent his visitingTalifu. Captain Dondart, being too ill to attempt the feat he subsequently died, entrusted its execution to Lieutenant Gamier, his second in command, who actually bearded the pseudo Emperor Suleiman in his capital. Suffice it to remark, the French were bitterly disappointed to find that the Mekhong was altogether imprac- ticable as a means for developing commerce.

Hsia-wu-t's immediate successors were not so sanguine as he, so the matter remained in abey- ance for a long time.

India, as a matter of fact, did not become known to the Chinese for two centuries afterwards, and then not by the short cut across the intervening regions, but by the Bactrian route, which was used up to the middle of the seventeenth century, when it was stopped by the King of Great Tibet in retaliation for the Great Mogul's invasion of his country.

Chang Kien's idea of a more direct communica- tion between the Flowery Land and Shintu, though long shelved, was not abandoned. In- deed, it was revived with the pertinacity for which the Celestials are famous when vital interests are at stake. A perusal of curious details, placed on record by these and other Chinese travellers, proves that the Celestials were then better informed about India than might be expected. From very remote times embassies very fre- quently passed between the Middle Kingdom and Hindustan, when such diplomatic amenities were not even dreamt of, much less in vogue, in Europe.

The latter, fully impressed with the honour of being selected as the first recipient of such condescension, complied with the imperial requisition, and in recognition of his obsequious- ness the Emperor accredited an ambassador to the Court of Magadha, ' in order that the principles of humanity and justice which had been diffused in that country might have a permanent protector and representative there.'

After Buddhism was introduced into the Middle Kingdom, the Princes of all the Buddhist coun- tries in this region also joyfully despatched missions to the Emperor, who often condescended to return the compliment by imperial missions to keep up his prestige.

In his first important mission he visited and gave most interesting particulars regarding various places in Yunnan and Burma, which have become
familiar in recent discussions on the subject of trade routes between the Flowery Land and the Golden Chersonese. Difficulties, however, arise as to the exact extent of the great traveller's journey; in other words, to determine where his narrative is founded on personal knowledge and where on hearsay merely.

It appears that the Khan called the Italians into his presence, and intrusted them with golden tablets of authority, which gave them the right of passage through all his dominions, and secured them facilities for procuring all that they might require. Thirteen ships were commissioned for the use of the embassy, escorting Queen Coachin, Lord Argon's bride-elect, and her companion, the daughter of the King of Manu. The capacity of these vessels may be imagined when they are described as having had four masts, and often hoisting as many as twelve sails, with some sixty or seventy private cabins, provided with closets and other conveniences, as well as public rooms for the use of merchants and other first-class passengers, besides ample accommodation for two hundred or more sailors, who sometimes had their families with them, and also managed to find space for small kitchen-gardens in spare ship's buckets.

These arks, though larger than any ships afloat in Europe, and containing as many water-tight compartments as the largest American liner of the present day, were, according to Marco, smaller than the Chinese possessed before that period. The fleet put forth to sea with the envoys and a goodly company, and first touched at Java, and, loosing thence, it proceeded to the different ports in the Indian seas, the voyage lasting about two years, thus enabling our Venetians to give most interesting accounts of their novel experiences, as Digitized by VjOOGIC china's maritime prestige.

Suijfice it to say, the envoys arrived at their destination in due course, and handed over the ladies to Casan, who, owing to the death of his father Argon, had not only become Lord of the Levant, but, in accordance with the custom of the country, had also inherited his father's right to the young lady in Marco's charge. Animated with the same spirit of enterprise that stimulated Drake, Frobisher, and other English worthies, the Great Khan was not a little aggressive, for he sent numerous expeditions against Japan and Java, which, though not always successful, prove that he had vast resources at his disposal, in the shape of ships, mariners, troops of various kinds, as.

No wonder, then, that he insisted on all intercourse with the Flowery Land resolving itself into the form of homage; for he had learned from the annals of his country that, for several centuries previously, the Kings of India and the Golden Chersonese had been in the habit of sending embassies to China for the payment of tribute. At the time of Marco Polo's voyage, the prestige of China as a maritime Power seems to have arrived at its zenith. It subsequently waned, and in the beginning of the fifteenth century the Emperor felt himself constrained to send a large fleet with a military force to India and the Golden Chersonese, to coerce those that wavered in their allegiance, and encourage the loyalty by the bestowal of honours and imperial gifts.

Some of the great traveller's experience in this region may appropriately be mentioned here, as they show that Cathay had then very many material interests in Farther India. He first notes Chamba or Cochin China, which he describes as peopled by ' idolaters ' subject to Kublai Khan, to whom they paid yearly a tribute of elephants, and nothing but elephants. He might have exclaimed with Pistol, "The world's my oyster, which I will soon open."
to sit enthroned in the middle of the palm.

One very soon discovers that any discrimination of so minute a character is far beyond the range of native intel- lect. I was therefore obliged to accept the position of a foreigner in general, without dis- tinction of race or religion, nationality, language, or business. The practical re- sults of this intercourse have not, however, been so pronounced as might have been expected.

Yet the civilisation that existed on the seaboard of Farther India in ancient times was no doubt partly influ- enced by the Chinese — famous for maritime en- terprise — and also by the Phoenicians and King Solomon's servants, who went thither in search of gold and precious stones, apes, peacocks, ivory, and alnug-trees.

China may be termed rather a congeries of States than a single homogeneous empire, as some of the viceroys of her distant provinces are prac- tically independent; but railways and the tele- graph will soon remedy this, and support her claim to be considered a nation, and not merely an agglomeration of peoples.

The same influence is still progressing in Farther India, a process of absorption defining the movement, which is fast removing differences between peoples who have hitherto played as prominent a part in its history as the English, French, and Germans have done in the history of Europe, and who will eventually become as much Chinese as the inhabitants of Yunnan, Si-ch'-uan, and other border provinces now are, were it not for the counteracting influ- ence of Western civilisation already referred to.

While the greater part of Europe was in a state of barbarous ignorance, this enterprise people, probably navigating by the magnet, are known to have pushed their explorations and carried on an extensive commerce throughout the Eastern hemi- sphere; and, judging by their annals, their historians and geographers of the early part of the Christian era spoke of the Irawadi and the Ganges as naturally as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society does now.

When Vasco da Gama, after his discovery of the route to India by the Cape, first encountered the Arabs, they had their charts, astrolabes, and astronomical tables, but as yet no compass.

The Chinese, however, had, centuries before this, acquired a maritime influence in the East which put the vaunted su- premacy of the Arabs into the shade. History records the Phoenician feat of having sailed round Africa B. We can well imagine that the navies of Solomon and Hiram, manned by the mariners of Zidon and Arphad, and piloted by the wise men of Tyre, freighted with embroidered fine linen from Egypt; blue and purple from the isles of Elishu; emeralds, corals, and agates from Syria; oil and palm from Judah; rich wares, wine of Helbon, and white wool from Damascus; iron, cassia, and calamus from Dan and Javan, visited this region — for Ezekiel, speaking of the Tyre which was of perfect beauty and glorious in the midst of the seas, says, ‘Thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and thy merchandise.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Chinese, by their knowledge and application of the magnet, possessed advantages long denied to the rest of the world. The reports of the celebrated Venetian further demonstrate the great capacity for ship-building, as well as the aptitude for maritime enterprise, which distinguished the Chinese of his time — worthy of Fohi or Noah, their reputed founder, the first and most eminent shipbuilder ever known. Kublai Khan was as enterprising by land as by sea.

Far from being content with his own enor- mous territory, he had, as already explained, an inveterate craze to be acknowledged suzerain of all the States on his borders; hence arose endless difficulties with Burra, which may conveniently be referred to now. With the political sagacity which used to distinguish Chinese statesmen in connection with the administration of the south-western provinces of the Empire, he determined first to conquer Yunnan; for, holding it, he knew he could dominate the trade as well as political affairs pertaining to the peoples who have their habitat on or near the rivers flowing to the south.

He had command of the Mongol armies, which for thirty years had been fighting to subdue the Chinese Empire, and in person directed the preliminary arrangements for the conquest of Yunnan, leaving them to be carried out by his second in command. According to Burmese his- tory, this officer, adopting his master's policy, sent a deputation to Mien or Burma, and demanded recognition of the Khan's suzerainty in the shape of tribute.

The Burmese king scouted the notion, and caused the envoys to be decapi- tated for alleged insolence. Kublai Khan was not slow to avenge this outrage, and sent a vast army to attack Mien. It appears that preparations had been begun for the defence of the city, in the shape of a huge wall composed of the debris of numerous pagodas which had been demolished for the purpose, but were arrested owing to the verification of an ominous prediction, setting forth that the city would be captured by the Chinese, which was found inscribed on a copper plate discovered in the process of dilapidation.

The superstitious king lost all heart when he read the inscription, and, collecting his valuables, fled in all haste to Bassein. Straitened by want of provisions, they here abandoned the pursuit, and, after returning again to the capital, plundered it, and went back to their own country. There is no allusion in Burmese history to collisions on the frontier at this time; and their improbability is evidenced by the pusillanimous disposition of the Burmese monarch, who was very unlikely to have attacked a more powerful country than his own.

Yet, according to Marco Polo, the Great Khan sent an army into the kingdoms of Carayan Yunnan and Vochan Yung Chang, to protect his subjects from the attacks of unruly people. He accordingly prepared a force consisting of two thousand elephants, each carrying from twelve to sixteen well-armed warriors, besides cavalry and infantry amounting to sixty thousand men, and caused it to march against the Tartars.

To this end he advanced his troops to meet the enemy, and halted them in the plains of Vochan, hard by a forest. The Bur- mese king made a counter demonstration with skill, and advanced to the attack. The Tartar horses could not be made to face the elephants, to the dismay of their
riders. Their commander had, however, foreseen this dilemma and ordered his men to dismount, fasten their horses to the trees of the forest to which they had retreated, and ply their bows and arrows.

This they did so deftly and strenuously as to cause the elephants to turn tail and fly with the fighting men on their backs. The Great Khan, fooled in his ambitious attempts to conquer the comparatively war-like Japanese on the east of his dominions, was vain to turn his attention to his western neighbours, on hearing marvellous accounts of the richness of their country and the probabilities of its easy conquest. The splendours of Pugdin have departed, and yet it is one of the most interesting places in Burma, though now it does not contain more than a dozen inhabited houses.

One of these, in , might have been critical to her destiny, as the time chosen for attacking her was when her hands were full with Pegu. It appears some Shan chiefs revolted, and a few of them were sent as prisoners to Ava. The others in-voked the aid of China, which responded willingly by sending an army, and demanding the release of the prisoners. The point as to whether they were to be surrendered or not was left to be decided by the result of single combat between champions.

The Burmans accepted battle rather than give up the man, and completely defeated the invaders. They were again threatened with serious trouble in the seventeenth century, when a certain Yunhli, who had assumed the title of the Emperor of China, when driven from his capital Nankin, established himself in Yunnan, and, not content with levying taxes from the people of that province, attempted to do alike with tribes subject to Burmese suzerainty.

The Burmese resented this assumption by force of arms; but simdiry awful portents, such as earth-quakes, storms, and the appearance of two suns in the sky, caused the superstitious monarch, in abject terror, to fancy that he had no alternative excepting to acquiesce in Yunhli's pretensions. Accordingly, in compliance with an ancient custom, he built for him a temporary palace, wherein he placed his eldest marriageable daughter, in the hope of appeasing the wrath of the conqueror.

It so fell out, however, that the pseudo-Emperor was driven out of Yunnan by the Tartars, and took refuge in Burma, where he became a naturalised subject. So, just twelve decades ago, the inevitable would have been precipitated by similar perversity on the part of one of His Majesty's predecessors, in connection with the remonstrances of a Chinese trader, were it not for the infinite resource, strategic knowledge, and determined spirit evinced by the Burmese generals, confronted though they were by apparently overwhelming numbers.

In consequence of a series of misunderstandings in matters connected with the frontier between Burma and China, the Emperor Kienlung in invaded Burma four times. Notwithstanding all these reverses, he determined, two years afterwards, to invade the country again with even a more powerful army than before, selecting a time when the Burmese monarch was distracted by omens in the shape of earthquakes, which rent the great national temples, and seemed to portend coming disaster.

His Majesty was, however, quite equal to the occasion, for he dispatched troops commanded by capable officers to encounter the invaders, whose success so discouraged the Chinese general that he was constrained to solicit permission to return unmolested to his own country, when he found his forces surrounded 'like cows in a pond,' and entirely at the mercy of the Burmes.

The Burmese commander summoned a council of war, the members of which unanimously gave it as their opinion that no quarter should be given to the Celestials. He overruled this advice, on the ground that undue severity would only perpetuate ill feelings, to the mutual and lasting disadvantage of both countries; and that therefore it was more politic to arrive at a friendly settlement, rather than exasperate a very powerful nation.

Accordingly it was arranged that peace and friendship should be established between the two great countries as of yore; and that the 'gold and silver road' of commerce should remain open. The Chinese claim for decennial tribute is based apparently on what took place at the end of this war. In the recent controversy regarding the alleged suzerain rights of China in Burma, this incident, as related in Sir Arthur Phayre's carefully authenticated 'History of Burma,' was relied on by those opposed to the Chinese claims, their opponents ridiculing it as the fond imaginings of the Burmese Court historiographer, differing from the account given by Crawfurd and by Chinese historians.

Crawfurd's version is certainly not in accord with most of the recognised authorities on Burmese affairs; but it was admittedly founded on Court gossip, while the dicta of Celestial historians is not quoted.

The truth probably is, as Sir Arthur Phayre suggests, that the campaigns of Chinese armies in Burma from to are noticed very briefly in the histories of China, Gutzlaff alone telling the truth without disguise of the discomfiture of the Chinese armies, Gute's account, by the way, is almost word for word identical with that given by the despised Burmese historian, excepting that he merely contented himself with recording that a treaty was made, without entering into particulars with regard to its details.

The late filing Mengdon, staunch in his loyalty to his 'Elder Brother,' denounced Suleiman as a rebel. Not so the English, who, according a warm reception to Pan-thay envoys in , in defiance of their obligations to China, incensed the latter against England, and caused her, by measures short, sharp, and decisive, to re-assert her power and make a clean sweep of the Panthays. Colborne Baber's interesting remarks in connection with the Panthay rising may conveniently be quoted here.

Groveons Mission. The rebels were and are known to themselves and to the Imperialists by the name of Hui-hui, or Hui-tzu Mahommedans, the latter expression being slightly derogatory. The name of Sultan, utterly foreign to the ordinary Chinese, was never applied to their ruler, except perhaps by the two or three hadjis among them. The name "Suleiman" is equally unknown. The Mahommedans of Yunnan are precisely the same
race as their Confucian or Buddhist countrymen; and it is even doubtful if they were Mahommedans except so far as they professed an
abhorrance for pork.

That they were intelligent, courageous, honest, and liberal to strangers, is as certain as their ignorance of the law and the prophets. All honour to
their good qualities, but let us cease to cite their short-lived rule as an instance of the Great Mahommed Revival. The officials who were
appealed to invariably decided against the Mussulmans. Great discontent ensued, and soon burst into a flame. The Chinese were satisfied with the
results of their encounters with a European foe, especially as they were not to blame for the disturbance of the peace in that portion of the Golden
Chersonese belonging to the Son of Heaven.

So long as France confined herself to Cochin-China and Annam, China contented herself with a policy which she found convenient in the case of
the British annexation in Burma, remaining quiet while the latter absorbed the maritime provinces, but asserting her alleged suzerain rights when they
approached nearer to her.

When the French, however, under the flimsiest of pretexts, ventured to occupy Tonquin, China very naturally demurred to part with a province
which undoubtedly belonged to the Celestial Empire, and, in support of her contention, was obliged to appeal to arms — a challenge accepted by
France with a light heart. It is unnecessary to our present purpose to decide this knotty point; but the fact that raw levies, consisting of peasants,
robbers, and rambunctious of all kinds, armed, it is true, partly with weapons of precision, but which were worse than useless owing to the want of
proper cartridges; cheated by commissariat officials and paymasters, and with commanders who, considering discretion the better part of valour,
took up their position a day's march or so from the front — should more or less be able to hold their own against well-disciplined French troops,
commanded by experienced officers, offers food for serious reflection.

Already at several points these rivers are meeting and contending for the mastery. What will be the final issue? The twentieth century will determine
it in its annals. Agreeably to the convention entered into at the close of the war of — already noticed — embassies have since been dispatched by
both countries at irregular intervals.

Judging by the light brought to bear on these events by persons behind the scenes, both sides have practised the most glaring deceptions on each
other in the matter of the ambassadorial personnel and the treatment of the envoys accredited to their Courts. Laughing in their sleeves, as it were,
at their own knavish tricks, they never dreamed that they themselves were hoodwinked by precisely similar tactics. Neither, for instance, deemed it
incumbent on them to select men of high rank to represent them.

Anomalous as it may also appear, no effort was spared on either side to welcome envoys with becoming honour, and to make their official
reception as brilliant and imposing as the requirements of ancient custom demanded.

What is now known as the Shoe Question was, as an engine of oppression, a never-failing source of delight to the Burmese, for the process of un
booting within the palace precincts was as abhorrent to the Chinese as to Europeans. This infatuation would have caused the loss of their
country in the thirteenth century, had Kublai Khan chosen to take it, and doubtless had not a little to do with the final catastrophe. Causing
mislaid foreigners to perform unnecessary obeisance was a practical joke of perennial flavour, the most stiff-necked being unwittingly forced
to become victims thereto by being led through doorways so low that they necessarily bowed their heads.

Though the political history of the French in this region comprises events which happened more than a hundred years ago, it is only within
comparatively recent times we have had occasion to be exercised by their doings. At one time, France had reasonable hopes of founding an
empire rivalling the British Empire in India proper.

In , a reversion to Cochin China deprived the reigning monarch, Gia Loung, of his throne; but in , assisted by French adventurers, he not only
re-established his power in Cochin China, but added Tonquin to his dominions. Three years before. Several French men-of-war and a large
contingent of troops were actually despatched, but only went as far as Pondicherry; had they reached their destination, a rich appanage would
undoubtedly have accrued to the French crown. On the plea of troubles in France requiring their presence at home, but really by reason of ignoble
intrigues inspired by a spiteful woman, the enterprise was abandoned, and France thus lost a splendid chance of becoming a great Asiatic power
like her insular rival.

It was in the hope of securing to themselves the great advantages their predecessors allowed to escape when almost within their grasp, that the
French have been so active of late in Cochin China and Tonquin, and have indulged in the hope of taking possession of Siam and the Shan States,
and of assuming a protectorate over Upper Burma.

Their too pronounced intrigues, however, only hastened the annexation of the latter country, while the judicious policy of the British Government
in dealing with the Shan States, combined with the tendency of Siam to seek the protection of England in the event of her being coerced in any
way by her Gallic neighbours, have doubtless, ere now, convinced the French that there is little probability of their dreams being realised.

With France satisfactorily disposed of, and with Siam friendly, the great expectations hoped for consequent on the meeting of Far Cathay
with Tartar India seem within measurable distance of fulfilment.

There are reasonable grounds for supposing that a comparatively advanced maritime civilisation existed on the seaboard of Burma from the most
ancient times, and that a few tribes favourably placed became considerable nations. These races were exposed at intervals to the irruption of inland
Mongolid peoples impelled by the pressure of others behind them.

Thus the Mons or Talaings have, as it were, been obliterated by the Burmese, to whose stronger individuality the Arakanese have also succumbed.
The Karens again have either dispersed into the more or less inaccessible mountain systems, or have been content to become subjects of plain-
dwelling peoples, though not amalgamating with them. Besides these prominent, if not historic races, there are a number of tribes whose civilisation
varies through every degree excepting the highest, constituting a ragged fringe to the region between our own territories in Bengal, the Empire of China, and the Kingdom of Siam.

The Burmese are probably the gayest and most light-hearted people in the world; their neighbours the dullest and least impressionable.

Blessed with a happy temperament, a contented disposition, and jocund spirits, which make light of the inevitable ills to which mankind is liable, they defy dull care.

The latter, on the contrary, prone to morose discontent, and often a prey to melancholy, speedily succumb to the frowns of Fortune. Partly owing to their natural temperance, and partly to the influence of their literature, fundamentally of Hindu origin, the former are somewhat proud, arrogant, and conceited — a weakness from which the others are exempt.

Their religious writings, moreover, impress on their minds the fact that they, as Buddhists, are infinitely superior to all other races who have not been baptised in this faith, and are, therefore, outside the pale of salvation.

They are further happy in the firm conviction that they are wiser, better, and braver than any other people. These annals are further replete with records of events very flattering to their pride, which their poays or plays continually recall to their memory.

No wonder, then, they have an exceedingly good opinion of themselves. Naturally idle, and having neither fixity of purpose nor perseverance, discipline or regular employment is most irksome to them. Nevertheless, the soldiers of a Burmese army thrive in regions where those of other armies would starve; in a spirit truly accommodating, every beast of the field, every fowl of the air, every fish of the sea, everything that creepseth on the face of the earth, and every herb not actually poisonous, is accepted by them as food.

With all his deficiencies, the Burmese soldier has one advantage over disciplined troops. He requires no commissariat, and is ready for service at a few minutes' notice. A few pounds of rice and a little gnoapi or fish-paste carried on his person sufficing for his very modest requirements. Not deficient in pluck, cheerful, obedient, and patient under physical hardship, it is found that for sudden and short expeditions, to chase rebels or punish freebooters, he is second to none.

There were reasonable hopes, therefore, of making him thoroughly efficient; but, in spite of every effort, the experiment had to be abandoned. The Burman is impracticable as regards routine and discipline. As soldiers, therefore, they are thoroughly out of the question. These defects of character are also prejudicial to their success in mechanical arts. A Burman will often try his hand at various trades, and not infrequently at the wane of life adopt the medical profession, which in Burma requires neither diploma nor training.

He may accordingly be styled ' Jack of all trades and master of none,' excepting in the case of those passed masters of Art, such as carving and jewellers' work, which require a long apprenticeship and steady application. Hence the lottery mania, due, it is said, to Italian teaching, which more or less ruined the country in Theebaw's time. In spite of these shortcomings, the Burmese possess many admirable qualities, which enlist the sympathy and interest of all who are brought into contact with them.

Entirely free from all prejudices of caste, they make no difference between the despised Pariah from the coast of Coromandel and the twice-born Brahmin of Benares. All men with them are equal, excepting the King, his ministers, and the priests. Strictly tolerant in matters of religion, Christians, Jews, Mahomedans and Hindus are allowed to practise the rites of their several religions without let or hindrance.

With surprising candour, their teachers allow that Christianity is almost as good as Buddhism; but opine that the former suits Europeans to Americans and the latter the people of Indo-China; therefore, while on the one hand they do not care to attempt the conversion of the Chris- tians, on the other, they cannot understand why Christian missionaries should not also let them alone.

No calamity is so overwhelming as to cause the Burman to despond. Buoyant and elastic, he soon recovers from personal or domestic disaster. His cattle may die of murrain, his crops may be destroyed, his house and all his belongings may be burned, without putting him out very much.

Like Mark Tapley, he is 'jolly' under all circumstances. Few Burmans care to amass much wealth, and when one does so he spends most of it building pagodas, monasteries, caravansaries, or other works for the public benefit, so as to acquire thereby religious merit for himself and his future transmigrations. But, though riches have no charm for them, they are great dabbler in small mercantile ventures. They are also distinguished for their great public spirit, often shown at much personal sacrifice.

For the Burmese Government never provided in any way for public works, leaving it to the people to construct roads, bridges, wells, ponds, caravansaries, and the like, for the public utility. Vanity, or ambition, or charity, or perhaps all three combined, inspire the people, as they inspire many public-spirited people with ourselves, when they desire to be public benefactors. But, whatever their motives, the public certainly profits by the results, and expresses its sense of benefits received by conferring on the donors honorary titles much esteemed by the recipients.

The Burman has an amazing aptitude for adapting himself to circumstances; so much so, that it is hardly too much to say that, if the hum-ble coolie were suddenly made a grandee, he would comport himself in his new sphere as if to the manner born.

He is generally free from care. A bountiful soil supplies all his modest wants with little labour; ambition has no charms for him, and he jogs through life merrily, lazily, and aimlessly. If he has not actually found the philosopher's stone, he has perhaps more nearly succeeded in achieving that feat than any other member of the human race. To sum up, the Burman, with his numerous faults, has many virtues.

Centralisation and other results of what is termed Progress tend, alas! Absolutely free from care as is the Burman, blessed with a happy and contented disposition as well as a buoyant temperament which makes light of the ills to which flesh is heir, enjoying as he does a life of great
tranquillity, the most ardent reformer cannot help feeling a pang at the thought that this Arcadian existence must be pushed aside in the hurry of an advancing civilisation, whose teachings will necessarily dissemi- nate the fond imaginings inspired by their drama and national history.

The matter-of-fact prose of every-day life must usurp the place of the romantic idylls of the past. The Burmese woman enjoys a personality so distinct that she is entitled to be treated separate- ly. Though theoretically inferior to her male prototype as regards progress towards Nirvana, Nei- ban, or Everlasting Rest, to which all good Buddhists aspire, practically she is his equal in everything connected with present mundane affairs.

She enjoys an incomparably higher posi- tion than do women of other Eastern countries, and vies even with her Western sisters in this respect, inasmuch as she has voluntarily con- ceded to her, by custom as well as by law, all that is clamoured for by the most zealous advocates of women's rights.

There was then, as there is now in Burma, per- fect freedom between the sexes, and the influence of women was as powerful as it now weak. An unbinding policy of non-interference with the religions of the people of India has, to the lasting and ineffable reproach of the British Government, entailed intolerable misery and humiliation on many millions of Hindu women.

Amid the plaudit? But it still permits infant marriages, which are the cause of untold misery in India, and consigns to a living death of infamous slavery the unfortunate widows it has rescued by its well-intentioned, but, in a Hindu sense, abortive philanthropy.

When the scandal of condoning such a demoniacal practice as Sati became so pronounced that its suppression in the interests of ordinary morality was admitted as a foregone conclusion by those charged with the administra- tion of the country, many learned and complaisant Pundits were found capable of proving that this course was justifiable according to Hindu law.

So if infant marriages were declared unlawful, and adequate relief and protection afforded to Hindu widows, equally learned and equally accommodat- ing Pundits would doubtless be forthcoming, and able to quote precedents in favour of the new departure. In dealing with the women of Burma, fortun- ately, we are not, as was the case with Hindu women, obKged to carry out legacies devised by the cruelty or the heartlessness of mun. We possess a tahuh. Monastery schools exist in almost every village.

Girls, however, are denied this privilege. The celibate women would be scandalised at the very notion of conducting a girls' school. The Vin or code for the guidance of Buddhist monks is very strict as regards their conduct towards females, insisting on their hiding their faces be- hind fans when preaching, lest the charms of the ladies listening to them when expounding the Law should cause them to succumb to the lust of the eye.

A member of the Sacred Order is not allowed to sleep under the same roof, travel in the same carriage or boat, much less to touch a female ; the last prohibition including the monk's mother, even if she be in danger of drowning, unless there be no other aid available, and then he must not hold out his hand, but only offer her his habit or his staff to cling to, and thus save her. He durst not even allow his natural feelings to affect him, but must school himself into imag- ining that he is merely pulling out a log of wood!

Practically, therefore, so far as elementary edu- cation of males is concerned, Burma compares favourably with even Western countries, while that of females is backward.

Girls very early de- velop the trading talent for which their mothers are proverbial, and those of the poorer classes are utilised in this way long before boys exhibit a speciality for anything more practical for making their way in the world than football or nine-pins. They cannot, however, in defiance of public opin- ion as it now exists, and in the absence of a de- mands for female labour, compete successfully for clerkships or other employments of which males now enjoy the monopoly.

Hence they deem there is no need that they should qualify therefor ; so their brothers distance them in purely literary efibrts, though the girls more than hold their own in all that concerns the ordinary affairs of life. Owing to the interest taken in the instruction of girls and women by missionaries of all denom- nations, and the hearty encouragement and sup- port accorded thereto by Government, female education has made considerable progress under British rule.

It must necessarily, however, be a plant of slow growth. Barring the utilitarian view, there is absolutely no prejudice against the education of women, so we may hope that the impetus already given thereto will be productive of the happiest results. Important as the subject of their mental cul- ture undoubtedly is, attention to the physical well-being of actual and possible mothers in a country whose chief want is population is a far more imperative duty.

The exquisite suffering which at child-birth is the natural heritage of women is intensely aggravated at a critical time in their lives by the practice prevalent in Burma, whereby the patient is subject to torture by fire for seven days, and drenched with drastic and powerfully-scented drinks, with the professsed object of eliminating noxious humours, but re- sulting in prematurely aging the victim.

This barbarous custom, though universal in places un- affected by Western civilisation, is happily be- coming obsolete in the larger towns under the influence and example of women of other nation- alities. The National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India, so success- fully inaugurated by the Countess of Dufferin, has a most promising field for its operations in Burma, where exist none of the caste prejudices which in India are often so fatal to schemes in- tended to ameliorate the condition of the natives.

It seemed to me, then, that, if only the people of India could be made to realise that their women have to bear more than their necessary share of human suffer- ing, and that it rests with the men of this country and with the women of other nationalities to re- leve them of that unnecessary burden, then surely the men would put their shoulders to the wheel and would determine that the wives and mothers and sisters and daughters dependent upon them should, in time of sickness and pain, have every relief that human skill and tender nursing can afford them.
In spite of what matter-of-fact Western theologists may say to the contrary, the Burman knows that, by the inexorable fiat of Buddhist law, he can not claim to be more than a mere animal, unless he submits to the ordeal of Buddhist baptism, which entails shaving the head, abandoning the world, donning the mendicant's dress, and becoming a monk — even if it be only for twenty-four hours.

They tell her, with uncouth promising plainness, that her only hope of salvation is that, by great piety in this life, she may become a man in the next transmigration, and, as such, joining the privileged ranks of the yellow-robed fraternity, become a candidate for baptism.

It is quite as important an incident in her career as putting on the yellow robe or being tattooed is to her brother. Though not claiming the religious character pertaining to Buddhist baptism, it is her nearest equivalent thereof; and is an event of such importance that all relatives and friends are bound to put in an appearance when summoned to the festival held in honour of the occasion, conventional excuses for absence being adjudged almost tantamount to insult.

In a word, the Nalwin Mengala transforms the girl into a woman, just as much as admission to the monastery makes the boy a man. This is her baptism, and is the distinctive mark of her race. Some three hours or so after the shades of eve have fallen, or at what is popularly known as 'bachelor's roving time,' she may be seen arrayed in all her very best, with her jetty locks ornamented by a single orchid or other flower coquetishly arranged therein, and her little oil-lamp properly trimmed and lighted — seated, either alone or with one or two girl-friends, in the verandah of her home, after the elders have retired or gone to bed.

London, The Burmese maiden, so far as this custom is concerned, has as much latitude given her as transatlantic fashion awards to the American belle and her admirers, and, if rumour be consistent, repays the confidence placed in her by an equally strict attention to decorum. Amorous swains are fully aware that they run the risk of being taken up by the police if they happen to be abroad at night-time without being able to give a satisfactory account of themselves.

But it would be a very hard-hearted constable indeed who would 'run in' a youth reasonably supposed to be abroad on courting thoughts intent. Those who hold marriage to be a sacrament are scandalised at the free-and-easy notions held by the Burmese on the subject. With them it is a simple contract, having nothing of a religious character about it. The fact of both appearing together in public at a bridal feast given by the bridegroom and his parents, has even superseded the traditionally simple ordeal of eating out of the same dish, which, being tantamount to the irrevocable 'I will' in the marriage service of the Church of England, is as binding with them as having the knot tied by a bishop, or the agreement ratified by a marriage registrar, with us.

The actual ceremony is a humdrum affair, but its subsequent development, as expressed by the boisterous conduct of youths on the occasion of the beginning of the honeymoon, is decidedly of a more pronounced character. We throw rice and old slippers after the happy pair when they start on their first journey together, while they adopt a very objectionable equivalent to this harmless custom. For, on the night of the wedding, a number of young bachelors are accustomed to surround the house occupied by the newly-married couple, and, unless bought off by the payment of blackmail, pelt the thatched or wooden shingled roof with stones, brickbats, and other missiles, which causes a din that would wake the Seven Sleepers, and occasionally does injury to the inmates.

We have ever been under the impression that the practice was a senseless and impudent system of extortion. But Shway Yeo in his very interesting book declares the learned in Burmese folklore assign it a much more romantic origin. These authorities assert, he tells us, that nine celestial beings, called Brahmans, already referred to, elected to remain on earth, instead of returning to their abode in heavenly regions; and owing to contending themselves with earthly food, instead of celestial manna, degenerated from their pristine angelic forms, and, taking the shape of mortals, five became men and four women.

Satisfaction with the feelings of this archetypical bachelor has perpetuated the stone-throwing by the Loo-byos bachelors to the present day. But, in these degenerate days of so-called Progress, the perpetrators of high jinks of this kind often find themselves arraigned before a police-court, and punished under the provisions of a code which has superseded Menoo.

Far Cathay And Farther India Reviews

Like the Pacific islanders, they are unable to survive contact with European civilisation. Not far from the Andamans, in the Mergui Archipelago, and therefore British subjects, Marco Polo would have found in the Selungs or Sea-Karens of Burmo-Malay type a race of islanders differing materially in mental as well as physical characteristics from the negroes he condemns so severely.

For though he would doubtless have classed them as ' idolaters,' with merely a traditional belief in a beneficent God, he would also have found them naturally kind and confiding, though timid, owing to long-endured oppression at the hands of Malays, Chinese, and Burmese, of whose slave-hunting expeditions they give accounts which 'bear melancholy marks of truthfulness.

Some success has been achieved by the English in encouraging cultivation and village settlements; but so spasmodically that the white man is chiefly known by vague report as a beneficent being whose visits, as Blair has it, are 'like those of angels, few and far between. Before venturing to offer a few suggestions on a subject of such paramount importance to our future prospects, we propose, by way of preface, to indulge in a brief retrospect of the relations that have for centuries existed between our recent inheritance and the great empire of China.
brethren of the Golden Chersonese and Far Cathay, notwithstanding many a sharp tussle and stand-up fight, on the whole cordially fraternised. Their people never allowed the wars, in which they were occasionally plunged by their rulers, to disturb for any length of time their reciprocal feelings of goodwill.

With prodigious indifference to ethnic diagnosis, a well-read Burman, who, according to Dr. To quote Mr. Perhaps the thumb was for the occasion transferred from Tibet to Europe. The great Emperor of China is imagined to sit enthroned in the middle of the palm.

One very soon discovers that any discrimination of so minute a character is far beyond the range of native intellect. I was therefore obliged to accept the position of a foreigner in general, without distinction of race or religion, nationality, language, or business. The practical results of this intercourse have not, however, been so pronounced as might have been expected. Yet the civilization that existed on the seaboard of Farther India in ancient times was no doubt partly influenced by the Chinese — famous for maritime enterprise — and also by the Phoenicians and King Solomon's servants, who went thither in search of gold and precious stones, apes, peacocks, ivory, and almag Trees.

The same influence is still progressing in Farther India, a process of absorption defining the movement, which is fast removing differences between peoples who have hitherto played as prominent a part in its history as the English, French, and Germans have done in the history of Europe, and who will eventually become as much Chinese as the inhabitants of Yunnan, Ss-ch'-uan, and other border provinces now are, were it not for the counteracting influence of Western civilization already referred to.

While the greater part of Europe Avas in a state of barbarous ignorance, this enterprising people, probably navigating by the magnet, are known to have pushed their explorations and carried on an extensive commerce throughout the Eastern hemisphere; and, judging by their annals, their historians and geographers of the early part of the Christian era spoke of the Irawadi and the Ganges as naturally as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society does now.

When Vasco da Gama, after his discovery of the route to India by the Cape, first encountered the Arabs, they had their charts, astrolabes, and astronomical tables, but as yet no compass. The Chinese, however, had, centuries before this, acquired a maritime influence in the East which put the vaunted supremacy of the Arabs already referred to.

History records the Phoenician feat of having sailed round Africa. We can well imagine that the navies of Solomon and Hiram, manned by the mariners of Zidon and Arphad, and piloted by the wise men of Tyre, freighted with embroidered fine linen from Egypt; blue and purple from the isles of Elisha; emeralds, corals, and agates from Syria; oil and palm from Judah; rich wares, wine of Hethon, and white wool from Damascus; iron, cassia, and calamus from Dan and Javan, visited this region — for Ezekiel, speaking of the Tyre which was of perfect beauty and glorious in the midst of the seas, says, ' Thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou fillest many peoples; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and thy merchandise.

From Marco Polo we learn that, in the thirteenth century, during the reign of the famous Emperor, Kublai Khan, the Chinese — far from exhibiting their traditional characteristics of exclusiveness — not infrequently asserted themselves in a very pronounced fashion. Kublai Khan was as enterprising by land as by sea. Far from being content with his own enormous territory, he had, as already explained, an inveterate craze to be acknowledged suzerain of all the States on his borders; hence arose endless difficulties with Burma, which may conveniently be referred to now.

With the political sagacity which used to distinguish Chinese statesmen in connection with the administration of the south-western provinces of the Empire, he determined first to conquer Yunnan; for, holding it, he knew he could dominate the trade as well as political affairs pertaining to the peoples who have their habitat on or near the rivers flowing to the south.

He had command of the Mongol armies, which for thirty years had been fighting to subdue the Chinese Empire, and in person directed the preliminary arrangements for the conquest of Yunnan, leaving them to be carried out by his second in command. According to Burmese history, this officer, adopting his master's policy, sent a deputation to Mien or Burma, and demanded recognition of the Khan's suzerainty in the shape of tribute.

The Burmese king scouted the notion, and caused the envoys to be decapitated for alleged insolence. Kublai Khan was not slow to avenge this outrage, and sent a vast Burmese force for three months successfully resisted the invaders, but was then obliged to retreat to Male, where they made a creditable stand, but were eventually routed, and forced to retreat on the capital, which they found had already been abandoned.

It appears that preparations had been begun for the defence of the city, in the shape of a huge wall composed of the debris of numerous pagodas which had been demolished for the purpose, but were arrested owing to the verification of an ominous prediction, setting forth that the city would be captured by the Chinese, which was found inscribed on a copper plate discovered in the process of dilapidation.

The superstitious king lost all heart when he read the inscription, and, collecting his valuables, fled in all haste to Bassein. Straitened by want of provisions, they here abandoned the pursuit, and, after returning again to the capital, plundered it, and went back to their own country. The Burmese, thoroughly disgusted with the cowardice of their king, nicknamed him Taruk-pye-men — the king who fled from the Chinese — a title which has stuck to him ever since. There is no allusion in Burmese history to collisions on the frontier at this time; and their improbability is evidenced by the pusillanimous disposition of the Burmese monarch, who was very unlikely to have attacked a more powerful country than his own.

Yet, according to Marco Polo, the Great Khan sent an army into the kingdoms of Carajan Yunnan and Vochan Yung Chang, to protect his subjects from the attacks of unruly people. He accordingly prepared a force consisting of two thousand elephants, each carrying from twelve to sixteen well-armed warriors, besides cavalry and infantry amounting to sixty thousand men, and caused it to march against the Tartars.

To this end he advanced his troops to meet the enemy, and halted them in the plains of Vochan, hard by a forest.
The Burmese king made a counter demonstration with skill, and advanced to the attack. The Tartar horses could not be made to face the elephants, to the dismay of their riders. Their commander had, however, foreseen this dilemma and ordered his men to dismount, fasten their horses to the trees of the forest to which they had retreated, and ply their bows and arrows.

This they did so deftly and strenuously as to cause the elephants to turn tail and fly with the fighting men on their backs. The Great Khan, foiled in his ambitious attempts to conquer the comparatively war-like Japanese on the east of his dominions, was flun to turn his attention to his western neighbours, on hearing marvellous accounts of the richness of their country and the probabilities of its easy conquest.

The splendours of Pagan have departed, and yet it is one of the most interesting places in Burma, though now it does not contain more than a dozen inhabited houses. But something else it now: the spot is cursed. One of these, in, might have been critical to her destiny, as the time chosen for attacking her was when her hands were full with Pegu. It appears some Shan chiefs revolted, and a few of them were sent as prisoners to Ava. The others invoked the aid of China, which responded willingly by sending an army, and demanding the release of the prisoners.

The point as to whether they were to be surrendered or not was left to be decided by the result of single combat between champions. The Burmese refused to acknowledge the claim, which was not pressed; but later on, in lieu thereof, the Chinese insisted on the surrender of the chief of Mogoung, who had taken refuge at the Burmese capital.

The Burmans accepted battle rather than give up the man, and completely defeated the invaders. They were again threatened with serious trouble in the seventeenth century, when a certain Yunnan, who had assumed the title of the Emperor of China, when driven from his capital, Nankin, established himself in Yunnan, and, not content with levying taxes from the people of that province, attempted to do wise with tribes subject to Burmese suzerainty.

The Burmese resented this assumption by force of arms; but sundry awful portents, such as earth- quakes, storms, and the appearance of two suns in the sky, caused the superstitious monarch, in abject terror, to fancy that he had no alternative excepting to acquiesce in Yunnan's pretensions. Accordingly, in compliance with an ancient custom, he built for him a temporary palace, wherein he placed his eldest marriageable daughter, in the hope of appeasing the wrath of the conqueror. It so fell out, however, that the pseudo-Emperor was driven out of Yunnan by the Tartars, and took refuge in Burm, where he became a naturalised subject.

Leaving collateral, though doubtless important, issues aside, such as anarchy, which paralysed our trade and injuriously affected our administra- tion, French intrigues, the Shoe question, and other matters of high politics, — the final disembarrassment of the Burmese Empire was primarily due to the impracticability of King Theebaw, in the matter of complaints on the part of an English commercial company.

In consequence of a series of misunderstandings in matters connected with the frontier between Burma and China, the Emperor Kienlung invaded Burma four times. Notwithstanding all these reverses, he determined, two years afterwards, to invade the country again with even a more powerful army than before, selecting a time when the Burmese monarch was distracted by omens in the shape of earthquakes, which rent the great national temples, and seemed to foreshadow coming disaster.

His Majesty was, however, quite equal to the occasion, for he dispatched troops commanded by capable officers to encounter the invaders, whose success so discouraged the Chinese general that he was constrained to solicit permission to return unmolested to his own country, when he found his forces surrounded 'like coods in a pond,' and entirely at the mercy of the Burmese.

The Burmese commander summoned a council of war, the members of which unanimously gave it as their opinion that no quarter should be given to the Celestials. He overruled this advice, on the ground that undue severity would only perpetuate ill feelings, to the mutual and lasting disadvantage of both countries; and that therefore it was more politic to arrive at a friendly settlement, rather than exasperate a very powerful nation.

Accordingly it was arranged that peace and friendship should be established between the two great countries as of yore; and that the 'gold and silver road' of commerce should remain open. The Chinese claim for decennial tribute is based apparently on what took place at the end of this war.

Logically it would tell against the suppliant Celestials; but, as a matter of fact, owing to the tact of the Burmese general, both sides were satisfied, and marched off, as it were, with drums beating and colours flying. In the recent controversy regarding the alleged suzerain rights of China in Burma, this incident, as related in Sir Arthur Phayre's carefully authenticated 'History of Burma,' was relied on by those opposed to the Chinese.

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The late King Mengdon, staunch in his loyalty to his 'Elder Brother,' denounced Suleiman as a rebel. Not so the English, who, according to a warm reception to Pan-thay envoys in, in defiance of their obligations to China, incensed the latter against England, and caused her, by measures short, sharp, and decisive, to re-assert her power and make a clean sweep of the Panthays. Colborne Baber's interesting remarks in connection with the Panthay rising may conveniently be quoted here.

His head was immediately cut off and exposed, and heedless of his prayer — probably the most impressive and pathetic ever uttered by a dying
Grosveor's Mission. The rebels were and are known to themselves and to the Imperial-ists by the name of Hui-hui, or Hui-tz Mahom-edans, the latter expression being slightly derogatory.

The name of "Sultan," utterly foreign to the ordinary Chinese, was never applied to their ruler, except perhaps by the two or three hadjis among them. The name "Suleiman" is equally unknown. The Mahommedans of Yunnan are precisely the same race as their Confucian or Buddhist countrymen; and it is even doubtful if they were Mahommedans except so far as they professed an abhorrence for pork.

That they were intelligent, courageous, honest, and liberal to strangers, is as certain as their ignorance of the law and the prophets. All honour to their good qualities, but let us cease to cite their short-lived rule as an instance of the "Great Mahom-edan Revival. The officials who were appealed to invariably decided against the Mussalims. Great discontent ensued, and soon burst into a flame. So long as France confined herself to Cochin-China and Annam, China contented herself with a policy which she found convenient in the case of the British annexation in Burma, remaining quiet while the latter absorbed the maritime provinces, but asserting her alleged suzerain rights when they approached nearer to her.

When the French, however, under the flimsiest of pretenses, ventured to occupy Tonquin, China very naturally demurred to part with a province which undoubtedly belonged to the Celestial Empire, and, in support of her contention, was obliged to appeal to arms — a challenge accepted by France with a light heart. For if the Chinese should take the lesson to heart, and utilise the enormous rough material they possess, by subjecting it to proper discipline and organisation, as well as centralised administration and control, by the aid of railways and the telegraph — there is no reason why they should not be able to defy the world.

Already at several points these rivers are meeting and contending for the mastery. What will be the final issue? The twentieth century will determine it in its annals.

In our concluding chapter, however, it will be shown that, as regards Farther India, they will be welcomed rather as ministering angels than as destroying demons. Agreeably to the convention entered into at the close of the war of — already noticed — embassies have since been dispatched by both countries at irregular intervals. Judging by the light brought to bear on these events by persons behind the scenes, both sides have practised the most glaring deceits on each other in the matter of the ambassadorial personnel and the treatment of the envoys accredited to their Courts.

Neither, for instance, deemed it incumbent on them to select men of high rank to represent them. Anomalous as it may also appear, no effort was spared on either side to welcome envoys with becoming honour, and to make their official reception as brilliant and imposing as the requirements of ancient custom demanded. Yet, with all this, the officials of both Courts seemed to take a childish pleasure in offering every conceivable slight to their seemingly highly-honoured guests, endeavouring to mortify them in every possible way, under the mistaken impression that by so doing they exalted themselves at the expense of their friends.

What is now known as the Shoe Question was, as an engine of oppression, a never-failing source of delight to the Burmese, for the process of unshooping within the palace precincts was as abhorrent to the Chinese as to Europeans. This infatuation would have caused the loss of their country in the thirteenth century, had Kublai Khan chosen to take it, and doubtless had not a little to do with the final catastrophe. Causing misguided foreigners to perform unnecessary obeisance was a practical joke of perennial flavour, the most stiff-necked being unwittingly forced to become victims thereto by being led through doorways so low that they necessarily bowed their heads.

With exquisite, though mayhap unconscious irony, they also insisted on their putting in an appearance at the Emperor's annual levee, identical with the Burmese kadaw. The probability of having to deal with France — a cloud which loomed large on our political horizon before Upper Burma became part of the British Empire — no longer exists. Though the political history of the French in this region comprises events which happened more than a hundred years ago, it is only within comparatively recent times we have had occasion to be exercised by their doings.

At one time, France had reasonable hopes of founding an empire rivalling the British Empire in India proper.

In , a reoccupation in Cochín China deprived the reigning monarch, Gia Loung, of his throne; but in, assisted by French adventurers, he not only re-established his power in Cochín China, but added Tonquin to his dominions. Several French men-of-war and a large contingent of troops were actually despatched, but only went as far as Pondicherry; had they reached their destination, a rich appanage would undoubtedly have accrued to the French crown.

On the plea of troubles in France requiring their presence at home, but really by reason of ignoble intrigues inspired by a spiteful woman, the enterprise was abandoned, and France thus lost a splendid chance of becoming a great Asiatic power like her insular rival. It was in the hope of securing to themselves the great advantages their predecessors sired allowed to escape when almost within their grasp, that the French have been so active of late in Cochín China and Tonquin, and have indulged in the hope of taking possession of Siam and the Shan States, and of assuming a protectorate over Upper Burma.

Their too pro-nounced intrigues, however, only hastened the annexation of the latter country, while the judicious policy of the British Government in dealing with the Shan States, combined with the tendency of Siam to seek the protection of England in the event of her being coerced in any way by her Gallic neighbours, have doubtless, ere now, convinced the French that there is little probability of their dreams being realised.

There are reasonable grounds for supposing that a comparatively advanced maritime civilisation existed on the seaboard of Burma from the most ancient times, and that a few tribes favourably placed became considerable nations. These races were exposed at intervals to the irruption of inland Mongoloid peoples impelled by the pressure of others behind them.
Thus the Mons or Talangs have, as it were, been obliterated by the Burmese, to whose stronger individuality the Arakanese have also succumbed. The Karens again have either dispersed into the more or less inaccessible mountain systems, or have been content to become subjects of plain-dwelling peoples, though not amalgamating with them. The Burmese are probably the gayest and most light-hearted people in the world; their neighbours the dullest and least impressionable.

Blessed with a happy temperament, a contented disposition, and jocund spirits, which make light of the inevitable ills to which mankind is liable, they defy dull care. The latter, on the contrary, prone to morose discontent, and often a prey to melancholy, speedily succumb to the frowns of Fortune.

Partly owing to their natural temperament, and partly to the influence of their literature, fundamentally of Hindu origin, the former are somewhat proud, arrogant, and conceited — a weakness from which the others are exempt. Their religious writings, moreover, impress on their minds the fact that they, as Buddhists, are infinitely superior to all other races who have not been baptised in this faith, and are, therefore, outside the pale of salvation.

They are further happy in the firm conviction that they are queer, better, and braver than any other people. The ' Mahan Raj Weng' or national history, teaches them — indeed, their very name implies — that they are lineal descendants of celestial beings called Brahmas, who were tempted to visit this earth from the seventh heaven, but Avho, overcome by the allurements of sin, the world, and the devil, were unable to return to their former abodes.

These annals are further replete with records of events very flattering to their pride, which their poays or plays continually call to their memory. No wonder, then, they have an exceedingly good opinion of themselves. Naturally idle, and having neither frizzy of purpose nor perseverance, discipline or regular employment is most irksome to them. With all his deficiencies, the Burmese soldier has one advantage over disciplined troops.

He requires no commissariat, and is ready for service at a few minutes' notice. Not deficient in pluck, cheerful, obedient, and patient under physical hardship, it is found that for sudden and short expeditions, to chase rebels or finish freebooters, he is second to none.

There were reasonable hopes, therefore, of making him thoroughly efficient; but, in spite of every effort, the experiment had to be abandoned. The Burman is impracticable as regards routine and discipline. Drill is simply odious to him after the novelty wears off; an incorrigible sloven, he cannot understand the necessity of keeping his arms and accoutrements clean and in a serviceable condition.

As soldiers, therefore, they are thoroughly out of the question. These defects of character are also prejudicial to their success in mechanical arts. A Burman will often try his hand at various trades, and not infrequently at the wane of life adopt the medical profession, which in Burma requires neither diploma nor training.

He may accordingly be styled ' Jack of all trades and master of none,' excepting in the case of those passed masters of Art, such as carving and jewellers' work, which require a long apprenticeship and steady application.

Hence the lottery mania, due, it is said, to Italian teaching, which more or less ruined the country in Theebaw's time. In spite of these shortcomings, the Burmese possess many admirable qualities, which enlist the sympathy and interest of all who are brought into contact with them.

 Entirely free from all prejudices of caste, they make no difference between the despised Pariah from the coast of Coromandel and the twice-born Brahman of Benares. All men with them are equal, excepting the King, his ministers, and the priests. Strictly tolerant in matters of religion, Christians, Jews, Mahommedans and Hindus are allowed to practise the rites of their several religions without let or hindrance.

With surprising candour, all their allowances that Christianity is almost as good as Buddhism, but opine that the former suits Europeans and Americans and the latter the JDCouple of Indo-China; therefore, while on the one hand they do not care to attempt the conversion of the Christians, on the other, they cannot understand why Christian missionaries should not also let them alone.

No calamity is so overwhelming as to cause the Burman to despond. Buoyant and elastic, he soon recovers from personal or domestic disaster. His cattle may die of murrain, his crops may be destroyed, his house and all his belongings may be burned, without putting him out very much. Like Mark Tapley, he is ' jolly' under all circumstances. Few Burmans care to amass much wealth, and when one does so he spends most of it in building pagodas, monasteries, caravansaries, or other works for the public benefit, so as to acquire thereby religious merit for himself and his future transmigrations.

But, though riches have no charm for them, they are great dabbler in small mercantile ventures. They are also distinguished for their great public spirit, often shown at much personal sacrifice. For the Burmese Government never provided in any way for public works, leaving it to the people to construct roads, bridges, wells, ponds, caravansaries, and the like, for the public utility.

Vanity, or ambition, or charity, or perhaps all three combined, inspire the people, as they inspire many public-spirited people with ourselves, Avhen they desire to be public benefactors. But, whatever their motives, the public certainly profits by the results, and expresses its sense of benefits received by conferring on the donors honorary titles much esteemed by the recipients. The Burman has an amazing aptitude for adapting himself to circumstances; so much so, that it is hardly too much to say that, if the humbled coolie were suddenly made a grandee, he would comport himself in his new sphere as if to the manner born.

He is generally free from care. A bountiful soil supplies all his modest wants with little labour; ambition has no charms for him, and he jogs through life merrily, lazily, and aimlessly. If he has not actually found the philosopher's stone, he has perhaps more nearly succeeded in achieving that feat than any other member of the human race. To sum up, the Burman, with his numerous faults, has many virtues. Centralisation and other results of
what is termed Progress tend, alas! Absolutely free from care as is the Burman, blessed with a happy and contented disposition as well as a buoyant temper which makes light of the ills to which flesh is heir, enjoying as he does a life of great tranquillity, the most ardent reformer cannot help feeling a pang at the thought that this Arcadian existence must be pushed aside in the hurry of an advancing civilisation, whose teachings will necessarily displace the fond imaginings inspired by their drama and national history.

The matter-of-fact prose of everyday life must usurp the place of the romantic idylls of the past. The Burmese woman enjoys a personality so distinct that she is entitled to be treated separately. Though theoretically inferior to her male prototype as regards progress towards Nirvana, Never or Everlasting Rest, to which all good Buddhists aspire, practically she is his equal in everything connected with present mundane affairs.

She enjoys an incomparably higher position than do women of other Eastern countries, and vies even with her Western sisters in this respect, inasmuch as she has voluntarily conceded to her, by custom as well as by law, all that is claimed for by the most zealous advocates of women's rights. There was then, as there is now in Burma, perfect freedom between the sexes, and the influence of women was as powerful as it is now weak.

An unyielding policy of non-interference with the religions of the people of India has, to the lasting and ineffable reproach of the British Government, entailed intolerable misery and humiliation on many millions of Hindu women.

Amid the plaudits of Christendom, it abolished the diabolical practices of female infanticide and self-immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, after having been — in slavish adherence to this policy — for several decades, accessories, before and after the fact, to many murders.

But it still permits infant marriages, which are the cause of untold misery in India, and consigns to a living death of infamous slavery the unfortunate widows it has rescued by its well-intentioned, but, in a Hindu sense, abortive philanthropy. So if infant marriages were declared unlawful, and adequate relief and protection afforded to Hindu widows, equally learned and equally accommodating Pundits would doubtless be forthcoming, and able to quote precedents in favour of the new departure.

In dealing with the women of Burma, fortuitously, we are not, as was the case with Hindu women, obliged to carry out legacies devised by the cruelty or the heartlessness of men.

We possess a tabula rasa in this respect, and it will be greatly to our discredit if we do not prove ourselves equal to the occasion. Monastery schools exist in almost every village.

To these custom and religion demand that every boy shall go, in order that he may receive gratis a rudimentary education in the 'three Rs,' as well as in the tenets of his religion. Girls, however, are denied this privilege. The celibate teachers would be scandalised at the very notion of conducting a girls' school.

The Vini or code for the guidance of Buddhist monks is very strict as regards their conduct towards females, insisting on their hiding their faces behind fans when preaching, lest the charms of the ladies listening to them when expounding the Law should cause them to succumb to the last of the eye.

A member of the Sacred Order is not allowed to sleep under the same roof, travel in the same carriage or boat, much less to touch a female; the last prohibition including the monk's mother, even if she be in danger of drowning, unless there be no other aid available, and then he must not hold out his hand, but only offer her his habit or his staff to cling to, and thus save her.

He durst not even allow his natural feelings to affect him, but must school himself into imagining that he is merely pulling out a log of wood!

Practically, therefore, so far as elementary education of males is concerned, Burma compares favourably with even Western countries, while that of females is backward.

Girls very early develop the trading talent for which their mothers are proverbial, and those of the poorer classes are utilised in this way long before boys exhibit a speciality for anything more practical for making their way in the world than football or nine-pins. They cannot, however, in defiance of public opinion as it now exists, and in the absence of a demand for female labour, compete successfully for clerkships or other employments of which males now enjoy the monopoly.

Hence they deem there is no need that they should qualify therefor; so their brothers distance them in purely literary efforts, though the girls more than hold their own in all that concerns the ordinary affairs of life.

Owing to the interest taken in the instruction of girls and women by missionaries of all denominations, and the hearty encouragement and support accorded thereto by Government, female education has made considerable progress under British rule.

It must necessarily, however, be a plant of slow growth. Important as the subject of their mental culture undoubtedly is, attention to the physical well-being of actual and possible mothers in a country whose chief want is population is a far more imperative duty.

The exquisite suffering which at childbirth is the natural heritage of women is intensely aggravated at a critical time in their lives by the practice prevalent in Burma, whereby the patient is subjected to torture by fire for seven days, and drenched with drastic and powerfully-scented drinks, with the professed object of eliminating noxious humours, but resulting in prematurely aging the victim.

This barbarous custom, though universal in places unaffected by Western civilisation, is happily becoming obsolete in the larger towns under the influence and example of women of other nationalities. The National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India,
so success- fully inaugurated by the Countess of Dufferin, has a most promising field for its operations in Burma, where exist none of the caste prejudices which in India are often so fatal to schemes in- tended to ameliorate the condition of the natives.

It seemed to me, then, that, if only the people of India could be made to realise that their women have to bear more than their necessary share of human suffer- ing, and that it rests with the men of this country and with the women of other nationalities to re- lieve them of that unnecessary burden, then surely the men would put their shoulders to the wheel and would determine that the wives and mothers and sisters and daughters dependent upon them should, in time of sickness and pain, have every relief that human skill and tender nursing can afford them.

In spite of what matter-of-fact Western theolo- gists may say to the contrary, the Burman knows that, by the inexorable fiat of Buddhist law, he can- not claim to be more than a mere animal, unless he submits to the ordeal of Buddhist baptism, which entails shaving the head, abandoning the world, don- ning the mendicant's dress, and becoming a monk — even if it be only for twenty-four hours.

The greatest event in the career of a Buddhist youth is when he enters a monastery as a proba- tioner for the priesthood; though some irreverent lads have a notion that the occasion of having a pair of inexpressibles tatt jood on their persons — a mark of manhood — is a far more notable episode.

It is quite as important an inci- dent in her career as putting on the yellow robe or beino; tattooed is to her brother. Thouoo-h not claiming the religious character pertaining to Buddhist baptism, it is her nearest equivalent thereof, and is an event of such importance that all relatives and friends are bound to put in an appearance. When summoned to the festival held in honour of the occasion, conventional excuses for absence being adjudged almost tantamount to insult.

She now puts away her dolls and other playthings, and only surreptitiously sucks the sweetsies or chews the sugar-cane, in which her soul openly delighted before; while in society she assumes a gravity of demeanour beyond her years — befitting, she ima- gines, her new condition.

In a word, the Natwin Mengala transforms the girl into a woman, just as much as admission to the monastery makes the boy a man. This is her baptism, and is the dis- tinctive mark of her race. London, The Burmese maiden, so far as this cus- torn is concerned, has as much latitude given her as trans-Atlantic fashion awards to the American belle and her admirers, and, if rumour be con- sistent, repays the confidence placed in her by an equally strict attention to decorum. Amorous Savains are fully aware that they run the risk of being taken up by the police if they happen to be abroad at night-time without being able to give a satisfactory account of themselves.

But it would be a very hard-hearted constable indeed who would ' run in ' a youth reasonably supposed to be abroad on courting thoughts intent. Those who hold marriage to be a sacrament are scandalised at the free-and-easy notions held by the Burmese on the subject. With them it is a simple contract, having nothing of a religious character about it. The fact of both appearing together in public at a bridal feast given by the bridegroom and his parents, has even superseded the traditionally simple ordeal of eating out of the same dish, which, being tantamount to the irrevocable ' I will ' in the marriage service of the Church of England, is as binding with them as having the knot tied by a bishop, or the agree- ment ratified by a marriage registrar, with us.

The iictulul ceremony is a huiiidrum affair, but its subsequent development, as expressed by the boisterous conduct of youths on the occasion of the beginning of the honeymoon, is decidedly a more pronounced character. We throw rice and old slippers after the happy pair when they start on their first journey together, while they adopt a very objectionable equivalent to this harmless custom.

For, on the night of the wedding, a number of young bachelors are accustomed to surround the house occupied by the newly-married couple, and, unless bought off by the pay- ment of blackmail, pelt the thatched or wooden-shingled roof with stones, brickbats, and other missiles, which causes a din that would wake the Seven Sleepers, and occasionally does injury to the inmates. We have ever been under the impression that the practice was a senseless and impudent system of extortion.

But Shway Yeo in his very interesting book declares the learned in Burmese folk-lore assign it a much more romantic origin. Sympathy with the feelings of this arche- typal bachelor has perplexed the stone-throwing by the Loo-bios bachelors to the present day.

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But, in these de- generate days of so-called Progress, the perpetra- tors of high jinks of this kind often find them- selves arraigned before a police- court, and punished under the jrovisions of a code which has super- seded Menoo. Though there was no provision for divorce in the Hindu creed from which Buddhism revolted, it is allowed under the reformed religion, and is almost as simple a process as marriage.

Anomoi- nous as it may seem, however, the ties of con- sanguinity are as much respected and family affection as pronounced in Burma as in communi- ties where it is more difficult. In no other country do wives identify themselves so fully in all that concerns their husbands. The better half of a magistrate, police-officer, tax-collector, or merchant, in the good man's absence, not only accepts, but acts on his responsibility; while, still stranger to relate, the people affected by this eccentricity, far from demurring, accept it as a matter of course.

Loudou, lb If either should have been the sole bread-winner, he or she takes two-thirds and the other one-third. The clothes and ornaments of both are also valued, and a similar system of give and take adopted, while the debts incurred during cohabitation are shared equally. If there be male children by the marriage, the man takes them; if female children, the woman. When one or other desires to separat- ate, and the wish is not reciprocated, while no fault can be attributed to either further than the fact of their ' destinies not having been cast to- gether,' the former can only retain royal gifts and a single suit of clothes, while the latter is entitled to the rest of the property.

If the person want- ing a divorce has no property, he or she must give the price of his or her body, in other words, pay damages. Either husband or wife can claim a divorce if certain indiscretions enumerated in the Code are proved against the other; and in some cases the wife can not only take the whole of the joint property, but has also the privilege, if she pleases, of turning her husband out of doors with but a single garment to cover his nakedness.
He tells us that wives may be divided into seven classes: namely, 'a wife like a mother, a wife like a slave, a wife like a sister, a wife like a friend, a wife like a master, a wife like a thief, and a wife like an enemy. It says much for the naturally pleasant ways, gracious manners, and general attractiveness of the Burmese woman that one forgets she does not exactly conform to the classic type of beauty.

She steadily holds her own in spite of being heavily handicapped by prejudiced male opinion, which has the hardihood to assert that the dress worn by the daughters of Eve in Burm is ill-calculated to enhance any beauty of form they may possess. Fitch, as quoted by Purchas, perhaps gives the best notion of the tamerin. We prefer to pin our faith on Captain Lewin's pleasanter notion that the tamerin is of ancient origin, ' for it is recorded in Plutarch's "Lives," in his comparison between Numa and Licurgus with reference to the Spartan women, that "the skirts of the habit which the virgins wore were not sewn to the bottom, but open at the side as they walked and discovered the thigh.

The results have been unsatisfactory and ludicrous. Id atonement for this remissness, he humbly quotes and fully endorses the opinion of a very competent authority in the person of Lady Violet Greville writing in a number of the Nineteenth Century. From the back de-pends another piece, which trails a little on the ground and resembles a scanty drawing-room train. These pieces of silk are of the dauniest and most artistic hues, generally of pale peach colour, shot with pink or yellow or pale gold.

Add to this a scarf of silk of some contrasting colour, and you have the Burmese costume complete, simple, pretty, and nice to look at. Flowers seem to be their ideal, and they themselves are like flowers to look at. They manage their own affairs, hold stalls in the bazaar, with which no one interferes, marry when they choose, and divorce their husbands as soon as they please.

They flirt, dance, and laugh with as many admirers as they choose. There, ladies, unemancipated crea-tures, though you call yourselves civilized, what do you think of that? From the wicked Queen of Theebaw who murdered seventy relations in a single day because they were in the way. Let us hope, therefore, that not only may we possess as blameless a record, but also that we may do our duty by the genial women of Burma, so as to fit them for the high position to which their virtues, their natural genius, their cleverness, and their many other admirable qualities entitle them.

At one time, apparently, the Burmese were uncouth, boorish, and turbulent as any of the surrounding tribes. But by various influences, which will be dealt with hereafter, they had al-ready attained a fairly high degree of civilisation, and not a little culture, when first encountered by Europeans. This union, he goes on to say, ' was accomplished very gradually under the influence of Aryan immigrants, chiefly, if we may trust the national traditions, Kshatriyas from Gangetic India, from the softening influences of Buddhism, and probably the simple handicrafts of weaving, the acquisition of which is next to agriculture, of the greatest importance to a rude people.

Sir Arthur Phayre, Mr. Bryan Hodgson, and other authorities, judging both by physical characteristics and affinities of language, concur with the professor, and further tell us that the Sinhphoes on the north of Burm, and the equally uncivilised tribes on the Arakan and Manipur frontiers, are their true kinsmen. They classify them among the numerous races which, at a remote period, left their ancient habitat beyond the snowy range, passed through some of the hundred gates of the Himalaya, and after having sojourned for a while in the country now known as Assam, arrived in due course at the upper basin of the Irrawadi.

This prince, they declare, formed Hindu settlements in the rezion indicated above, and built the city of Tagoung, which Colonel Yule says may be identified with the Tungou metropolis of Ptolemy.

The existing ruins of this city certainly give support to the general truth of their tradition, as Buddhist images, bricks stamped with the image of Buddha, and Pali inscriptions in the ancient Devanagiri character, have been found therein. Professor Lassen, whose authority in matters connected with this region is undoubted, sides with the Burmese view. Colonel Yule, on the other hand, considers that the Burmese legend is manifestly of equal value and like invention to that which deduced the Romans from the emigration of the pious Ilians, the ancient Britons from Brut the Trojan, and the Gaul from Scota, the daughter of Pharaoh.

The same may be said of the Dravidian immigrants, who long played a very important part in the maritime provinces of Burm. Some centuries ago, the Burmese were doubtless in a state of barbarism; but they have now achieved a unique position in the civilisation of Farther India.

The aim of the present writer is to endeavour to interest his readers by furnishing a few particulars regarding the chief influences, more or less subtle, as well as more or less tangible, which have contributed to this result.

Ethical influences may appropriately be considered first. The Mongoloid tribes, by whose amalgamation the Burmese were formed into a nation, differed materially in one respect from their reputed congeners, who are essentially high-landers; for they had already become dwellers in the plains, and consequently far more amenable to the teachings of a higher civilisation brought to bear on them by Indian immigrants than they otherwise would have been.

The savage and chronically turbulent border tribes were then probably very much the same as we now find them, the Burmese a little more civilised. The latter have since changed so much that it seems ridiculous to speak of both as belonging to the same race. The typical mountain Mongoloid is very matter-of-fact, and absolutely devoid of humour; the Burman, on the contrary, has a keen sense of the ridiculous.

The former rarely exhibits feelings of surprise, joy, gratitude, or admiration. Nor is he endowed with a feeling for art like the latter, who decorates his carts, boats, agricultural implements, articles for domestic use, rest-houses for travellers, monasteries, and other religious buildings, etc. The difference between the Malay and the Papuan, so described by Mr.

It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that for a very long period they have not been indebted to these tribes, nor to other branches of the parent stock, for any infusion of new blood. We must also do this in the cases of the Aryans and Dravidians, as well as various alien races who have contracted unions with them, but who, when compared with the total popula- tion, are an insignificant factor in the problem. It is unnecessary to revert to prehistoric times, or even to go far afield, when its solution is patent to all who have compared the Burmese with the various peoples who
have intercourse with them.

The face of the Burman has his Tartar genealogy stamped upon it in characters that cannot be mistaken.

The least observant cannot fail to notice the predominating infusion of Chinese and Shan blood with the Tibeto-Mongoloid, especially in Upper Burma, where the people are much fairer than they are farther south. The Chinese, again, who have for centuries been influencing the Burmanese in many ways, have been gradually gravitating towards the Irawadi Valley, and, as the more energetic and intelligent, will sooner or later absorb them. The Arys, who reached Burma overland, caught the Mongoloid tribes on the bound, after they had emerged from barbarism, and gave them an impetus towards a higher civilization.

But the crowning glory is rightly awardable to other Aryan visitors who also came by sea, for they gave them religion, a written language, and literature.

Their comparatively modern annals also unmistakably betray the original Hindu influence. This is even the case where historiographers give the rein to fervid imagination, and embellish their exceedingly dry record of facts with highly-coloured results. Like the Holy Bible, their "Maharajah Weng," or national history, has its Genesis, and gives a description of the creation of the world, and of its first inhabitant.

It also records what happened after that great event, in the minutest detail. It affects, for instance, to trace the ancestors of the deposed King Theebaw, in regular sequence, to Maha Thumada, the first emperor of the world, and even ventures to in-clude Gaudama Buddha in the royal line. In spite of being disfigured with many similar blemishes, calculated to overstrain the credulity of the most indulgent reader, the "Maharajah Weng" has earned high encomiums from very competent judges.

They present a marked contrast to the scantiness or total absence of such writings among the ancient Hindu kingdoms. It is unfortunate that the great standard work of the country should be tarnished by the absurd interpolations of persons bound to flatter the Court circle to which they were attached, and thus be furnished with an excuse for going beyond the record. Burma has not yet introduced a Macaulay or a Thieler to make history more interesting than fiction; and so we must accept with indulgence the Court historiographer's efforts to enliven what would otherwise be an exceedingly prosaic record.

Although one naturally resents the notion of pranks being played with history, the student's regard for truth must indeed be keen if he can read the "Maharajah Weng," with interest, shorn of the compiler's embellishments. Burmese ideas regarding history and cosmography are, it need hardly be said, very different from ours. Maha Thumada, and other immortal heroes whose exploits are glorified in their dramas, have a last-ino; hold on their immo-inition.

With us the names of Odin and Thor, Triga and Iduna, are names only, though their deeds of potency remain to cast a spell on all the nurseries of northern Europe. All the myth and dragon lore which Odin and the Asur brought from the East exist under new names in the nursery lore of our infancy; in "Jack the Giant Killer," "Cinderella," "Blue Beard," "The Giant who smelt the blood of an Englishman," "Pass in Boots," etc.

We matter-of-fact Westerns, it is true, discard these tales when we leave the nursery; but to the more romantic Easterns they show themselves ever in a renewed and immortal bloom. This idiosyncrasy, weakness, or whatever it may be termed, which, like our remote ancestors, the Burmese possess, cannot be disposed of casually as a trivial psychological truism; but must be accepted as an important factor in enabling us to decide the weighty problem of governing an independent, impulsive, high-spirited, and naturally proud people, the guidance of whose destinies, for good or evil, we have assumed.

Still, it was a claim to the suzerainty of the country, and one which had to be answered. The troubles which after so many years still obstruct the progress of the French in Tonquin show what might easily have happened in our province. Burma, said a Chinese journal some time ago, may be likened to a beautiful ball of gold, which a man having found lying in his path has picked up and carried off.

A little boy who had lost the ball stopped the man and said, "Man, that is my ball. All I want is to keep it safe for you. It was lying about, and you will lose it. But had the man spoken roughly to the boy and denied his claim, the child would have thrown dirt and stones at the man and followed him with abuse, and he would have had no peace or enjoyment in his possession of the ball.

The French, on the other hand, had repudiated China's claims and insulted her dignity, and therefore they had been annoyed incessantly by Black Flags and pirates, as the French term the dacoits. True wisdom, therefore, and, it may be added, true courage, were shown by the British Government in its decision to avoid all cause of offense to China by admitting the claim of the Emperor to the suzerainty of Burma.

A Government less conscious of its power might have hesitated to make any concession to a claim so unsubstantial. It has been agreed to send an embassy or deputation to China from Burma every ten years, with some presents, in accordance with an old custom. To please the child, his wish to have the ball nominally recognised as his property has been so far gratified, and at this shadowy price the quiet possession of the substance has been secured.

Enough perhaps has been said to show that our relations with the Chinese Empire have been changed materially and rendered closer and more important by the annexation of Upper Burma. While on the north-west frontier the British Indian Empire is in contact with Russia, on the east it is in close touch with China. It is of importance that this position should be more widely known and appreciated.
A remarkable proof of the wave of change which has been pass- ing over the Flowery Land was notably exempli- fied in a very curious polit- ical legacy left, a few years ago, to the Chinese Emperor and his people by the famous Viceroy Tso-Tsung-Tang—a Chi- nese of the Chinese, a man in whom the charac- teristic virtues and defects of his race were mag- nified. It seems only yesterday that the crass imperturbability of the people of the Middle Kingdom was so pronounced that one as much expected to see the Iron Horse as to meet a Celestial without a pigtail.

But now they are as fully convinced of the importance of railways and telegraphs as, only a short time ago, they were persuaded to the contrary. To sum up, the conclusions of the Times as to the interest and importance of the frontier policy and the proper handling of the border tribes may be accepted in their entirety.

On the 1st of January, His Excellency, the Earl of Dufferin, issued the following notice: 'By command of the Queen-Empress, it is hereby notified that the territories formerly gov- erned by King Theebaw will no longer be under his rule, but have become part of Her Majesty's dominions, and will, during Her Majesty's pleas- ure, be administered by such officers as the Viceroy and Governor-General of India may from time to time appoint.

The more thoughtful, however, knew that our political responsibilities were vastly increased thereby. For, whereas before the whole breadth of the Himalaya range intervened between our Indian provinces and the boundary separating us from the outlying de- pendencies of the Flowery Land, we can now, as it were, shake hands across the border. The situation also had materially changed from the Chinese standpoint, for while India, in days of yore, was the Ultima Thule of Celestial geography, it had been brought to their very doors.

It was generally admitted that the purely milit- ary operations necessary for the occupation of Burma might be simple enough, yet no one imagined that a territory which had been subject to anarchy for many years could be reorganised without patience, trouble, and sympathetic treat- ment by officers of experience.

The campaign, as anticipated, proved to be a mere military promenade, and, for weeks after the arrival of our troops at Mandalay, the attitude of the people seemed all that could be desired. This lull after the storm seems to have taken our authorities off their guard, for they too long delayed the neces- sary precautions for the civil administration of the country which they had all along deemed inevitable.

Dacoity, or gang-robbery, was the natural result of revolution and anarchy. In its initial stage, and probably in its subsequent development, it never assumed a strictly political tendency. Many who, under ordinary circumstances, were law- abiding people took to the nefarious calling for the mere love of excitement, or to be considered men of spirit by their sweethearts; others adopted it to escape starvation.

Thus inoculated, they became more or less reckless and demoralised, and in organised gangs even ventured to confront our troops. At last it came to such a pass that they found they must either make it their regular business to rob others, or be robbed themselves, for, excepting at our widely separated posts on the river Irrawadi, there was neither law nor dominant authority in the country. They were between Scylla and Charybdis, for they were a prey to professional dacoits on the one hand, and if found with arms required for protection they were harassed by our troops on the other.

Over-zealous efforts to stamp out dacoity by shooting and flogging men and burning villages, coupled with a want of readiness to pardon offenders who repented the evil of their ways, hardened men of this stamp and aggravated the difficulty. Brigandage may be said to have been normal in Upper Burma. Theebaw no doubt emphasised it, but it was also rife in his astute and respectable father's time.

The late King Mengdun, in his personal interest, preferred to pay his officials modest salaries rather than allow them to acquire enormous gains to the detriment of the Royal treasury which the farming out of appointments under the ordinary system entailed. In the same selfish spirit, but presumably to keep them out of harm's way.

His Majesty only allowed his sons miserable pittances in the way of pocket-money. The consequence was that many of his Ministers and some of the Royal Princes did not consider it beneath their dignity to be hand-in-glove with notorious free-booters in order to share the proceeds of robbery. A dacoit gang was, in fact, as much a political necessity to a Burmese Minister as a newspaper organ is to Ministers in more civilised countries.

During the prevalence of revolution and anarchy in our new inheritance, the attitude of China was a potent factor in the situation which could not be ignored. Had she elected to be hostile, the British authorities might have been involved in very serious complications. Her friendship, or, at any rate, her neutrality was therefore well-nigh indispensable. The success of our diplomatists in securing the goodwill of the Son of Heaven was accordingly highly commendable.

As far back as the reign of Tai Wu b. The Chinese annals, however, do not aid us on this point, and make no direct reference to foreign countries till a century or so before the Christian era, when India appears to have exercised great a fascination for the Celestial imagination as it did in Europe fifteen centuries afterwards. The Son of Heaven was not a little impressed by Chang Kien's report, and, in the interests of commerce and a possible increase of imperial tribute, acted upon it at once by dispatching commis- sioners to report on the three routes, which, according to the commander's information, seemed the most promising.

All the exploring parties, however, returned discomfited, chiefly by reason of the impracticability of the 'barbarians' encountered in every direction.

It is curious to notice how history repeats itself. Cooper elected to explore Chang Kien's route No. Arriving at Ssu-ch'uan from the Chinese seaboard, he managed to reach the most westerly point attained by any traveller from the Flowery Land. Unfortunately, however, just as he fancied himself certain of being able to pene- trate the 'iron wall' between Cathay and Shintu, his hopes were doomed by the prohibition of the Chinese authorities.
Major Sladen's expedition from Bhamo was unable to proceed further than Momein or Teng-yuel-chou, the frontier town of Yunnan. The governor treated its members very courteously, but objected to their proceeding farther, on the profession of ground of danger to them- selves from the disturbed state of the country due to the Panthay rebellion.

This mission is also notable for the untoward fate of Augustus Raymond Margery, its capable and distinguished pioneer. The great effort of Captain Dondart de la Gréve from Saigon via Baang-hung, with the view of exploring the head waters of the Melkong, was not so easily baffled, though similar tactics were tried to prevent his visiting Taliflu.

Captain Dondart, being too ill to attempt the feat he subsequently died, entrusted its execution to Lieutenant Gamier, his second in command, who actually beared the pseudo Emperor Sukriman in his capital.

Suffice it to remark, the French were bitterly disappointed to find that the Melkong was altogether impracticable as a means for developing commerce. Hisa-wu-tf's immediate successors were not so sanguine as he, so the matter remained in abeyance for a long time. India, as a matter of fact, did not become known to the Chinese for two centuries afterwards, and then not by the short cut across the intervening regions, but by the Bactrian route, which was used up to the middle of the seventeenth century, when it was stopped by the King of Great Tibet in retaliation for the Great Mogul's invasion of his country.

Chang Kien's idea of a more direct communication between the Flowery Land and Shintu, though long shelved, was not abandoned. In deed, it was revived with the pertinacity for which the Celestials are famous when vital interests are at stake. A perusal of curious details, placed on record by these and other Chinese travellers, proves that the Celestials were then better informed about India than might be expected. From very remote times embassies very frequently passed between the Middle Kingdom and Hindustan, when such diplomatic amenities were not even dreamt of, much less in vogue, in Europe.

The latter, fully impressed with the honour of being selected as the first recipient of such condescension, complied with the imperial requisition, and in recognition of his obsequiousness the Emperor accredited an ambassador to the Court of Magadha, ' in order that the principles of humanity and justice which had been diffused in that country might have a permanent protector and representative there.

After Buddhism was introduced into the Middle Kingdom, the Princes of all the Buddhist countries in this region also joyfully despatched missions to the Emperor, who often condescended to return the compliment by imperial missions to keep up his prestige. In his first important mission he visited and gave most interesting particulars regarding various places in Yunnan and Burma, which have become familiar in recent discussions on the subject of trade routes between the Flowery Land and the Golden Chersonese.

Difficulties, however, arise as to the exact extent of the great traveller's journey; in other words, to determine where his narrative is founded on personal knowledge and where on hearsay merely. It appears that the Khan called the Italians into his presence, and intrusted them with golden tablets of authority, which gave them the right of passage through all his dominions, and secured them facilities for procuring all that they might require.

Thirteen ships were commissioned for the use of the embassy, escorting Queen Coachin, Lord Argon's bride-elect, and her companion, the daughter of the King of Manu. The capacity of these vessels may be imagined when they are described as having had four masts, and often hoisting as many as twelve sails, with some sixty or seventy private cabins, provided with closets and other conveniences, as well as public rooms for the use of merchants and other first-class passengers, besides ample accommodation for two hundred or more sailors, who sometimes had their families with them, and also managed to find space for small kitchen-gardens in spare ship's buckets.

These arks, though larger than any ships afloat in Europe, and containing as many water-tight compartments as the largest American liners of the present day, were, according to Marco, smaller than the Chinese possessed before that period. The fleet put forth to sea with the envoys and a goodly company, and first touched at Java, and, loosing thence, it proceeded to the different ports in the Indian seas, the voyage lasting about two years, thus enabling our Venetians to give most interesting accounts of their novel experiences, as Digitized by VjOOQIC china's maritime prestige.

Suffice it to say, the envoys arrived at their destination in due course, and handed over the ladies to Casan, who, owing to the death of his father Argon, had not only become Lord of the Levant, but, in accordance with the custom of the country, had also inherited his father's right to the young lady in Marco's charge. Animated with the same spirit of enterprise that stimulated Drake, Frobisher, and other English worthies, the Great Khan was not a little aggressive, for he sent numerous expeditions against Japan and Java, which, though not always successful, prove that he had vast resources at his disposal, in the shape of ships, mariners, troops of various kinds, as.

No wonder, then, that he insisted on all intercourse with the Flowery Land resolving itself into the form of homage; for he had learned from the annals of his country that, for several centuries previously, the Kings of India and the Golden Chersonese had been in the habit of sending embassies to China for the payment of tribute.

At the time of Marco Polo's voyage, the prestige of China as a maritime Power seems to have arrived at its zenith. It subsequently waned, and in the beginning of the fifteenth century the Emperor felt himself constrained to send a large fleet with a military force to India and the Golden Chersonese, to coerce those that wavered in their allegiance, and encourage the loyal by the bestowal of honours and imperial gifts.

Some of the great traveller's experience in this region may appropriately be mentioned here, as they show that Cathay had then very many material interests in Farther India. He first notes Chamba or Cochin Chine, which he describes as peopled by ' idolaters ' subject to Kublai Khan, to whom they paid yearly a tribute of elephants, and nothing but elephants. He might have exclaimed with Pistol, 'The world's my oyster, which I with sword will open.'

In the ordinary course of things they knew they were destined to die, and practically warned the fishermen not to let down their nets; just as the
historical racoon, in like predicament, called out from a tree-top to his would-be mur-derer — a crack shot — ' Don't shoot.

I'll come down. Antonio in Padua. Before bidding a final farewell to trans- Gangetic countries subject to his master, the Great Khan, Marco Polo visited the Andaman and Nicobar groups of islands, which, though situated so close to the highly civilised Indo- China, are inhabited by Mincopies, or Oriental negroes, in the lowest stage of barbarism.

They would trade for old cloth or pieces of old Unnen breeches. Till comparatively late times, all the islanders were more or less partial to the highly objectionable practice of killing and eating their fellow-creatures. In fact, it was owing to frightful disclosures of massacres of crews of vessels visiting the islands that led to their being periodically visited by Her Majesty's men-of-war, and eventually occupied by the British Government. The inhabitants are still ' idolaters'; still prefer nudity to the encumbrance of clothing, and would not object to Dean Swift's suggestion of ' cold missionary on their sideboards'; neverthe-less, the dog face description decidedly comes under the head of libel.

This unique and primitive race, which for cen-turies has been estranged from the outer world, is threatened in the near future with complete extinction. Like the Pacific islanders, they are un-able to survive contact with European civilisation. Not far from the Andamans, in the Mergui Archipelago, and therefore British subjects, Marco Polo would have found in the Selungs or Sea- Karens of Burmo-Malay type a race of islanders differing materially in mental as well as physical characteristics from the negroes he condemns so severely.

For though they would doubtless have classed them as ' idolaters,' with merely a tradi- tional belief in a beneficent God, he would also have found them naturally kind and confiding, though timid, owing to long-endured oppression at the hands of Malays, Chinese, and Burmese, of whose slave-hunting expeditions they give ac-counts which ' bear melancholy marks of truth- fulness.

Before venturing to offer a few suggestions on a subject of such paramount importance to our future prospects, we propose, by way of preface, to indulge in a brief retrospect of the relations that have for centuries existed between our recent inheritance and the great empire of China.

And as is the case with other brothers we wot of, who, though they may occasionally quarrel, are nevertheless the best of friends, so these brethren of the Golden Chersonese and Far Cathay, notwithstanding many a sharp tussle and stand-up fight, on the whole cordially fraternised. Their people never allowed the wars, in which they were occasionally plunged by their rulers, to disturb for any length of time their reciprocal feelings of goodwill.

With prodigious indifference to ethnic diagnosis, a well-read Burman, who, according to Dr. To quote Mr. The great Emperor of China is imagined to sit enthroned in the middle of the palm.

One very soon discovers that any discrimination of so minute a character is far beyond the range of native in- tellect. I was therefore obliged to accept the position of a foreigner in general, without dis- tinction of race or religion, nationality, language, or business. The practical re- sults of this intercourse have not, however, been so pronounced as might have been expected. Yet the civilisation that existed on the seaboard of Farther India in ancient times was no doubt partly influ- enced by the Chinese — famous for maritime en- terprise — and also by the Phoenicians and King Solomon's servants, who went thither in search of gold and precious stones, apes, peacocks, ivory, and almag-trees.

China may be termed rather a congeries of States than a single homogeneous empire, as some of the viceroys of her distant provinces are prac- tically independent; but railways and the tele- graph will soon remedy this, and support her claim to be considered a nation, and not merely an agglomeration of peoples. The same influence is still progressing in Farther India, a process of absorption defining the movement, which is fast removing differences between peoples who have hitherto played as prominent a part in its history as the English, French, and Germans have done in the history of Europe, and who will eventu- ally become as much Chinese as the inhabitants of Yunnan, Ss-ch'-uan, and other border provinces now are, were it not for the counteracting influ- ence of Western civilisation already referred to.

While the greater part of Europe was in a state of barbarous ignorance, this enterprising people, probably navigating by the magnet, are known to have pushed their explorations and carried on an extensive commerce throughout the Eastern hemi- sphere; and, judging by their annals, their his- torians and geographers of the early part of the Christian era spoke of the Irrawadi and the Ganges as naturally as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society does now.

When Vasco da Gama, after his discovery of the route to India by the Cape, first encountered the Arabs, they had their charts, astrologies, and astronomical tables, but as yet no compass. The Chinese, however, had, centuries before this, acquired a maritime influence in the East which put the vaunted su- premacy of the Arabs into the shade.

History records the Phoenician feat of having sailed round Africa B. We can well imagine that the navies of Solomon and Hiram, manned by the mariners of Zidon and Arphad, and piloted by the wise men of Tyre, freighted with embroidered fine linen from Egypt; blue and purple from the isles of Elisa; emeralds, corals, and agates from Syria; oil and palm from Judah; rich wares, wine of Helbon, and white wool from Damascus; iron, cassia, and calamus from Dan and Javan, visited this region — for Ezekiel, speaking of the Tyre which was of perfect beauty and glorious in the midst of the seas, says, ' Thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many peoples; thou didest enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and thy merchandise.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Chinese, by their knowledge and application of the magnet, possessed advantages long denied to the rest of the world. The reports of the celebrated Venetian further demonstrate the great capacity for ship-building, as well as the aptitude for maritime enterprise, which distin- guished the Chinese of his time — worthy of Fohi or Noah, their reputed founder, the first and most eminent shipbuilder ever known.

Kublai Khan was as enterprising by land as by sea. From being content with his own enor-mous territory, he had, as already explained, an inveterate craze to be acknowledged suzerain of all the States on his borders; hence arose endless difficulties with Burma, which may conveniently
With the political sagacity which used to distinguish Chinese statesmen in connection with the administration of the south-western provinces of the Empire, he determined first to conquer Yunnan; for, holding it, he knew he could dominate the trade as well as political affairs pertaining to the peoples who have their habitat on or near the rivers flowing to the south. He had command of the Mongol armies, which for thirty years had been fighting to subdue the Chinese Empire, and in person directed the preliminary arrangements for the conquest of Yunnan, leaving them to be carried out by his second in command.

According to Burmese history, this officer, adopting his master's policy, sent a deputation to Mien or Burma, and demanded recognition of the Khan's suzerainty in the shape of tribute. The Burmese king scouted the notion, and caused the envoys to be decapitated for alleged insolence. Kublai Khan was not slow to avenge this outrage, and sent a vast army to attack Mien. It appears that preparations had been begun for the defence of the city, in the shape of a huge wall composed of the debris of numerous pagodas which had been demolished for the purpose, but were arrested owing to the verification of an ominous prediction, setting forth that the city would be captured by the Chinese, which was found inscribed on a copper plate discovered in the process of dilapidation.

The superstitious king lost all heart when he read the inscription, and, collecting his valuables, fled in all haste to Bassein. Straitened by want of provisions, they here abandoned the pursuit, and, after returning again to the capital, plundered it, and went back to their own country. There is no allusion in Burmese history to collisions on the frontier at this time; and their improbability is evidenced by the pusillanimous disposition of the Burmese monarch, who was very unlikely to have attacked a more powerful country than his own.

Yet, according to Marco Polo, the Great Khan sent an army into the kingdoms of Carajan Yunnan and Vochan Yung Chang, to protect his subjects from the attacks of unruly people. He accordingly prepared a force consisting of two thousand elephants, each carrying twelve to sixteen well-armed warriors, besides cavalry and infantry amounting to sixty thousand men, and caused it to march against the Tartars.

To this end he advanced his troops to meet the enemy, and halted them in the plains of Vochan, hard by a forest. The Burmese king made a counter demonstration with skill, and advanced to the attack. The Tartar horses could not be made to face the elephants, to the dismay of their riders. Their commander had, however, foreseen this dilemma and ordered his men to dismount, fasten their horses to the trees of the forest to which they had retreated, and ply their bows and arrows.

This they did so deftly and strenuously as to cause the elephants to turn tail and fly with the fighting men on their backs.

The Great Khan, foiled in his ambitious attempts to conquer the comparatively war-like Japanese on the east of his dominions, was fain to turn his attention to his western neighbours, on hearing marvellous accounts of the richness of their country and the probabilities of its easy conquest.

The splendours of Pagan have departed, and yet it is one of the most interesting places in Burma, though now it does not contain more than a dozen inhabited houses. One of these, in , might have been critical to her destiny, as the time chosen for attacking her was when her hands were full with Pegu.

It appears some Shan chiefs revolted, and a few of them were sent as prisoners to Ava. The others in- volked the aid of China, which responded willingly by sending an army, and demanding the release of the prisoners.

The point as to whether they were to be surrendered or not was left to be de- cided by the result of single combat between champions. The Celestial did not, however, remain quiescent very long, and in, backed by an army, revived the demand for tribute from Taruk-pyfe-men in The Burmese refused to acknowledge the claim, which was not pressed; but later on, in lieu thereof, the Chinese insisted on the surrender of the chief of Mogoung, who had taken refuge at the Burmese capital.

The Burmans accepted battle rather than give up the man, and completely defeated the invaders. They were again threatened with serious trouble in the seventeenth century, when a certain Yunhli, who had assumed the title of the Emperor of China, when driven from his capital.

Nankiin, established himself in Yunnan, and, not content with levying taxes from the people of that province, attempted to do likewise with tribes subject to Burmese suzerainty. The Burmese resented this assumption by force of arms; but, indignant at the portents, such as earthquakes, storms, and the appearance of two suns in the sky, caused the superstitious monarch, in abject terror, to fancy that he had no alternative excepting to acquiesce in Yunhli's pretensions.

Accordingly, in compliance with an ancient custom, he built for him a temporary palace, wherein he placed his eldest marriageable daughter, in the hope of appeasing the wrath of the conqueror.

It so fell out, however, that the pseudo-Emperor was driven out of Yunnan by the Tartars, and took refuge in Burma, where he became a naturalised subject. So, just twelve decades ago, the inevitable would have been precipitated by similar perversity on the part of one of His Majesty's predecessors, in connection with the remonstrances of a Chinese trader, were it not for the infinite resource, strategic knowledge, and determined spirit evinced by the Burmese generals, confronted though they were by apparently over- whelming numbers.

In consequence of a series of misunderstandings in matters connected with the frontier between Burma and China, the Emperor Kienlung invaded Burma four times. Notwithstanding all these reverses, he determined, two years afterwards, to invade the country again with even a more powerful army than before, selecting a time when the Burmese monarch was distracted by omens in the shape of earthquakes, which rent the great national temples, and seemed to portend coming disaster.

His Majesty was, however, quite equal to the occasion, for he dispatched troops commanded by capable officers to encounter the invaders,
whose success so discouraged the Chinese general that he was constrained to solicit permission to return unmolested to his own country, when he found his forces surrounded ‘like cows in a pond,’ and entirely at the mercy of the Bur-mese.

The Burmese commander summoned a council of war, the members of which unanimously gave it as their opinion that no quarter should be given to the Celestials. He overruled this advice, on the ground that undue severity would only perpetuate ill feelings, to the mutual and lasting disadvantage of both countries; and that therefore it was more politic to arrive at a friendly settlement, rather than exasperate a very powerful nation.

Accordingly it was arranged that peace and friendship should be established between the two great countries as of yore; and that the ‘gold and silver road’ of commerce should remain open.

The Chinese claim for decennial tribute is based apparently on what took place at the end of this war. In the recent controversy regarding the alleged suzerain rights of China in Bur-ma, this incident, as related in Sir Arthur Phayre’s carefully authenticated ‘History of Bur-ma,’ was relied on by those opposed to the Chinese claims, their opponents ridiculing it as the fond imaginings of the Burmese Court historiographer, differing from the account given by Crawford and by Chinese historians.

Crawford’s version is certainly not in accord with most of the recognised authorities on Burmese affairs; but it was admittedly founded on Court gossip, while the dicta of Celestial historians is not quoted. The truth probably is, as Sir Arthur Phayre suggests, that the campaigns of Chinese armies in Bur-ma from to are noticed very briefly in the histories of China, Gutzlaff alone telling the truth without disguise of the disgrace of the Chinese armies, Gutzlaff’s account, the way, is almost word for word identical with that given by the despised Burmese historian, excepting that he merely contains himself with recording that a treaty was made, without entering into particulars with regard to its details.

The late filing Mengdon, staunch in his loyalty to his ‘Elder Brother,’ denounced Suleiman as a rebel. Not so the English, who, according to warm reception to Pan-thay envoys in, in defiance of their obligations to China, incensed the latter against England, and caused her, by measures short, sharp, and decisive, to re-assert her power and make a clean sweep of the Panthays.

Colborne Baber’s interesting remarks in connection with the Panthay rising may conveniently be quoted here. Grouvenor’s Mission. The rebels were and are known to themselves and to the Imperialists by the name of Hui-hui, or Hui-tzu Mahomedans, the latter expression being slightly derogatory. The name of Sultan, utterly foreign to the ordinary Chinese, was never applied to their ruler, except perhaps by the two or three hadjis among them.

The name “Suleiman” is equally unknown. The Mahomedans of Yunnan are precisely the same race as their Confucian or Buddhist countrymen; and it is even doubtful if they were Mahomedans except so far as they professed an abhorrence for pork. That they were intelligent, courageous, honest, and liberal to strangers, is as certain as their ignorance of the law and the prophets.

All honour to their good qualities, but let us cease to cite their short-lived rule as an instance of the “Great Mahomedan Revival. The officials who were appealed to invariably decided against the Mussulmans. Great discontent ensued, and soon burst into a flame. The Chinese were satisfied with the results of their encounters with a European foe, especially as they were not to blame for the disturbance of the peace in that portion of the Golden Chersonese belonging to the ‘Son of Heaven.

So long as France confined herself to Cochinchina and Annam, China contented herself with a policy which she found convenient in the case of the British annexation in Bur-ma, remaining quiet while the latter absorbed the maritime provinces, but asserting her alleged suzerain rights when they approached nearer to her. When the French, however, under the flimsiest of pretexts, ventured to occupy Tonquin, China very naturally demurred to part with a province which undoubtedly belonged to the Celestial Empire, and, in support of her contention, was obliged to appeal to arms — a challenge accepted by France with a light heart.

It is unnecessary to our present purpose to decide this knotty point; but the fact that raw levies, consisting of peasants, robbers, and ragamuffins of all kinds, armed, it is true, partly with weapons of precision, but which were worse than useless owing to the want of proper cartridges; cheated by commissariat officials and paymasters, and with commanders who, considering discretion the better part of valour, took up their position a day’s march or so from the front — should more or less be able to hold their own against well-disciplined French troops, commanded by experienced officers, offers food for serious reflection.

Already at several points these rivers are meeting and contending for the mastery. What will be the final issue? The twentieth century will determine it in its annals. Agreeably to the convention entered into at the close of the war of — already noticed — embassies have since been dispatched by both countries at irregular intervals.

Judging by the light brought to bear on these events by persons behind the scenes, both sides have practised the most glaring deceptions on each other in the matter of the ambassadorial personnel and the treatment of the envoys accredited to their Courts. Laughing in their sleeves, as it were, at their own knavish tricks, they never dreamed that they themselves were hoodwinked by precisely similar tactics.

Neither, for instance, deemed it incumbent on them to select men of high rank to represent them. Anomalous as it may also appear, no effort was spared on either side to welcome envoys with becoming honour, and to make their official reception as brilliant and imposing as the requirements of ancient custom demanded.

What is now known as the Shoe Question was, as an engine of oppression, a never-failing source of delight to the Burmese, for the process of unbothing within the palace precincts was as abhorrent to the Chinese as to Europeans. This infatuation would have caused the loss of their country in the thirteenth century, had Kublai Khan chosen to take it, and doubtless had not a little to do with the final catastrophe.
Causing misguided foreigners to perform unnecessary obeisance was a practical joke of perennial fla- vor, the most stiff-necked being unwittingly forced to become victims thereto by being led through doorways so low that they necessarily bowed their heads. Though the political history of the French in this region comprises events which happened more than a hundred years ago, it is only within comparatively recent times that we have had occasion to be exercised by their doings.

At one time, France had reason- able hopes of founding an empire rivalling the British Empire in India proper. In , a revo- lution in Cochin China deprived the reigning monarch, Gia Loung, of his throne; but in, assisted by French adventurers, he not only re-established his power in Cochin China, but added Tonquin to his dominions.

Three years before. Several French men-of-war and a large contingent of troops were actually despatched, but only went as far as Pondicherry; had they reached their destination, a rich appanage would undoubtedly have accrued to the French crown.

On the plea of troubles in France requiring their presence at home, but really by reason of ignoble intrigues inspired by a spiteful woman, the enterprise was abandoned, and France thus lost a splendid chance of becoming a great Asiatic power like her insular rival.

It was in the hope of securing to themselves the great advantages their predeces- sors allowed to escape when almost within their grasp, that the French have been so active of late in Cochin China and Tonquin, and have indulged in the hope of taking possession of Siam and the Shan States, and of assuming a protectorate over Upper Burma.

Their too pro- nounced intrigues, however, only hastened the annexation of the latter country, while the judicious policy of the British Government in dealing with the Shan States, combined with the tendency of Siam to seek the protection of Eng- land in the event of her being coerced in any way by her Gallic neighbours, have doubtless, ere now, convinced the French that there is little probability of their dreams being realised.

With France satisfactorily disposed of, and with Siam friendly, the great expectations hoped for con- sequent on the meeting of Far Cathay withFurther India seem within measurable distance of fulfilment. There are reasonable grounds for supposing that a comparatively advanced maritime civilisation existed on the seaboard of Burma from the most ancient times, and that a few tribes favourably placed became considerable nations.

These races were exposed at intervals to the irruption of inland Mongoloid peoples impelled by the pressure of others behind them. Thus the Mons or Takings have, as it were, been obliterated by the Burmese, to whose stronger individuality the Arakanese have also succumbed.

The Karens again have either dispersed into the more or less inaccessible mountain systems, or have been content to become subjects of plain- dwelling peoples, though not amalgamating with them. Besides these prominent, if not historic races, there are a number of tribes whose civilisation varies through every degree excepting the highest, constituting a ragged fringe to the region between our own territories in Bengal, the Empire of China, and the Kingdom of Siam.

The Burmese are probably the gayest and most light-hearted people in the world; their neighbours the dullest and least impressionable. Blessed with a happy temperament, a contented disposition, and jocund spirits, which make light of the inevitable ills to which mankind is liable, they defy dull care. The latter, on the contrary, prone to morose discontent, and often a prey to melancholy, speedily succumb to the frowns of Fortune.

Partly owing to their natural tempera- ment, and partly to the influence of their litera- ture, fundamentally of Hindu origin, the former are somewhat proud, arrogant, and conceited — a weakness from which the others are exempt. Their religious writings, moreover, impress on their minds the fact that they, as Buddhists, are infinitely superior to other races who have not been baptised in this faith, and are, therefore, outside the pale of salvation.

They are further happy in the firm conviction that they are wiser, better, and braver than any other people. These annals are further replete with records of events very flattering to their pride, which their poays or plays continually re- call to their memory. No wonder, then, they have an exceedingly good opinion of themselves. Naturally idle, and having neither fixity of pur- pose nor perseverance, discipline or regular em- ployment is most irksome to them. Nevertheless, the soldiers of a Burmese army thrive in regions where those of other armies would starve; in a spirit truly accommodating, every beast of the field, every fowl of the air, every fish of the sea, everything that creepeth on the face of the earth, and every herb not actually poisonous, is accepted by them as food.

With all his deficiencies, the Burmese soldier has one advantage over disciplined troops. He requires no commissariat, and is ready for service at a few minutes' notice. A few pounds of rice and a little gunpowder or fish-paste carried on his person sufficing for his very modest requirements. Not deficient in pluck, cheerful, obedient, and patient under physical hardship, it is found that for sudden and short expeditions, to chase rebels or punish freebooters, he is second to none.

There were reasonable hopes, therefore, of making him thoroughly efficient j but, in spite of every effort, the experiment had to be abandoned. The Burman is impracticable as regards routine and discipline. As soldiers, there- fore, they are thoroughly out of the question. These defects of character are also prejudicial to their success in mechanical arts. A Burman will often try his hand at various trades, and not infrequently at the wane of life adopt the medical profession, which in Burma requires neither diploma nor training.

He may accordingly be styled ' Jack of all trades and master of none,' excepting in the case of those passed masters of Art, such as carving and jewellers' work, which require a long apprenticeship and steady applica- tion. Hence the lottery mania, due, it is said, to Italian teaching, which more or less ruined the country in Theebaw's time. In spite of these shortcomings, the Burmese possess many admirable qualities, which enlist the sympathy and interest of all who are brought into contact with them.

Entirely free from all prejudices of caste, they make no difference be- tween the despised Pariah from the coast of Coromandel and the twice-born
All men with them are equal, excepting the King, his ministers, and the priests. Strictly tolerant in matters of religion, Christians, Jews, Mahomedans and Hindus are allowed to practise the rites of their several religions without let or hindrance. With surprising candour, their teachers allow that Christianity is almost as good as Buddhism, but opine that the latter suits Europeans and Americans and the latter the people of Indo-China; therefore, while on the one hand they do not care to attempt the conversion of the Chris- tians, on the other, they cannot understand why Christian missionaries should not also let them alone.

No calamity is so overwhelming as to cause the Burman to despond. Buoyant and elastic, he soon recovers from personal or domestic disaster. His cattle may die of murrain, his crops may be destroyed, his house and all his belongings may be burned, without putting him out very much.

Like Mark Tapley, he is 'jolly' under all circumstances. Few Burmans care to amass much wealth, and when one does so he spends most of it building pagodas, monasteries, caravansaries, or other works for the public benefit, so as to acquire thereby religious merit for himself and his future transmigrations. But, though riches have no charm for them, they are great dabblers in small mercantile ventures.

They are also distinguished for their great public spirit, often shown at much personal sacrifice. For the Burmese Government never provided in any way for public works, leaving it to the people to construct roads, bridges, wells, ponds, caravansaries, and the like, for the public utility.

Vanity, or ambition, or charity, or perhaps all three combined, inspire the people, as they inspire many public-spirited people with ourselves, when they desire to be public benefactors. But, whatever their motives, the public certainly profits by the results, and expresses its sense of benefits received by conferring on the donors honorary titles much esteemed by the recipients.

The Burman has an amazing aptitude for adapting himself to circumstances; so much so, that it is hardly too much to say that, if the humblest coolie were suddenly made a grandee, he would comport himself in his new sphere as if to the manner born. He is generally free from care.

A bountiful soil supplies all his modest wants with little labour; ambition has no charms for him, and he jogs through life merrily, lazily, and aimlessly. If he has not actually found the philosopher’s stone, he has perhaps more nearly succeeded in achieving that feat than any other member of the human race. To sum up, the Burman, with his numerous faults, has many virtues. Centralisation and other results of what is termed Progress tend, alas! Absolutely free from care as is the Burman, blessed with a happy and contented disposition as well as a buoyant temperament which makes light of the ills to which flesh is heir, enjoying as he does a life of great tranquillity, the most ardent reformer cannot help feeling a pang at the thought that this Arcadian existence must be pushed aside in the hurry of an advancing civilisation, whose teachings will necessarily dissipate the fond imaginings inspired by their drama and national history.

The matter-of-fact prose of every-day life must usurp the place of the romantic idylls of the past. The Burmese woman enjoys a personality so distinct that she is entitled to be treated separately. Though theoretically inferior to her male prototype as regards progress towards Nirvana, Neipa, or Everlasting Rest, to which all good Buddhists aspire, practically she is his equal in everything connected with present mundane affairs.

She enjoys an incomparably higher position than do women of other Eastern countries, and vies even with her Western sisters in this respect, inasmuch as she has voluntarily con- ceded to her, by custom as well as by law, all that is clambered for by the most zealous advocates of women’s rights. There was then, as there is now in Burma, perfect freedom between the sexes, and the influence of women was as powerful as it is now weak. An unbending policy of non-interference with the religions of the people of India has, to the lasting and ineffable reproach of the British Government, entailed intolerable misery and humiliation on many millions of Indian women.

Amid the plaudits? But it still permits infant marriages, which are the cause of untold misery in India, and consigns to a living death of infamous slavery the unfortunate widows it has rescued by its well-intentioned, but, in a Hindu sense, abortive philanthropy. When the scandal of condoning such a demonic practice as Sati became so pronounced that its suppression in the interests of ordinary morality was admitted as a foregone conclusion by those charged with the administration of the country, many learned and complaisant Pundits were found capable of proving that this course was justifiable according to Hindu law.

So if infant marriages were declared unlawful, and adequate relief and protection afforded to Hindu widows, equally learned and equally accommodating Pundits would doubtless be forthcoming, and able to quote precedents in favour of the new departure. In dealing with the women of Burma, fortunately, we are not, as was the case with Hindu women, obliged to carry out legacies devised by the cruelty or the heartlessness of man.

We possess a tahuh. Monastery schools exist in almost every village. Girls, however, are denied this privilege. The celibate teachers would be scandalised at the very notion of conducting a girls’ school.

The Vini or code for the guidance of Buddhist monks is very strict as regards their conduct towards females, insisting on their hiding their faces behind fans when preaching, lest the charms of the ladies listening to them when expounding the Law should cause them to succumb to the lust of the eye.

A member of the Sacred Order is not allowed to sleep under the same roof, travel in the same carriage or boat, much less to touch a female; the last prohibition including the monk’s mother, even if she be in danger of drowning, unless there be no other aid available, and then he must not hold out his hand, but only offer her his habit or his staff to cling to, and thus save her. He durst not even allow his natural feelings to affect him, but must school himself into imagining that he is merely pulling out a log of wood!

Practically, therefore, so far as elementary education of males is concerned, Burma compares favourably with even Western countries, while that of females is backward. Girls very early develop the trading talent for which their mothers are proverbial, and those of the poorer classes are
utilised in this way long before boys exhibit a speciality for anything more practical for making their way in the world than football or nine-pins.

They cannot, however, in defiance of public opinion as it now exists, and in the absence of a demand for female labour, compete successfully for clerkships or other employments of which males now enjoy the monopoly.

Hence they deem there is no need that they should qualify thereto; so their brothers distance them in purely literary efforts, though the girls more than hold their own in all that concerns the ordinary affairs of life. Owing to the interest taken in the instruction of girls and women by missionaries of all denominations, and the hearty encouragement and support accorded thereto by Government, female education has made considerable progress under British rule.

It must necessarily, however, be a plant of slow growth. Barring the utilitarian view, there is absolutely no prejudice against the education of women, so we may hope that the impulse already given thereto will be productive of the happiest results. Important as the subject of their mental culture undoubtedly is, attention to the physical well-being of actual and possible mothers in a country whose chief want is population is a far more imperative duty.

The exquisite suffering which at child-birth is the natural heritage of women is intensely aggravated at a critical time in their lives by the practice prevalent in Burma, whereby the patient is subject to torture by fire for seven days, and drenched with drastic and powerfully-scented drinks, with the professed object of eliminating noxious humours, but resulting in prematurely aging the victim.

This barbarous custom, though universal in places unaffected by Western civilisation, is happily becoming obsolete in the larger towns under the influence and example of women of other nationalities. The National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India, so successfully inaugurated by the Countess of Dufferin, has a most promising field for its operations in Burma, where exist none of the caste prejudices which in India are often so fatal to schemes intended to ameliorate the condition of the natives.

It seemed to me, then, that, if only the people of India could be made to realise that their women have to bear more than their necessary share of human suffering, and that it rests with the men of this country and with the women of other nationalities to relieve them of that unnecessary burden, then surely the men would put their shoulders to the wheel and would determine that the wives and mothers and sisters and daughters dependent upon them should, in time of sickness and pain, have every relief that human skill and tender nursing can afford them.

In spite of what matter-of-fact Western theologians may say to the contrary, the Burman knows that, by the inexorable fiat of Buddhist law, he cannot claim to be more than a mere animal, unless he submits to the ordeal of Buddhist baptism, which entails shaving the head, abandoning the world, donning the mendicant's dress, and becoming a monk—even if it be only for twenty-four hours.

About Far Cathay And Farther India Writer

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