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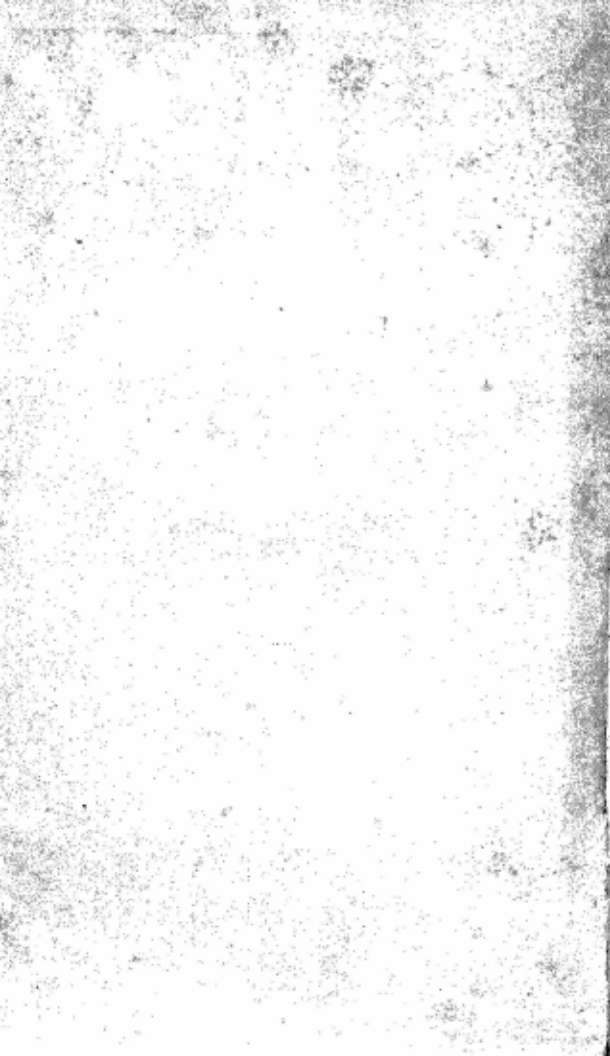
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THE BURMAN  
HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS

289/67

VOL. II.



# THE BURMAN

## HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS

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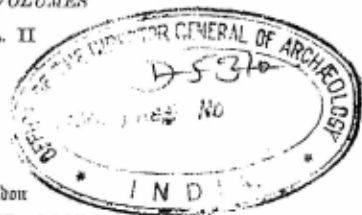
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BY  
SHWAY YOE  
SUBJECT OF THE GREAT QUEEN



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# THE BURMAN;

## *HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS.*

### CHAPTER I.

#### DANCING.

DANCING, though an accomplishment in which every Burmese man or woman is more or less proficient, is, as elsewhere in the East, never carried on simply for personal amusement. That custom, together with elaboration of the two sexes dancing in couples, is entirely a western invention. If a great man wants dancing he hires people to do it for him. If indeed he becomes greatly excited at a boat race, a buffalo fight, or a religious procession on its way through the town to the pagoda, he may tuck up his pasoh tightly round his thighs and caper away till his bare legs tire, but he does so ordinarily with a ludicrously solemn aspect, as if the performance were a part of his official duties, and to be got through with as much stately dignity as the dispensing of justice from the magisterial bench. It is a concession to the excitability of his nature, and he would be very much offended if next day, when he had calmed down to his ordinary composed demeanour, an

Englishman were to compliment him on the agility he displayed, or the complexity of his evolutions on the previous day.

With the young people it is different, but only to a certain extent. Most of them, if they have any aptitude that way, practise dancing for the sake of the applause and admiration it may get for them when they perform in a village procession, at the initiation of a young friend into a monastery, or at one of the great religious feasts, such as Tawadehn-tha, or even at a funeral. But as a general rule no lessons are taken other than watching noted performers. The ambitious usually confine themselves to practise in out-of-the-way places by themselves, trusting to natural ability and good ear to help them in the harmonious movement of head, limbs, and body, to the sound of the music. The women who dance as professionals in the plays have to go through a very rigorous course, not that there are any complicated steps to be learnt, but that they may acquire the pliancy of body necessary for the india-rubber contortions into which they have to writhe their bodies.

There are therefore no distinctions of dances, according to regular varieties of movements. These are pretty well regulated both by professionals and amateurs according to individual fancy. If such a thing as an "encore" existed in Burma, it would probably puzzle the dancer to repeat the step exactly as it has been gone through before. This of course refers to individual dancing, and does not by any means apply to the yehn pwès, where a carefully trained troupe goes through pre-arranged movements with well-drilled precision. There may be said to be really only two kinds of dancing: individual, or it might almost be called irresponsible dancing, such as is seen in the plays and at various religious or social ceremonies; and the yehn pwès

the figure, or "country" dances, where much practice and working together is imperatively necessary. A zaht-oke, or theatre manager, will tell you that there are four or perhaps five kinds; the dancing of the zaht pwè, the regular drama; that of the yahma zaht (the Ramayana), which is of a much wilder and energetic character; the dancing of the a-nyehn-thama, the trained companies of ballet-dancers, who perform in the palace before the king and princes to the sound of the pattala, the harp, or the flute. These are simply glorified yehns, and the *dansuses* are often most gorgeously dressed with gilded pyramidal crowns, and wings on their legs. Fourthly, there is the bohn-shay pwè, a performance of much the same kind, except that it is gone through to the music of the instrument of that name, a long kettle-drum-like thing, much the same as the tom-tom of India. This latter variety is considered old-fashioned, and is not often seen now, notwithstanding that it is called Byaw, after the great Thabin-woon, who is particularly fond of it. The fifth style of dancing, according to the player's idea, is the performance of the ordinary domestic youth on festive occasions, when he prances about like an extremely self-conscious turkey-cock in the style that suits his capabilities best.

There are a great variety of names for special dances, but in all there is the same waving of hands and weaving of paces. The hands, fingers, elbows, and shoulders, are twisted about as if they were circular jointed; the legs are doubled up and extended in the same fantastic and tentacular fashion, while the body seems to wind and bend in any direction with equal facility. I am not a *connoisseur* in dancing myself, and will only add that Europeans as a rule find no attractions in the dancing except the marvellous sensitiveness to time, and the extreme tension in which every muscle of the body is constantly kept.

Little though the dancing of the men resembles European saltation, that of the girls is still farther from active motion and definite figures. This is no doubt in great part due to the Burmese female dress. The *tamehn* is simply a square cloth folded round the body and tucked in so that the opening is down the front. This necessitates some adroitness even in walking, and renders all active motions incompatible with modesty. When they dance the skirt is sewn or pinned down the front, so that the girl is, as it were, in a narrow bag, reaching down to her feet and trailing about on the ground in an eighteen-inch or two-foot train. Even thus hampered their dances are much more animated than those of the Indian nautch girls, but still do not go greatly beyond posturing. Nevertheless, the natural and graceful attitudes into which they throw the body, and the cleverness with which they manœuvre their hands and arms, so different from European awkwardness with these members, is not without a charm. It is quite a common thing to see a girl bend over backwards till her lips touch the mat upon which she stands, and pick up from the ground rupees thrown there by the spectators. In Mandalay, I have seen a performer double up all her members, head and all, into a space represented by the length of her trunk, and compact enough to be put into an ordinary-sized portmanteau.

The *zaht-thama*, the professional actresses, usually dance to their own singing and often improvise with wonderful cleverness, when performing before a celebrity, or any one whom it is especially desired to honour. Many of them acquire a reputation that extends all over the country, and are often sought for in vain by the wealthiest play-goers. Chief among them is the *Yeen-daw Mah-lay*, the "Mandalay Diva," who is known to every English official or man of importance who has visited Mandalay within the

last twenty years. Unlike most Eastern women, she keeps remarkably well, and though her voice is beginning to give way, she makes up as well as she did nearly twenty years ago, when she sang in Amarapoora, the City of the Immortals. There were few Englishmen who saw her perform, ten years since, before Lord Mayo in Rangoon—she was sent down specially from Mandalay by the late king for that purpose—who could have believed that she was then close on forty.

An accomplishment greatly affected by the coryphées is the extraordinary faculty of moving local muscles, the remainder of the body being perfectly quiet. Many of the men, especially the clowns of the piece, can do the same thing, but it is usually brought in by them only as a mockery of the lady. She will extend the arms alternately and cause the muscles to rise and fall and twitch so vigorously that it may be seen yards off. Similarly the bosom heaves as if violently agitated by passion or exertion, while the face remains perfectly impassive.

These displays are all, however, comparatively uninteresting to foreigners. The posturing and waving of hands, however graceful and supple, become tiresome, and the more so the oftener they are seen. (But it is different with the yehn pwè, the choral dances, which are very often executed by amateurs, and imply considerable skill and long practice under competent instructors. The *coup d'œil* is very attractive, and the effect of the different groupings quite as good as anything to be seen in the incidental ballet of the European stage, while the brilliance of the dresses and the ebbing and flowing chorus of the dancers adds to the picturesqueness of the whole. The yehn flourishes most in small villages, where the most promising of the youth of both sexes are taken in charge by a skilled sayah, who trains them assiduously together until they have attained

perfection. Even in these dances the sexes do not mingle. There are mehmma yehn and youkya yehn, the former usually eschewing complex movements, and sitting in rows on the ground, richly decked with bracelets, and dahleezan necklaces falling over their silken vests or tight-fitting lace bodices. The dancing consists of the usual pirouetting, or perhaps it ought to be called winding, on both feet, with much serpentine movements of the arms and the head. The loosening of the elbow-joint is greatly practised by Burmese girls with a view to these performances, and also under the impression that it is elegant in itself. From early years the arm is so manipulated that the forearm can be bent back so as to form a curve outwards, and this accomplishment is steadily exhibited on all occasions in public by a belle who has acquired it. Very often the mehmma yehn is performed by a body of girls, who succeed one another in successive groups. All are seated at first. The chorus begins in a low recitative gradually swelling until at last the first group rise and go through a stately performance. They are succeeded by the next row who are more lively in their movements, and so on to the last, who are usually young girls, and are much more rapid and varied in their figures than their elder predecessors. Finally all join in some complicated evolutions, and finish up seated in some pre-arranged figure. But as a rule the mehmma yehns, though pretty enough as a mere spectacle, have not sufficient action to redeem them from the accusation of tiresome sameness brought against individual dancing.

In the men's dances it is different. At the commencement all are seated, four or five in the front row, and forming a column of perhaps ten or more rows. The conductor gives the sign and all bow down with closed hands raised to the forehead in salutation to the great man

in whose honour the dance is given. Then they begin singing in chorus in the usual way. The song treats in a rambling way of the past history of the village, its ancient princes and heroes; its victories in boat-races, boxing matches, or mains of cocks. Interpolated are catch phrases for the guidance of the dancers. At a certain word all spring to their feet; they sway to the right, to the left; white handkerchiefs are drawn from the belt and waved to the measure of the refrain, peeled white wands replace them; they pirouette simultaneously, they troop round in procession in movements resembling figures in the Lancers, or the Haymakers, the time varying with the measure of the song, dying away in plaintive sounds almost to quiescence, and then suddenly rising to excited movement of every limb as the words tell of a *let-pwè*, in which some local hero of the "fancy" did glorious deeds, or a fight long years ago when the village spearmen carried the day. Then the measure changes again, the alterations in time being always heralded by some such refrain as *toh yehn daw tha, lay mounng yoh wa*, a kind of warning hung out after the manner of the first word of a military command. Occasionally a *yehn troupe* which has acquired particular skill and renown travels about the country on special invitation. Rangoon is often supplied with its "country dances" in this way, the townspeople not having the time, or being too numerous to form a good company for themselves. But they very rarely become regular professionals in the same way as the play actors do; they never perform ostensibly to gain a living, and the dances always occur on some fête day, whether in their own place, or in the village to which they have been invited. Their instructor always receives a sum of money to recompense him for his trouble and to pay for the



expenses of his troupe. Yehn pwès are performed ordinarily in private houses, or on a public platform, when it is a religious or special festival. A yehn is a favourite way of greeting a great man, or an English official on his arrival in a village. It is not so expensive as a zaht pwè, is more quickly arranged, allows the sons and daughters of the chief people to distinguish themselves, and lasts just as long as the person it is intended to honour pleases.

## CHAPTER II.

### MUSIC AND SONGS.

THERE are no teachers of music or singing in Burma, and there are no written scores. A musician commences his career by diligently listening to the performance of a good band. By and by he enters the village orchestra as a clapper player, and so learns the time and the peculiarities of various tunes, just as actors rise from the posturing and choruses of children's and country yohn pwè to the full dignity of dramatic performers. As a natural consequence there are occasionally variations, and indeed every puloay, or flute-player, has his own particular mannerisms, but these are never so great as to materially alter the character of the air, and such tunes as the tay-dat, a-poo-deik, lohn-gyin and so forth, which occur in every zaht, are as familiar to everybody as "God save the Queen" and "Auld Lang Syne" are to an Englishman. Nevertheless it is very difficult for a foreigner to catch the air, and I have not been able to get an English score of any of the really old national tunes. The melody given later on was taken down from the playing of a well-known pwè leader in Maulmein, and has been harmonised for the town brass band by Mr. W. G. St. Clair of that place, to whom I am indebted for the score. So true is it to the air that many

right hand touches the strings, while the singer plays to his own accompaniment. A similar instrument is the mee-gyoung, "the crocodile," a sort of guitar with three strings, stretched over a hollow sounding-board, shaped like that uninviting saurian. It is somewhat too primitive, however, to be popular, except with sentimental people. Finally there is the pattala, or bamboo harmonicon, as some call it. This instrument has always evoked approval from even the most fastidious of foreigners, as a singular instance of sweetness of sound produced from most unpromising materials. It consists of a carved and painted box, long and narrow and with high rising ends. From each of the corners of these sides are suspended strings, which hang down in a parabolic curve over the low centre of the box, and to these strings are attached flat strips of bamboo, placed at close intervals. Their tone is regulated by the more or less complete thinning out of the centre of the under side, and little sticks are used to strike them with. The notes produced are surprisingly clear and melodious.

Fiddles may often be heard played with greater or less skill, especially on the pagoda steps by blind and deformed beggars, but the instrument is not national, and is never, or but rarely, found where Europeans have not penetrated. The same may be said of the young Burmans who play in Rangoon on the concertina and the English fife and piccolo. It is flattering to national pride to notice with what accuracy and rapidity they pick up English airs.

But except at funerals and other solemn occasions instrumental music is looked upon not so much as a means of enjoyment in itself as an accompaniment to the human voice, and mere orchestral concerts would never draw the crowds which a single good singer can always command. The recitative character of the music is always

more evident in the singing than in the instruments, and each "prince" or "princess" has individual peculiarities in the way of trills and staccatos introduced into the legitimate air. As the young musician learns by hanging about the band, so a vocalist follows an acknowledged great singer about and imitates his style, or at any rate learns the tunes and the words. The latter are, however, very immaterial, for the language itself is so melodious that it is easy to express the ideas in rhythm as you go on. Moungh Thah Byaw, the great singer of the day, always makes his songs as he sings them, and this is so well known that whenever he appears, whether in a regular play or only to sing a few airs, there are always thirty or forty reporters sitting round to take down his words in their parabeik. This peculiarity of the Tha-bin-woon has occasionally got him into trouble. A somewhat incomprehensible piece of palace etiquette renders it treasonable to sing a than-zan, a new song, before the king. Moungh Thah Byaw has several times, whether through too great laziness to learn the words, or the force of habit, transgressed this rule, and has actually been ordered out to execution. But he sang to the htoung hmoos and the pah gwet, and these grim customers, unable to resist the melody of this latter-day Orpheus, have hid him away and exhibited some less talented person's body in evidence of having carried out their orders. Then when the next palace concert came on, the king—his late majesty—would grow tired of the ordinary vocalists and regret that the great improvisatore was gone. Whereupon Moungh Thah Byaw would promptly come forth and sing his sweetest. He has been killed in this way several times, and is now not above fifty years of age—a little older than the *prima donna*, Yeendaw Mah-lay.

The honours he receives are quite on a par with

European admiration of musical talent. He has a patent to carry a golden umbrella, and, as Tha-bin-woon, has magisterial powers to punish those who offend him or refuse to obey his edicts. Two lictors go before him to clear the way, a white cloth being tied round their fasces as a distinctive mark. When he performs in a play a low yaza mat, or royal fence, extends across the front of the stage, and at the ends are planted his golden htee and a banana-tree. The latter distinction is also granted to Moungh Thah Zahn and Moungh Moo, singers only inferior to the Tha-bin-woon himself.

If the tunes are not easily reduced to regular rules, the difficulty with the metres is not less. There exist, indeed, written laws ordaining the number of feet to the verse, but they are as lightly regarded as is consistent with their recognition at all. Much more precision is indeed expected in the old tunes than in those of modern date, but even with them song-writers of the present time allow themselves very considerable freedom. The original *linga* are all very short. Thus the *pyoh* has but four syllables; *ka-bya*, four; *yatoo*, six and four; *lootah*, four; *ya-gan*, six and four; *è-gyin*, four, five, and six; *hmaw-lohn*, four and six; *peik-zohn*, four; *lay-gyoh*, four; *sah-gyin*, four, five, and six, and so forth. In the *than-zan*, or new tunes, however, the compass of the lines often approaches the portentous length of some of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Such modern tunes are the *kayah-than* (so-called English), *doh-bat-than*, *na-bay-than*, *nan-thehn yohdaya* (Siamese), and *pyee-gyee-than* (Chinese). Such compositions as the *lohn-gyin* and *ngoh-gyin* cannot be designated otherwise than as musical prose, with occasional fits of metre, prompted by their dolorous character. They are usually the wails of despondent lovers and the laments of *divorcées*, unhappily all too common (in plays and song-

books). Such, too, are the *soung-ba-sah*, the ardent epistles of separated sweethearts.

The question of rhyme is even more puzzling. Some compositions not intended to be sung, such as notably the *sè-hnit ya-thee bwè*, songs about the twelve months of the year, giving an account of their characteristics, the *pwès* that take place in them, and so on, are written with regular final rhymes, while the other laws of prosody, *shi'-lohn ta-beik*, *koh-lohn ta-beik*, and so forth, are fairly strictly observed. But in the songs of the plays and such-like productions, rhyme runs absolute riot, so that it is quite common for every word in a line to rhyme with the corresponding word in the second verse of the couplet.

Thus in the *kayah than*, translated below, there are abundance of lines like the following :—

*Theo-zah loh loh*  
*Moo-yah poh poh.*

Or—

*Ma yoh lay hnan kyeok*  
*A-poh lay tau louk.*

Or in the *Taydat*—

*Ta koh dè pa*  
*Ma soh bô hma*  
*A ngo thò hla.*

Such rhymes occur in an abundance that makes them the most prominent characteristic of the verse, but it is impossible to reproduce them except in another monosyllabic language. English, of all others, offers the greatest difficulties to the translator.

I have done my best to reproduce the following *Kayah-than*, "The Sound of the Trumpet," as nearly as possible in the varying metre of the original. Those who are best able to judge of the success of the attempt will be the most lenient in their criticism. I may mention that the tune

was originally composed to the words of a song in honour of the accession of King Theebaw, but words on all manner of subjects have been written to it since :—

## RANGOON MAIDENS.

O, the girls of Rangoon town,  
They are fairies who've come down  
From seats of nats, beyond the skies, sure here their likes are none.  
And the fragrance on their cheek,  
Gad, it makes a man feel weak,  
And their hair so black and glossy with jet wavelets in the sun.

Ye maidens fair,  
With graces rare,  
Your faces and your ways they are a pair ;  
Nat-maidens are renowned,  
But to say this I am bound—  
If you were mixed  
We should be fixed,  
For who could tell the fairy from the fair !  
You're so slender  
And so tender,  
You are like Waythandaya's queen,  
And when Baranee is seen,  
Who goddess is of flowers on the green,  
Men say,  
'Ameh !

Such a likeness, I am sure, ne'er was seen.'  
Ah, when we meet by chance,  
My heart's all in a dance,  
You're so dangerously, murderously fair.  
The diamond ear-ring's light  
Like a meteor glows at night,  
With the lightning of the hairpin in the midnight gloom of hair.

The Southern Queen,  
The right-hand Queen,  
She who sits supreme, alone  
By the monarch on the throne,  
She the greatest of the Four ;  
List, sweet maids whom I adore,  
Dark-skinned or fair,  
Slim, *débonnaire*,

She has robes, a kingdom's joy,  
 That two hundred looms employ;  
 But the silken flowers you wear,  
 You may dare with her compare,  
     Rangoon maids.  
 With gay kerchief o'er the bosom,  
 With sweet swaying of the shoulder,  
     Without art  
 Ye inflict on one or two some  
 Wounds that love will hardly soder  
     In the heart.  
 O that curve in the round arm!  
 It has wrought men grievous harm.  
 Like the sylphs when they're at play,  
 Like the maids of Mandalay,  
     Without display  
     In every-day  
     Quiet dresses they  
     Are basked and gay

As the daughters of the palace, as the maidens of the skies  
 In their natural, their usual array.

O! could I but sing what I think,  
 My heart would no more on the brink  
 Of despairing love struggle and sink,  
 Ye maidens to heavens the link;  
     Each passer-by  
     Who casts his eye  
 Upon the buxom Hanthawaddy girls,  
     Though he be sage,  
     His feelings wage  
 Fierce war within his brain-pan till it whirls.

Dewah daughters, fair, fair,  
 Rose-bud fairies, ware, ware,  
 Born men's hearts to snare, snare,  
     Can I paint your ways,  
     Better sound your praise,  
     In verse  
     That's terse

Than thus: You're fair as any maid in Mandalay.

Baranee is a daughter of nats, corresponding very much  
 to the classical Flora.



Madee, the spouse of Prince Waythandaya, is always regarded as the model wife.

Ameh! "mother!" is the invariable exclamation of all Burmans on all possible occasions of astonishment, anger, doubt, or delight.

The name Hanthawaddy, properly applied to the whole province, is, in songs, usually employed to designate Rangoon, for rhythmical more than any other reason, just as Mamyay, or Myay, or Man, stands for Mandalay.

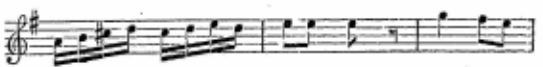
"Rose-bud fairies," called bohn-gyoh, are daughters of nats, who having stayed in the country of the dewahs for a thousand years, are obliged to come down to the seat of man again. They are born from roses. Such charming hours apparently particularly affect Rangoon.

The following is the air as written down by Mr. St. Clair:—

KAYAH-THAN.

M  $\frac{1}{4}$  = 64







Next to the "Sound of the Trumpet" the Doh-bat-than is probably the most popular air, and is certainly the next most familiar to the English ear. It may be called the refrain-song, and is remarkable for the long dwelling and trilling on the last note of each stanza. The doh is the seed with which 'aim is taken in the game of gohn-nyin-htoh, and pat, or bat, is to twist or spin. The metre here is not so complicated:—

#### SERENADE.

Love united,  
 Troth so fondly plighted,  
 Love's light with life first lighted.  
 Sigh, my dear,  
 In me here,  
 Long with fear,  
 Now thou'rt near;  
 Long and sigh, my dear.

Flew the storm-cloud,  
 Rose and shrieked the winds loud,  
 Came I, yet and lowly bowed,  
 Cold as lead  
 Here I sped,  
 For love dead  
 Bent my head,  
 Lonesome for love dead.

The thehn-nats play,  
See through wild rain I stray,  
Drenched, but sad from thee away :  
Sad and lone.  
Sweet, my own,  
Be not gone,  
Hear me moan,  
Sweet love, hear my moan.

Love, the cloud-rack  
Flashed blue gleams of hope back,  
Broke and furled its fringes black ;  
Here I wait  
At thy gate ;  
Open straight,  
Be not late,  
Hot with hope I wait.

My pet is fair  
With flowers twined in her hair,  
Kerchief gold-meshed like a snare,  
Like a net  
Fairly set  
Hearts to get,  
Sweet my pet,  
Mine lies in that net.

Courtly story  
Tells of queenly glory :  
My queen's as fair and more, aye.  
Eyebrow tint,  
Just a glint,  
Slightest hint  
Of art in 't,  
Eyebrow's pencilled tint.

Painted cheeks sweet,  
Nosegay where all scents meet,  
See, I throw me at thy feet.  
There is none  
To be won,  
No not one  
'Neath the sun,  
Like my love there's none.

The thehn-nats are certain spirits, or superior beings, who preside over the showers. It rains whenever they come out of their houses (the stars), to sport about and have mimic fights in the air. The thunder and the lightning are the clashing and shining of the celestial arms. When the sun is in the house of the goat it is very hot, and the thehn-nats do not come out. To arouse them from their lethargy, if the rains are long of coming, it is a common custom in country places to have a lohn-swè-thee, a tug of war. A chain or a stout cable is got, and the villages divide themselves into two parties, and pull and shout and get up as much excitement as possible, to stimulate the thehn-nats to exert themselves also. A lohn-swè-thee sometimes continues for nearly an hour without definite result.

The "painted cheeks," or "fragrant cheeks," so frequently mentioned in all these love-songs, refers to the thana'kha, a sweet-scented, straw-coloured powder made from the bark and roots of the *Murraya paniculata*, a flowering shrub of the citron species. Some girls, and especially some actresses, have particular recipes for making up the cosmetic into a moist paste. It is applied with the finger, and a good deal of skill is exhibited in putting on the requisite amount. Unpractised hands usually smear on far too much, and it cracks and looks unpleasant. On others it is barely visible. All girls use it, and not a few town dandies.

The following may be regarded as somewhat of an approach to the European *vers de société*. I have not attempted to imitate the original metre:—

THE CIGAR-MAIDEN OF MADRYAH, NEAR MANDALAY.

Thy cheroots, so deftly fingered,  
Famous are in Burma's land,  
Many a chief has fondly lingered,  
Watched the maiden's nimble hand.

Madeyah, I'd spare to sing thee  
For cheroots and dainty maids,  
For their crispness doth but bring thee  
Sorrow from the palace blades.

By the throne's great gilded grandeur  
Sits the prince, cheroot in hand,  
And behind him little Mah Nyo,  
Pearl of all the village band.

Burnt up all my love and sighing,  
Like the ash of his cigar ;  
Hopes dispelled and idly flying,  
Like the smoke he puffs afar.

Thy cheroots so deftly fingered,  
Madeyah are silver-white,  
But the prince that came and lingered,  
Stole away the hamlet's light.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE TAWADEHNTHA FEAST.

NEXT to the uproarious merriment of the New Year's feast in the spring, the festival of Tawadehntha is probably the most joyous and striking of the Burmese religious ceremonies. It is not of universal observance. Some districts keep it up with much more pomp than others, but are not always equally enthusiastic every year in the way in which they celebrate it. In Rangoon and Mandalay, however, it is carried out regularly with greater or less magnificence, and preparations for the procession and the performance of the mystery play often go on for many months beforehand.

The feast commences on the first of the waning moon of Ta'soungmohn, about the beginning of November, and lasts over three days. It is commemorative of the Lord Buddha's ascent from the earth to preach the Sacred Law to his mother, Maya, then a Queen of dewahs in Tawadehntha, the second nat-heaven. He was staying at the time in the country of Thawattee (probably the place now called Fyzabad), in the Zaytawoon monastery, and thence in three steps compassed the distance to the nat-heaven, situated above the Myemmohtoung, the centre

of the universe.<sup>1</sup> Arrived in the nat-seat, the Buddha preached a sermon on the duties of filial gratitude, to a vast congregation of byammahs, nat-dewahs, and arahats, and having expounded the Law which was to lead them into the noble path of deliverance, descended again by a magnificent ladder composed in separate strips of gold, silver, and precious stones, to the neh'ban kyoung, where he received the usual pious offerings of the people on his arrival, on the day of the full moon of Thadingyoot.

To recall this event in the Buddha's life is the object of the feast, and the preparation of the stage often takes considerably over a week, notwithstanding the facility with which bamboo buildings are run up in Burma. A platform is prepared, from twenty to fifty or sixty feet in height, according to the subscriptions and the scale on which it is intended to carry out the performance. Over this is raised a gaily decorated pya-that, the tower-like spire with seven diminishing roofs, characteristic of sacred buildings, and leading up to it is a sloping way, representing the Soung-dan, the path by which Shin Gautama ascended. Sometimes there is a similar sloping descent on the other side, figuring the ladder which led down to the monastery in the neighbourhood of Sampa Thanahgo, but more often the ascent and descent are compassed on the same slope, which comes to an abrupt end six or eight feet from the ground, on a level platform, covered by an ordinary roof, if it represents merely the earth, or the sacred pya-that if it does duty also for the neh'ban kyoung. Half-way up there is sometimes a covered stage,

<sup>1</sup> He had just finished a display of miracles on an immense road, constructed by him from one side of the world to the other, before a crowd covering an area of thirty-six yoozanas. The leader of the heretics who challenged the display of wonders, a man named Poorana, was so overcome with chagrin that he tied himself to a weighted jar and was drowned.



representing the Oogandaw hill, on which the Lord Buddha found purchase for his final step to the nat-dewah country. On the first day of the feast, usually about eight o'clock at night, the whole scene being lighted up by the brilliant moon, occasionally rather spoilt by smoky torches and the evil-smelling fumes of open crude-oil lamps, the procession begins. The image of the Teacher of the Law, always represented sitting cross-legged, is mounted on a little carriage, fitted to run on a tramway reaching right up to the top, and is dragged up by means of a rope and a windlass. This is done slowly and in a rather jerky fashion, partly because the apparatus does not admit of greater expedition, but principally to prolong the function as much as possible, so that all the people may see it and greater merit may be gained. Surrounding the Buddha is a great company of worshippers from all the higher seats of the universe, earthly kings in royal dress, the white umbrella borne over their heads, and ministers and pages at hand with trailing robes and gorgeous peacock fans; nat-dewahs and their rulers in rainbow hues, with wings on arm and thigh; byammahs from the thoughtful realms of the upper sky; a glittering throng, all uniting in praise to the Saviour of the World, the chant rising and falling on the night air as they slowly ascend. As a general thing it takes quite an hour to get up. There are many doxologies to be sung, and the performers, all laymen from the town, have paid many rupees for their dresses and want as many people to see their grandeur as possible. Technically, on the first night the image should go no further than the Oogandaw hill, but, as already said, this half-way house very often does not exist at all, and even when it does there is usually no more than half-an-hour's halt, and then the procession goes on to Tawadehntha, the spire-covered platform on the summit. There the gay

throng gather round the image in the attitude of adoration, and a man with a powerful voice stands behind it and declaims the sermon written down in the sacred books as having been preached on the occasion. The subject is filial piety. "I, the great Sramana, the mightiest of all beings, the teacher of neh'ban and the Law; I, the all-powerful, who by my preaching can lead my mother into the path of salvation and the final deliverance; I, who know all things and have beat down the passions under my feet; even I, with all this can but repay the debt due to one of the breasts that suckled me. What then can man offer in love and gratitude to the mother who nourished him at her breast?"

The sermon takes very much less time than the ascent. There is a Burmese proverb—

"Sah nahtoung thaw  
Tayny pyaw."

"When the Pohngyee preaches  
No harm the sleeper reaches;"

that is to say, no great evil can befall you when you are assisting, in presence of body, if in no other way, at the exercise of so meritorious a ceremony as the expounding of the Law. Accordingly the great crowd, who have been looking on with much interest at the progress up the taper-lit soung-dan, commence generally to prepare for sleep in the zayats which surround the place where the stage is, or failing accommodation there, curl themselves up as comfortably as may be under the bullock-carts which brought them thither. A still greater proportion, however, gather together in circles to have a gossip, and this talk, accompanied by much smoking and chewing of pickled tea and betel, goes on till far into the night. An excuse for the scant reverence paid to the sermon, to which none but

a few white-haired men and women listen, is, that what part of it is not in Pali is in such *sugga-gyee*, such a lofty and stilted style of Burmese, that no one can follow it. Accordingly the discourse is hurried through and the performers come down, and after putting off their fine clothes receive the congratulations of their friends. The image remains all night in "*Tawadehntha*," and the following evening the descent is made with similar ceremonial, and so the dramatic part of the festival is concluded.

But this is very far from being the whole of the proceedings. On both days numerous presents are made to the *yahans* and offerings to the pagodas, and these are carried round about the town and by circuitous routes to the monasteries, so that the greatest amount of pleasure and publicity may accrue to the donors.

Chief among these offerings are always huge spires, some of them fifty feet high, representing *Tawadehntha*, and similar to that on the summit of the stage platform. They are made of bamboo covered with pasteboard, glittering with gold and silver paper and painted in many colours, and are carried by ten or twenty men, on long bamboo poles. Round about them dance all the youth of the quarter they are presented by, young men and girls, all in their brightest clothes. In Rangoon scores of these offerings wend their way to the monasteries under the shadow of the great *Shway Dago*hn.

Mingled up in the procession come white umbrellas, gold umbrellas, lofty bamboo poles with gilt balls quivering and swaying at the top, big pasteboard images of *nadewahs*, *beeboos*, princes, and animals, from the crawling turtle to the familiar two-legged (or six-legged, which you please) horse, all of them surrounded by their group of vigorous dancers. Most characteristic of the day are the *padaytha-bins*, a sort of Turanian Christmas-tree,

representing the fabled wishing-tree of the Northern Island and the heavens of the nats. In those regions the fairy branches bear whatever is wanted, from a savoury ragout to a complete suit of clothes. Upon earth the quivering bamboo twigs carry, dangling by strings, whatever the bazaar shops will supply, packets of scented soap, match-boxes, razors, clasp-knives, little looking-glasses, coloured glass tumblers, candles and dolls; and piled round the roots are heavier and more useful articles—blankets, mats bales of yellow cloth, and earthenware or lacquer begging-bowls. These trees, each with its attendant band of dancers, are carried round and finally deposited before the house of the head of the monastery. Occasionally a *ngway padaytha* is offered, if the inhabitants of the wealthy districts of the town are particularly pious. This silver *padaytha* is a tree similar to the rest, except that from its branches hang exclusively rupees and smaller silver coins, each wrapped up in a piece of tinsel or coloured paper. These silver trees, some of which are worth from 500 to 1,000 rupees, are more frequently presented to the pagodas than to the monasteries. In the former case the custodians of the shrine take charge of the money for the purposes of repair and the payment of watchmen; in the latter, the *kyoung-thah-gyee*, the *kappeeya dahyaka*, or lay steward of the monastery, receives the money, as indeed he takes the miscellaneous collection from the other wishing-trees, and dispenses all for the benefit of the *kyoung* and the giving of alms to poor travellers. It is noticeable, however, that the ascetic *Soola-gandee* monks would altogether refuse to accept such a temptation to break their vows as a silver rupee tree.

Spires and umbrellas, *padaytha*-bins and hobby-horses, hover about the streets on the way to the monasteries all day long throughout the duration of the festival, and at

night, after the mystery play is over, the bands which have been performing sedulously all day crash out again on the night air, and fragments of plays and songs are to be heard everywhere. Chief among the night amusements too is the presentation of the nagah, the huge serpent-like dragon, a great monster often considerably over a hundred feet long, formed of thin paper, distended on bamboo hoops. Each of these has a handle attached to it and a lighted taper fastened inside, and is carried by a man. The body is white, shading off into a blood-red head and jaws, and as the creature writhes its long folds and twists and darts from side to side of the road, the effect from a distance is very fine and startling on a first view. He plunges and coils about till the candles are nearly burnt out, and then is deposited with other offerings on the pagoda. All through the day and night there are generous people about, ready to give meat and drink, cheroots and betel, to any passer-by who chooses to afford them an opportunity of acquiring merit, for any act of charity accumulates koothoh, even though the object aided be base.

The offerings to the monks are also not confined to the fruit of the padaytha-bins. On the third day of the feast the image of Shin Gautama is carried away from the bamboo erection and dragged through the town in the early morning, the monks following with their begging pots and receiving the abundant alms prepared for them at the Sohn-daw-gyee feast, which is intimately connected with that of Tawadehntha, and commemorates as much the Lord Buddha's issuing from the neh'ban kyoung at Sampa Thanahgo to beg for his food on his return from the second heaven, as the pious gift of nogana, made after the long fast, by Thoozata.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A SOHN-DAW-GYEE FEAST.

It is written that in the solitude of Ooroo-wehla a woman named Theozata vowed an offering to the spirit of the place, if she should have a male child. The prayer was granted, and the offering prepared. A thousand cows, new-calved, were milked ; five hundred more were fed with this milk, and then with theirs two hundred and fifty more, and so on until the six noblest and best of all her herds produced a milk of surprising flavour and richness. This was boiled with sandal and fine spice in silver vessels, and fine ground rice, from chosen seed, set in new-broken ground, was added. Wonderful signs attended the preparation of the offering. A tha-gyah brought fuel to the fire ; the great Brahma held an umbrella over the silver lota ; four kings of nats sat by and watched ; while subject spirits infused rich honey into the nogana. When it was ready Theozata sent a servant to clear a place under a tree in the grove that she might make her offering to the wood-spirit. Sounama, the servant, found Shin Gautama sitting under the bawdee-tree. It was the day on which he attained the neh'ban of the passions, on which he became the Lord Buddha, and his face shone with a splendour beyond that of nats. Sounama returned

and told her mistress that the spirit of the grove had appeared in person to receive the offering. Thoozata poured the nogana into a golden cup, worth a hundred thousand pieces of silver, such a cup as is always presented to the payah-loung on the day wherein he becomes Buddha. Then she went to the grove, and prostrating herself humbly, made her offering, turned on the right, and retired. The Lord Buddha bathed in the river Nerit-zara, at a place where more than 100,000 Buddhas had bathed, before obtaining the supreme intelligence. Then he divided the nogana into forty-nine mouthfuls, ate it, and mounted the throne, whereon he sat for forty-nine days tasting no food, and combating Mahn Nat, the spirit of death and sin. But ere he lapsed into meditation he threw his golden bowl into the river. It ascended the stream swiftly, floated steadily for a short time, and then sank in a whirlpool far down, leagues beyond the earth into the country of the nagas, where it fell against the golden bowls of the three previous Budhs with a clang that resounded throughout the four worlds, and all things worshipped the present Lord:

" King and high Conqueror ! thine hour is come,  
This is the night the ages waited for."

This event in the life of Shin Gautama is commemorated in the Sohn-daw-gyee pwè. Sohn-thee is a sacred word set apart to denote the eating of members of the Holy Assembly, and, in remembrance of Thoozata's historic offering, the mendicants are feasted annually by the pious, with a splendour and profusion far exceeding the ordinary alms poured daily with unstinting hand into the begging-bowl. The date of the feast does not exactly correspond with the original event. According to the chronicle, the Lord Buddha attained the first state of

neh'ban in the month of Kasohn, about April, whereas the feast of Tawadehntha, with which the Sohn-daw-gyee is always immediately connected, is celebrated after Lent, at the full moon of Ta'soung-mohn in November. The festival is essentially one of the town rather than of the country. Except the New Year's Feast, none of the religious celebrations can be really called universal, and the Sohn-daw-gyee perhaps least of all. Villages and small country towns cannot get together the splendour necessary to distinguish the occasion from the ordinary domestic feasts, or even from the daily almsgiving to the mendicants. It is therefore in a large town like Rangoon, where there is a certain amount of money, and a facility for acquiring or borrowing ornaments and frippery, that the festivities are best seen. There the *fête*—the word is more appropriate than any implying more of a religious character—assumes the appearance of a gigantic reception, or *conversazione*. Streets and quarters of the town make up a common purse for general decorations and the erection of stages for hired troupes of actors, in addition to individual effort. The dates are arranged beforehand so that no two streets shall make their effort on the same night, and so lessen the enjoyment of the public, or draw away from the expected number of spectators. A committee is elected, or appoints itself, and having got as much money as possible, hires the best available dancers and actors for the zaht pwè, if possible a puppet troupe also, and in addition, as many unattached mummers and clowns as can be got, whose business it is to dance up and down the street in the guise of dragons, snakes, nagahs, and demons of all sorts, and amuse such of the visitors as cannot get near enough to see the set play, or prefer walking about talking to their acquaintances. Bands are engaged in profusion, flower-garlanded arches erected at the ends of the street and at



intervals along its length, and gay Chinese lanterns hung up everywhere. Complimentary packets of le'hpet, pickled tea, serving as invitations, are sent out in profusion, but the non-receipt of one of these does not deter anybody, and all comers of whatever nationality are welcome.

Nowadays the monks are wont to complain that the presents customarily made them at the Tawadehntha feast are not nearly so valuable, or even so satisfactory, as they used to be. But it is different with the Sohn-daw-gyee *fele*. There the emblems of the archetypal nogana are all edible and of the most sumptuous kind. In every house the offerings for the ascetics are set out for display all night long and make a goodly show, if the process can hardly be supposed to improve them for consumption. Mountains of cooked rice send out spurs of beef and pork, with flat lands of dried fish and outlying peaks of roasted ducks and fowls, the legs with their claws and the neck with the head and beak being extended as if they had been drawn out tight to exhibit their greatest length. Nga-pee, fish paste, in all its malodorous varieties of nga-pee gounng, sehn-tsa, dhamin, nga-tha-louk abounds, and loads the air with suggestions of a fish-curing village, or an unclean fish monger's in the dog days. Chinese patties of sugar and fat pork, plates full of fried silk-worms, maggots from the top of the cocoanut-tree, salt-pickled ginger and fried garlic, and a variety of other dishes beyond the ken of occidental cookery abound all down the long tables. Alternating with these, and perhaps more pleasant to look at, are heaps of fruit, oranges, citrons, shaddocks, plantains, with here and there a late durian or two, rivalling the nga-pee in its odour, and the brick-red or purple rind that conceals the luscious "snows" of the delicious mangosteen. Plentiful tins of sardines

and Reading biscuits, with somewhat muddy-looking Bengali-made lemonade, give evidence of the progress of "civilisation;" and plates of betel with the fresh green leaves of the betel-vine suggest how the morrow's afternoon will be passed in well-filled meditations by the pohn-gyees of the neighbouring monastery.

The house itself is decked out on a corresponding scale of magnificence. To the uninitiated foreigner an ordinary Burmese hut presents about as unfavourable raw material for decoration as can well be imagined. Built of rough teak planking, or of split bamboo mats, and raised a few feet off the ground on posts, it resembles a marquee tent in shape and in size (according to the principle of the old Joe Miller story about the stone which was as big as a lump of chalk). On all ordinary occasions there is not a vestige of furniture in it. A row of earthenware pots with water, a couple of wooden boxes, and the rolled-up mats and blankets whereon the household sleep, are the only things to be seen. The sides and ceiling are grimed with the smoke of the fire that cooks the daily meals; the floor stained with smudges of oil and red blotches of betel. Yet this unpromising shanty the Burman transforms into a palace chamber, or stage-like fairy bower. The sides of the house are thrown up towards the street, so that the room assumes the appearance of a verandah. The floor is covered with thick bamboo matting finely woven, over which bright flowered rugs are spread. The dingy sides of the house are draped with flags and kullagahs, elaborate stitched pieces of tapestry, ten or twelve feet long, and reaching down to the ground. White, or brilliant-coloured chintz, or paper, forms a roof studded with red, blue, or green stars and rosettes of tinsel paper. Great mirrors, swinging and other lamps, statuettes of wood or stucco, candlesticks with glass shades, clocks, German half-crown engravings, and gay

Chinese lanterns hang or stand about. The floor is literally covered with silver and gold cups and betel-boxes, of all sizes, from that of a soup-tureen down to a breakfast cup. Some are plain; some of that *repoussé* work at which the Burmese silversmiths are so clever. The great majority of these are of course borrowed from friends (of another street or quarter) or hired for the night from the chetty pawnbrokers. A few chairs and tables stand about for any European visitors who may come, and who are sure of a friendly welcome. At the back of the room in a long line, behind the mirrors and statuettes, sit the girls, decked out in their most expensively embroidered skirts and gayest silk neckerchiefs. They are literally loaded with jewellery. Round their necks and over the bosom hangs the broad network of the *dahleezan*, formed of silver or gold fishes and flowers linked together. The *na-doung*, the huge-gold plugs or circlets in their ears, sparkle with rubies and emeralds. So do the bracelets on their arms and the rings on their fingers. Each girl as she sits is worth many hundred rupees. It is probably for this reason that they are made so inaccessible, seated behind the lamps and lights. If admiring swains could get at them, so could other individuals, whose regard for the jewellery might exceed that for the commandments. The young women may therefore be supposed not to care so much for the *Sohn-daw-gyee fte* as their brothers. Most of the girls are of course daughters of the house. If, however, the householder has not womankind enough, he simply goes out into the bazaar and hires as many personable looking damsels as he may find necessary. They are as much a part of the display as the silver cups and the looking-glasses. A band at one end of the room discourses music fitfully. Occasionally a girl, too young to have attained to the dignity of jewellery, gets up and dances and sings for a while.

Musical instruments of different kinds, pattala, hnè, and mee-gyoung, harmonicons, trumpets and alligator guitars, lie scattered about here and there for the amusement of skilled visitors, and there is always somebody thrumming or tootling away on them.

The whole scene is an unceasing round of laughter and gaiety. The host and hostess and a few old women bustle about and receive the visitors, point out the most noteworthy parts of the display, have a few words of conversation, and offer refreshments. The guest drinks a cup of singularly washy and saccharine tea or lemonade, smokes a big green cheroot, or chews a fid of betel, compliments the owner of the house, declares he never saw so much magnificence in his life, and departs to go through the same performance in the next house. Englishmen are always welcome. Seats are brought for them; the master of the house sits by while they are under his roof, explains everything to the best of his ability, and produces the inevitable bottle of brandy or beer, without which no European is supposed to be able to endure existence. The reception begins at eight, or half-past, and lasts for an hour and a half or so. Then every one who is coming has arrived, and has gone the round of his friends, so that the domestic display is pretty well over. The gorgeously arrayed females gather up their skirts, and go off home under a guard of their male relatives, and having put off the greater part of their jewellery, come back, each with a huge green cheroot in her mouth, to see the play and join in the fun. A few of the older people remain indoors, steadily chewing betel, comparing notes as to past displays, and speculating as to whether any other street in the town will be able to surpass the display of Eighteenth Street. Not a few placidly go to sleep, notwithstanding the din without, the strident sounds of the band, the shouts

at the buffoonery of the clown, and the confused chatter of thousands of voices. Outside there is no slackening in the jollity. From the lofty stage representing the second heaven of the nats, portions of the Law are declaimed; the celestial beings deliver themselves of sugga-gyee, lordly sentiments, revellings in exuberant verbosity, all night long, and the constantly shifting audience never thins away. Farther up the street a huge pasteboard demon is gambolling unwieldily, half-a-dozen dancers twirling and twisting vigorously within a foot or two of its great tusked jaws. At intervals some of the youths of the street, or some of the visitors, worked into a state of excitement by the music, dance enthusiastically in an unattached kind of fashion for a few minutes, and then suddenly break off with a laugh. Some of the young men spend most of the time flitting about the extemporised stalls, tasting at one place fish jelly, at another queer salads, having a violent flavour of garlic; here smoking a cheroot, there chewing a packet of pickled tea, and flirting in turn with all the girl vendors, who look very coquettish with the red or white flowers in their glossy black hair, and the fragrant, yellow thana'kah toning down their complexion. Not in the least shy they are, and quite ready to bandy Oriental compliments with new acquaintances. It is with many of the younger folks the pleasantest part of the feast—and is not the old duenna sitting behind—what matter though she is asleep—to play propriety? And so the merriment goes on all night, fit occupation provided for all; sleep or high moral declaimings, combined with the clown's comedy for the elderly; abundance to eat, and a surfeit of gossip for the lazy and middle-aged, and indiscriminate love-making and dancing and noise for the young. At length, with dawn of day, which in these low latitudes corresponds with the rising of the sun, the ascetics come round in grave

yellow procession, their hands clasped round the thabeht, their eyes downcast. The bowls are filled; the rest of the feast is carried humbly to the monastery by the donors, and the Eighteenth Street Sohn-daw-gyee pwè is over. The celebrators sleep all day; the state of digestion of the monks is not a matter for discussion; and those visitors who have got new ideas from what they saw last night, lose no time in making use of them for the better glorification of their own *fête*, which comes off a few days later.

## CHAPTER V.

### A WORK OF MERIT.

"THE wisdom that made Asia mild" laid down no command which is better observed in Burma than the first of the Five Rules : *Thop a-thet go ma that hnin* (Thou shalt not take any life at all). Hardened convicts will not harm the vermin that infest their mattresses. A story is told of a man who allowed the snake that had killed his father to wriggle away unmolested through the tall elephant grass. I myself have seen a Burmese mother take up between two bits of bamboo the scorpion that had stung her little son, and simply throw the hideous creature out of the house. So far does the command to beware how they harm any meanest thing in its upward path lead earnest Buddhists. Mr. Edwin Arnold tells how, in a distant age, the great Lord Buddha offered up himself to preserve "this breath of fleeting life" in an animal :

"Drought withered all the land ; the young rice died  
Ere it could hide a quail."

When between the hot walls of a nullah, our Lord spied, as he passed, a starving tigress, with two little cubs whining for the nourishment her shrunken frame could not give them. Then, heeding nought but the immense

compassion of a Budh, the great yahan bethought himself :

“ Lo ! if I feed her, who shall lose but I ? ” and, throwing off his priestly robes, came forth with a “ Ho ! mother, here is meat for thee ! ” and died.

“ So large the Master’s heart was long ago,” before he came upon earth for the last time to teach the Law and give the millions peace ; not only when he came down from the hills, where in austere fastings he had been pondering to win the secret of “ that curse which makes sweet love our anguish,” and appeared before King Bimbisara to plead for the flocks that the white-robed Brahmin priests destined for sacrifice on the altar. The idea has always been a favourite one with Buddhists. A favourite myth is that of the hare, Kalpas, since the Lord of ruth appeared on earth in the form of that animal. All creatures were making offerings to the Buddha who was then engaged in preaching the sacred Law. The hare bethought himself that he too must give some alms. But what had he to give ? Man might bring costly gifts ; the lion found it easy to offer the tender flesh of the fawn ; birds of prey brought dainty morsels ; fish could produce no less tasty signs of devotion ; even the ant was able to drag along grains of sugar and aromatic leaves ; but the hare, what had he ? He might gather the most tender succulent shoots from the sunny forest glades, but they were useless even to form a couch for the teacher. There was nothing but his own body, and that he freely offered. The Supreme Lord declined the sacrifice, but in remembrance of the pious intention, placed the figure of the hare in the moon, and there it remains as a symbol of the queen of night to the present day.

Similarly just a little below Mandalay on the river, near



the Ava road, there is a huge, castellated pagoda, the Shway Gyet-yet, raised in commemoration of another performance of the Budh, in an avatar countless ages ago. The tale is that in a season of grievous dearth, when all flesh was dying of famine, the great Master, then in the shape of a jungle-fowl, spied a holy pilgrim in the last extremity of want. There was none to pity him, none to save him from death; and the Budh, conquering, even in that distant time, one of the latest lost of the ten deadly sins—the love of life—surrendered himself to save another. Hence the pagoda standing out boldly on a great rock over the river. To the east is a representation of a fowl in stone, recalling the event; and before this, daily by the pagoda slaves and others, and on feast-days by hundreds of worshippers, plentiful heaps of gilded grains are strewn.

These personal examples furnished by the teacher of neh'ban and the Law himself, have only served to emphasize what is seen on the admission of every new member to the holy assembly. One of the articles with which, in addition to his dress and begging-bowl, every postulant must provide himself, is a strainer, without using which he must drink no water. The object is, of course, to prevent him from destroying life in the shape of the small animaculæ to be found in water. Some zealous and scientific proselytiser endeavoured to persuade the people that this was of no avail, seeing that even in the strained water there was abundance of animal life; but a council decided that, provided the water had been filtered, if the ascetic could detect nothing living, with his unaided eyes, he was at liberty to drink the water without incurring blood-guiltiness. The attacks of science on Buddhism failed as completely as the efforts of most missionaries.

The mingled pity and dislike with which professional hunters and fishermen, whose occupation implies the regular taking of life, are viewed by Buddhists, is well known, and makes itself evident in the fact that the villains in most plays are hunters. Fishermen are perhaps not so much decried—possibly on account of the plea brought forward on their behalf, that the fish die of themselves, being taken out of the water, and not through any direct action of their captors. It is in connection with fish, however, that one of the most curious national works of merit takes place annually—furnishing, like all Burmese festivals, occasion for much fun and frolic.

The violence of the rain during the five or six months of the south-west monsoon floods the country. Not only do the rivers, which in many places rise regularly as much as thirty or forty feet above their hot-weather level—not only do they overflow their banks, and make wide seas of the neighbouring flat lands, but great lakes spring up everywhere. These are gradually stocked with fish of all kinds, most of which, by the sudden fall of the water, are cut off from all chance of retreat to the large rivers; where alone there is safety. Steadily the water goes down, the hot sun sucks up the pools, till at last the end seems to be come. The river is far away, and there will be no rain for months. Another day or two will suffice to bake and split into long fissures the bottom of the puddle, wherein are yet hundreds of animate things, from the whiskered mud-fish to the lordly hilsa, the salmon of India. Then the seekers after merit come out, bearing with them big chatties, huge earthenware jars, the size of some of which makes the story of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* seem very much more credible. Girls and boys, old men and old women, go tramping about in the soft slush, capturing the fish and dropping them into the jars of water. Great

laughter there is over the wild plunges and floundering of the boys, the little screams and "a-mè leh-leh, a-mè leh-taws" of the girls as they step upon a fish, which whizzes away with a suddenness that is apt to disturb the equilibrium, or slip with one leg slowly but irremediably into a hole—perhaps a last year's buffalo-wallow—out of which they are only extricated after much teasing and tickling by the boys. Then there is the stalking and driving of a great nga-gyee into a corner, whence with a flop and a muddy dash, he escapes into the middle again, amidst a chorus of the inevitable amè! "mother," which springs to a Burman's lips on all possible and impossible occasions. There is the caution to be observed in seizing the stinging mud-fish; the gingerliness with which, when he is caught, the waving whiskers are avoided; especially the control over yourself to be maintained if he does sting you, lest you should spoil all your chance of merit in a moment of irritation, by doing him an injury. Sometimes the fish are caught in nets; but this reckless wastefulness in the matter of combining merit with merriment is not very favourably viewed by the neighbourhood.

At last the fish are all caught and crowded together in the sin-oh—the water jars. There is, perhaps, a considerable pause before they are liberated. The nga-hloht pwè usually occurs a little after the carnival of the water feast, when everybody is doused with water; and if the fish have been rescued from their danger some time before that, they have to wait in their uncomfortable quarters all the longer. The fête seems to be celebrated with more enthusiasm in Maulmein than in any other large town in Lower Burma. In Rangoon the spruce merchants' clerks are apt to sneer at it as a "jungle feast," and rather laugh at the gatherings on the banks of the "Great Royal Lake." But in Maulmein it is different. There everybody enters into the

spirit of the thing with religious fervour. A great procession is formed, and winds its way along the long snake-like up-and-down street that constitutes the great part of the town. At the head comes a band of young men dancing—some with their faces whitened with chalk, others grimed with soot; some extravagantly dressed as princes and ogres, others scantily arrayed in a tucked-up waistcloth—capering and prancing along with the waving of hands and fantastic paces characteristic of the national dancing. Behind them, in a bullock cart, is the band, the huge seing-waing, the circular frame with its octaves of drums, on which the performer, smoking a big green cheroot all the while, thumps away with great vigour and in excellent time, accompanied by some trumpets, a flute or two, and a young fellow with a noisy bamboo clapper. Then there is an indiscriminate crowd of well-dressed, excited people, carrying huge umbrellas, white and gold; big spires; young fellows on hobby-horses; men with long bamboos, gilt from butt to tip, looking like fishing-rods, with which one might bob for whales. Mingled with these are the carts carrying the jars of fish. In the middle is a great long platform on wheels, supporting a pasteboard and bamboo and painted mat model of a steam-boat. The captain, in a gold-bordered cap, occupies the greater part of the ship forward, and yells orders to the man at the helm, who ports and starboards with surprising rapidity and impartiality. The chief engineer divides his time between keeping up the smouldering cigar-stump and the cotton which supplies the smoke from the funnel, and whistling violently on his fingers. A man stands at the side, heaving the lead (a joint of bamboo stuffed with cotton). It seems to be "And a half, nine," when some one is hit on the head, and "teen bahm milla nay"—three fathoms and no bottom—when the lead fails to touch

anybody. A lady in English dress, with her face brought to the proper colour with chalk, represents the passengers. This performer is of course a boy, and usually affords most amusement to both native and English spectators. The fun goes on all the way with jokes at the expense both of the performers and the lookers on, and shouts and roars of laughter at every new buffoonery. At last they reach the spot on the river-bank selected for freeing the fish, and after a few pious formulæ have been recited, the contents of the jars are capsized into the water. Many of the fish are already dead, and not a few are so sickly that there is little chance of their recovering health and strength again; but this does not disturb the equanimity of any one. A great *koung-hmoo* has been done, much merit has been gained, and there has been great fun over it. The motley procession wends its way back again, and everybody goes at nightfall to see the great *kyee-gyin pwè* given by some public-spirited and drama-loving quarter or street in the town.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST.

ALTHOUGH religious festivals and *fêtes* are so abundant in Burma, it is undoubtedly true that none of them are universally observed in all parts of the country, except the New Year's Feast. In localities where the people are exceptionally pious, the end of Lent may be more carefully observed than elsewhere, some devoting themselves especially to pious observances, others to the more worldly ceremonies of the *sohn-daw-gyee* feast. The *Tawadehntha* festival is an annual observance in some districts, in others it practically passes over unnoticed. Similarly with all the minor *fêtes*. But it is not so with the *thi'gyan pwè*. All over Burma, from the smallest jungle hamlet to the crowded streets of Rangoon and the straggling suburbs of Mandalay, the New Year is ushered in with the old formalities, and with perennial enthusiasm. Not an hour is cut off from the allotted number of days, and every item of the old practice is carried out with the same vigour.

For this reason the "Water Feast," as it is called by Englishmen, has forced itself on the attention of the most careless observer, and every one who has written about Burma devotes a greater or less amount of space to a description of the good-humoured merriment with which

the New Year is introduced. I do not propose, therefore, to do more than allude to the lesser known formalities observed on the occasion.

The month Tagoo, the first of the Burman year, occurs in the spring, and New Year's Day is in the earlier half of April. But it does not fall annually on the same day. It is a movable feast, and the date of the commencement of the year is regularly fixed by the royal astrologers in Mandalay, who make a variety of intricate calculations, based on the position of various constellations. The object is to determine at what time the king of the tha-gyabs will descend upon earth, for it is his arrival which will inaugurate the year. The Dewah king is fairly punctual, and the descent occurs always between the 9th and 12th of April. For the last few years he has appeared on the 11th, and scoffers in Rangoon declare that he will probably continue to do so to save the Pohnnas trouble. These gentlemen annually draw up a thi'gyan sah, a kind of prophetic almanac for the year, relating what is likely to happen, and whether it will be prosperous or not. These vaticinations depend upon a variety of circumstances. The tha-gyah min may come down wielding a spear, when there will be disturbances in the land; a water-jar, when the rains will be abundant and the crops good, a torch or a simple staff.

It is from those objects that he bears with him, all of which are ascertained by previous inspection of the heaven and comparison with ancient precedents, that the astrologers are able to determine the exact time when the descent will be made. Other particulars are learned from the animals on which the nat-king rides. Sometimes he has a cow, or a buffalo for a mount; at other times he bestrides a nagah, when there are sure to be very heavy rains; a galohn, on the other hand, presages violent squalls

and atmospheric disturbances. When the tha-gyah min goes on foot with a lantern in his hand and shoes on his feet, it is a sign that the heat will be very great and prolonged. Besides this king of the superior heavens, the Boomazoh-nat, the spirit guardian of the earth, exercises also a considerable influence on the coming year, though he has nothing to do with its commencement. The pohnnas therefore, are at great pains to find out his exact position at the beginning of the month Tagoo—whether in the trees, the flowers, or the paddy stubble. Each of these temporary habitations has its special signification, and the discovery of them is not only valuable in itself, but serves as a most satisfactory corroboration of the truth of the events prognosticated by the movements and surroundings of the tha-gyah king. The conclusions are all carefully noted down in the thi'gyan sah, and great piles of these are carefully preserved in the archives of the palace library, seldom to be looked at again.

Besides the events which are to happen in the coming year the astrologers are also able to determine whether the tha-gyah min will remain three days or four days upon earth. If he stays three days it is called a mahtoolè year, if four, tawtoolè, and the water-throwing is carried on a corresponding time.

All these points are settled some time beforehand, so that every one in the remotest part of the country may have due notice, and then information is sent to the heads of monasteries, and the chief districts, and all is made ready to receive his nat-majesty with proper honours. When at last the day comes round, all are on the watch, and when the wise men give the signal, tha-gyah min chah-bye, the king has come down, a cannon is fired off in the palace, and forthwith all the people come out of doors with pots full of water, the mouths of the jars



filled up with fresh green leaves and twigs of the sacred tha-byay tree. A formal prayer is said, and the water is poured out on the ground, and all are happy. Not many years ago an event happened which singularly impressed true believers in the royal city. Just when expectation was at its highest and all ears were strained in expectation of the roar of the cannon, there was a terrific thunderclap, which made all the town quiver, and demonstrated the accuracy of the pohnnas' calculations. There was no more thunder that night, and the ranks of the pious received great increase during the ensuing week. In country towns and villages every one who has a gun rushes out into the street at the appointed hour and fires it off. Most wonderful blunderbuses and old flintlocks and ancient rusty horse-pistols make their appearance, warranted to make a noise, but capable of little more. After this ceremony is over a few go to bed,—for the descent is always made at midnight,—but the majority sit up and talk.

With the earliest glimmer of light all rise, and taking pots full of fresh clean water, carry them off to the monastery to present them to the monks—not to throw over them, such liberties are never taken with the brethren. After having made their kadaw, “begged pardon with water,” to the sacred order, they set off to the pagoda and there commence the yay-thohn pwè, the washing of the images. It is not to be supposed that these really require cleansing any more than the recluses do, but it renders them myatta-thappè, an expression not to be rendered by many words in English. It combines all the meanings of cleanliness, beauty, stateliness, proper position, majesty, and repose; and the laving with water is merely a recognition of this fact. The work is usually done by women, and they reverently clamber up and capsize their silver and earthenware goblets of water over the placid features.

There are scores of them at work, and the ceremony is soon finished. Then all set off home again, and the jovial part of the festivities begin. All along the road are urchins with squirts and syringes, made of tin and bamboo, with which they have been furtively practising for the last few days, and their experience develops itself in extreme accuracy in catching you with a stream of water in the ear. Young men and girls salute one another mostly with cups and goblets of water, and stifled screams and shouts of merriment rise everywhere. Before breakfast every one is soaked, but no one changes, for it is fine warm weather, and there is lots more water to come.

During the day there is a regular going round to pay the compliments of the season. It is a great kadaw day in the palace at Mandalay, and all the nobles and officials go to "beg-pardon," and worship at the golden feet—not with water however. Similarly inferiors pay their respects to their superiors and masters; children to their parents, scholars to their teachers, and juniors generally to seniors. There is water everywhere, more especially on those parts of your dress which cling most uncomfortably to you. The girls are the most enthusiastic in the matter, and as they generally go in bands and have a copious reservoir in the shape of big jars along with them, the unprotected male is routed in no time. Some zealous people go down to the river or creek, wade into the water knee-deep and splash water at one another till they are tired and the thing begins to seem monotonous. No one escapes; in fact no one would care to get through the three days with dry clothes, for the wetting is considered a compliment. A clerk comes up to his master, shekhos to him, and gravely pours the contents of a silver cup down the back of his neck, saying yai-kadaw mee, "I will do homage to you with water." A polite, but less humble form of speech is

yay-loung-thee, to "pour" water over; while equals, and the young people generally, yay-pet-thee, "splash" one another with the utmost vigour. It is to be observed that dirty water is never used. I think, however, the barbaric innovation of squirts ought to be put down. They concentrate the stream in a most aggravating way, and it is almost a luxury to have an honest splash from a basin afterwards, even though it do catch you in the small of the back.

Foreigners do not object to the custom, except perhaps some of the more pompous and stolid natives of India, whose minds are incapable of appreciating a joke in any form whatever. The rollicking Chinaman takes it up with the utmost zeal, and sets about the thing in the most business-like way. The last time I was in Maulmein one of the store-keepers in the main street had rigged up a garden hydrant in front of his house and connected it with the well. A coolie was engaged to work it all day, and a continuous jet of water, sufficient to put out a small conflagration, streamed from the nozzle the entire duration of the feast. Not only was Boon Tek enabled to drench everybody, but he advertised his machines and made a good thing of it.

But the Chinaman was exceeded in zeal by a young Englishman in Prome, not many years ago. He was a Government official, and there were two friends dining with him. A note came round to him from a neighbour in the next street saying that the yay-pet-thee girls were out and would be round his way shortly. So he forthwith made preparations. The Madrasi "boys" got a huge bath tub on to the verandah, and tin pannikins were placed handy, and the dinner proceeded. But unfortunately there was no one put to watch for the arrival of the girls, and the first notice of their appearance was a well directed

stream of water in the nearest man's shirt-front. To sally forth was the work of an instant, but it was found that the tub was in the possession of the enemy, and only served to eke out the abundant supply they had brought with them in big silver bowls. The three Englishmen were soaked through at the first discharge. But the English boh-gyee was not to be discomfited so easily. He rushed through a perfect cascade, and seizing the first damsel he came across, incontinently plunged her in the bathing-tub and soused her under. This filled the rest with dismay, and they forthwith took to their heels and ran, followed as speedily as her clinging garments would permit, by the offended beauty who had been so unceremoniously treated. The occurrence was rather unfortunate, for the girls were all the daughters of some of the principal Burmans in the town, and it is a very grave impropriety for a man to lay hands on a woman even in joke; how much more to duck her in a wash-tub and wet all her hair! That young official had no more compliments paid him at New Year's time, to his own loudly expressed regret.

The most ludicrous story I have heard on the subject of the water-feast may serve as a warning to Englishmen who arrive in Burma in April. The victim reached Rangoon on the second day of the water-feast, and having no Indian outfit got himself up in a tall hat, frock coat and the rest, to go and present a letter of introduction. After much trouble and irritation, caused by the meanderings of his ghari-wallah, not by any means alleviated by the heat—for the sun is usually at its hottest in April—he arrived at the desired house, and proceeded up stairs. On the verandah he found three or four Burmese girls, who forthwith asked permission to throw water on him. He naturally supposed they were asking whether he wanted to see the master of the house, and nodded violently. Whereupon they capsized

their bowls of water over him, including the hat in the libation. The astonished man took it to be a custom of the country to cool down over-heated foreigners, but thought the soaking of his "stove-pipe" an unnecessary detail. Just then the owner of the house appeared, having retired previously to get some money to buy himself off a ducking, and having been informed of the state of affairs, burst into a fit of such violent laughter at the griff's notion of the ceremony as roused in the latter a wrath so fiery that it almost dried him again.

A special feature of the New Year's Feast is the formal washing of the king's head, called *thi'gyan daw gyee*. It is not to be supposed that his majesty washes his head only once a year, or that it is at any time an operation to be lightly undertaken, any more than it is by the humblest of his subjects. But at other times the ceremony is called *hkoung-say mingala* or *thi'gyan daw hkaw*, and is not attended with so great solemnity as characterises the function at the opening of a new year. Formerly the water for the purpose was annually brought up from *Hkoung-say Gyoon* (Head-washing Island), a little rocky islet situated on the river opposite *Maulmein*. *Hkoung-say Gyoon* is fabled to hang, with its little cluster of pagodas and monasteries, by an invisible cord from the heavens, and has therefore long enjoyed a special sanctity, not by any means reduced by the springs of clean bubbling water found on its limited surface. Therefore for long it supplied all the water for the royal head-washing. Latterly, however, it has been abandoned, and with this there is a curious history connected. After the war of 1826, it was settled in a general way between the commissioners that the river *Salween* should form the boundary between *Burma* and the newly-acquired British province of *Tenasserim*. But later a question arose as to the ownership of

the islands, and especially of the rich rice-growing Beeloo-gyoon, north and south of which the three rivers flow into the sea. After much fruitless palavering it was determined to leave the decision to chance. A couple of coconuts were tied together and taken some distance up the Salween and thrown into the water in the middle of the river. They went down bobbing gaily till they came to the place where the conflicting currents of the Gyaing and the Attaran come in, and there they twirled and twisted about in an aggravating way until at last an eddy caught them, and, carrying them past the old town of Martaban, decided for the Dayè outlet, through which they were swept away to sea. Thus the "Ogre's Isle" became British territory, and with it the little Hkoun-gsay Gyoon. Nevertheless for many years water was still carried up to Mandalay for the thi'gyan daw gyee, till at last Pegu was annexed to the British crown. Then it seemed undignified to carry the sacred water, not only from the stranger's land, but so many miles through alien waters, and so it was necessary to seek for another place. Where could a better be found than the mighty Irrawaddy itself? Accordingly, since then, the necessary amount has been drawn from the centre of the river by the Yay-kyee-woon, a minister specially appointed for that purpose, and woe betide him if it does not raise a satisfactory lather!

As in so many other cases the amenities of the thi'gyan pwè have led to the extorting of money. In the good old days, and in the country districts still, it was the practice for benevolent people to keep open house, and give food and dainties to all passers-by, with tea and flavoured drinks, cheroots and betel for those that preferred them. To lighten the expense contributions, called kè-boh, were invited from friends and neighbours, and out of this has sprung the system of blackmail prevalent in Rangoon. A

bevy of girls go into an Englishman's house and sprinkle him with lavender-water, or the moss-rose bouquet, so favourite with Burman belles. After a little badinage, they produce plain water, and threaten further operations unless something is given them. This they usually get, and if Englishmen complain of shameless extortion it is their own fault. The fair speculators are not such as any respectable girl would care to be seen with, and the prettinesses with scents are no more national than the scents are themselves. A provincial beauty would infinitely prefer a good honest ducking with vulgar water to the mawkish sentimentality of *eau de Cologne*. Some of the results of superior civilisation are very undesirable.

On the final day of the feast a gun is fired at noon to signalise the ascent of the tha-gyah min to his happy realms again, and then all is over. The squirts are laid by for another year; clothes are hung up to dry, and nothing remains but to wait and see whether the pohnnas are more successful than usual in their prognostications for the year.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A BOAT RACE.

It is four o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun is still beating down fiercely on the mile and a half broad stretch of water which extends far above and below Myan-oung. But the whole population of the town, and excited family parties from a score of villages round about, are gathered on the banks of the Irrawaddy, and bustle about regardless of the heat. Girls with flowers in their hair, and the brightest of dainty silk handkerchiefs floating over their dazzling white jackets; their costly skirts trailing on the half-muddy, half-dusty grass, and the long loops of their dah-leezan necklaces swinging about on their bosoms, hurry backwards and forwards with unwonted activity, regardless of the detriment to the fragrant yellow cosmetic on their cheeks and necks, and heedless of the occasional remonstrances of the guardian duennas, hardly less excited than themselves. Young men, ordinarily scrupulous as to the jaunty set of their flowered turbans, and the carefully-arranged folds of their hundred or two-hundred rupee waistcloths, now rush backwards and forwards, apparently aimlessly, their gounge-boungs twisted on anyhow, or hanging loose round their necks, and the cherished pasoh girded up tightly round their loins, reckless of creases;



while they have not a word to say, or even a glance to throw at the fairest of the country's daughters. Staid old men are gathered together in knots, all talking together at the pitch of their voices, and jingling bags of rupees in one another's faces; every now and then one group rushing off to another and swelling loud talk into shouting, in a fashion of which you would not have believed the phlegmatic old gentlemen capable, if you had seen them three days ago. Everywhere is bustle and excitement and anticipation. Even the township policemen have lost their ordinary official swagger, and are engaged in eager converse with individuals who, in ordinary times, command their attention in quite a different way.

There is very good reason for it. The full moon of Thadin-gyoot is past; it is well on in October, and it is the time of the boat races. For weeks past the Myan-oung boat has been spurting up and down the long straight reach, or having a heavy training paddle to Akouk-toung and back again, and now at last the great day has come. Myan-oung has challenged Thohn-kwa, hitherto the unconquered champions of all the low country, and the race, in best-and-best boats, is to come off this afternoon. The down-river men with their boat, and pretty nearly the entire body of their fellow-villagers, arrived last night, and none except the privileged have seen anything of them yet, to enable them to judge whether they are in as fine form as they were last year when they rowed the Bassein boat to a standstill. No wonder there is excitement, for Myan-oung is but a young subdivision, sprung up since the English occupation, with no speciality for paddlers, and Thohn-kwa cherishes a name for prowess on the river from far back in the old Burmese days.

But suddenly there is a lull in the buzz of talk, and every eye is directed up the river. The boats have started

for the preliminary row over the course. It is necessary to propitiate the guardian spirits of the river, and the votive offerings are therefore to be made. At the stem of each boat crouches a man holding with outstretched arms a bunch of plantains, some cooked rice, flowers, and betel, for the behoof of the water-kelpie. This precaution must on no account be omitted. Who knows what disaster might not otherwise happen? The flouted nat might upset the craft with a flip of his finger, or cling to the keelson of the boat and tire to nothing the sinews of the brawniest arms. Therefore goodly alms are given, so that all may rest with the prowess of the rival crews. This breather serves also another purpose. It enables the spectators to have a final view of the antagonists, and to lay their last rupee or not on their champions according as their judgment or loyalty bids them. Not a man of them will back the enemy's boat. If they have not supreme confidence in the superiority of their representatives, they simply refrain from staking all they possess. But in all the vast crowd there is not a man who has not a money interest of some kind in the race. There is Oo Ohn, the district magistrate, in the "grand stand"—a primitive erection run up in half an hour with some sticks and bamboo matting; he is a Thohn-kwa man by birth himself, but nothing will persuade him to back the fishing village against the subdivision over which he now rules. Why, he has practically built and furnished all the money for the Doung-sat-pyan himself. The water-craft which he learnt in his native place has only prompted him to hang with greater loving care over the lines of the boat when it was building, and Bah Too, his eldest son, wields the steering paddle in the Peacock, the pride of Myàn-oung. Now the old gentleman—he pulled a good oar himself twenty years ago for the very town he now longs to beat—

moves about uneasily, gets up and sits down, winds and unwinds his white paw-lohn, and can hardly refrain from shouting out, for the Peacock is just passing, and Bah Too gives a yell and flourishes his paddle, and there is a great shout of "Youk-kya!" from the Myan-oung partisans. Youk-kya, or youk-kya bah-thah, means simply "man" or "man, the son of his father," but it is a defiant challenge, or an inspiring cheer to the Burmese. They are a fine, strong-looking lot, the Myan-oung crew, perhaps a little too fleshy, and therefore possibly deficient in staying power, but all young, and worked up to a state of nearly frantic enthusiasm by the presence of their sweet-hearts and the momentous duty that rests upon them. Their weather-beaten old trainer paddles alongside of them in a little canoe, and begs them to be calm at the beginning and not rush themselves out at the start. The boat is a beauty, and does credit to the old magistrate in the sweeping curves of its lines. Low and as light as skilled hands can make it, it draws only a few inches of water, and does not rise much more than a foot above the surface. So thin are the sides that the boat is tourniquetted together with twisted wire and bamboo, and the seats themselves serve more to stiffen it and prevent a wrench from doing any harm, than as conveniences for the paddlers. There are twenty-four of a crew all told, and the boat is fifty feet long. It is painted all black, save at the bow, where there is a brilliant representation of the peacock, from which it takes its name. At the end they come with a great spurt, shouting and bending to each stroke, and another great yell rises from the bank to assure them of the approval of their townsmen.

A length or two behind them comes the Thohn-kwa boat, paddling along composedly to the time of their celebrated rowing song, a mysterious, gusty air that has suggestions of

the swirl of the river eddies and the rustle of the wind in the tall kaing-grass that lines their native creeks, in its varying measure. It comes over the water gently enough now, but many is the time it has swelled like a hurricane-blast and left the opposing boat foolishly as if it were at anchor. The Thohn-kwa crew are as different as possible in appearance from their robust young rivals. There is probably not a man under thirty among them, but there is not a superfluous ounce in all the wiry twenty-four. Every thew is tough as whip-cord, with long struggles against the rush of the current in the flooded creeks; every face and arm and shoulder is deep brown with exposure to the wind and the sun, for not a man among them but is a fisherman, and thinks nothing of the wild squalls that sweep over the delta and ruffle the swift current into a dangerous surge. No wonder they have an unbeaten record; and Oo Ohn fidgets about uneasily when the famous pè-nin of the Thohn-kwa boat salutes him obsequiously as the boat sweeps up.

No one knows how old Koh-kyah-gyee is. His withered face and shrunken body suggest that it is time he was giving up fishing and endeavouring by assiduous piety to get his balance of kan somewhat more on the right side towards another existence, but he is "hard as nails" still, and no man in all Burma has a greater name than the ever-victorious Thohn-kwa steersman. None like him to keep a boat straight in the conflicting eddies that have thrown out many an apparently conquering boat; none like him to gauge the strength of his crew and spurt just at the right moment! From start to finish he has all his wits about him, and the stem of the boat is full on the winning-post all the time. Four years ago, when the Hlaing men seemed to be carrying all before them, it was Kyah-gyee's generalship that won the day. Therefore the

Myan-oung magistrate is a little disconcerted at the homage paid him by his old rowing mentor, but none the less he puts on another hundred rupees with a Thohn-kwa loo-gyee who come up at the moment. The Thohn-kwa men come with a bit of pace just at the finish too, and with a heh-la, loo-la, youk-kya, bah-thah, hé, dash past the winning-post.

This winning-post is not such as is used in English boat racing. A boat is moored right out in the current with its head to the stream. At right angles to its length a long hollow bamboo stretches across the bows, and through this is passed a rattan, the end projecting an inch or two beyond the mouth of the tube at both sides. The contesting boats have each their own side and keep their own water, and the bow-paddler rises and snatches at this pan as the boat whisks past. It thus becomes a sign and proof of victory. Not a little skill is wanted on the part of both the man at the bow and the man at the stern. The former has to be sure in the eye and quick of hand, and the latter must take especial care to bring the boat past at the proper distance. It is not so very simple a matter to pull out the long cane at the terrific pace with which the boats come up, and the pan must be carried off to ensure the verdict. Sometimes both men seize it at once, and then they are almost certainly swept out of the boat, and as a rule both lose the rattan.<sup>1</sup> But if one has the pluck and presence of mind to stick to it, then his boat has won.

Now the offerings have been made and the boats turned round, no very easy matter in the swift current with their great length. But it is effected dexterously enough. The Myan-oung boat paddles up to the winning-post and young Oung Zahn tries the pan to see that it runs smoothly

<sup>1</sup> Then it is a *thayay pwé*, a dead heat.

in the bamboo, and Koh-kyah-gyee swings in the stern of the Thohn-pan-hla—the Three Fair Flowers, as the Thohn-kwa boat is called—to make sure that his man will have his proper amount of cane to grasp at. Then both boats get under the bank to avoid the force of the current, and paddle leisurely up to the starting-point, a mile or a mile and a-half up the river.

The din and bustle on the bank now becomes greater than ever. Every one is talking and stating his views as to the result of the race, and nobody is listening to him. Betting goes on freely, and the chink of rupees is heard perpetually. It is announced that the sporting English extra assistant-commissioner from the divisional town has given as his opinion that "the fishermen" will win; they are in better condition and cooler headed than their opponents, and will win at the finish. There is a minute's dejection at this, and then it is all effaced by the discovery that the Chinese store-keepers have put their "bottom dollars" on the home boat. That is good news, for the Talohk is a good judge of anything that can be betted about, and it is very seldom that he drops money. So the talk goes on till the last coin is staked. Welshers have not yet been introduced into Burma, and there is now nothing to be done but relieve one's feelings in talk, and puff furiously at big cheroots, with an occasional rush into the water to see how far the boats have got up. Old Oo Ohn tries to talk to the young Englishman, but it is no use, he can't keep either his mind or his eyes off the boat, and the Ayaybaing improves the occasion by attempting a flirtation with the "daughter of the house." But he might as well talk to the winds. She is far more excited than her father, and would be dancing about if it were not for the restraint of her old nurse, who is too blear-eyed and rheumatic to be anything but ill-natured.

But at last there is a hush and every eye is turned up the river. The boats are turning, and come drifting down to the starting place. There is a minute or two of backing and fussing about so as to get the boats straight and the bows level, and then, with a loud shout, they are off to a start by mutual consent. A roar of pent-up excitement comes from the crowd all the way down the banks to the grand stand and then swings back again like a wave on the flat sea-sand. Served by their magnificent boat and their younger strength, the Myan-oung crew jump off with the lead and continue to draw away until half way down the course, where they are clear and have a bit of daylight to spare. The backers of the Peacock are wild with triumph, and already see victory before them, but the Thohn-kwa party are perfectly composed and declare that things could not be going better. Quarter of a mile from home old Koh-kyah-gyee lets out a yell, and though there is no apparent quickening of the stroke, the gap, which for the last few hundred yards has remained unaltered, suddenly disappears, and the Thohn-pan-hla creeps steadily up the Peacock's thwart, and at last Oung Zahn, the Myan-oung bow, sees the enemy's boat for the first time since the start, and a few seconds later the rival bow is level with him, and the nose of the Three Fair Flowers shows in front to the length of its figure-head. The noise on the bank is simply deafening. Incoherent shouts of despair and encouragement and delight burst from every throat; old women tear down their scanty hair and work with their arms as if they themselves were in the race; girls rush to the water's edge heedless of the mud and splashing that will ruin their silken skirts for ever; young men and boys rush up to their necks in the water and yell with frenzied eagerness, for it is only a boat's length to the winning-post, and Thohn-kwa leads by a foot. Old Oo Ohn can

stand it no longer, for the last minute he has been shaking all over as if he were in a palsy, and his tongue and throat are as parched as if they were choked with slack-lime. He rushes forward with his hands in the air and shrieks *Youk-kya* in a key that cuts through the din like a steam whistle. *Youk-kya*—the cry is taken up; *Youk-kya*, *bah-thah*—every mother's son of you—the *Doung*, the *Flower*, *sway lay lay*; row for you lives; row for your unvanquished name; and the two bows fling their paddles from them and rise for the struggle. The wink of an eye too soon and he will miss his grasp, the flick of a finger too late and there will be nothing to seize. A great hush falls on the vast crowd as if they were all stricken dead, and then both men disappear in the water, clutching apparently simultaneously at the rattan. An agonizing five seconds, and then *Oung Zahn* comes to the surface brandishing on high the pan; the *Thohn-kwa* bow felt the scratch of it on his palm as it disappeared through the tube.

The scene that follows is beyond description. The victorious crew spring up to dance, but the relief is inadequate. They can only escape frenzy by plunging into the river. *Oo Ohn* tucks up his waistcloth and dances round in mad delight till his stiff old legs will bear him no longer. Pompous old *loo-gyees* caper and plunge and shout; younger men can only relieve their feelings by flinging themselves in the pools on the bank and rolling about wildly in the mud; girls who at ordinary times would hardly dare to raise their eyes to look about them, dance and shout in ecstasy, and their married guardians join in the rout. Bands from a dozen villages round about strike up, but the professional dancers who came to perform in honour of the victors are fain to look on while their intended audience go through unpremeditated figures.



It always seems marvellous how the people ever get gravity of demeanour again after a great boat-race.

The contest is technically not over yet. It is a hlay-pyoung loo-pyoung, that is to say, the crews have now to change boats. The Thohn-kwa men take the Doung-sat-pryan, and the home crew man the Three Fair Flowers. But to all intents and purposes the victory has been won, and the home representatives are the conquerors. The two boats paddle up again, and the fishermen go right away and win with the most consummate ease. This sets money matters on a more comfortable footing, but the Myan-oung people are not a whit disconcerted. They won the real race, that in which each crew rowed in its own boat, and they receive the arguments of the Thohn-kwa contingent with the most self-satisfied composure. The record of the champions has been broken, and the veteran Koh Kyah Gyee has at last sat in a losing boat.

A general adjournment is made back to the town. The country people have all come in their bullock waggons, and these are drawn up in comfortable places under the trees. The victorious crew go in procession up and down the main street, preceded by bands and every one in the place who can dance. Feasting is general, and then all move off to the plays, of which there are three or four, while some unwearied spirits can only find relief for their exultant triumph in yehn dances and irresponsible performances of their own. Till dawn of day the revelry goes on, but there is nothing like drunkenness. It is exceedingly seldom that you see a drunken Burman out of Rangoon, where they claim to be Europeanised. For a couple of days the excitement lasts, and then the strangers wend their way homewards, and the township calms down to its usual quiet. But for years the great event will be talked of at the local feasts, and the Yehn

choruses of three or four generations will tell of the gallant struggle when the Doung-sat-pyan beat the Thohn-pan-hla and broke the long supremacy of the Thohn-kwa rowers.

It is a great pity that these old contests are not kept up with the spirit that used to characterise them. In 1877 the then Chief Commissioner of British Burma, Mr. Rivers Thompson, believing that they led to unrestrained and dangerous gambling, issued an order forbidding all government officials to have anything to do with them, and advising that great races should be discouraged as much as possible. This policy was continued by Mr. Aitchison (now Sir Charles), and there seemed some danger that the art of making fine racing boats would be lost, while all the fun and jollity of the old yay-pwè, kohn-pwè, land and water sports, were put an end to, without any decrease in the amount of gambling. The habit is as ingrained with the Burman as with the Chinaman, and if there are no boat-races to bet on there are lots of other things, from pony matches to gohn-nyin-toh, on which sporting votaries might stake their money. There were still local matches between adjacent villages held, but they were but a sorry imitation of the old festivals, and have unfortunately led to the unpleasant speculations of the West being introduced. "Barneyings," in-and-out rowing, and all the unlovely customs of Western professionalism have sprung up as a consequence of the degradation of the old manly sport. Mr. Bernard, the present Chief Commissioner, an ardent athlete himself, has done a good deal towards reviving boat-racing again. Sports have been held on the Great Royal Lake at Rangoon, it may be hoped only as a preliminary measure to the encouragement of longer contests on the great rivers again. The surest way of putting an end to "roping,"

and false rowing with the object of mere money gain, is to re-introduce the old honest, enthusiastic rivalry. Where every rower feels that the name of his village depends upon the prowess of his arm, there will be no "sugaring" and ignobly waiting, in Sheffield handicap fashion, to "have their heads loose."

All the races in the low country are rowed in hlau hlau, or hlau loung, that is to say, in paddle boats. Up country there are frequently contests in hkap hlau, "pull-away boats," rowed with oars, but even there the national paddle predominates. It may be mentioned that the coast men are by far the better rowers. In the Mandalay October races in 1881, a scratch Bassein boat challenged all comers, and was victorious in every match.

There are a variety of boats, mostly, however, made on the same model of which the loung-goh is the type. This is simply a canoe hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, the sides of which are drawn out by charring and inserting wedges; then the boat builder chips out the centre. The loung-sat is only a little larger and more commodious, plank sides being added to the solid keel, if it may be so called. The huge hnaw, or rice boats, are made in the same fashion.

Of a different style are the pehn-gaw, huge, ungainly, barge-like things, used principally at Yay-nan-gyoung for carrying oil. Along the sides, projecting over the beams of the boat, and reaching aft to the house raised on the quarter-deck, are tagin, a sort of platform for the polers to walk backwards and forwards on. Pehn-gaw keep mostly in shallow water, so that their ungainly weight may be moved along by poles, which is much quicker and less laborious work than rowing.

Barring exceptionally fine racing boats, the hlau ka-daw, or hlau-gah, the king's despatch boats, are the finest

specimens of boat building. They are gilt all over, even to the kat-tat, or paddles, and the stern rises high up in the air for the accommodation of the steerer. The express boats, or hpoung-paw, have usually a representation of the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu and national emblem of the Burmese, on the bows, and have often as many as sixty paddlers. Down stream they go faster than a steamer; but they are seldom seen in British waters nowadays.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHESS.

I DO not say that the Burmese invented chess, either for the world or themselves. As latter-day English dramatists "adapt" from the French, so Burmese play-writers steal from the Hindoos, and possibly the game of chess was got in the same way. But there is a considerable diversity in one respect. The plays are rendered into Burmese with a stupid fidelity. The sayahs do not even take the trouble of altering the names of men and places, and the only difference in the pieces is that the loo-byets, and occasionally even the actors of higher parts, introduce "gag" of a comic and local description to satisfy the national demand for fun and frolic, and to carry down the prosiness of the staid Hindoo. Chess may have been taken over in a similar way, and altered after the same fashion. I remember once, indeed, hearing an enthusiastic player in Rangoon claim the invention of the game for an ancient Talaing queen. She was passionately fond of her lord; he was equally fond of fighting; and to keep him by her, and at the same time out of the dangers of the wars, she invented the game of chess. The story has a certain pathos about it, and it would be pleasant to believe it true; but I never came across any other Burman who had ever heard the story, and am afraid the old sit-du-yin player was romancing. But if the Burmans did take the

was thrown, the king or a pawn had to be moved; when a quatre, the elephant; a trois, the horse; a deux, the boat. With such a method it was impossible to forecast the game—or, in fact, to work on any leading idea at all. Nevertheless, the Hindoo game is undoubtedly very ancient, and has certainly the oldest history of any known form of chess. It is alluded to in the most ancient law-books. The wife of Ravan, King of Lanka (Ceylon), is said to have invented it to amuse her spouse with the image of field war while his capital was besieged, 5,000 years ago, by Rama, with his wild hordes of barbarian mountaineers, derisively called monkeys, or satyrs, in the great Indian epic. The Hindoo game, then, if it really be the first idea, has been no less altered by us than by the Burmans, as well as by the Persians.

The Burmese arrangement of the pieces differs entirely from the Hindoo, though we may, perhaps, imagine a reminiscence of the four armies in the arrangement of the pawns. The pieces are as follows:—

3							3
	1	4	5	5			
	4	2		6	6	6	6
6	6	6	6				
				6	6	6	6
6	6	6	6		2	4	
			5	5	4	1	
3							3

1. Min = one king.
2. Si'le = one lieutenant-general.
3. Yittah = two war-chariots.
4. Sin = two elephants.
5. Myin = two horsemen.
6. Nè = eight pawns, or foot-soldiers.

The king has the same moves as in the English game, but cannot "castle." Si'kè can move diagonally in advance, or retrograde one square at a time. The yittahs have the same power as the English castle or rook. The sins have five moves, one square at a time—one direct forward, two diagonally forward, and two diagonally backwards. An elephant cannot walk straight backwards, nor can he go sideways. The myins have precisely the same power as the English knight. The pawns act in the same way as in the English game, except that in the initial move they can only advance one square. They may become si'kè, in the event of that piece being taken, by advancing to the diagonal line which stretches across the board. When, however, the pawn replaces the dead leader, he is not allowed to remain on the square where he gained the distinction. He must be placed as one of the eight surrounding checks, at the player's option, and therefore often falls a victim to his new-gained eminence.

From the Q.'s pawn to the Q.'s R.'s pawn, the nè are placed on the third square. From the K.'s pawn to the K.'s R.'s pawn, they are placed on the fourth square in direct *echelon*. The first move, therefore, takes a pawn. The pieces may be arranged behind the pawns according to fancy or judgment. The formation represented in the figure is considered the best among Rangoon players.

Either player, however, may adopt another line of battle. He may strengthen either wing, or expose the king, according as he estimates his opponent's abilities, or the peculiarities of his play. In some respects this may be done in such a way as to be tantamount to giving a piece to an inferior player. The pawns, however, never vary in position. The board is a huge thing like an enlarged footstool, or a tea-table without any legs, the players squatting on mats. There is always heavy betting on the games;

and when a famous player comes in from the district, or over from Maulmein to measure strength with the Rangoon cracks, the excitement is wonderful, and often furnishes occasion for free fights, such as the Burmese, in their sturdy, hot-blooded way, delight in as much as any schoolboy or devotee of town-and-gown rows.

The Burmese game, as well in the names and powers of the pieces as in the liberty of individual arrangement, is thus, it will be allowed, much more like a real battle than any other recognised form. The elephant is particularly well calculated for defending the king where he is most vulnerable.

War-chariots are decidedly more appropriate to active warfare than castles. Indeed the Briton must acknowledge that the English nomenclature is bad. There was a time certainly when bishops used to buckle on their armour, and charge across the field of fight; but their disestablishment in that way came about long before the day of Mr. Miall. Boadiceas and Shan amazon leaders are too rare nowadays to have queens careering about the board as a regular thing, dealing slaughter for their less nimble spouses. The Burmese general has powers sufficient to elevate him above his men, and is yet not so loftily supreme as the mail clad knights of romance; while if he is laid low, it is not too violent a change for the gallant foot-soldier who may win the marshal's bâton. On the whole, the Burmese game is undeniably a good one; far superior to the Hindoo, or the Persian, though possibly not requiring the skill and calculation of the European form.

It may, perhaps, be said that the Burmese would be more likely to get their game from their Mongolian relations than from the Hindoos. This is historically improbable, and a comparison of the games bears out the belief. The



Chinese, as usual, claim for themselves priority in the discovery of the game. Unfortunately, however, they fix a date when it was invented, and this is long after the time when the Aryan game is first spoken of. Three hundred and seventy years after Confucius (B.C. 174), Hung Cochee sent a warlike expedition into the Shensi country, under a mandarin called Hem Sing. After one successful campaign, the troops went into winter-quarters. Shensi lies in the north-west, and the weather was very cold; and the soldiers thought of their families, and wanted to go home. Hem Sing, who was a great military genius, invented the game of chess to occupy their minds and foster their military ardour. The soldiers were so delighted with it that they forgot the inclemency of the weather, and their wives and children at home, in the excitement of the new game. So the winter passed away, and in the spring-time Hem Sing took the field again and conquered the entire province, in consequence of which Hung Cochee assumed the title of Emperor, and chess was held in the greatest reverence ever after. So says the book of Chinese Annals.

The Chinese game is a very odd one. The pieces are played, not on the squares, but on the lines. I should have mentioned before that in none of the Eastern games are the squares differently coloured. Midway between the opposed forces flows a river. The king on either side is shut up inside a fortress, out of which he cannot move, but can shift about from one side to the other as much as he pleases. On either side of the fortress are two princes, his sons, who are equally bound to stick to the side assigned to them. There are a couple of elephants in either army, which however, being very heavy, cannot cross the slender plank-bridge thrown over the stream for the passage of the other troops. They therefore remain on the defensive.

There are also pieces called *pao*—bombardiers or rocket-men—with curious powers. They can move the whole length of the board, in the fashion of the castle. If an adversary's piece intervenes, they can take the pawn or piece immediately behind it, but cannot kill direct. Students of the Persian game will be reminded of the power of their elephant. It will be seen from this cursory description that the Burmans can hardly owe their game to the Chinese. Shin Gautama sent us Buddhism from "the Middle Country"; it is possible that the game of chess came from India also. But if so, while Burmese Buddhism has hardly changed at all, and remains much more like the original teachings of the Master than the faiths of Ceylon, Nepaul, and Thibet, the game of chess has been greatly altered, and I think I may venture to say vastly improved.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GAMES.

A VERY favourite game with Burmans of all ages is the gohn-nyin toh pwè. The name is very suggestive. Gohn or hkohn means to jump, and nyin is to deny or bluster, and there is no doubt of the fitness of the implication. A more noisy and contentious game, not even omitting the uproariousness of the English enormity known as "grab," it would be difficult to find. Most writers on Burma have passed over gohn-nyin weing lightly, as a simple, harmless, children's game. It would be well if it were only that, though the monks at the pohn-gyee kyoung often sally forth in great wrath (most dangerous for their future state), and armed with a stout bamboo, to put a stop to the clamorous disputes of the schoolboys over their seeds. But the police officers would tell a very different tale. Grown-up men play also, and the quarrels sometimes end in assault and murder, and always in reckless gambling. Behn-sah-thee-loo, opium eaters, who with all respectable Burmans stand for types of iniquity, a kind of epitome of vice, often have as much as two or three hundred rupees on a single game, and the results of unrestrained gambling are best known to civilized people, for whom I am writing. Consequently the police keep a sharp eye on grown-up

gohn-nyin toh players, and if a party is caught, they are all punished heavily for gambling, the deing, or keeper of the ground, being fined heaviest of all. For there are regular "alleys" kept for the purpose, the deing, or proprietor, carefully smoothing the ground, moistening it delicately in the hot weather, and keeping it from getting sodden during the monsoon. He charges his customers a small fee for the right to play, usually an anna in the rupee, keeps a supply of seeds ready, and acts as umpire in cases of doubt, or when a tie has to be played off.

The game is played with the seeds of a huge creeper, the *Entada Purscatha*, whose pods are five feet long and six inches broad, and the beans are large flat things, about an inch in diameter, and shaped like a lily or lotos leaf, or the flattened-out gizzard of a fowl. They are made to stand on the stalk side, flat face foremost, a little more than a diameter apart in a long row, and the object of the player is, as in bowls and ninepins, to knock down as many as possible. The players use seeds called doh, exactly similar to those they aim at, or occasionally iron rings, and the distance from which they do so is agreed upon beforehand, but is never less than five or six yards. The doh is spun away in crossbow fashion from the forefinger of the left hand, drawn back by the thumb and finger of the right. As the seeds aimed at are all in a line, there is plenty of room for skill in the way of putting a heavy bias on, as well as in the by no means easy matter of preventing the bean from jumping up and missing altogether. Some old players have a wonderful knack of getting a strong parabolic curve on, which succeeds in levelling a great part of the line. The difficulty of the thing cannot be realized till one has made an attempt one's self, and the result of a few experiments is usually greatly to raise the estimation of gohn-nyin toh as a game of skill.

There are a great many ways of playing it. First, it may be premised that the ordinary value of a seed is two annas, about threepence—that at any rate is the price usually charged by the deing, who always has a great supply of them. Having got his seeds, the player puts down as many as he pleases in the row, five perhaps or ten. There is usually a preliminary dispute about some one who has not put down so many as the others, yet claims an equal chance of winning in the game. These quarrels, after having been noisily fought for a quarter of an hour or so, are referred to the decision of the ground keeper, who settles the matter off-hand, seldom knocking a man out as long as he is sure that he has no more seeds to stake. Then it has to be settled who is to have first shot, naturally among good players a very considerable advantage. This is settled by a preliminary tournament for the best of one or three shots the players following one another in the order of their success in the trial. Then it is settled how the game is to be played. Sometimes it is the obvious, barndoor way of each man taking the seeds he knocks down, sometimes it resolves itself into a contest for everything staked, the man who knocks down most taking all the seeds. There are of course numerous bets, but they are more frequently disposed in backing one player against another than in selecting a single individual as the probable eventual winner.

This method, however, of endeavouring to knock down the greatest number of seeds, which is of course the commonest with children, is not so much affected by grown-up gamblers as other elaborations of the game. A favourite form is that called nga-let nga-lohn, where the object is, in five shots to knock down five seeds, neither more nor less. This is not so easy as it might seem, for the seeds are not like marbles, and it is hardly less difficult

to make them go perfectly straight than it is to put on the proper "side." Most men try to knock down all five at their first attempt, and then let their remaining seeds go anyhow. Veterans, however, declare that the safest way is to knock down the fifth from the end of the line with your first shot. It then lies as a kind of barrier to prevent the other four, when knocked down, from rolling about and upsetting more than the proper number. The seeds when hit hard certainly have very eccentric methods of spinning and wobbling about. If there are ties, the men of course play off, and the winner takes the whole pool, if the collection of seeds may be so called. The best play is almost always seen in these nga-let nga-lohn contests. The children's form, that of knocking down the greatest number in one or three shots, is called pwet-tha, and is certainly the commonest, except with the avowed gamblers. There are besides these two main forms many other variations occasionally introduced, the commonest being dOUNG-pYIT and pay-dan. In the former the seeds are placed in the usual line, but all except the centre are lying on their sides. The players stand much farther away, and the object is to hit the seed standing up. Any one who does so carries off all. If one of those lying down is hit the seeds from it to the extremity of the line are taken. In pay-dan the seeds are placed in a big circle. Some one seed, either at one of the sides or at the back, is fixed upon to be hit. Any one who does so takes all, but if any other seed is knocked over you have to pay farfeit, and add one to the circle. This is, perhaps, the most outrageously noisy form of all, and, like the dOUNG-pYIT, is very seldom played by any but children.

The deing or ground keeper's services are constantly being called for. A long-armed man is accused of deliver-

ing too far forward; some one has got an exceptionally big doh to aim with; one of the seeds knocked over does not fall down flat, but leans up against another; somebody hits a seed already knocked down by somebody else, and by means of it manages to level some of those left standing, though his own seed never touches them; cases of this kind are always cropping up and being referred to the umpire amidst boisterous statements and precedents referred to by everybody present, for the betting spectators are often more deeply interested in the matter than the actual players. Then the police burst in and carry them all off to the lockup, and they are duly fined for gambling, and English residents who look upon gohn-nyin toh as only an elementary kind of marbles are astonished that people should get themselves into trouble for such a trifle. But for all that, gohn-nyin toh, in its way, requires quite as much skill as either bowls or curling, and judgment and delicacy of touch are quite as essential as in billiards.

Curiously enough, taking gohn-nyin toh for mere childishness, most foreigners look upon "Burmese football" as a game. This is certainly not the case in so far as a "game" is a striving between one or more competitors for supremacy. There are of course different degrees of proficiency, but one man cannot be pitted directly against another to see who is the better player, as you do with two lawn tennis or racket players. Primarily chin-lohn, as it is called, is simply designed to exercise the body, to restore elasticity to the back and limbs cramped by sitting, reading, or writing, or even by playing chess or gohn-nyin toh. The ball is composed of wicker work, strips of rattan interwoven in bands so as to leave a number of pentagonal holes, and is about four inches, or a little less in diameter. It is extremely light, and the object is to keep the ball as long as possible in the air without touching it with the

hands. Thus a single individual may play it all by himself, or there may be a circle of players who catch the ball as it comes round their way, keep it up as long as they can, until an ill-judged stroke sends it away from them to somebody else who proceeds in a similar manner. To play it of course the feet must be without shoes and the waist-cloth is tucked up close round the middle, so that the legs may be quite free. It is worth while watching a good player. He starts the ball on his knee, knocking it up, and standing on one leg all the time, or perhaps rapidly changing the knee. Suddenly he sends it up high, catches it with a back stroke with the heel, repeated perhaps several times. Then he receives it on the knee again, gradually and gently reduces the force with which he strikes it, lets it slip down to the instep, and jerks it back and forwards between the top of the foot and the knee for a time. Then from the knee he sends it into the air again, clips it between his cheek and his shoulder; then lets it run down the side to be caught up with a side stroke of the foot, or behind to be sent up by the heel, or forwards to be caught again by the knee. The last is the most difficult, because if hit too soon with the top of the thigh, the ball simply flies outwards, and cannot be saved from falling to the ground, while even in catching it with the knee, care must be taken to hit it gently. Another very difficult manoeuvre is to jump into the air, catch the ball between the feet and jerk it up again before reaching the ground. Nasty tumbles are the usual result of first attempts. A good player will keep the ball up until his strength gives way, and most Burmans if they are not ambitious to attempt difficult strokes, can keep the chin-lohn up a very fair time. But it is not easy all the same. No part of the arm must be used, and using the toes is also barred, though in any case, with them a stroke would almost inevitably prove a

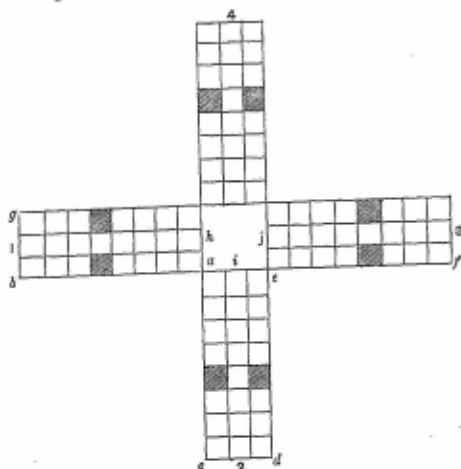


failure. Still though spectators may stand and look on, and the players may try to give one another difficult strokes, the skill displayed in negotiating which is always applauded, yet chin-lohn cannot be called a game, any more than dancing the Highland Fling can, for judgment as to superiority in either case must be a mere matter of personal opinion, and cannot be governed by hard and fast rules.

These are practically the only out-door national games. Boxing is a very common institution, but there is no ordinary practice in the evenings, and when a *let-pwè* comes off it is a regular ceremony more resembling what would be called in Europe a match, or a tournament, than a game. A good deal of agility and skill is shown, leaps into the air, and kicks with the bare feet, and violent upward knocks with the knee finding a place which would not be allowed by the "fancy." The first drawing of blood decides a contest, however slight the injury may be. But in British Burma boxing is not common now. Among the Karens near Maulmein it is still regularly kept up, and no young man would be successful in his courting, unless he had "come off" on some occasion or other at a *let-pwè*. In Upper Burma contests are of regular occurrence at feast times, and the rule that no women shall be present is always rigorously kept.

What may be called indoor games are numerous and various. There is a game very much like the English one known as Fox and Geese. There are three big tigers, and eleven or sometimes twelve little ones. It is called *lay-gwet kyah*, and the object is for the big tigers to hunt down on a draft board and eat the little ones. If, however, the cubs can corner the big ones, and prevent them from taking a leap, the latter have to succumb—starve to death in fact. Another game called *pasit*, or *chuay pyit-thee*, or

ansah pyit-thee is a steeplechase kind of arrangement, and is a favourite with children and simple country people. It is played on a board shaped and divided like that in the figure:—



Cowries are used instead of dice, and the object is to complete the tour of the board as fast as possible, and to take as many opponents as you can on the way. Thus if there were two playing, the first thrower would enter at *a*, and having reached *b*, would continue from *a* to *c*, from *c* to *d*, and so on. The second would commence at *a* also, but proceed first to *c* thence to *d*, and so on. A third would start from *e* towards *f*, and a fourth in the remaining arm.

The method is as follows. Six cowries (*chuay*) are taken in the hand and thrown into a plate or cup; if one falls upside down it is called *t'sè*, and counts ten; two, called *pah*, score two; three, *thohn*, is the same in value; four, *lay*, equals four; five, upside down, called *taseht*, scores twenty-five. When all are on their backs, it is called *bahyah*, and counts twelve. When all six fall on their faces, *chouk*, and the value six.

You have three throws to start with, and can only enter with a ten or a twenty-five; after entering you can have only one throw at a time. If you are lucky enough, you may enter two or even three racers, but if you throw three tens running, or three twenty-fives consecutively the hand is lost to you, you cannot enter even one. If you overtake an opponent and come on to the same square with him, you kill him and he has to go back to the starting post, but only if you fall on the same square, and not if he is on one of the shaded squares, called *poh* or *kyah*, which are coloured red or green on the board. In this latter case you lose your throw. The game is won by returning home first. Thus the first player having rounded *g*, comes down the middle course and finishes at *k*; the second player at *i*; the third at *j*, and so on. Any number can play, and if there are four, or more, and even numbers, partnerships are formed. When three or more play, it is called *mè-thee-dah*.

The game is simple and harmless enough, and as there is little chance of gambling over it, *pasit* is but little in favour with people in the big towns. *Tohn-boo lehn*, cheating with the weight of the lime used in betel-nut chewing is much more to their taste. This lime, a little of which is smeared on the leaf of the betel-vine that wraps round the nut is, if of fine quality, often sold by its weight in rupees. Two confederates arrange a speculation

together. One of them picks out an eligible-looking bumpkin in the street, some rice-farmer, who has come in with his boat-load of paddy; or a raftsmen, who has brought down a lot of teak logs; or a pious man come to worship at the pagoda. He gets into conversation with the intended victim—asks him for a light for his cherut, perhaps, and brings round the talk to tohn-boo. Then he says he has got a fine sample of it, and draws a packet out of his pocket. The unsuspecting taw-thah admires it and is asked how much he thinks there is. He guesses three rupees weight. The speculator happens, singularly enough, to have a little pair of scales in the folds of his waist cloth. The lime is duly weighed, and the countryman proves to be right—Burmans have a natural faculty for estimating by the eye. The scales and the lime are put away, when up comes the confederate, who has been loitering about at a distance. He pretends to recognize a friend in our farmer, with his old-fashioned zig-zag pasoh and red-tanned face. After explanations he asks who his friend—the man with the tohn-boo—is. The latter immediately introduces himself, produces his lime again, and asks the new comer how much he thinks there is. He says right off, "two rupees weight"; our taw-thah breaks in, "No there isn't." "Bet you a-seht (a quarter century, twenty-five rupees) there is." All Burmans love gambling, and the farmer straightway tables his pieces, thinking he has got rather a "soft" thing. The scales come into use again, and the lime weighs two rupees—it is another packet. That night the two rascals are drunk together, and the farmer makes an offering to the nats, persuaded that there is something supernatural in the matter.

Pitch and toss is common enough in Rangoon now, as is also the three-card trick, introductions of Western

industry. Pitch and toss is called myouk pan—myouk is the lion and unicorn on the old "Jan Kumpani's" coin, while the pan, the "flower" is the laurel wreath on the other side. Two rupees or pice are spun, and the bystanders call. One says two tails, and if they turn up, he wins double his stake; similarly if he is equally fortunate as to his guess of two heads. If he hedges with a head and tail, he only wins what he laid. The "tossing shilling," and the "lucky penny," of Box and Cox, one of which had no head and the other two, are not by any means novelties in the Pabè-dan, and other disreputable streets in Rangoon.

Another sleight-of-hand trick at which the town loafers are very skilful and are constantly deluding the unwary, is a performance called kyoh toh-thee, tilting at the string. A narrow strip of hide is doubled across, and the doubled end being in the centre, it is wound round and round in a complicated way. Then one of the bystanders is asked to place either his finger or a stick into the centre. The thong is then unwound, and if the man has his finger in the doubled-up end he wins, otherwise the manipulator gathers up the money. It is obvious that manual dexterity may do a great deal in a venture of this kind, and the operator usually makes a good thing of it.

Cock fighting is also a very favourite pastime, and though forbidden by the authorities, is still carried on more or less openly in country villages and quiet streets in the towns. Theebaw's uncle, the deposed Pagahn Min, who died of small-pox in 1880, was so fond of the practice that he went by the name of the cock-fighting king. In independent territory pretty nearly every house has its kyet-hpa, or its teik-kyet, the latter, splendid-looking birds, being bred specially for their pluck in fighting.

Buffalo fights, which used to be great festivals in the

Tenasserim province, especially round about Amherst and Tavoy, have, under the influence of the British government, almost totally died out. Each village used to have its champion, songs were composed in its honour, and special guards appointed to look after it, and the conqueror brought as much honour to the village as a personal victory of the inhabitants would have done. But they were nearly as brutal exhibitions as Spanish bull-fights, and only a little less dangerous.

Field sports are barred to all but professional hunters by the religious objection to taking animal life, though when a Burman does enter upon the pursuit, he is always an enthusiastic and skilful sportsman and generally a clever shot.

## CHAPTER X.

### LUCKY AND UNLUCKY DAYS.

It has come to be considered an axiom that the Burmese are irredeemably lazy. Some authors who have written about the country ascribe a very great number of additional bad qualities to them; others are more favourable; but all are unanimous in the declaration that they are lazy. The reverend missionary, Father San Germano, who was almost the first European to write a definite account of Burma, is the most unkind critic of all. He gathered together a great deal of information about the country during his long residence, but the opinion he formed of the people would be crushing were it not so strongly at variance with that expressed by a Christian priest who has been still longer in Burma, and whose knowledge of everything connected with it yields to none, the Right Reverend Bishop Bigandet. But it is as well to see ourselves as others see us. The good father says: "The Burmese are distinguished for that timidity and servility which is the characteristic of slaves. . . . There is no contempt, oppression, or injustice they will not exercise towards their fellow-men when they can assure themselves of the protection of government. They are thus vile and abject in adversity, but arrogant and presumptuous in prosperity. There is

no one amongst them, however mean, who does not aim at the dignity of mandarin (minister)." But the chief characteristic of the Burmese "is an incorrigible idleness. Instead of employing their time in improving their possessions, they prefer to give themselves up to an indolent repose; to spend the day in talking, smoking, and chewing betel, or else to become the satellites of some powerful mandarin. The same hatred of labour leads to an excessive love of cunning, and also to thieving, to which they are much addicted. . . . It would seem that it is impossible for this people to tell the truth; nay, a person who ventures to do it is called a fool, a good kind of man, but not fitted for managing his affairs." Still the padre has a little good to say of them: "Besides giving daily alms to their talapoins, they all lay by something to be applied to some sort of public benefit. They are very fond of thus signalling their generosity, and will often deprive themselves of comforts to have the pleasure of being benefactors to the public." This is an unlovely picture. But the good father's head was "on fire."

It is pleasant after this to turn to a soldier's opinion. Major Grant Allen says: "Unlike the generality of Asiatics, the Burmese are not a fawning race. They are cheerful, and singularly alive to the ridiculous; buoyant, elastic, soon recovering from personal or domestic disaster. Free from the prejudices of caste or creed, they readily fraternise with strangers, and at all times frankly yield to the superiority of the European. . . . Indifferent to the shedding of blood on the part of their rulers, yet not individually cruel; temperate, abstemious, and hardy, but idle, with neither fixedness of purpose nor perseverance. Discipline, or any continued employment, becomes most irksome to them, yet they are not devoid of a certain degree of enterprise."



This is a much better certificate, but still we are accused of laziness. Let us now turn to the last and the best authority on the subject (from an English point of view), Colonel Horace Browne, late Commissioner of Pegu. The Burman, he says, "displays much spasmodic energy and general laziness, much love of feasts and shows, much disregard of the sacredness of human life, and much tenderness for the lives of inferior members of the animal kingdom, much arrogance and inconsiderateness when placed in high position, and last, though not least, much general truthfulness, and, amongst unsophisticated villagers, the very unoriental trait of being unable to tell a specious falsehood."

The hauteur complained of towards strangers is principally due to the fact that the stranger is not a Buddhist, and has not as a boy been admitted into a monastery. To a Burman such a man is no better than a buffalo or a dog. In those of low degree this feeling shows itself in pitying kindness, in those in high positions in arrogance and insulting rudeness.

The terrible allegations of Father San Germano may be considered cancelled by the advocacy of the two military gentlemen, but there remains the united charge of unwarrantable laziness. Let us see what can be said for the defence on this point.

It may be taken for granted that the whole human race is more or less hampered by a dislike for work when there is no necessity for doing it. In addition to sharing this weakness, the Burman is fettered by a multiplicity of fortunate and unfortunate days. When he is born, his *sadah*, or horoscope, is cast, detailing minutely the moment at which he appeared, and the influence the presiding constellation has over him personally; and this *sadah* must be carefully examined before anything can be done. But

beyond this there are a great variety of unlucky days which more or less concern everybody, and have to be avoided if a man is to hope for success in his enterprise or his journey. To enlist the sympathy of maritime England, I will begin with the superstition about Friday:—

“Thonkkya yay gyong  
Ma thwa koug.”

“On Friday boats sailing  
Cause weeping and wailing.”

On the contrary, if you begin the study of a subject on Friday you will become an authority on it. Thursday is also a good day; but if you commence on Tuesday or Saturday you will soon die. Saturday is a bad day for everything, especially for fires—a fact which Captain Shaw would probably corroborate. But doubtless it is somewhat irritating for an Englishman when he wants to commence a journey, and has everything ready except the bullocks for the cart, to find that he cannot persuade his servants to buy or engage them till Sunday, because such a proceeding would bring disaster on everybody connected with it. He declares it is dilatoriness, or the desire to stay and see some feast; whereas it is a matter of conscience, and was taught to the Burman in a rhyme when he was a little boy at school. Similarly there are regulations as to the days proper for washing one's head. This is a regular ceremony, performed only once a month or so, partly because it takes a long time with the Burman's luxuriant hair; partly because many people, especially in the small Talaing villages in Pegu, believe that too frequent washings would disturb and irritate the genius who dwells in the head and protects the man. Therefore when you collect the bark and saponaceous seeds and other material for the operation, you must remember that it is unlucky to wash your head on Monday, Friday, and

Saturday. In the same way, parents sending their boy into the monastery must remember not to cut his hair on a Monday, a Friday, or on his birthday. A Burman's birthday, it must not be forgotten, occurs once a week, and his name recalls the day.

This circumstance gives rise to a number of barriers to the proceedings of the children of particular days, all of which are taught in the *linga*, the doggerel rhymes of the monastic and lay schools. *Pyat-thah-da nay* (unlucky days) are as follows: Thursday and Saturday in the months of Tagoo (April), Wahgoung (August), and Na'daw (December). The months do not exactly correspond. Tagoo, the first month of the Burman year, is really half April and half May; Na'daw, half December and half January, and so on; which must be remembered in the months mentioned below. Thursday and Saturday mean that the people born on those days are invariably unlucky in the specified three months, and had consequently much better remain at home, talking, smoking, and chewing betel, even though it irritate good missionaries, like San Germano, than endeavour to do work of any kind which could only result unfortunately. The monastery rhyme may be rendered as follows:

"Tagoo the hot, Wahgoung the wet,  
Na'daw the dull and chilly,  
Scowl on the serpent and the rat,  
So rest ye, willy nilly—"

the serpent being the sign of Saturday, and the rat of Thursday. Similarly the sons of Wednesday and Friday are debarred from work in Kasohn (May), Tawthalin (September), and Pyathoh (January);

"Kasohn, Pyathoh, and Tawthalin,  
These months are right unlucky,  
For Friday and for Wednesday  
At home or in Kentucky."

Sunday and Monday are bad days in the months of Nayohn (June), Thadingyoot (October), and Tabohdwè (February).

"The tiger and the gusty roe  
Must shun Nayohn and Thadingyoot,  
Eke Tabohdwè with dripping look,  
Whate'er they do 'twill bear no fruit."

The tiger is the symbol for Monday; the Galohn, or roe, for Sunday. Tabohdwè is the foggiest month of the year.

The Wahsoh (July), Ta'soungmohn (November), and Taboung (March), those under the sign of the lion (Tuesday), and the tuskless elephant, Heing—which represents the dark planet Yahoo, and makes an eighth day of Wednesday after noontide—are shut out from active labour.

"In month Taboung, 'twixt hot and cold,  
Tasoungmohn, Wahsoh breezy,  
Yahoo and Tuesday's human fold  
Must take it precious easy."

On the other hand there are Yet Yahzah, "kingly days," during which the Burman will display "much spasmodic energy." Such are Friday and Monday in April; Saturday and Thursday in May; Tuesday in June; Sunday and Wednesday in July; Friday and Wednesday in August; Thursday and Saturday in September; Tuesday in October; Tuesday and Yahoo (noon to midnight on Wednesday) in November; Friday and Wednesday in December; Thursday and Saturday in January; Thursday and Tuesday in February; Saturday and Wednesday in March.

"Cease to weary,  
Whose lot's dreary,  
On these kings of kingly days."

It must, of course, be borne in mind that these days are

only lucky for those who were born on them, and not for everybody.

With all this the Burman is in a very considerable difficulty between lucky and unlucky days. If he declines a piece of work because it is his unlucky season, or undertakes it, but delays commencing till his unfortunate time shall come round, the foreigner accuses him of laziness in the one case and dawdling in the other. Yet many Englishmen would not sit down as one of thirteen to dinner.

It would be bad enough if this were all; but there are other matters calling for the observance of the Burman if he would consult his well-being. It is ordained for him by paternally solicitous astrologers in what directions he must not travel at certain seasons of the year. This is regulated by the *nagah hlè*. The *Nagah* is a huge creature, half dragon, half serpent, coiled round the world, and gradually and steadily crawling in a constantly repeated circle; so that his head is now in one place, now in another; the circuit being completed in a year, and following the direction of the hands of a watch. You can journey from the tail towards the head with safety, but not from the direction of the head towards the tail, for then you would go straight into the monster's jaws. It is safe to go across in any direction. As long as you know the position of the head, therefore, you are safe; and this is recorded for you in the usual *linga*.

“ From March to May, all April through,  
The huge *Nagah* towards Mount Meru  
His belly turns, his back to south;  
The west he frights with open mouth;  
His tail curled up holds all the east.  
Mark well how lies the grisly beast.”

From June to August, therefore, the head is to the

north, and you must not go southwards; from September to November the west is barred to you, and from then on till March it is dangerous to go north.

The difficulty an Englishman occasionally finds in getting boatmen to go in a particular direction, or porters to carry his baggage across country, is therefore easily accounted for, without any necessity for stigmatising the Burmese as hopelessly lazy and averse to steady labour. The fact that men are always to be got eventually is no argument against the general belief in the theory, for the English persuade people to all manner of iniquity. Staunch members of the Order of the Yellow Robe will tell you that the brandy-drinkers and the opium-eaters (whom the English *Tha-thana-baing*, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other good people believe to be so very numerous in Burma) are very frequently proselytes, and, at any rate, have been much influenced by the white foreigners. And I think that every officer in the commission who has at length got together a band of men to journey towards the *nagah's* jaws, will bear me out when I say they must have been a bad lot, and drank raw spirits and chewed opium enough to gladden the heart of an anti-opium society man in search of a frightful example.

It may be asserted that the unlucky days were invented as an excuse for laziness; but the prevalence of the system with regard to other matters disproves this. For example, the blind god is supposed to laugh at barriers of rank and time and space; but most Burmans have a profound belief in the *yan-pet linga*—the rhyme of hostile pairs, referred to in the chapter on marriage. Again, in forming a partnership for purposes of trade, or the like, a due regard must be paid to birthdays. Lucky combinations are as follows:—Sunday and Friday,

Tuesday and Thursday, Saturday and Wednesday, Monday and Yahoo.

When you get a Burman on his lucky day, he will display an amount of "spasmodic energy" which has surprised many travellers into calling him hard-working. The boatmen on the Irrawaddy and the Sittang often row six, eight, and even ten hours at a stretch, on no more solid food than cold boiled rice, with a fragment or two of salt fish or curried vegetables. But that is when it is their "kingly day." Try them on a *pyat-thah-da nay*, and they will not even drift with the stream.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BUTTERFLY SPIRIT.

IT is a matter of common knowledge that Buddhists deny the existence of a soul or spiritual principle in man. Each new being, spiritual nature as well as bodily substance, is the product of what has gone before, and differs entirely from the previous being. That faculty which performs all the actions referred by other religions to the soul is by the Buddhist system placed in a sixth sense called *manaw*, the heart, or faculty of knowing. This sense is as material in its action as any of the others which are denominated seeing, hearing, tasting, and so on. The *manaw* is, it is true, the most important of all the senses. The eyes, the ears, all the others, are merely channels to communicate impressions to the purely intellectual faculty of knowing; but it is not a separate something, distinct in composition and existence from the material body. The quality and keenness of perception of the *manaw* is a matter of serious importance to its owner; for it is only by meditation that a man can attain to the higher heavens, and the act of meditating can only be conducted by the sixth sense. The observance of the precepts and the performance of good actions meet with abundant reward in happy births on earth or in the six



heavens of the nat-dewahs; but the inward good deeds of the soul are incomparably more meritorious, and therefore the pondering on the lawkee seht, the ideas of creatures yet under the influence of the passions, and on the law-kohtara seht, which are the ideas of those happy beings who have entered into the current of perfection and move about in the regions of pure spiritualism—the consideration of these and of the sehtathit, or results immediately connected with ideas, throughout all the five stages of meditation up to oopekka, lead to rewards in the twenty superior heavens, where the contemplative gradually frees himself from the thanya, or false persuasions, and acquires a contempt for matter.

All this action has its place in the manaw, or the seat of knowledge, and is duly explained to the Burman when he is in the monastery school, and afterwards, perhaps, in discourses of the Yahans in the rest-houses on feast-days, or other suitable occasions. Unfortunately, however, the matter is, to say the least, a little obscure, and not by any means easily to be grasped. Accordingly, the superstitious Burman having got a confused lot of big words into his head, after letting them simmer there for a while, evolved from his internal consciousness the notion of the leyp-bya, or butterfly spirit.

This personation of the soul in a fairy-like form had natural elements of attractiveness in it; and the consequence is that the error of the unphilosophical Burman long ago has grown into a present national belief, and it is universally accepted that the life of man resides in the leyp-bya and dies when it disappears. The man at the point of death opens his mouth and the butterfly escapes from the body, but only to die at the same time. Many strange things are explained by this doctrine. For example, the leyp-bya is the cause of dreams. It is not absolutely

necessary that the butterfly should remain constantly in the body; death will not necessarily ensue from the separation. When the man is asleep, therefore, it leaves the body and roams about far and wide. But in these wanderings it can only go to such places as the person to whom it belongs has previously been in. A straying from known paths would cause extreme danger to the sleeping body, for it might happen that the butterfly would lose its way and never return, and then both would die—the body because the animating principle was gone, the leyp-bya because it had no earthly tenement to live in. The butterfly is enabled to perform these journeys through its existence as thway seht, or soul of the blood; and it is the state of this blood which makes the leyp-bya more or less inclined to roam, and which directs its movements. If the blood is feverish or excited in any way, the butterfly necessarily becomes restless, and wanders about more or less rapidly and into more or less strange places, according to the degree of perturbation. Therefore it happens that the soul thus existing in itself, and straying or flying at random, sees extremely strange and fantastic visions on these voyages. An elaboration of this notion divides dreams into three special varieties; those which occur at the beginning of sleep, those about midnight, and those in the early morning; or the false, the mixed, and the true. Baydin-sayahs and wise women are for this reason always very particular in their inquiries as to the precise time at which the dream occurred. If they foretell wrongly it is, of course, because the questionist made a mistake as to the time when his vision appeared to him.

These night wanderings of the butterfly spirit are not without their dangers. In addition to other hobgoblins and spectres, Burma is especially plagued by evil spirits called *beelocs*—creatures in human guise who devour men.

If they will eat the corporate man, there is small doubt what will happen to the fragile butterfly spirit should it come across such an ogre. Cases do happen when the leyp-bya is gulped down, and then the man has slept his last sleep. More often, however, it is only a case of leyp-bya lan; the soul is scared, and in its terror sometimes runs into unknown regions, from which it is unable to retrace its steps, when of course it dies and with it the owner; or it rushes home to its bodily dwelling-place with such precipitation that the whole system is disorganised and sickness follows. This butterfly theory, therefore offers a grand field for quack doctors, of whom there are unfortunately a very large number in Burma. When a man falls ill they dose him with all the drugs and simples they have in their little bamboo phials. If he does not get better after taking even the fungus from the roots of the bamboo, culled in the eclipse, or vegetable soot prepared at the change of the moon, then there can be only one opinion; the leyp-bya has had its system shaken by some ghoulisn sight; or perhaps it is being kept in durancevile by some taseht, some demon (in the sense of the Greek *δαίμων*), or by a sohn, a wizard. In this case no bodily medicine can be of any use, were it even that celebrated nostrum, the green powder, which contains 160 different ingredients. A witch doctor must be called in, and he resorts to the leyp-bya hkaw. This ceremony is very much like that made use of in ordinary cases of oppression by evil genii, nat-sohs, and witches. Offerings are laid outside the house, or perhaps outside the village, at night—heaps of cooked rice, bananas, salt fish, and other eatables; and the malevolent being, whether ghostly taseht or material witch, is begged to eat this rice instead of the butterfly spirit, and to let the prisoner free. Few are hardy enough to watch and see what happens; but

the few who have done so agreed with me in the discovery that the demon appears in the shape of a pariah dog, which does not differ from other pariah dogs in spirit, inasmuch as it will run away if you throw stones at it. The offerings are repeated till a change takes place. Perhaps the taseht is greedy, eats offerings, leyp-bya and all, and kills the man. Perhaps it is appeased. Then the butterfly spirit returns safe to its owner again, and convalescence sets in. This is called leyp-bya win. Beelcoos are never successfully negotiated with in this way; they are too voracious. They occasionally appear in broad daylight upon earth; but may always be recognised, since they have red eyes and cast no shadow.

A particularly difficult operation is to separate two leyp-byas that were intimately united in life. This is especially the case when a mother has died leaving a little infant. If the leyp-bya kwè is not resorted to, the butterfly of the little one will follow the mother, and the child will die. A wise woman is therefore called in. She murmurs some mantras, and then places a looking-glass on the floor near the corpse. Still muttering, but with more and more rapid gesticulation, she drops a filmy shred of cotton down on the face of the mirror, and with frenzied words entreats the dead mother not to retain the infant soul, but let it come back to its earthly tenement. The fleecy down slowly slips down the mirror face and falls off into the handkerchief she holds below, and is then gently placed on the breast of the child. A similar ceremony is occasionally gone through when a husband or wife is more than usually overcome by the death of the yoke-fellow.

The whole notion is of course foreign to Buddhism, and is viewed with great disfavour by the members of the sacred assembly, but they are no more able to put a stop to it than they are to suppress nat-worship in the

subsidiary form in which it still exists. It is somewhat discouraging to those who have the welfare of the people at heart; yet still when one comes to highly civilised countries such as are found in Europe and finds ghosts only a little less demonstratively believed in, a load is removed. The world is very small after all.

The leyp-bya idea, like a good many other peculiarities of the Burmese, occasionally gets them into trouble with foreigners. It is the cause of the great unwillingness all Burmans have to wake a sleeping man. It is obvious from the above explanation of the character of the lehp-bya, that it would be highly injurious to rouse a man suddenly from his slumbers. His butterfly might be wandering far from the body, and probably would not have time to hurry back to its tenement. Then the man would certainly fall sick, or at any rate would be indisposed for a short time. Consequently, it is useless to tell a Burman servant to wake you at a certain hour. He will come in at the appointed time and look wistfully at you, and wish something would fall down and make a noise; but he himself will tread as softly as a house-breaker, and will not even have the heart to instigate somebody outside to make a disturbance. The Englishman has not got "humanity," it is true; he has not been in a monastery, and is therefore not really a "man;" but there is no knowing but what he might have a leyp-bya for all that. Consequently the master is not awakened, and gets up an hour and a half after he wanted to, and storms at the poor Burman for a lazy scoundrel who snores away till the sun is as high in the sky as the pagoda spire, let alone a tari palm.

The same thing often occurs out in the country villages. An English assistant commissioner rides unexpectedly into a small townlet in his sub-division and calls for the head-

man. That worthy is having his afternoon siesta, and the good wife announces this with a composure which almost surprises the young sub-janta wallah into swearing. He says, "Well, then, wake him, and tell him to bring his accounts along to the traveller's bungalow." Old Mah Gyee shudders at the very thought, and flatly refuses. The Englishman gallops off in a fury at the d—readful impertinence of the people, and Mah Gyee calls together all her gossips to hear of the brutality of the young ayaybaing, who actually wanted her to imperil her goodman's life. It needs something more than passing examinations and being a smart report-writer to govern the people well.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CHOLERA SPECIFICS.

OCCASIONALLY a whole Burmese village or a quarter of the town seems to be seized with sudden madness. Without a moment's warning, apparently, and moved by one common impulse, the able-bodied scramble on to the tops of their houses and fall to work to beat the wooden or mat roofs with bamboos and billets of wood. The old and feeble stand down below and thump unmelodious drums, or bray their loudest on raucous trumpets; while the women and children dance round about and open their mouths and yell. No one has any right to talk about pandemonium till he has been scared by the sudden bursting on the night air of this diabolical uproar. New-comers in Rangoon, mindful of the scares which have been frequent of late years, on hearing the outburst for the first time, are apt to believe that the long-propheesied rising of the "budmash" population has at length commenced, and that the ferocious Burman has started on the war-path. They are the more inclined to believe it because the outbreak always takes place at night, and, at a distance, suggests nothing so much as a general free fight. But it is nothing of the kind; nothing could be farther from it. It is, in point of fact, the regular sequel to a religious ceremony. Cholera has appeared in the district. There have

been one or two deaths, and the population is aroused to a sense of the danger. The terrible epidemic is of annual occurrence, notwithstanding all sanitary precautions, at the beginning of the south-west monsoon in May. The first heavy bursts of the rainy season wash all manner of surface impurities, animal and vegetable, into the wells and tanks, and cases of sporadic cholera are the consequence. So says the civil surgeon; but the Burmans do not believe him. They are convinced that a *nat-soh*, some evil spirit, has taken up his abode in the place, and is exacting revenge for some real or fancied insult. They accordingly take this means of forcing him to quit; and if the malignant *nat* can be supposed to have any nerves whatever, it certainly ought to be effective.

The brethren of the monastery discountenance the practice as far as they can—as indeed every one not afflicted with a dulness of hearing might be expected to do. It is a remnant of the old *geniolatry*, and, having nothing to do with pure Buddhism, confounds the *dewahs* of the six heavens with the heathenish spirits of the old wild tribes. But cholera is a pestilence that regards not the yellow robe of the mendicant any more than the gay *pasoh* of the frivolous; and so the *pohn-gyees* hold the ceremony which immediately precedes the wild riot called *thayè tohp-thee*, and display their opposition no more violently than by getting out of the way as fast as the dignified walk peculiar to the Assembly of the Perfect permits.

It is related that long ago, at the time of the beginning of religion, the terrible pestilence swept over Kappilawoot, the city of Thoodawdana, the father of the Lord Buddha. Only at the intercession and by the merits of the prayers and good works of the saviour of the world and his assembly, was the plague stayed, and the city saved from



desolation—hence the function called *pareht yoht-thee*. Cholera has broken out in the village. Several deaths have occurred in succession with the terrible suddenness which is characteristic of the disease. The dirges played by the bands for the dead fade into one another and break out all down the street. Then one of the chief men of the place makes preparations and begs the monks to come down from the monastery. A raised dais is put up at the back of the room for the accommodation of the *yahans*, and covered with mats. Offerings to the holy men are arranged in a long row before the platform—rice, fruit, flowers, betel-boxes, pillows, cups and bowls. Alongside of these are placed the vessels which the monastic superior is to consecrate—*nyoung yay-oh*, sacred to the use of the religious, and *pareht-oh*, so called from the ceremony. These are partially filled with water, leaves of the *tha-byay* bin, a species of *Eugenia*, are put in, and along with them coarse, yellow string wound round a small stick. When all is ready the monks come down in the gray of the evening, moving, as always, in slow procession of Indian file from the *kyoung*, followed by their disciples carrying the large monastic fan, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf manuscript books. Meanwhile, and all through the ceremony, the people from all parts of the village come in, each person bearing his *pareht-oh*, with its supply of *tha-byay* bin leaves and modicum of yellow string. The *pohn-gyees*, their eyes fixed humbly on the ground, take their allotted seats without a word to any one, not even to the master of the house. All the people kneel as they come in, and remain in the half-kneeling, half-prostrate position, customary before members of the *thenga*.

The abbot of the *kyoung* then begins the service, longer or shorter according to the capability or inclination of the officiator. Certain formulæ reciting the praises of the

Lord Buddha are always chanted; the Tse-ba theela, the Ten Commandments incumbent on all believers on worship days and on the earnest always, are usually declaimed. Sometimes it ends with this; sometimes, if the abbot is an enthusiast, the law is preached. Then he extends his hands over the collected vessels and consecrates them, and the religious ceremony is over. The yahans rise and file back to their kyoung as solemnly as they came. The presents made to them are carried off at the same time, some by the boy pupils some by the donors. The people then take away their pots to their houses, and shortly afterwards, at a given signal, the wild clattering on the roofs begins. This lasts till the performers are exhausted. Fortunately that usually occurs within half an hour. If the malignant demon can hold out so long, it is much more than most Europeans can, and their futile remonstrances and threats sometimes add to the general din, especially if, as not unfrequently happens, the disturbance is repeated for several nights.

There is this much, however, to be said in favour of the custom, that it often actually does stay the spread of cholera—no doubt owing to the diversion of mind produced by banging away on the top of your roof, and the confidence and hope which the operation induces. Moreover, so much damage is done to the house itself that repairs take some time, which also serves to keep the mind occupied.

When the thayè tohp-thee is over, the people return to their houses, where the pots with their consecrated contents are. The yellow string is unwound from the sticks and divided into lengths. Some people hang it all round the eaves of the house in little bags, others tie pieces of it round the left wrist, more especially those who go about much. At a time when there is cholera about most of the young men may be seen with these wristlets. A Rangoon

clerk detected wearing one colours with annoyance, and says his parents made him put it on. He very probably throws it away, but the same night he will have a fresh piece on. The thread is coloured with dye obtained from the wood of the jack-tree, the same which supplies the colouring matter for the monkish garments. The tha-byay bin leaves are kept in the pot, or scattered about the house. The tree is particularly highly esteemed by the Burmese. A species of it, the tha-byoo tha-byay bin (the Malay apple, *Eugenia malaccensis*), is celebrated as the largest tree in the island which lies to the south of Mount Myemmoh. Sprigs and leaves of the tha-byay bin are cut, prayers and supplications for absent friends and relatives offered up before them, and then the twig is thrown into a pot of water. A song has been composed about the tree itself, and is one of the most popular of those that do not belong to the category of love-songs. The jester in a play has always an unfailing "draw," when, wishing to testify his regard for some one, he declares he has cut down an entire tha-byay bin and thrown it into the river that his friend may enjoy good health. The joke lies in the contrast between this and the couple of leaves in a small pot used by people ordinarily.

It might have been expected that contact with English civilisation and doctors would have put an end to the riotous absurdity of the thayè tohp-thee; but it has not by any means. In fact the house-beating goes on more vigorously in Rangoon and the larger district towns than elsewhere. This is partly because cholera is more frequent there on account of the crowding together of the people, and the greater chances of the water being polluted; and partly because in small villages the people very often simply abandon the place, if there seems any danger of the malady getting a firm hold. Cholera is almost certainly

fatal to any Burman attacked. The usual remedy adopted is a very astringent decoction of the rind of the mangos-teen fruit, but it is seldom given soon enough to be of any use; and the Burman habit of trying to keep air away from the patient as much as possible, pretty nearly renders useless any effect the drug might have had. All the windows and doors of the house are covered up, and a cloth is usually thrown over the sick man's head, so that he can hardly draw breath. Under these circumstances the man smitten with cholera invariably justifies the national belief that he is doomed. Any means, therefore, of keeping away the epidemic is eagerly seized upon, if it is only the embarkation of the whole population in unlimited gohn-nyin toh playing, as was recently recommended as a favourable diversion to the public mind in Prome. No amount of reasoning or remonstrance is likely to put an end to the infliction of the thayè tohp-thee. The government officials are helpless against the superstition, and English police-inspectors have simply to stand by foolishly with their hands to their ears till the clatter and clamour dies down.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MAKING GOLD.

THE Burmese have no more escaped from the craze for the discovery of the philosopher's stone than other civilised peoples. Even at the present day there are numbers of goldsmiths and other handicraftsmen in the principal towns of Lower Burma who might be prosperous and happy, did not the craving for the discovery of a means of making gold perpetually disturb their minds, and impel them to waste their earnings in dabbings with mercury and strange-looking mineral and vegetable products. Mercury is what the experimenter always starts with. Every would-be discoverer commences his researches with mercury; and it is on this account a matter for congratulation that it is so expensive; otherwise, we might have far more people doing damage to themselves and others than is even now the case. The last great fire in Rangoon was caused by a searcher after secrets capsizing his crucible while suddenly pouring in mercury. For greater secrecy, and because his horoscope said it was a favourable time, he was working at three in the morning. His house took fire; and when day dawned the whole of Edward Street—one of the wealthiest inhabited by Burmans—was a heap of smouldering ashes. The originator of

the fire, instead of being abused for his carelessness, was consoled with, because he was able to assert that the accident happened at the supreme moment, when he was trembling on the verge of the great discovery that would have made his own and all the neighbouring goldsmiths' fortunes. But accidents of this kind are not of frequent occurrence. The damage is usually limited to burnt fingers, and constitutions shattered with the red fumes of the heated mercury. Sometimes, however, men who have lost their possessions, in attempting to make gold, fall upon the notion of repairing their fortunes by making money—coining as it is called in ordinary parlance. Luckily, few have the skill requisite for this "smashing" business; and the counterfeit coin put about is such as should hardly deceive any man who has ever seen a genuine piece of money before.

Naturally with so many people experimenting, there are always rumours of the discovery having been made. Indeed, methods are known by which the great object can be attained—with proper care and the selection of a favourable hour. One of these is quite infallible, and is so regarded even by those who have tried it many times without success. If there has been any failure it is because of some miscalculation in selecting a lucky moment from the *sadah*, the horoscope which every one possesses; or because some unavoidable hitch in the operations allowed the propitious hour to pass. That there is any doubt about the feasibility of the process no one dreams of hinting. Have not skilled *sayahs* exhibited the metal—undoubted gold—which they have made?

This method is as follows. On the slopes of *Kyaik-htee-yoh*, the hill on which, perched on a gigantic boulder, stands the famed pagoda of that name, grows a peculiar kind of tree, the stem of which is flattened out in a

singular way, so that it gets the name of say nga-pè, from a flat flounder-like fish called nga-pè. This tree is cut down, and the trunk is chopped into little pieces, which are then squeezed in as effectual a way as the limited machineries in a Burman's household can do it. The chips are pressed between two stones; or the bullock-cart is passed over them; or the good man of the house puts his teak box on the top of them, and summons the family to sit upon it. Any way, the chips must be well squeezed; many failures are due to remissness in this respect. The chips are next thrown into a long crucible, half-filled with mercury, and the mixture is subjected to the heat of a roaring wood fire. By this simple process, the Sayahs have obtained pure gold—a little mixed with ashes, if there has been too much of the say nga-pè, but otherwise pure enough to content the most fastidious assayer. The only time I ever witnessed the operation myself, we were prematurely choked off by the wood smoke and the red fumes of the mercury; and when we went back again towards sunrise, we got nothing but a quantity of very malodorous charred wood. There was a mistake somewhere in conducting the experiment.

There is another method well vouched for, and it is much less trying to the temper and constitution than the other, though perhaps a little more difficult of execution; seeing that a good deal depends upon extraneous help, which is not always available, and then only in special localities. You get a small piece of pala-dohtta, copperas, or green vitriol, and persuade a fish to swallow it. Any kind of fish will not do. You must seek out the nga hkohn-ma, a silvery fish which grows to the length of about a foot, and is, I believe, known to science as *Barbus sarana*. It is most certain if you introduce the copperas into the living fish, let the creature loose, and catch it

again. If you are in a hurry, however, it is sufficient to put the copperas into the dead creature's stomach. When it is taken out again it is quite changed in appearance. I have never been fortunate enough to see the thing done, but Sayahs say the change is quite remarkable. This new substance is put into a mass of copper, and either allowed to remain there till the change comes about, or heated in a crucible to accelerate the process. In a successful experiment half the metal should become pure silver, and the other half remain copper, the two being on separate sides of the vessel and not mixed up together. This method, competent alchemists say, is infallible; but somehow it does not seem to enrich them. Perhaps they spend their gains in searching after more lucrative processes. When you can make silver, the desire to make gold is doubtless, only intensified.

I will mention only one more method, which was more satisfactory than any while it lasted, but was brought to an abrupt end by the exhaustion of the raw material. A ship was driven on shore near Negrais, the promontory on the south-west coast of Burma, and was broken up in a violent storm. Among the wreckage was discovered a small quantity of some substance, which those who found it called a-yet hkè (congealed or solidified spirit), on the analogy of yay hkè (ice). How they came to try it I do not know; but after a while it was found out that this was the grand secret. A small fragment of this stuff proved thoroughly effectual in converting the baser metals into gold. No matter what it was tried on—tin, copper, lead, iron—the result was always satisfactory, and the discoverers travelled about the country for a time turning other people's scraps of metal into gold. Then the supply of the a-yet hkè ran out; and the great question is now where to get more of it. The invention of "compressed



beer" created hope; but the acquisition of that article was disillusionizing. It had not the magical properties of the a-yet hkè, and it was not good to drink. There is here, perhaps, a promising field for sympathetic western industry. It may be hoped that the wrecking of the ship had nothing to do with communicating its special virtue to the "compressed spirit"; otherwise we might have an alarming series of maritime disasters all round the Gulf of Martaban. Burning houses to get roast pig would be a trifle to this.

These are a few of the methods adopted, and they may be taken as samples of them all. None of them are more scientific, and the three I have described enjoy the reputation of being entirely successful in the right hands. But the practice is much discountenanced by the pious. Alchemy is specially denounced by the Lord Buddha. It tends to induce covetousness; and the striving is in itself the best evidence of a love for the things of this world, which incapacitate a man for the contemplative states of *zahn* and *arupa*—how much more, then, for *neh'ban*. The monks, the Assembly of the Perfect, of course denounce it; for, in addition to the consulting of horoscopes—itsself, though universal (the *Pohn-gyee* himself had one drawn up when he was a week old) a Brahminical practice, and remote from true Buddhism—there are numerous other observances connected with alchemy which are still more heretical. In addition to consulting his *sadah* for a lucky hour, the alchemist frequently also obtains omens through the augurs from the bones of a sacrificial fowl. It is arranged that the thigh-bones of a chicken shall be examined. A condition is imposed that the bones shall exactly correspond, or that there shall be certain defined differences. The hollows for the tendons, for example, shall be like or unlike, the bones shall be even

or uneven, and so on. This being accurately settled, the bones are, after the chanting of baydin, and cabalistic spells, held up side by side, and critically examined. An experienced eye is necessary to read the result properly, and interpret the full signification of the omens. Fortunately, or unfortunately, as you like to take it, if there are two augurs present, they almost always differ, and the intending experimenter is left free to follow the opinion that he approves of, or which fits in best with his plans. This superstition, besides being abhorrent in itself, on account of the taking of life, is particularly objectionable to the mendicants, as implying that there are others besides themselves commanding respect and receiving reverence. The openly avowed alchemists are therefore a much abused body. But they have the consolation of knowing that almost every Burman has tried his hand at eggayat htob-thee and failed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SUMPTUARY LAWS AND ETIQUETTE.

IN Mandalay the sumptuary laws are exceedingly strict and most elaborate in their character. Out of the capital the regulations are equally in force ; but never, as a matter of fact, come into action, because the country governors take very good care to replenish their coffers out of the money-bags of every one who may chance to be fortunate in his speculations. Speaking generally, officials are the only rich people ; but in no country in the world is the official rank more open to competition, or more subject to the caprice of the king. The present mayor of Mandalay, who is also Governor of the Rafts—that is to say, Lord High Admiral—was not many years ago little better than a slave, and owed his first start in life to a lucky accident. Several other of King Theebaw's most prominent advisers were among his personal attendants before he ascended the throne. There is, therefore, nothing of the caste prejudice of the Hindoos to be found in Burma. Burmans will often declare there is caste, but what is called by that name is nothing more than the arbitrary settlement by the sumptuary laws of what a man may wear and what is forbidden ; what language he may use and what must be used to him. Captain Forbes, in his book on Burma, said that these prohibitions extended in native territory to the names which

might be given to a man. The term Shway, meaning gold, was, he said, restricted as a name to people of rank. This is certainly a misapprehension. It is not so restricted at the present day in Mandalay. I am as much Shway Yoe there as in Rangoon; and as far as my knowledge goes, there never was such a rule, even in the times of the haughtiest and most unreasonable monarchs, such as Tharrawaddy and Mintaya Gyee. The appellation is perhaps not so common as in British territory; but as far as the law is concerned, the poor man may call himself and his children Shway as much as he pleases; only he must be very careful how he uses any of the gold he may possess in decorating his person or in adorning his house.

If the regulations do not apply to the name a man may have, they certainly do to the language he may make use of. Oriental forms of speech in self-depreciation are familiar enough. They are universal with all the nations of the East, and even turn up in the democratic West in the petitions of "your humble, obedient servant." The magniloquent and supreme *nga*, as applied to one's self, is not peculiar to Burma; while *hnin*, addressed to an inferior, is only a little more contemptuous than the *Er* of the small German courts. The difference between the various ranks is far more distinctly marked than this in the employment of different forms of speech; an entirely special language as applied to the royal blood, and in a scarcely less adulatory way to the members of the Assembly of the Perfect. A man "dies"; a monk "goes back" to the blissful seats whence he came, or to *neh'ban*; a king "ascends to the village of Nats"; one of the six heavens of happiness, where the passions still reign, and in the contemplation of which Buddhists find consolation for the otherwise dismal forebodings of their faith. The Buddhist religion is thoroughly democratic. A man only

is what he is through his actions in past existences. The accumulation of merits must therefore vastly outweigh the demerits in the *kan* of a king. However badly he may act in his regal existence, he cannot fall below the lowest seat of the *dewahs*—at least, so official language declares. Similarly, an ordinary man “walks”; a mendicant “stalks,” or “strides,” or “paces with dignified gait,” or whatever may be the English honorific equivalent of the Burmese *chüwa*; while a king “makes a royal progress.” The latter expression is emphatically correct as far as personages of the Burmese royal blood are concerned. The descendants of Mahah Thamada never go on their own legs in the open air. If they do not mount an elephant, some official is honoured with the weight of majesty on his back. In the same way, while a humble subject “eats,” a *pohn-gyee sohn pohn pay-thee* “assimilates,” or “nourishes his body with the alms of the pious”; and a king demeans himself to nothing less than “ascending to the lordly board.” You may “call” or “invite” an ordinary man; to an ascetic you may “suggest an interview”; you would be a reckless man indeed if you sought a formula which in the faintest imaginable way would suggest to the king that you wanted him to come to you. When your visitor departs, if he is on familiar terms, he says, *Thwa-mee nō*, “I say, I’m going,” and you politely respond, *Thwa-ba*, “By all means, go away”; if he stands a little in awe of you, he says, *Thwa-daw-mee*, “Honoured sir, I take my leave”; on the other hand, when, after a conference with a holy brother, you take your departure, you say, “My lord’s servant does obeisance” (literally, “thinks on his forehead”); the king does not give you the chance to say anything; he flings out of the throne and disappears behind a blue curtain, while your eyes are fixed on the ground a couple of feet before you.

And so it goes on through a triple language, which makes Burmese in the palace an unknown tongue to the best foreign scholar. Tales are told of the ludicrous mistakes of men, who to ordinary people could speak Burmese, and therefore imagined they might venture on it with the king. Thus it was with a bluff English manager of one of the numerous mills which the late king built and kept going till he got tired of them. This gentleman, in replying in the affirmative to some remark of the Lord of the Golden Palace, horrified the court by saying hohk-de instead of the prescribed tin-ba payah, "I think with your majesty." The expression to palace ears was much the same as if some one were to say to Her Majesty, the Queen of England, "Right you are, old lady."

If the proprieties of language are carefully observed, the regulations as to wearing-apparel and ornaments are far more minute, and guarded with the most jealous care. The almost wretched character of the houses of Upper Burma, as compared with those in English territory is very apparent; but what strikes a stranger even more is the absence of the gay dress which is so pleasant and picturesque in Pegu and the seaboard provinces. There is indeed no law against any one wearing the most brilliant pasoh he can get; but the money is wanting to support the character. A man with a fine waistcloth would be considered to have money at the back of it, and might have to sell his dress to meet the contributions demanded accordingly by the local official. In Lower Burma, every one has a feast-day dress, however poor he may be. He gets the money for it by a week's work, perhaps, backed up by a lucky bit of gambling. Then he is at liberty to strut about and do nothing till the clothes get shabby, when he has to bestir himself again. In English territory, too, he may decorate his kilt with any number of repre-

sentations of the peacock. An Upper Burman would be promptly put in gaol—he would even run some risk of being killed outright—if he ventured upon one. Peacocks are for personages of the blood-royal. Most people in independent territory wear no coats at all; but if they do wear coats, they must be of the simplest possible “Chinese cut.” Long-tailed teing-matbehns, surcoats and the like, are reserved for officials, with regulations as to buttons, gold or otherwise, and other minutiae which must severely tax the memory of informers and chamberlains.

As we ascend in the social, or rather the official scale, —for all dignity comes from office, or from a special patent from the king—distinctions thicken. Naturally in the land of the umbrella-bearing chiefs, the huge htees afford a prominent and obvious mode of marking rank. The umbrella is twelve or fifteen feet high, with an expanse of six feet or more across. A poor man has nothing to do with these big umbrellas whatever, unless he be employed to carry one over his master’s head. If he owns an umbrella at all, it must be short in the handle and otherwise of Western dimensions. Royal officials about the palace have their umbrellas painted black inside; country people, and those not directly connected with the royal abode, must have the palm-leaf as near the original colour as the varnishing with wood-oil permits. Some have permission to cover the wide surface with pink or green satin; others, more honoured, may add a fringe, either plain or embroidered. A golden umbrella is given by special grace to the highest woons and the royal princess. A white umbrella belongs to the king alone, and not even the Ehng-shay min, the heir-apparent, when such a person, as occasionally happens, exists, is allowed to use it. Matters are still further complicated by the number of umbrellas. Nine white ones mark the king; the Ehng-shay min has eight golden ones;

and the rest of the royal personages numbers corresponding to their achievements, or the regard the king has for them. If they achieve too much, however, and become popular, they die. Distinguished statesmen and generals may have several gold htees, which are duly displayed on all public occasions, and are put up in the house in prominent places. The king's "agent" in Rangoon has only one, which very fairly represents the consideration in which Great Britain is held, and the official rank thought good enough to communicate with the Chief Commissioner. A favourite trick of the king, NOUNG daw GYEE, was to issue perpetually new edicts as to the length of umbrella handles and the proper measurement of the pasoh. District officials used to make large sums of money in the way of fines in those days, and occasionally themselves fell victims. There has been nothing of the kind lately, unless we may consider the queen SOO-PAYAH LAT's announcement as to the way in which her hair is dressed, being patented as her sole prerogative, an instance of the same nature. Nevertheless, the general distinctions are very tenaciously held by. Innocent, unwitting Englishmen have got themselves into serious trouble in Mandalay by going about carrying silk umbrellas with white covers. The offence is high treason and merits death. None have actually undergone the supreme penalty, but there are a few who have vivid denunciations for the stocks.

The metal, size, and construction of spittoons, betel-boxes, cups, and the like household furniture for different grades are rigidly demarcated, and afford the most minute evidences of the owner's rank and his precedence in that rank. Anklets of gold (*chay-gyin*) are forbidden to all children but those of the royal family on pain of death. Silk cloth, brocaded with gold or silver flowers and figures of animals, may be worn by none but the royal blood and



such of the woon-kadaws, the ministers' wives, as receive a special grace enabling them to use it. Similarly the usage as to jewels and precious stones is very carefully laid down. Very few besides the king and his kinsfolk may wear diamonds. The display of emeralds and rubies is restricted in like manner, and so on with other precious stones less esteemed by Burmans. All rubies above a certain size found in the country are the property of the king, and the hapless digger as a rule gets nothing in return. His head pays the penalty if he listens to the temptings of black merchants from India, and chips it so as to bring it under the royalty size. Ka-dee-ba bee-nat, velvet sandals, are allowed to none but persons of royal blood. The use of hin-tha-pa-dah, a vermilion dye obtained from cinnabar, is very jealously guarded. The kamouk, a great wide-brimmed hat, is an honour eagerly sought after by the lower rank of officials. The institution is not very ancient, and was primarily due to a prophecy that Burma would come to be ruled by a hat-wearing people. To cut out the Englishmen, therefore, the kamouk was invented, and is looked upon as a great distinction, though it makes a Burman look a terrible guy, and is very difficult to wear with the national top-knot. Hundreds more instances might be given of the yazagaing, the sumptuary rules; but the above will probably suffice to exhibit their scope and character.

British Burma subjects delight in nothing so much as in their immunity from these enactments; and perhaps the permission to bury their dead in any way they please is the most popular privilege. In Mandalay, exclusive of the ceremonial at the cremation of a monk, which is identical all over the country, five kinds of funeral are ordained by the yazagaing. First, that of the king; then of any member of the royal family. Even if one of them

is executed, he is put in a red velvet bag and committed to the waters of the Irrawaddy. Third in order are the funerals of those who have died in the enjoyment of ministerial office—not always a certain thing, if the recipient does not die shortly after his promotion. Then come the obsequies of thootays, “rich men,” people who have got royal edicts conferring that title on them; and finally the rites of poor people, which are practically no rites at all. They probably would not be buried at all were it not for sanitary reasons. But in Lower Burma, on the other hand, the poorest man, if he can borrow the money, may have any honours he pleases for his dead. He may shade the *cataphalque* with golden umbrellas, or white ones for the matter of that; he may hire elephants; he may fire guns, as long as he does not do it in the public thoroughfares; he may have any number of bands of music; he may erect a pagoda over the ashes of the deceased; he may revel in all the honours restricted by the yazagaing to the most privileged dead; and, in consequence, he may suffer in pocket as much as he dares. Further, he may heap up honorifics in his conversation and correspondence to the utmost of his desire and capability; finding infinite gratification in the fact that were he to make use of a single one of them in Mandalay, he would infallibly be lodged in gaol, there to be treated according to the way in which he was able to satisfy the rapacity of his guardians. If yazagaing is unpleasant where it is in operation, the contemplation of it certainly affords an unfailing pleasure to those who are exempt from its provisions.

## CHAPTER XV.

### WIZARDS, DOCTORS, AND WISE MEN.

WIZARDS and witches are very common in Burma. The thing runs in families, and on the Chindwin river in Upper Burma, there is a village, called Kalay Thoung-toht, "the small town at the top of the sandbank," where the entire population is possessed of supernatural power of this kind. They have a king there, and if a person who has been bewitched goes to him and represents that he has been malignantly and unjustifiably laid under a spell by some unknown person, the wizard king goes through some inverted prayers and ceremonies, and utters an incantation, which forces the bewitcher to his presence. An explanation is then demanded, and if no just cause can be shown, the witch is punished and the afflicted person is freed from his ailment. Many bewitched people who have gone there to be cured have, however, never come back again, and pilgrimages thither are therefore not so common as they might be otherwise, and of course no one, not afflicted, would be reckless enough to go as it were into the lion's den.

But there are good witches and bad. There are the sohns, who delight in nothing so much as in killing people, afflicting them with epilepsy, fits, and divers

other ailments; and there are the wehzahs, who are good people, and strive to overthrow the machinations of the sohs against the welfare of mankind, while themselves learned in all the knowledge of the mystic art. Weh-zah simply means wisdom or knowledge, and the sorcery studied by both classes is the same. Both kinds of wise men are divided into four orders, according to the branch of learning to which they have applied themselves more particularly. Thus there are—

1. The Pyada wehzah, the mercury wise men.
2. The Than wehzah, the iron wise men.
3. The Say wehzah, the medicine wise men.
4. The Inn wehzah, the wise men learned in cabalistic signs and squares.

The than and inn sorcerers are the most powerful and efficacious in their workings, whether for good or evil, and the others are looked upon more as experimenters and candidates for the higher ranks than as legitimate wizards. To the class of mercury wizards belong all those who make a regular practice of the study of alchemy with a view to the production of gold and silver, and on this subject almost every Burman has some pet notion. The medicine wizards are those who set up as professional doctors on the score of a particular knowledge of herbs and simples. It is a very simple matter starting as a doctor in Burma. All you have to do is to assert that you have acquired a special knowledge, and set to work prescribing the most villainous-tasted and drastic medicines you can think of. As long as an undeniable result one way or the other is produced you are sure of getting a certain amount of reputation.

The than and inn practitioners have a more legitimate title to the name of conjurers or workers in magic. The

title of iron wizard is merely typical, and implies that the man has a knowledge of the properties of all natural objects, and is as capable, or more so, of acting the rôle of a medical adviser as the professed doctors. The discovery and preparation of the pieces of metal, stones, and what not that are let under the skin of soldiers and dacoits is carried on by them, and this vending of charms is a regular source of income to them. An occasional marvel worked now and then acts as a recommendation and advertisement of their powers. Thus I have seen a hmaw sayah, a kind of generic term applied to all wonder-workers, roll up pieces of gold and silver leaf and thin sheets of copper, and throw them into a bowl of water. They of course sank immediately to the bottom, and then the sayah would make passes with his hands and mutter an incantation, when the metal would slowly rise to the top and float there. When sceptics were present, this man would suddenly stop the charm he was uttering, and the bits of metal would either remain floating in the middle of the bowl of water or sink down again according to the part of the spell to which he had reached. How it was done is only known to wizards of his class and sleight-of-hand people perhaps, but to the actual fact, of this hkohn tè let pwè, as it is called, numbers of people, Europeans as well as Burmans, can testify. The conjuror is a well-known man near the village of Pantanaw, fifty miles or so west of Rangoon.

But however many miracles the than wehzah may work, he is always exceeded in reputation by the constructor of cabalistic squares and symbols. These are of constant use by every Burman, or rather he gets them interpreted for him by a proficient. The horoscope which every one has drawn up at his birth has numbers of these mystical numbers on it, from which lucky days and

dangerous combinations may be learnt. To calculate the more harmful spells the inn sayah should have these data, or at any rate should know the date and hour of the victim's birth. Therefore it is a safe rule never to let a wizard or conjuror see your sadah, or to mention the hour of your birth to any one whom you may suspect of having an ill-will against you, for he might from even that one fact have a most potent charm thrown over you; for these mystic squares and numbers have most extraordinary virtue. By holding up one of a particular kind for a short time you can set a house on fire. Another inn engraved on a stone will make it float, and such a stone, buried in the skin of a man's body, would prevent him from drowning, unless some other magician destroyed its influence by a more potent spell. If you scratch an inn on a tree or a house, you can make lightning strike it; another arrangement of the cabalistic words or numbers will preserve it from such a calamity. There is probably not a single Burman, tattooed at all, who has not several inns on different parts of his body. Some of them protect from special ailments; the most common are those which avert dangers from bullet or sword cut.

The doings of the wizards therefore enter largely into Burmese domestic life. There is a sohn in the neighbourhood, and all the mischief which happens there is ascribed to him, while the aid of the inn sayahs and others is called in to frustrate his knavish tricks. The sohn is of course unknown, or the people would soon make short work of him. In Upper Burma, among other remnants of trial by ordeal, they still occasionally put a suspected person to the old test. A woman is suspected of being a sohn-ma. Her hands and feet are tied, and she is placed between two boats moored out in the river. A quantity of filth is heaped upon her, and the boats are

then drawn away so that she falls into the water. If she swims she is a witch, and is put to death. If, on the contrary, she sinks, it is a proof of her innocence, and the accusers are punished. To prevent her from being drowned, a rope made of green bark is tied round the waist, so that she may be pulled on shore again. The great danger from the witches is that, like the *wehrwolf*, they can assume the appearance of animals, or living people, even of one's own relations. If however, the apparition is wounded, the same injury will be found on the person of the actual witch. Few people, however, have the courage to attack a nocturnal visitant whom they believe to be a *sohn*, and prefer propitiation in the shape of refections laid outside the house. In all these points the beliefs and fears coincide with those of other countries, and it is therefore unnecessary to do more than allude to them.

The rudiments of the science are contained in the volumes of the Baydin and a book on astrology and cabalistic science called the Dehtton. These are very imperfect, and individual magic-workers advance far beyond the matter to be found in them. It is said that these books were complete, but that in the time of the Lord Buddha the people, worked on by his vivid preaching, seized on all the magic volumes, together with all weapons and objects for destroying life, and heaping them together, set fire to them. But Dewadat, cousin of Shin Gautama, and always plotting harm against him, snatched several of the sections from the flames, and so a portion of the old science was preserved in the world. This tradition of course shows the attitude of the monks and the religious towards the students of this sort of learning. Nevertheless, just as every Burman at some time in his life dabbles a little in alchemy, so the baydin

sayahs and hmaw sayahs, and the magicians, good and evil, obtain believers and clients.

As the sohns are supposed to afflict people with strange illnesses, the province of the wehzahs becomes very much mixed up with that of the professional doctors. The latter cannot complain, and the general public can see no reason why the one should not be as good a physician as the other, for doctors in Burma take no diploma, and are not required to give proofs of skill in the healing art to any one but themselves. Many of them therefore are the most arrant charlatans, giving medicines according to fancy and in unlimited quantities. On the principle of like to like, prescriptions mainly composed of cayenne, cloves, ginger, and the like, are made up for fever patients, while purgatives are rigidly withheld. If a patient says he is no better five minutes after he has swallowed a dose, something else is tried, and so on, till the wretched victim has a stomach loaded with drugs to the limit of the prescriber's pharmacopœia. These quacks are too often taken as the only representatives of Burmese medical skill, and it is denied that any one in the country has a right to the title of doctor at all. But it is certain that some have really useful and efficacious remedies for ordinary ailments, such as jungle fever, dysentery, and other frequently met with diseases, while it is certain that they are particularly successful in the treatment of sores and ulcers. I knew of a case in Rangoon where varicose ulcers, which had resisted the efforts of the best English doctors in Rangoon and Calcutta, yielded to the simples of a Burmese saythama. He used earth-oil with an infusion of some seed or bark, and speedily effected a cure. The Burmese *materia medica* consists of barks, leaves, flowers, seeds, roots, and a few simple minerals, of which they have an empirical knowledge. They especi-



ally deal in pills and powders, which they carry about with them in little phials of bamboo.<sup>1</sup> Liquids are very seldom used. There are, however, two schools—the daht-sayahs, or dietists, who trust solely to regulating the patient's food according to the derangement of the elements, which is supposed to cause his disease, and eschew drugs; and the behn-daw-sayahs, who rely upon the exhibition of medicines. These last, the druggists, are far more numerous than the dietists. It is a great deal more easy to get a reputation with potent drugs than with a simple regulation of the diet, and accordingly an upstart doctor is always a druggist. The best advisers are those who combine the two systems, but such sensible practitioners are unfortunately few and far between.

Both assert that the human body is composed of four daht, or elements. These are—patawee daht, earth; apaw daht, water; tezaw daht, fire; wayaw daht, air. Akatha, or ether, is sometimes added to these, but the doctors mostly disregard it. Earth constitutes the flesh, bones, hair, intestines, and the like members of a man. Water constitutes the fat, blood, bile, spittle, mucus, &c. Eating, drinking, chewing, and licking come from the fire element. Air produces the six kinds of wind. Any derangement of the equilibrium of these elements makes a man ill, and it is important to know the precise time of a man's birth in order to know in what proportion the daht should be present. Therefore in the case of illness an experienced doctor almost always examines a man's birth

<sup>1</sup> These little cylinders are usually gilt and painted bright red, and are always strongly perfumed. It does not so much matter about the materials as at what time of the moon and under what constellations the ingredients are gathered. Whoever reaches a place within three days of the falling of a thunderbolt and finds meteoric stones, has sufficient to set him up as a doctor at once. The scrapings of the stone, among other things, are the best possible ophthalmic medicine.

certificate before he looks at the sick man himself. Besides the derangement of the elements, diseases may be caused by *kan*, the influence of the sum of good and bad actions a man has done in past existences. If a man is ill of *kan*, nothing will cure him but the preponderance of good in his past lives. Again, a man may fall sick through derangement of his *seht*, or mind; through the influence of the seasons, *ootoo*; or, lastly, through food, *ahahya*. These causes, being laid down as the basis of the diagnosis, naturally do not always lead to the best results in the case of affections which are in any way out of the common run. Even in perfectly evident illnesses, however, such as low fever, two persons in the same house afflicted in the same degree with the same ailment, are treated differently, simply because they were born under the influence of different planets, which have a special control over the effects of *ootoo* and *ahahya*, or over the respective relations of fire and water.

The dietists are often particularly absurd in their regulation of the diet from the horoscope. Having ascertained the day on which the patient was born, they will forbid him to eat articles of food whose names commence with any of the letters assigned to that particular day, most especially those which have the same initial letter as the sick man has himself. Thus a man born on Sunday will have to eschew eggs (*oo*), cocoanuts (*ohn-thee*), and other edibles whose name commences with a vowel. One whose birthday is Thursday must give up pumpkins (*payohn-thee*), mangosteens, and gourds (*boo-thee*), while a Monday's child must refrain from seasoning his curry with ginger (*chin-sehn*) or garlic (*kyet-thohn byoo*), and so on through all the other days. It is worthy of note, however, that those born on a Saturday are never forbidden to eat their rice (*tamin*),

nor those on Friday their curry (hin). An attempt to ostracise the staff of life, as curry and rice is to all Orientals, would only result in bad treatment to the too pedantic and precisely logical practitioner.<sup>1</sup>

These vagaries of the dietists are, however, far from universal, and emanate mostly from the manifest quacks of the profession, just as newly set up druggists will imagine specially curative properties in every strange and new leaf, or seed, or mineral they come across, and manufacture such extraordinary compounds as the green powder nostrum, which was exhibited to an astonished English M.D. with the information that it contained one hundred and sixty different ingredients and was infallible in its results. No doubt it was.

There is no denying that the excitability and impatience of the people reacts on the proceedings of the Burmese doctors. Whenever a man falls sick he gets into a feverish state of alarm about himself, and probably sends off for several doctors at once. The first one that comes prescribes, say for the liver. If the sick man does not feel better within a quarter of an hour at the outside, the physician is paid his fee of a few annas, sixpence say, and dismissed, and another is called in. Possibly he decides that the constituent of the disturbing element is the blood—the element of water, and not that of earth—and gives a dose accordingly. Should this not be speedily effective, he too gets his sixpence and his *congé*. And so on, as long as the means of the patient or the supply of doctors holds out. One consequence of this system is, that the richer a man is, and the more doctors there are in the neighbourhood, the greater is the probability that he will die; another equally unsatisfactory result is that

<sup>1</sup> Such affections are called "Monday's sickness," "Tuesday's sickness," and so on. (Tawinla, Inga kan keit-thea.)

the doctors, to maintain a reputation and ensure clients, are obliged to make their medicines as griping in character, as unpleasant in smell, and as nasty to taste as possible. In the large towns in English territory many of the better class Burmans resort now to English doctors or apothecaries. In Mandalay and the big towns of independent territory the patient is usually killed off by the variety of drugs given him by different doctors.

But in small towns and country villages the physicians are few, and when the say sayah cannot cure the sick man, he declares that he is possessed by an evil spirit or under a sohn's spell, and calls in the assistance of a witch doctor, a wehzah of any one of the different classes, by preference, of course, an inn wehzah. Then there is a fresh consultation over the birth horoscope, an examination of the charms there may be on the sick man's body, a muttering of prayers and incantations, and finally the baydin sayah agrees that the man is bewitched. Thereupon he ties a rope round the patient's neck, and after chanting a formula with occasional jerks on the line, asks the demon in the victim what he has come for. If any answer is given and an object mentioned, this is taken to be the thing required, and it is placed outside the house in the road and left there all night. It will be gone by that time if it is worth taking (by men or nats). If the evil spirit does not then go out of the man, or if the tugging at the rope brings forth no answer, stronger measures are resorted to. He is soundly beaten with a stout bamboo, pins are stuck into him, red pepper is forced into his eyes, and the louder he shrieks and groans the better pleased are his friends and relations, for it is the witch, or the nat-soh that is suffering, and not the sick man at all. If this treatment does not kill or cure him, a final effort is made. A middle-aged woman, sometimes a

member of the family, dresses herself up in a fantastic way, and assumes the name of "wife of the evil spirit." A shed is erected for the occasion just outside the house. Music is brought, and the woman begins to dance, slowly at first, and then gradually more and more furiously, until at length she works herself into a regular frenzy or ecstasy. Then it is supposed that the demon has passed out of the sick man into her, and that whatever answers she now gives to questions are the utterances of the demon. Consequently, whatever she directs is implicitly carried out. The instructions usually resolve themselves into offerings to be placed outside for the evil spirit at nightfall. If this fails, then the witch doctors and medicine doctors unite in declaring that the nat is too strong for them, and abandon their patient. Occasionally, if he is of a very strong constitution, he revives after that. Such performances as the above are limited to remote jungle places in British territory nowadays. Thus, however, the provinces of the physician and the necromancer run into one another, and it is difficult to say where science ends and magic begins.

Shampooing is almost always employed in every disease, in addition to the prescriptions of the doctor; and here, at any rate, we have real skill. The shampooers are almost always women, though most men know a little about it too. A professional has a most wonderful knowledge of all the tendons and muscles in the human body, and follows them up with a light pressure of the fingers that affords a relief in the case of rheumatism and stiffness from exhaustion, which is simply incredible to all but those who have experienced it.

In addition to their other work, the hmau sayahs are very much resorted to for love philtres and potions by both sexes. They have always an answer pat if the

prescription fails: it is due to the opposition of the *ehng soung nat*, the guardian spirit of the house; or the applicant has made a mistake as to the date of birth of the object of his affection. Knowledge of this latter particular is imperative, and an error of an hour or two makes all the difference in the composition of the potion.

It is unsatisfactory to an intelligent Burman's feelings to think that the man who prescribes for him in a dangerous illness is possibly at the same time mixing cunning draughts for a love-sick maid, or is manufacturing an image of a girl with magical charms and drugs which shall drive the original mad and soothe the vengeful wrath of the rejected suitor. Consequently, a Rangoon Burman, if he falls ill out in the district anywhere, hurries back to town as fast as he can. If he cannot do that, the best thing is to call in a *welshab* in preference to an unknown doctor; for while the former will probably confine himself to incantations at first, the dietist will irritate all the gastric juices in your body by prescribing some new variety of food, and banning everything you have been accustomed to; while the druggist will cram you to the throat with cathartics and anthelmintics, with arsenic, fungi from bamboo roots, green vitriol, decoctions of lemon grass, borax, croton seeds, and vegetable soot.

The father of Burmese medical science was the celebrated physician *Zaywaka*, who once cured a colic which afflicted the Lord Buddha Gautama, by simply giving him three flowers to smell. Upon the petals were strewn some potent powders which restored perfect health in a few hours. To this good medico is to be ascribed the assertion that the diseases which afflict mankind are ninety-six in number. These may vary in their symptoms according to the thirty-five temperaments, the forty-five accidents, the sixteen dangers, and the four elements, but, there are no

more than ninety-six waydana for all that. Accordingly, a very common beginning to a formal Burmese letter is to say that by your good wishes the writer has been preserved from the ninety-six andayè; the thirty-two kan-chammah, or pieces of bad luck; the twenty-five bayah, dangers from assassins, wild beasts, and the like; and finally from anehta bala, evils of all kinds, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness: your regard has kept all these things far from him, may his aspirations for your welfare be not less efficacious. Therefore it is very essential that even the most empirical doctor should know at least the names of these diseases. The mere sound of them is as good as medicine to a man with a stomach-ache.

Bewitchings, of course, do not count as diseases. Very often when a man has very strong griping pains which no amount of drugs will serve to alleviate, the doctor declares that there is an a-pin in him. Some wizard has introduced a piece of raw flesh into his stomach by means of a spell, and this goes on drawing everything to it till it kills the man. When a sick man is unable to pronounce certain letters the doctors are able to calculate in how many days or hours he will die. Unfortunately, the fulfilment of their prophecies lies very completely in their hands.

Very often images of pagodas and Buddhas may be seen outside a house in the country villages. There is some one sick within, and the pious resort to this expedient to get rid of the malady. This method is called payah tayah, and does not exclude medical advice. The figures are small, and are usually made of pasteboard or clay. A man afflicted with a headache will often hang up pictures of peacocks and hares under his eaves, along with small fans. The peacock represents the sun and the hare the moon, and the indisposition is supposed to result from sun

or moonstroke. Sometimes a sayah, when he is called in, will recommend that the patient be moved a little to the eastward or the westward, if his illness arises from kan. Similar to this is the ceremony called yaydaya ya-yee or yaydaya sin. A small coffin with a tiny corpse inside it is manufactured and carried a small distance to the east or the west and there buried. When the a-yoht, the effigy of the patient, has been thus disposed of, he ought to get well. These matters are decided from the sick man's horoscope, which shows from what constellations he is particularly likely to suffer harm.

The witch doctor usually has an elaborate rod called yŭwa-tan, marked all over with cabalistic figures, and often with medicines let into it. The sayah stands before the possessed person and threatens a blow. The witch or spirit in the victim then becomes anxious and pays reverence with clasped hands. It is then forced to relate exactly its name, place of abode, friends and relations, and so on. The possessing demon is usually a witch, and she acknowledges that she has entered the patient from motives of hatred or revenge. The wise man could now kill the witch with his baydin if he pleased, but is usually persuaded by the relatives of the sick man not to do so. A desire not to spoil his own trade is also not without its argument. So he accepts a number of presents from the patient's family, and is then won over, contenting himself with giving the possessed person a sound thrashing as a remembrance of him and a return for the fees. Then he commands the witch to depart and not come back again. As a conclusion the victim and his relations are enjoined not to pursue the witch any further. Sometimes, however, they are obstinate, and refuse to rest here. Then, if the affair has happened in native territory, the case is brought before the magistrate, who has the accused tied to a



bamboo and thrown into the river along with the accuser, who is served in the same fashion. The one that sinks wins the case, and the loser pays all costs. In English territory the magistrate has the complainants bundled out of court.

If any one doubts the power of the hmaw sayah, he works a miracle to cure them of their scepticism, and prove that he governs all creatures. He gets an empty earthenware jar, covers it with a cloth, and repeats his spells over it. When the cloth is removed, there is smoking-hot rice and roasted fowl in the jar, and those present are allowed to eat as much as they like. If they eat with perfect belief, they will never be hungry again; but perfect belief is practically never found. Sometimes, however, a demon gets angry at the display of power, and interferes in an officious way. He steals some of the cooked meat out of the jar, and does his best to work a counter-miracle. He never manages to do it, but the ceremony is disturbed by his interference and has to be gone through again. Sometimes the sayah himself indulges in a little pleasantry. The spectators see a beautiful melon so juicy and ripe that their mouths water at the very sight of it; but when they seize a piece and already feel it between their lips, it vanishes away and they bite their own fingers. Unless they are hopelessly stupid they do not laugh at hmaw sayahs after that.

The following are a few prescriptions for whitlow and bad sores from a Maulmein doctor's books:—

1. The "hand" of a touk-tè, the big trout-spotted lizard, that haunts old trees and the thatch of houses; or, more probably, a bit of the stem of an epiphyte called the touk-tè's hand.

2. Sulphur.

3. The bulb of a white lily.

4. A chilli roasted.

5. Cock's dung.

Mix in equal parts, and stir while heating it, and finally add some earth oil.

Again: Take a sufficient quantity of cock's dung, add to it a small quantity of copperas, pound them well together, and then mix with earth oil and some sessamum oil.

Seven or eight dry seeds of dan-kwè (*cassia fistida*), well bruised, and then intimately mixed with a little congee (rice water), with "sufficient" earth oil added, also proves a very effective remedy.

The baydin sayah's books are partly written, partly filled, with magic figures and pictures. The squares are all formed in accordance with the ordinary Hindoo law. When the wise man is asked questions, he keeps writing down numbers and characters on his parabaik tablets and rubbing them out, chanting to himself all the time. Sometimes he shakes cowries and seeds together, and when they fall out, decides from their position which of the pictures or rhymes in his book is to be consulted. Each of these gives its own answer, but they are not always as definite in their character as is desirable. The sayah always speaks in the declamatory monotone of the linga.

The following are the names of some of the familiar spirits and their likenesses:—

Oo-padanah Pyoo-dah, a spirit who lives under the earth and protects the husbandman. When he comes above ground he rides on a serpent. The inquiring farmer whose cowrie refers to this picture is most fortunate.

Sadee Wazadat, a wild figure galloping on a horse. This means failure of the attempt.

Sakah Badah, a monkey mounted on a goat. Denotes fertility of mind.

In another picture a crow is represented breaking a vessel full of money with its beak. Close at hand are a man and woman embracing one another. This denotes loss.

A man and his wife represented dancing together signify great gifts to the pagoda.

Another picture, which represents a husband and wife standing together in front of a house, with a horse and cow near it, denotes that the child to whom this picture may refer will be a farmer.

Near the picture of a dog, which one man holds by the tail while another hits it on the head, is written: "When the lot falls here, be not boastful, but humble; avoid pride and assumption, for that will only raise up enemies for you."

The following are some spells:—

Take this amulet (a piece of bone carved rudely square, and with mystic figures on it), put your foot up against a tha-byay tree, and repeat the ectee peethaw (a form of worship in learning which one spends four or five months in the monasteries) thirty-seven times. Then you will be able to turn any given man into a ghost and make him do as you please.

Take the stalk of a betel leaf in your hand. Repeat "Ohn padan roopa wahree thwa ha" seven times, and then throw the stalk at the person. He or she is sure then to listen to what you say.

The following is a charm to cause a dream about your lady love:—Get an exact likeness of her made. Find out the hour and day on which she was born, her name and exact age. Then having begged permission from the guardian spirit of both the houses (your own and hers), chant as follows: "Oh, Theorathadee, fairest goddess of

flowers, daughter of nats most high, grant most graciously all that I desire of thee: ta-sa ma-chan: without keeping back the least remainder; without withdrawing a single joy: prithee do this without fail, sweet goddess of woodland love." Repeat this seven times before the figure. Then go to sleep.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SLAVES AND OUTCASTS.

IT is a work of the greatest possible merit to build a pagoda, and the founder, prefixing Payah-tagah to his signature, for the rest of his life is looked upon as certain to pass into neh'ban on the completion of this, his present existence. Similarly a man acquires great koothoh by repairing portions of one of the old national shrines, putting up a new umbrella on the summit, setting the steps that lead up to the platform in order, or even by simply gilding afresh a few square feet on a feast day. By doing any one of these things a man sets his balance of kan on the right side and gains the good opinion of his neighbours. It is therefore, not unnatural that all foreigners should be struck with the fact that the regular servitors of the places of worship, those who sweep the platform, carry off dead leaves, broken branches, and litter generally, and keep the place in order, that these men are not only slaves, but are regarded as outcasts with whom the rest of the community will have no dealings and whose society is contaminating. Not only is the original para-gyoon a slave for life, for no one, not even a king can liberate him or provide a substitute in his place, but his descendants, till the cycle of Shin Gautama's religion shall have come

to an end, and all the relics shall vanish from the earth; all his children throughout the thousands of years that have to elapse, are fixed and settled slaves of the pagoda from their birth, and any one marrying a pagoda slave, even unwittingly, becomes himself, with all the children he may have had by a previous wife, irremediably a para-gyoon. Why this should be I do not know. Some learned men may be able to explain it, but I have never come across them, and the vast mass of Burmans share my ignorance. So strict is the dedication that any one who attempts or connives at setting free a pagoda slave is condemned to misery in the lowest hell, *awizee*. The servitor of the shrine can be employed in no other duty than keeping it in order, and kings and great men are threatend with loss of power and dire destruction if they venture to employ such outcasts as servants, even in the meanest capacity.

Slavery of the familiar form known in semi-civilized countries still exists in Upper Burma, but the pagoda-slaves are a perfectly distinct body. A person who sells himself, or is sold, by his relation for debt is in a very inferior position doubtless and cannot enjoy any very great privileges. But he can always work his release and is not thereafter considered as lying under any particular stigma. But the para-gyoon are neither more nor less than outcasts. They are looked upon as unclean, and the rest of the community will have no intercourse whatever with them. So much is this the case that in British territory, where they have of course been liberated from their compulsory servitude; they are looked upon with no less aversion than in Upper Burma, and though nominally free and independent, have to travel into districts where they are unknown before they can find employment even of the most menial kind.

It is no explanation of the taint that the original

servitors were prisoners taken in war, condemned convicts, or people expressly sentenced to this office on account of hideous crimes. The reverence for the pagoda cannot be exceeded, why then should the care of it and the surrounding buildings be left in the hands of such vile and degraded people? Besides, in the old autocratic days, not entirely vanished yet, it was a common thing for a pious sovereign to set apart certain villages, or a stated number of houses in those villages, for the service of the pagoda, and the victims were selected, quite regardless of personal character, by the village headman from those who were unable to buy themselves off. The cloud, therefore, which hangs over such people in English territory is all the more singular. The feeling came out very strongly in the case of a man with slave blood in him, who was appointed by the local government to be a magistrate. Subordinates declined to act under him, and resisted all he did; the people were still more demonstrative and petitions flowed in begging that the disgrace might be removed from their district. It was to English minds quite impossible that this should be done, and equally so that he should not receive support in the execution of his duties. The matter was far from being simplified by the natural feelings of resentment, showing itself in undue severity when occasion offered, which filled the victim of the popular clamour, and it was only by the exercise of great tact and patience that the English Deputy Commissioner was able to quiet the people, and after long persuasion gradually to set matters right. But the majority of paragoons are far from being so fortunate. Here and there in Rangoon and Maulmein are a few men who have got into business, but it is only by carefully concealing their antecedents, and they live in constant terror that the few who know them will betray their secret and reduce them to

ruin. The great bulk of the liberated, however—if they can be called liberated when they never had any direct master—find that the force of public opinion is too much for them and are driven to staying about the old source of their shame to obtain a living; they haunt the pagoda steps and sell offerings to the pious on their way to worship, candles and prayer-flags, incense-sticks, flowers, and fruit. Few of them now resort to their old source of food, the altars, where they used to dispute the ownership of the cold rice and victuals with the crows and the pariah dogs. In Upper Burma the sellers of gold-leaf and ta-gohn-lohn are often respectable, that is to say, free men, but in the low country so great is the fear of being mistaken for a para-gyoon that but very few “good” people will sell their wares on the soung-dan. At the Shway Dagohn, in Rangoon, the vendors are almost without exception of the unclean class.

In King Theebaw's territory the pagoda slaves are still universal at all the greater shrines. As might have been expected, many-pagoda'd Pagahn is their greatest place. Here there is even a king of the para-gyoons, and he enjoys a sorry mockery of state in the use of gold-embroidered sandals, permission to wear jewelry, and the shade of a gold umbrella when he walks abroad. But a free man meeting him in his grandeur would make no obeisance and would shrink to the other side of the road to avoid contamination. The origin of his sovereignty is told in an old tale which proves the antiquity of the custom and the tenacity with which the dedication is held to. A King of Pagahn—which has not been a capital since the fourteenth century—had suspicions of the loyalty of a tributary sovereign, and invited him to the great and noble city with its towers of gold and silver of which Ser Marco Polo writes. This monarch seems to have had no



fears and came with but a small retinue. Then the Lord of the Golden Palace decreed a great feast, and when all were assembled at the Shway-zee-gohn pagoda, seized his unfortunate vassal by the hair, and holding aloft his sword, dedicated the helpless man with all his followers and their descendants for ever to the service of the great shrine, where lies a cast of the Lord Buddha's jawbone. Hence the petty state of the slave-king and the great crowding of pagoda slaves to his dominions to share his privileges. There is little chance of the class dying out, and if there were its ranks would soon be filled with new dedications. As it is they marry and increase. Besides the para-gyoon, equally among the outcasts are the ta-doung-sa; the executioners, jailors, and lictors in Mandalay; lepers and incurables of all kinds, coffin-makers, and those occupied with dead bodies and the graveyards; all deformed and mutilated persons and the lamaing, or government slaves, tillers of the royal lands. Of these the ta-doung-sa are the nearest in character to the pagoda slaves, and were probably originally intended as a kind of reserve to draw from for a supply of servitors to the temples. They may not engage in any fixed occupation for their support, and are condemned to make their living by begging alone, but a few of them become very rich, for they wander all over the country and occasionally chance upon windfalls, but their wealth is of no use to them, for they can never retire, even in the extremest age. Like the pagoda slaves they have their head-quarters in Pagahn, and some of them are vehemently suspected of being run-away para-gyoons from other parts of the country. But the advance in public estimation is of the slightest possible character. Among the sellers of nan-ta-gohn and other pagoda essentials, at the shrines of Rangoon, Prome, and Pegu, are here and there a few ta-doung-sa, tired of their wandering life; yet, notwith-

standing the disgust with which they are regarded, they are never stinted for food.

Lepers and others afflicted with loathsome diseases, deformed and mutilated persons, are regarded more with pity than with aversion, but they are not the less outcasts, and must live in villages by themselves, or with the *ta-doung-sa* and *para-gyoon* if indeed they do not scorn to do so. They usually line the pagoda steps on a duty or feast day, and receive abundant alms, every third or fourth worshipper dropping a handful of rice or a copper coin into the basket or platter laid before them. The dislike to maimed people is very singular, and led to curious incidents in the first and second Burmese wars. The wounded men brought into the field hospitals refused to have arms or legs amputated to save their lives, and it is a matter of not unfrequent occurrence even now, in the hospitals, for a man to tear off the bandages wrapped round the stump, that he may not survive his misfortune and become a shame to his family. In Upper Burma the taint, or even the suspicion of leprosy in a family, becomes a fertile source of villainy. If the suspected person, or the head of the house be at all well-to-do, heavy sums are extorted by the headman of the place in return for permission to stay on in the village, and sometimes informers make a good thing in demanding hush-money. But no amount of payments could save a man badly affected with the disease from being driven out of the town. In Lower Burma the aversion is equally strong, and unless the leper is a rich man he has to live in prescribed quarters among the outcasts already mentioned. Equally despised are all those who have anything to do with funerals, either in making the coffin or digging the grave. This occupation in British territory has therefore fallen almost exclusively into the hands of the old *para-gyoon*, and helps to keep alive the

ancient feeling. It must be allowed that the ways of the sandalaks do not in any way tend to conciliate the multitude.

Finally there are the pah-gwet, the let-yah-toung, or theing-gyeing, the constables, jailors, executioners, lictors, found only in Upper Burma, and there mainly in the neighbourhood of the capital. These merit all the obloquy that could be cast on them, but their position of quasi-authority makes them more secretly hated than openly flouted. They are never allowed to enter a free man's house, even in the exercise of their office; nor can they go within the walls of the palace stockade, but many a citizen has smarted under the blows of the lictor's theing, when a great man has come round a corner suddenly, and the let-ya-toung has seen a chance for a back-hander with his fasces; and it is far too easy a matter for a man to get into gaol in Mandalay to make it a wise proceeding to rail at the pah-gwet. It is an unlovely custom in Upper Burma which makes the executioner both constable and gaoler, and condemns him to live on his wits. The natural result is that he lives on the prisoners, and extorts the last pice out of his victim with threats of violence, or actual torture. Pah-gwet means a circle on the cheek, and this ring on the face implies that its bearer has been condemned for a capital crime, and is respited to fill his present post. Others have devices descriptive of their offence tattooed on the chest, as loo-that (murderer), thu-kho (thief), da-myah (dacoit or highway robber). An execution in Mandalay is a horrid sight. The "spotted man" dances round his victim, makes feints with his sword and bursts into fits of wild laughter or yells, to shake the doomed man's nerves. It must be admitted that the spectators are very little better. A skilful blow which just slits the skin and draws blood meets with an approving

about. It is consoling to know that the pah-gwet, like the para-gyoon, is buried like carrion when he dies, or perhaps is simply thrown out with the town offal.

How does all this agree with the theory of Buddhism, that there is equality for all, and that the poorest man can raise himself to sublimest heights after death? The king has and exercises the power of life and death over all his people. He rules in the truest sense by divine right, and his subjects are all as slaves. The answer is—it is *kan*, it is the accumulation of merits or demerits in past existences. A man is rich, powerful, and great, because aforetime he was pious and good. Therefore now he has a right to govern and look down with contempt on the poor. The poor man must have been a bad man before he entered on this existence. He deserves to be miserable; he knows it himself, and submits fatuously. It is true the tyrant does not do well if he oppresses him, and perhaps may be punished for it in a later existence, and become the slave of him, who, now a slave, may hereafter by good works attain the rank of king. But in his present existence the great man has the fullest right to oppress and grind down the poor as much as he chooses. He enjoys the fruits of previous virtues, and since he has perhaps in many existences mortified the flesh and done grievous penance, he has now a right to enjoy himself to the limit of his desires. Moreover, as he has great power and riches, it is always easy for him by much almsgiving and good works to add so much merit to his *kan*, as to outweigh all his sins, and in the end preserve the balance still in his favour. This is however very hard for the poor man. His station exposes him to many temptations to sin. He has but very little to give to the *behkko* and to the pagodas. He has perhaps even, in order to save himself from starvation, to shoot deer and game, and catch fish.

a mode of living which infallibly dooms him to a few millions of years in hell, whence again he has to work up through the upper three states of punishment before he can enter anew upon existence on earth, there to strive to accumulate hard-earned merit, that he may not incontinently topple back again to *nga-yè*. In any case the poor man's hope can only be directed to the future. From the seeds sown in past worlds, tares have sprung up in the soil of his present existence, and tares they will remain. The germ of a higher life may be sown, but it will only grow up in a new existence. There is happily one refuge for the man born to poverty and misery. It is always open to him to put on the yellow robe of the Assembly of the Perfect, but to do that he must feel himself strong enough to beat down the fire of passions and remain steadfast to the end, for a *loo-twet*, a man who has put his hand to the plough and turns back again, exposes himself to infinitely greater danger towards his next existence than he who has remained throughout in the world. The monastery is a house of refuge not to be lightly sought, and, sad to say, even it is not open to the outcast.

This doctrine of *kan* also accounts for the equanimity and callousness with which Buddhists view human misery and the taking of human life, notwithstanding the law which forbids the killing of even the smallest insect. They recognize apathetically the working out of inexorable destiny, and watch a man drowning in the river with undisturbed tranquillity, for they are not called upon or even justified in stirring a hand to prevent it. You cannot combat manifest fate.

But the outcast may not in any case enter the monastery, not even as a scholar. Even that last chance is withheld from him. He is the connecting link with the state of animals, the highest state of punishment. He is

no better than an animal in thought; he meets with less consideration indeed. Were he bedizened to the eyes with costly silks and priceless jewelry no girl would look at him. His wealth is of no use. He is not allowed to build a pagoda, or even to supply fresh water-pots on a way-side stand. The monk would refuse his alms; the starving free-man beggar would scorn his bounty. I cannot understand why they do not drown themselves.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### FORMING THE NATIONAL CHARACTER.

IF the nation which has no history is happy, it is difficult to know what is to be said of the nation which has a very voluminous history, almost all of which is, however, pure romance. The effect on the Burmese of the fond imaginings of the Mahah Yaza-win, the great Chronicle of Kings, is most undesirable. No defeats are recorded in those courtly pages; reverses are charmed into acts of clemency; armies vast as those that people dreamland march through its chapters; its heroes are of the old ballad type; its treasures such as might have been the produce of Aladdin's lamp. The result has been a permanent influence on the national character. Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Chronicle of British Kings" has only left its mark on the national literature, but had the English lived forty degrees nearer the line, they might still be believing in Brut, great-grandson of Æneas, and the unbroken line of kings of whom King Arthur was chief. As it is the British Mahah Yaza-win only supplied a spring for the poets of all the after time. The Burman Chronicle, on the other hand, has laid the foundation of the national character. Like all hardy, strong-limbed races, the Burmans are naturally proud; but this innate

pride has been tenfold increased by the wonderful tales of the national annals. What is a Burman to think when he reads in the history of his country—there is but the one means of learning the past—that the English have only foothold in Burma through the clemency of a gracious king? They might have been crushed as effectually as the first settlers on Negra's Island; they might have been driven forth as easily as their seventeenth-century ancestors from the factory at Bhamaw, far up the Irrawaddy on the confines of China; but Bah-gyee-daw, the king, said, like the Lord Buddha, "All can take life, but who can give it back?" The Burmese annalist relates: "The kulla byoo, the white strangers from the west, fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took that place, and Prome, and were permitted to advance as far as Yandabo; for the king, from motives of piety and regard to life, made no effort whatever to oppose them. The strangers had spent vast sums of money on the enterprise; and by the time they reached Yandabo their resources were exhausted; and they were in great distress. They petitioned the king, who, in his clemency and generosity, sent them large sums of money to pay their expenses back, and ordered them out of the country."

By the Treaty of Yandabo, extorted by the fear that the capital would fall into the hands of Sir Archibald Campbell, then thundering at the gates of Ava, the English acquired the provinces of Tenasserim and Arrakan, and deprived the sovereign of two-thirds of his sea-board. The Province of Pegu, which was annexed after the second Burmese war in 1852-3, has never been formally ceded by any treaty. King Mindohn said, "Let them stay there; I cannot turn them out, but I will not be written down as the king that gave up Rangoon." Lord



Dalhousie said: "A treaty with a man like that is useless"; and he straightway fixed upon a parallel of latitude as the northern boundary of British Burma, and put up a line of frontier pillars along it without reference to the Burmese Government at all. The Mahah Yaza-win said, in effect: "The foreigner was starving in his own land, and the king bounteously granted him a resting-place in the dismal swamps by the sea." To this day the only approach to a recognition of the British possession of Pegu is an announcement from Mindohn Min, the late king, that "orders had been issued to the governors of districts not to allow the Burmese troops to attack the territories of Meaday and Toung-oo, in which the British Government had placed its garrisons." Well may it be said that Burmese kings submit to accomplished facts, but do not sanction them. Shortly before the storming of Melloon, the King Mintaya Gyee sent a note to Sir Archibald Campbell representing that "it was contrary to his religious principles, and the constitution of the Empire, to make any cession of territory, and he was bound to preserve its integrity."

Naturally, therefore, the up-country Burman thinks that his race is the bravest in all the realms of Zampoo-deepa, the island in the south, with all its five hundred surrounding islets. The idea has been little checked by English communications and relations with the Lord of the Golden Palace. Such documents as the following are duly inserted in the Mahah Yaza-win, and lose nothing in the translating. This was sent, in 1695, by Nathaniel Higginson, Governor of Madras, to the King of Ava. "To his Imperial Majesty who blesseth the noble city of Ava with his presence, Emperour of Emperours, and excelling the Kings of the East and the West in glory and honour, the clear firmament of Virtue, the fountain

of Justice, the perfection of Wisdom, the lord of Charity and Protector of the Distressed, the first mover in the Sphere of Greatness, president in council, victorious in war; who feareth none and is feared by all; centre of the treasures of the Earth, and of the Sea; Lord Proprietor of Gold and Silver, Rubies, Amber, and all precious Jewels; favoured by Heaven and honoured by all men; whose brightness shines through the World as the light of the Sun, and whose great name will be preserved in perpetual memory."

After this promising exordium the letter goes on: "The fame of so glorious an Emperour, the Lord of power and riches, being spread throughout the whole earth, all nations resort to view the splendour of your greatness, and, with your majesty's subjects, to partake of the blessings which God Almighty hath bestowed upon your kingdom above all others. Your majesty has been pleased to grant your especial favours to the Honourable English Company, whose servant I am; and now send to present before the footstool of your throne a few toys, as an acknowledgment of your majesty's goodness, which I beg your majesty to accept, and to vouchsafe an audience to my servants and a gracious answer to my petition."

He finishes by asking leave to send a factor next monsoon to reside at Syriam, opposite Rangoon, on the other side of the Pegu river. Edward Fleetwood was the envoy. He had to wait a long time before the gate of the palace stockade was opened; when that was done he had to bow three times to the building; half way across the esplanade he had to bow humbly three times again; then at fifteen yards off, and finally had to make the same obeisance to the king.

The answer to the governor, in the name of the ministers, ran as follows:—"In the East, where the sun

risers, and in that Oriental part of it which is called Chapudu; the Lord of water and earth, the Emperor of Emperors, against whose imperial majesty if any shall be so foolish as to imagine anything, it shall be happy for them to die and be consumed; the lord of great charity and help of all nations, the great Lord esteemed for happiness; the Lord of all riches, of elephants and horses and all good blessings; the Lord of high-built palaces of gold; the great and most powerful Emperor in this life, the soles of whose feet are gilt and set upon the heads of all people; we his great governor and president here, called Mahah Eggena Tibodis, do make known to the governor, Nathaniel Higginson," and so it goes on in the same strain, concluding with a notification of the presents sent—1,500 viss of lac, 2,500 viss of tin, 300 viss of ivory, 6 earthen dishes, and 8 lacquered boxes. This was, however, more satisfactory than that which fell to the lot of Ensign Lester in 1757, when he got a concession of Negrais Island and a commercial treaty from the conqueror, Aloung-payah. The gallant envoy received a present of eighteen oranges, two dozen heads of Indian corn, and five cucumbers. Two years later the garrison on the ceded island was massacred. The national annalist gloats over these things.

Here is another petition from the white foreigners:—"Placing above our heads the golden majesty of the mighty lord, the possessor of the mines of rubies, amber, gold, silver, and all kinds of metals; of the lord under whose command are innumerable soldiers, generals, and captains; of the lord who is king of many countries and provinces, and emperor over many rulers and princes, who wait round his throne with the badges of his authority; of the lord who is adorned with the greatest power, wisdom, knowledge, prudence, foresight, &c.; of the lord

who is rich in the possession of elephants and horses, and in particular is the lord of many white elephants; of the lord who is the greatest of kings, the most just and the most religious; the master of life and death; we his slaves, the governor of Bengal, the officers and administrators of the Company, bowing and lowering our heads under the sole of his royal golden feet, do present to him, with the greatest veneration, this our humble petition."

Such documents might have flowed from the chronicler's own pen, and the Burmese historical student, in reading this unbought praise of nations, naturally takes it as honest homage due up to the present day. So exalted an idea had the Court of the military power of the country that in 1810, a minister at Ava told Captain Canning, that if proper application had been made to the king, he would have sent an army to Europe and put England in possession of France, and so ended all the troubles of the beginning of the century.

Most envoys sent to the Arbiter of Existence have been treated very cavalierly in the way of interviews; not a few in the old days waited long months without ever seeing the king at all. All, down to Sir Douglas Forsyth, in 1874, have had to go in shoeless, and crouch humbly, in adoring attitudes—the unaccustomed nature of which did not tend to render the position less ridiculous. In other ways they were treated with every indignity. When King Mintaya Gye heard that Colonel Symes was coming, he went away to Mingohn, to contemplate his gigantic failure at a pagoda there. Thither the colonel had to follow him, congratulating himself on the circumstance that as the king was away from the palace, there would be the less trouble in seeing him. But he found himself vastly mistaken. On arriving at Mingohn he was told to take up his quarters on an island in the middle

of the river. On this barren place, shunned by all Burmese, as a polluted spot, where bodies were burnt, and criminals executed, he had to remain forty days, and during all that time, not the slightest notice of him was taken by the court. Finally he was admitted on a kadaw, or "Beg-Pardon Day," one of those set apart for all inferiors and vassals to come and do homage and worship at the Golden Feet. For long it was the invariable custom to receive representatives of foreign states on these days. Colonel Burney was the first to refuse to be so treated, and he carried his point, though the woon-gyees told the king the reason why he did not come on the appointed kadaw day was because he was sick. The utmost protestations of Symes and Crawford failed to save them from the humiliation. Another favourite method of showing contempt for foreigners, and exalting the national dignity was rather curious in its elaborate ingenuity. Foreign missions were provided for by a tax levied on outcasts. The money was only collected when an embassy was expected, and was applied to no other purpose than providing accommodation and food for the members of the mission. The coin was considered too vile to be put to any other use. Delaying the envoy at the gates was an invariable device. Just as he came up to the entrance a band of princes, with their followers, would turn in from a side street, and the luckless representative of England would have to stop and bite his nails till they had all passed in. Colonel Burney was delayed two hours in this way, and even Colonel (now General) Phayre, in 1856, had to wait on his elephant till the Ehng-shay Min and his train filed in before him. Arrived at the palace, all the earlier envoys were made to fall on their knees, and shekho to the central spire of the royal residence. The members of the embassy of 1856 were

nearly bullied into taking off their hats to the pyathat. The object was to show them as suppliants at the Golden Feet, honoured by being allowed to view his dwelling, and elevated to the summit of earthly ambition by being admitted to an interview. Symes and Cox paid for their admission in this way. Besides this official bad treatment the plenipotentiaries were victimised with numberless personal insults. Even the Supreme Court on at least one occasion refused to see Cox. He was knocked up long after midnight one night by a clerk who wanted to get a nutmeg-grater to show to the king. The Myc-woon wrote to him to say that as the envoy would not take his advice he must break off all intercourse, and the English than-thaman would be good enough not to come near his house for the future. Captain Cox had had a fence put up round his house to keep away the inquisitive rabble, at a cost of twenty rupees. One morning when he woke up he found this had been unceremoniously carried away, and that it had been used to inclose a place near the river where the heir-apparent's head might be washed. Finally great pressure was put upon him to take the oath of allegiance to the king; he was to drink the water in which the muskets and lances of the guard had been dipped and it was expressly stipulated that he should pay for his oath just as any Burman would have to do. Scores of like details might be mentioned with regard to all the other ambassadors and residents. It will be sufficient, however, to mention that one resident not many years ago had a cane flourished over his head by a convict lictor, and that the last *chargé d'affaires* of all was chased by a howling rabble from the Mandalay bazaar to the Residency gates, which were broken in—no great exertion of strength was necessary certainly—all because he had killed a pariah dog that was snapping at his heels.

If the various *ayaybaings* were treated in this way, non-official Englishmen could not expect great reverence to be paid to them, and it is hardly worth mentioning that in 1881 a Rangoon merchant, yelled at by convict lictors, went down on his knees while one of the leading spirits of the massacres, the *Hpoung Woon*, went by on his elephant. Little wonder then that the patriotic fictions of the *Mahah Yaza-win* are believed, and that the perusal of them is all the more greedily indulged in. The settlement of the shoe question, since the "*Flight of the Strangers*"—the withdrawal of the English Residency in Mandalay—is farther off than ever.

But it is not so much the English that suffer—though occasionally a few of them do get stoned—as the smaller nations and tribes who live around and among the Burmese. It must be acknowledged that the Burman is a sad bully; but the white strangers could reduce him to civility, if to nothing else, very speedily. It is different with other races—some perhaps aboriginal, some invaders of Burma as much as the present ruling sept. The Chins, the Karens, and, in some degree, even the warlike if simple Shans, have all suffered in common with weaker nationalities from the cunning and braggadocio of the Burman. The *Mahah Yaza-win* delights no less in recounting tales of barbaric diplomacy than in heroics about gallant generals who hold quicksilver in their mouths and advance on the quailing foe, leaping eighteen or twenty cubits in the air. For example, the chronicles of *Prome* relate the well-known world-story of the bullock's hide of ground. A tribe came from the East under the command of an Amazon. She obtained from the aborigines—probably now some of the hill-tribes in Arakan—a grant of as much land as could be inclosed within an ox-hide, and, following the example of *Dido*, cut the hide into strips.

She got into difficulties, however, and would probably have been driven out had she not married a neighbouring king. A stepson of hers founded the ancient town of Thare-kettara (Prome), an event said to have been prophesied by the Buddha Gautama himself, in proof whereof the Shway-san-daw pagoda exists to the present day.

A story of a similar character is told with regard to the Shans. The Burmans had a quarrel with some of these big-boned highlandmen as to the ownership of a tract of fine paddy-land. The Shans were in force, and, as they always are, perfectly prepared to fight about the matter. The Burmese therefore resorted to craft. An old hermit was referred to on the subject. He said that the party which first finished building a pagoda of a certain fixed size should have the disputed territory. So both sides set to work. The Burmese soon found that the sturdy hillmen were distancing them. At night therefore the chief had recourse to stratagem. He made a framework of bamboos of the required height, had it covered with cloth, and daubed the cloth with white plaster. When daylight came, and the Shans saw the Burmese shrine complete and perfect, even to the extent of offerings of fruit and candles, their astonishment and dismay was such that they marched off straightway to the hills— ascribing the rapid erection to supernatural assistance, and never dreaming of examining the precocious payah; whereat the Burmese chronicler chuckles with patriotic delight, and glorifies the wisdom of his countrymen. The same story is told of the foundation of the Arakan empire by the younger of two brothers who came from India.

But it is in the relations with the milder-natured tribes, such as the Karennis and Chins, or the small if warlike septa such as the Kachins, that the Burman most comes up to the truculence of the Mahah Yaza-win. Out of the



northern Kachins—bold robber bands, armed with queer, home-made, stockless guns—little is to be gained. They live on the hills, and own nothing but pigs; but they raid on lowland villages, and the Burmans retaliate, and there are periodic seasons of mutual crucifixion. Long ago these clans had the reputation of kindly hospitality, but Burmese tyranny has made most of them dangerous savages. It is different with the Karennas and Chins. The former a heavy, plethoric people, endure their wrongs with dull indifference, all but the fierce red Karennas, who keep up a perpetual guerilla warfare, after the manner of the Kachins. The Karennas account for their wrongs in the following way. When Yüwa created the world he took three handfuls of earth and threw them round about him. From one sprang the Burmans, from another the Karennas, and from the third the Kullabs, the foreigners. The Karennas were very talkative and made more noise than all the others, and so the Creator believed that there were too many of them, and he threw another half handful to the Burmans, who thus gained such a supremacy that they soon overcame the Karennas, and have oppressed them ever since.

The Chins, a quiet and harmless race, have been subjected to such long-continued and systematic ill-treatment on the part of the Burmese, that traditions accounting for this oppression actually form a part of the national religion. All mankind, they say, is descended from a woman called Hlee-neu, who laid 101 eggs, from the last laid of which sprang the Chins. Hlee-neu loved the youngest best; but he had gone away, and before she found him again the whole world except bleak mountain-ranges had been partitioned out among her other children. So the Chin first man got the hills, and as compensation was given elephants, horses, cattle, goats, pigs, and fowls.

Unfortunately, Hlee-neu appointed the Burman brother to look after him. The Burman turned out a most wicked and unscrupulous guardian. He pretended to teach him, but only showed the blank side of the slate, so that the poor Chin never learned a single letter. He rubbed the elephant's back with cowhage, so that the Chin's bare legs were so tickled that he refused to have such an unpleasant animal, and gave all the elephants to the Burman. By similar tricks the buffaloes, the horses, and the cattle were obtained. When the Chin mounted to ride on the horse, the Burman's wife got in the way, and was knocked down; and as compensation for the injuries she sustained, and to quiet her clamour, the horse had to be handed over. Then at the Burman's instigation the Chin went to view his buffaloes, clad in fiery-red garments. The buffalo naturally chased him up a tree, and before he could gain the earth again the buffaloes had gone the way of the elephants and horses. Ultimately nothing remained but goats, pigs, and fowls. Even the barren mountains were not left in his undisturbed possession. When the boundaries of the different countries were marked out, the Burman took very good care to mark his with stones and pillars, but he persuaded the Chin that tufts of grass were good enough for him. These were all burned away by the jungle-fires, and then the despoiled Chin had to live wherever the Burman told him. Thus the race has never had a country or town of its own, but wanders about in a nomadic way over the hills of Burma. A more pitiful tale of wrong and oppression it would be difficult to find. The well-known custom the Chin women have of tattooing their faces is an existing proof of this tyranny. They are naturally pretty; and this disfigurement—for they themselves acknowledge it to be such, and are giving it up in British territory—was

adopted to prevent the Burmese from carrying them off, as they once did constantly.

The stories of the Mahah Yaza-win fully account for and justify these queer traditions of the national religion of the Chins. But it is not in such minor points that the annalist is seen at his best. It is when he vapours about Chinese and Siamese and Munipuris, who come in armies, numbered by hundreds of thousands, with elephants in tens of thousands, and the guardian nats of the nations fight on their respective sides and serve to account for Burmese retreats—then it is that the spirit of the Mahah Yaza-win comes out and streams along in true *Ercles* vein. And except the plays the Burman has no other literature to read. It is not wonderful, therefore, that he has as good an opinion of himself as the “centennial Yankees.”

“Breathes there a Yank, so mean, so small,  
Who never says, ‘Well now, by Gaud,  
I reckon since old Adam’s fall  
There’s never grewed on this ‘ere ball  
A nation so all-fired tall  
As we centennial Yankees.’”

The writer might well have been a worker on the Great Chronicle of Kings.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE LORD OF THE CELESTIAL ELEPHANT AND OF MANY WHITE ELEPHANTS.

THE *Royal History of Kings* enumerates altogether 587,000 kings, following one another in regular succession. From Mahah Thamada, the great first ruler of land and of sea, there were 334,569 sovereigns till the time of the most excellent Buddha Gautama. From thence onward, the Maha Yaza-win carefully records the sequence of the ancestors of the present ruler of the Eastern Land, Theebaw Min. Western chroniclers point out incredulously that the hunter Oung Zaya, who died in 1760, founded the present dynasty under the title of Aloung Payah (commonly written Alompra), and till his rescue of the country from the victorious Peguans, held no more exalted rank than that of headman of his native village. But this scepticism ignores the doctrine of Kan, which provides that none can succeed to the throne of the Arbiter of Existence and Great Lord of Righteousness, but those whose merit in previous existences entitles them to it. The king emphatically rules by what is called in the western kingdoms the right divine. The eldest daughter of the reigning king was always declared ta-bin-deing she was forbidden to marry till the death of the sovereign. When that occurred, if there were no sons to succeed,

there was an interregnum till the ta-bin-deing could find a husband to ascend the throne. This selection was not made by the laws of passion or personal inclination, but was solely decided according to the principles of kan. A royal chariot was harnessed to a fiery steed and driven away from the palace with no one to guide it. The horse roamed about, suffering no one to enter till he came to the person decided by fate to rule the country, usually some one of the royal lineage, or of some other princely line, who had wandered, or been carried off from court. Then the horse waited patiently till the sleeper should wake up; the tales always represent the prince as asleep when the chariot arrives. When he rouses himself he steps into the chariot, and without guidance, the horse forthwith gallops back to the palace and the ta-bin-deing finds a husband and the country a king. Alompra became sovereign, only in a slightly different way, but his descent from Mahah Thamada must be unimpeachable.

Long before he took up arms and won for himself the throne, the soothsayers saw about him signs that betokened his coming dignity. When he slept his arms shone like fire; vultures perched on the houses of his enemies; gorgeous butterflies and gay-plumaged birds, and strange animals entered his dwelling; he dug up an ancient image of the Buddha not far from his door-step; when he came to fight it was manifest that he was favoured even beyond the great men of old. He possessed a sword that flew through the air and cut off heads; his shoes enabled him to clear miles at a stride; his fairy spear could spit a whole line of soldiers at once; his javelin could be hurled to any distance; finally, as a fifth weapon, he had a gun which never missed its mark, and was brought down to him by a thagyah. The possession of these five weapons at once proved his right to the throne

and secured his holding it. It is true that some of the omens which signalized his right have appeared in others with very different result. A Karenn min-loung, or embryo king, displayed the same fire-streaming arms, and raised a rebellion since the British occupation of Pegu. He gained a considerable following, and seemed formidable for a time, till the English wise men pointed out that the fiery glow was produced by rubbing phosphorus on his skin. Then all went against him as an impostor, and he very soon vanished into the hill-country. Similarly, in 1858, a poor fisherman at Twantay, a large village not far from Rangoon, dragged up in his net a small image of the Buddha. Such discoveries are always looked upon as an omen of high destiny, and according to the common superstition, the fisherman believed that he would rise in dignity, restore the Talaing kingdom, and revive religion. He announced the supernatural call in the village bazaar. A few desperate characters joined him, took possession of the town, and issued a proclamation calling upon all the faithful to rally to his standard. But the British civil authorities stepped in and broke up the procession which was going in solemn state to the pagoda to inaugurate and consecrate the fisherman in his new profession. The claimant of royal honours escaped at the time, but was afterwards given up by the villagers. In each of these cases there was deception or misapprehension of the meaning of the omens, but the abundance of the signs in the case of Alompra dispose of the assertion that he was a mere adventurer. He himself thoroughly believed in his high destiny, and talked of it in right royal fashion to Captain Baker, an ambassador sent to him in 1755 by the Honourable East India Company. This gentleman, the commander of an East Indiaman, who, under the instructions of his employers, evidently regarded

the great conqueror as little better than a savage, brought him a present of a chest or two of gunpowder, a couple of muskets and carbines, a gilt looking-glass, some red earth in bags, and half-a-dozen bottles of lavender water (there is no mention of glass beads), and offered Alompra the assistance of the great company. Whereupon his majesty burst into a defiant laugh and replied in the following fashion: "Have I asked, or do I want any assistance to reduce my enemies to subjection? Let none conceive such an opinion! Have I not in three years time extended my conquests three months' journey in every quarter without the help of cannon or muskets? Nay, I have with bludgeons only, opposed and defeated these Peguans who destroyed the capital of this kingdom, and took the prince prisoner; and a month hence I intend to go with a great force to Dagohn (Rangoon), where I have an army now lying, when I will advance to the walls of Pegu, blockade and starve them out of it, which is the last town I have now to take to complete my conquest, and then I will go in quest of Bourno (the French governor of Syriam, whom he afterwards actually did put to death). Captain, see this sword; it is now three years since it has been constantly exercised in chastising my enemies; it is indeed almost blunt with use; but it shall be continued to the same till they are utterly dispersed. Do not talk of assistance. I require none. The Peguans I can wipe away as thus (drawing the palm of one hand over the other). See these arms and this thigh (drawing his loose coat-sleeve up to the arm-pit, and lifting his pasoh, so as to display a bare, tattooed leg); amongst a thousand you cannot see my match. I can crush a hundred such as the King of Pegu." (Quoted from Crawford.)

Two years later he talked to Ensign Lester in the same bombastic strain telling him that he would go to Madras,

and that if a nine-pounder shot was to hit him it could do him no harm, with a good deal more to the same effect. He is described at this time, when he was about forty-five years of age, as five feet eleven in height, and of a powerful build, with a long, but not a thin face, the expression not being improved by a number of smallpox pitmarks. He had a broad but very retreating forehead, a characteristic shared by all his descendants, and particularly prominent in the case of the reigning king.

Alompra, then, was no feeble founder of the present line of successors to the great Mahah Thamada. He certainly had the power to command, and his military successes carried the peacock flag from far away towards Dacca, down to the Siamese capital. He certainly was a worthy follower of the great first king, and the Burmese believe firmly in the unbroken character of the succession. Accordingly all the old Indian and Sakyan customs are carefully observed by the Burmese royal family. Such are the marriage with half-sisters, and the consequent preserving unmarried of the king's eldest daughter; the reverence of the three most excellent animals, the peacock of the sun, the hare of the moon, and the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, whose eyes like jewels look friendly on the stranger; and the a-beht-theht, the consecration by pouring out of water at the accession. Marriage with half-sisters is only allowed to the king, not to the people at large, or even to the princes of the blood royal. The throne is painted over with representations of the peacock and the hare, typifying the descent of the king from the solar and human races, which is also directly laid claim to in the title, *nay-twet buyin*, sovereign of the rising sun. Similarly with the titles *khattia*, implying that he has dominion over the crops, and *yaza*, because he could instruct men in the laws, a somewhat doubtful ability perhaps in



the case of Theebaw Min. The consecration by a-beht-theht is completed in three special ceremonies, as was the case with the Payah-loung chosen to be the first ruler.

1. Yaza beht-theht, the consecrating of him as king.

2. Manda beht-theht, the solemn marrying him to a queen of royal lineage.

3. Thenga beht-theht, the confirmation or renewal of his engagement to abide by the laws, whereupon full powers for the government and administration of the country are conferred.

The actual coronation ceremony is a mere form nowadays, but is intended to mark the claim of the Lord of the Golden Palace to be the representative of the universal monarch.<sup>1</sup> It consists principally in incantations and sprinkling with holy water from the Ganges, performed by the pohnnas, the Brahmin astrologers, the Burman yahans having nothing whatever to do with it. Besides the pohnnas, only a few of the chief ministers are present. The really national part of the ceremony is the royal progress round the city moat, made seven days after the a-beht-theht. The king leaves the city by the Eastern Gate, the precise moment being notified by a discharge of cannon. He then enters the state barge, a most gorgeously gilt and carved construction, surpassing even the traditional coach of the Lord Mayor of London. This boat is then slowly rowed round the moat, with music clashing all around, and bands of dancers supplying the place of a rejoicing populace. Then when the circuit has been completed, the newly-crowned monarch enters again between the guardian ogres of the Eastern Gate, a fresh salvo of artillery announcing the arrival at the palace.

<sup>1</sup> The Sekya-waday king, who never makes his appearance during the time allotted to the publication and duration of the religious institutions of a Buddha.

The ceremony is simple enough, but Theebaw Min has never gone through it. In the first days of his reign he was afraid to leave the nandaw, lest conspirators might find the chance too good a one to lose, and later on, a fear that the delayed festival might suggest ideas of previous faint-heartedness came in the way. Consequently, though he is crowned successor to Mahah Thamada as far as the a-beht-theht is concerned, and therefore becomes the source of the law, the guardian of the welfare of the country, the recipient of the revenues, and the chief administrator of justice, he is hardly yet a successor to the warlike Alompra. Possibly the failure to assume the sturdy spirit of the first of the family may account for the deficiency in some of the attributes derived from the first king, a deficiency which even the most loyal of Upper Burmans is occasionally induced to acknowledge with bated breath.

The first ruler was chosen for his strict adherence to the five fundamental precepts now incumbent on all men, and for his general sanctity. These qualities are inherent in all his successors, though sometimes it is difficult to distinguish them. From them sprang four other laws incumbent on all kings and rulers. These thengaha kingly laws, or byammazoyah, are as follows:—

1. Tha-tha mayda, ordaining that he shall not receive more than a tithe of the produce of the country.
2. Pooreetha mayda, ordaining that the king shall engage to pay his servants and army once every six months.
3. Thama-patha, by which the king binds himself to assist his subjects with money, and to receive payment of it within three years, without charging interest.
4. Wahsa-payah, the use of courteous and fitting language, according to the age and position in life of the persons addressed.

It is to be feared that these kindly kingly laws are not found suitable to the conditions of modern society. At any rate they are not very strictly observed by Theebaw Min.

Nevertheless that monarch is very far from being such an unlovely character as most Europeans have been led to believe. It is explicitly denied by many that he drinks at all; it is certain that whatever excesses he may have plunged into in the remorse caused by the massacres of February, 1879, he is assuredly not a confirmed drunkard. His worst fault—I am writing from a Burman point of view—is that he is easy, or call it weak-spirited if you like. It is an open secret that he was not intended to be king. His father, Mindohn Min, had a strong liking for the young yahan, but his intention was that the pious and well-read Nyoung Yan prince, now a refugee at Barrackpore, near Calcutta, was to be his successor, and if the court or the town had been polled, the choice would have fallen on the same burly, good-natured individual.

It must be understood that, notwithstanding the precautions for the preservation of the pure blood-royal, the system of keeping a princess ta-bin-deing, to be married to the new ruler, it by no means follows that the eldest son of this union, or, indeed, any son by this queen at all, necessarily succeeds to the throne. It is not often that there is a recognised Ehng-shay min, an heir-apparent to the throne, but when there is such a dignitary, he may be the fifth, or the tenth, or the thirtieth son, the only stipulation being that he shall be the child of one of the four chief queens. The nomination rests with the king. A consideration of the gruesome history of the parricide kings, who reigned in one of the countries of the Myissee Madaytha, the middle country, as India is called, each of

whom ascended a throne stained with a father's blood, until the horrified populace of Pataliputra revolted and exterminated the whole house; the reading of this bloody chapter in the royal annals may prompt the custom, but it is certain that it is not often that the heir to the throne is recognised. The late king made no sign till his last illness came upon him. Then when it was evident that he could not survive, he named the Nyoung Yan mintha and after him the yellow-robed Theebaw prince. Then palace intrigue began. The Theebaw prince, it was well-known, had a passion for the ta-bin-deing, Selin Soo-payah (Selina Sophia as she was called by some of the English residents in Mandalay) and the second of the Soo-payahs, for there were three of them, was equally enamoured of the young Patama Byan. Therefore the queen-mother resolved to gratify all parties, and become herself queen dowager. She opened up communications with the then all-powerful Kin Woon-min-gyee, the Premier as he was usually called. That crafty minister saw continued power in store for himself if he could get the unsophisticated pyin-sin placed on the throne. Therefore he threw himself into the plot. The princes were summoned by a forged royal order to come before his majesty, bid him farewell and hear his nomination of a successor. As they came up to the hnaw gaw, the mirror throne room, where the king's body afterwards lay in state, they were seized separately and forthwith hurried off to prison. The Nyoung Yan and his brother, the Nyoung Oke prince, received timely warning, and instead of coming to the palace went straight off for sanctuary to the English church, whence they afterwards escaped, disguised, to the protection of the British flag in the compound of the British residency. But though they thus saved their lives, as appeared five months afterwards, when the other

princes were done to death, the throne was lost, for Theebaw was left master of the situation, and soon completed his arrangements for securing his position. At first everything went well. It was necessary to retain the support of the Kin Woon-gyee and that astute minister, acting on the idea that he could easily manage the raw young ex-neophyte, proceeded to draw up a scheme for a constitutional government, the greater part of which was written for him by the late Dr. Clement Williams, the first English Resident in Mandalay, and afterwards an independent trader. This constitution was published with a great flare of trumpets and much talk about the establishment of Western methods and the raising of Burma to the rank of a first-class Eastern power. The people at large did not perceive any very radical difference as far as the payment of moneys was concerned, under the new system. Perhaps it would have turned out well if it had lasted. But it was not destined to last.

As soon as the funeral rights of the dead king were over, and Theebaw Min had been sprinkled with the consecrated water by the *pohnnas*, he proposed to marry "Selina Sophia," and take the younger sister, the *Soo-payah Lat*, along with her according to agreement. But the *ta-bin-deing* was not willing. On the contrary, she took the altogether unprecedented step of cutting off her hair and entering a nunnery. The slighted golden monarch was furious. The two luckless maids of honour of the scornful beauty had their hands chopped off by the "spotted man." What became of the nun herself no one seems to know. Whether she is in her grave or in a jungle convent is a matter which neither her friends nor her enemies will reveal. Theebaw Min at any rate had to be satisfied with the *Soo-payah Lat*. He very soon found that he had quite enough to do with

her. The mother had always been known as strong-minded; the daughter developed an even greater amount of determination, and between them they soon reduced the ruler of the umbrella-bearing chiefs to submission. It had never been their intention that the Kin Woon-gyee should derive the greatest part of advantage from the scheme for enthroning the Theebaw prince, and they gradually worked his majesty into a state of desperation. However meek he might be towards them, he soon became embarrassingly testy with his courtiers, and after a time took to using what was called Tharrawaddy's spear. Kohn-boung Min, that fiery descendant of Alompra, in his latter years amused himself with spearing his courtiers with a javelin he always kept by him. This trait, which soon grew into a regular homicidal mania, and led to his being smothered in the end, seemed to have broken out afresh in the young king, and the Rangoon papers began to talk of hereditary insanity. Soon, however, the whole civilised world was to be shocked. The queen mother and the Soopayah Lat persuaded the king that he would never be safe till the princes were put out of the way. It is said that Theebaw Min at first flatly refused, and then, broken down by daily taunts, pleaded the danger from the British Government. Here also, however, he was overruled. The queen dowager called in a European (not an Englishman), and asked what would be done if all the imprisoned princes were massacred? He answered there would be a great deal of talk and nothing more. So Theebaw gave in, and said, "Shin-ba say, let them be cleared away;" and seventy of the royal blood, men, women, and children, were murdered in the next three days, and buried within the palace, in a long trench dug for the purpose. The eldest prince, the Mekhaya, a man nearly three times Theebaw's age, and hated for his

fierce, proud demeanour, died shrieking for mercy at the hands of his own slaves, whom he had often tortured. The Thohnsay mintha, equally overbearing in his manner, and a fanatical hater of the English, whom he lost no opportunity of insulting, gained in his death an esteem he had never known while living. With his last breath he hurled defiance and imprecations at the brother whom he had always despised, and prophesied a speedy and bloody end for the "runaway monk." The weakly and gentle-mannered Meingtohn murmured a prayer that the hideous sin of murder might be pardoned to its instigator and perpetrators, and then resigned his neck to the club which sent him to the blissful seats of nat-dewaha. The princesses were subjected to nameless horrors, and the treatment of the children recalled the days when ravaging hordes marched through the land with babes pitted on their pike staffs for standards. The poor old regent of Pegu, governor at Rangoon, when the British came in 1852, had his nostrils and gullet crammed with gunpowder, and was thus blown up. But the tale of horrors is not one to enlarge upon. They were conducted by those who are now the king's most trusted advisers. All the three days bands of music were playing throughout the palace, and dancers posturing to divert attention from what was going on, and to drown the cries of the victims.

The custom of putting to death all dangerous rivals on the accession of a new king, has unhappily become almost a recognised thing in Burma whenever there is a new sovereign. Many Burmans defend it warmly, on the plea that it secures the peace of the country. Where there are so many of the royal blood, the appointment of one, possibly among the youngest, to the supreme power, cannot but lead to discontent, breaking out into open rebellion when the slighted find themselves strong enough to feel hope of

success for a rising. The accession of Mindohn Min was marked by no such atrocities, but he came to the throne under exceptional circumstances. His brother, the Pagahn Min, was deposed because he would do nothing to make peace with the English, then threatening to occupy the capital, which they were so near effecting in the first war of 1826. The deposed king was allowed to live happy with his game cocks. The people's idol, the fiery "War Prince," was passed over because he was pledged to fight to the death, and there was an explicit understanding that he, or failing him, his issue, should succeed to the royal honours on the death of king Mindohn. That pious and enlightened monarch was forced on the country by a happy necessity. But it was very different when he died. There was no war to distract the people, and further, there was a multiplicity of candidates. The Governor of the Fifth Great Synod had, during his lifetime, fifty-three recognised wives, besides an indefinite number of handmaidens. By the wives he had altogether one hundred and ten children, forty-eight sons and sixty-two daughters. Of the forty-eight sons only twenty-four were alive at the time of his death, and two of these were detained as political prisoners in India, the Mingohn and Mingohn-deing princes, the originators of the rebellion of 1866, when the "War Prince" was killed, and the king himself had a narrow escape.

There were thus twenty-two possible successors to the Golden Throne. One was a lunatic—the Chabin Mintha, four were little boys under ten years of age, others were disqualified for a variety of reasons, but there remained the Thohnsay, the Mekhaya, the Nyoung Yan, and the Nyoung Oke, all of whom were considered as having certainly greater claims than the actual successor. Theebaw Min wanted to keep them all in prison, and a range of barracks was actually being constructed for their occupa-



tion when the massacres occurred. Whatever foreigners may think, all Burmans lay the guilt of the executions at the door of the queen and the queen dowager. When some were killed, prudential motives, as well as a ghoul-like thirst for blood, prompted the murder of all, and this accordingly was carried out. Of all the twenty-four princes, excluding the king, there remain alive now but four little boys in sanctuary in Mandalay monasteries, one of them barely five years old, and the three refugees in India, one of the four, the Mingohn prince, having died a year ago. Of the princesses, thirty-five of whom survived their father, four were killed in the February massacres, and twenty-one kept in confinement in the palace, some of whom have almost certainly died of want or external violence. The remainder were of too little account to be taken notice of. Thirty-seven queens were alive when the late king died. Thirteen fled when his illness became dangerous, and so extinguished themselves. Twenty-three are kept in underground dungeons, or under close surveillance in the palace; one only, the mother of the Mekhaya, with fourteen of her children and grandchildren were killed in 1879. This is rather a dismal list, and the shadow of it rests over the royal throne. Whether Theebaw Min was the direct author of the tragedy or not, the stain of the crime and the recollection of it clings to him. After its accomplishment, the king fell more and more under the malign influence of the termagant queen. The Kin Woon-gyee and his constitution were ignominiously bundled out of the palace. The former all-powerful minister is now little more than a private citizen, and the vile conductors of the massacres are the chief in authority. With their lotteries and monopolies they are fast hurrying the country to ruin, unless it be to the blessing of English rule.

Personally, Theebaw Min cannot be otherwise than miserable. The harridan queen keeps him in most humble subjection. Hitherto every king of Burmah has had at least four chief queens, those of the east, west, north, and south palaces, of whom the southern queen was supreme. But Soo-payah Lat persists in remaining sole controller of the royal heart. Terrible stories are told of the death by lingering torture which has proved the portion of maids of honour on whose charms the unhappy king is said to have looked with favour. As I write (in December 1881) his majesty is indeed said to have taken to wife the grand-daughter of the Kampat Mingyee, a minister who formed one of the Burmese embassy to England. But he has to keep her in a separate suite, carefully protected by soldiery from the infuriated Soo-payah Lat. Such an unusual state of things, such a disgrace as a woman's slave for a king has never befallen any country before. A son was born in the end of 1879, but he died of smallpox in the epidemic of March, 1880, and a daughter in the end of the same year compares but badly with king Mindohn's three or four a year. Were the king to die suddenly there would be bloody civil war before the next possessor of the Golden Throne could be chosen.

The king is practically a prisoner within his golden walls. No king of Burmah is much given to leaving the palace. Possession of it, with the vast arsenal which it contains, implies the subduing of the entire country. When a monarch goes forth to worship at a pagoda or preside at some function, he leaves the nandaw in charge of the prince or minister whom he can best trust. But poor Theebaw Min can trust no one, or at any rate, believes that that is his state. There are not many Burmans, certainly no low-country Burmans who would change places with him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### KING THEEBAW.

[The following three chapters are by the English hand which wrote of the Rangoon rice-mills, and gives the foreigner's view of his majesty.]

#### I.—A PRIVATE INTERVIEW.

TIME was, when to get an interview with the Arbitrator of Existence was as difficult a matter as to see the Grand Lama, or the Sherif ul Islam of Mecca. When the servants of "the Foreign Woman," Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, protested in 1879 against the new sovereign's summary settlement of domestic matters, Theebaw swore a royal oath by the sacred hairs of Gautama, by the Lord, the Law and the Assembly, the three precious things, that he would never look on a white man again. For a year the vow was religiously kept, and ambitious "globe-trotters" and prying special correspondents were kept at a distance, and had not even the satisfaction of being admitted within the outer gate of the nandaw. In time, however, the royal coffers got low, and it was thought foolish not to make use of the barbarian merchants, seeking for monopolies and grants of forest land, and able and willing to pay enormous sums for such concessions. His majesty's ministers therefore speedily found means of relieving the great King of Righteousness from his solemn

oath. The first principle of the Buddhist faith is charity. How, then, could the Lord of the Rising Sun gain more merit and advance some miles on the noble Eightfold Path better than by conquering his just personal antipathies and allowing awestricken foreigners to grovel before the splendour of his effulgence and worship at his Golden Feet! When once they had experienced that supreme delight, his majesty's ministers might be trusted to see that the wealth of the merchants was made to subserve the royal interests. And so it came to pass that Theebaw first received a few speculators and their friends, and has ended by granting an audience to any European that can get a minister to speak for him. And so the Golden Hairs are forgotten, and the three precious things calmly flouted. Still the royal barbarian is not comfortable at these interviews, and always has a look about him as if he had "stolen the spoons" and thought you knew it.

Securing an interview is not always an easy matter, unless you are a great capitalist, desirous of a grant somewhere. If you merely wish to see his majesty, the process is somewhat difficult. You probably apply first of all to the Chevalier Andreino, Italian Consul in Mandalay, and master of ceremonies and mysterious "doing duty" man at the Burmese Court. He may get you the desired audience, but more probably refers you to one of the higher ministers. Almost certainly these officials will say that it is impossible for you to see the king. His majesty is too busy, "working hard all day at affairs of state;" and they gaze stolidly upon you. You regret the circumstance extremely, make the minister a present of a few hundred rupees, and continue to deplore your bad luck. Then he brightens up suddenly, recollects that on such and such a day his majesty is possibly free. He will find out and do his best for you.

Next day you are told that an interview will be granted, that the king of kings graciously permits you to come and place your head under his gilded feet. If you are a wise man and have been warned by considerate friends, you will now commence to practise sitting on your feet. It is as well to rehearse the process frequently beforehand, for they must be tucked away so that his majesty cannot see them; and if you do not find the most agreeable way of effecting the concealment, your audience will be chiefly memorable to you for frightful agony, a vast amount of internal "popular language," and vows of vengeance against the ministers, who seem to have an irritating faculty of grinning all down their backs.

The journey to the palace is not a pleasant preparation. It is too hot to ride, and accordingly you decide to go in the apotheosis of a dog-kennel on wheels, which does duty for a carriage in Mandalay. There is not room for much more than one Englishman in the vehicle, and the only way you can get in is by scrambling over the backs of the bullocks. I shall never forget my first experience of a Mandalay carriage. After an exciting ten minutes spent in trying to circumvent a kicking bullock, I at length got in and sat down on the floor—there are no seats—to gaze out at the round hole by which I had got in. The rest of the party followed, each man in a kennel of his own. The beasts set off at a swinging trot over roads of the early depraved order, and in a couple of minutes we were all regretting that we did not brave the sun and ride, or even walk. However, the drivers disregard our entreaties, and hustle up their cattle all the more energetically. We pass over the moat, and through the enormous wooden gateway into the walled town. We enter by the a-mingala gate, the south-western, the only one through which corpses are allowed to be taken from the city. It is almost invariably

used by Englishmen as being the nearest to the Residency and the river, but no upper-class Burman will pass through it, if he possibly can avoid doing so. After five minutes more jolting we arrive at the outer stockade of the palace, and get out of our conveyances with some alacrity and a lot of bruises. Immediately inside the gate is a guard-house, with a cluster of the royal soldiery, who, as we come up, squat down on the ground and hold their Enfields in front of them at the third motion of the present, looking like frogs trying to climb a tree.

We cross a wide open space, pass through the "Red Postern," and turn to the left, for it is to be a private reception, and we do not ascend the steps to the Hall of Audience. We pass a gallop which Theebaw has had laid down for his ponies, and enter the Royal Gardens. They are not much to speak of. Laid out in squares, with raised paths, deep brickwork canals running in every direction, grottoes and "fads" of all sorts in every available place, they are rather tiresome, and we prefer to talk to a remarkable gentleman who meets us here. This is the Pan-gyet Woon, or governor of the glass manufactories—rather a mysterious title, seeing that there are no such works in the royal city. But names mean anything or nothing in Mandalay.

A "leary" man is the Pan-gyet Woon. As we shake hands with him he smiles demurely, and says he regrets he cannot offer us "a liquor." "Wine or spirits, you know, are not drunk in the palace," and an apparition suggestive of a barbarian wink, flits across his face. We have not long to talk with him, however. Everything, he says, is ready, and we make for a side-door into the palace, or rather into one of the numerous audience chambers connected with the nandaw, each having a name of its own, and being used according to his majesty's whim.

We are to be received in the Hmaw-gaw, "the Crystal Palace," so called from the decoration of its walls, resplendent with bits of looking-glass and zinc. We have to put off our shoes before stepping into the palace, and do so not without dire misgivings, for in times gone by we had been to see king Mindohn, and have lively recollections of the nails in the floor. A Burman, they say, never likes to finish anything, and therefore does not drive home the nails in the planking of his house. People more versed in the ways of the nandaw assert that this is not the true reason, and declare that it is an ingenious method of making the presumptuous kullah approach the neighbourhood of the Lord of Land and Sea in respectful fashion, with his eyes humbly lowered. It certainly is very effective in that way. You cannot gaze about you with any degree of freedom when you have a lurking suspicion that the next step will drive a nail into the ball of your big toe. Consequently every one used to go in with meekly, downcast face, and respect to the sovereign was thus triumphantly enforced. But Theebaw disdains such petty ways of compelling outward respect. Has he not made the English Resident run away? Or perhaps it is the European experience of the Pan-gyet Woon that we have to thank. At any rate, the corridors and passages are covered with thick soft carpets, three or four deep, and we walk along in comfort, if with a somewhat undressed feeling.

It is not far to the Hmaw-gaw. We find the chamber almost empty. A thick carpet, woven in one piece, covers the floor, and the far side is raised a couple of feet above the rest of the room. On this dais stands a couch. The Pan-gyet Woon tells us to sit down and not to speak. We obey, and stare at the couch and a door behind it. Again we have misgivings. Mindohn Min used to keep visitors

waiting a trifle of an hour or so, till they got so cramped that they had to be hoisted on to their legs. But it is not so with his son. He comes almost immediately, jerking himself suddenly in at the door, as if somebody had stuck a pin into him behind, walks hurriedly to the couch, kicking off his slippers on the way, and throws himself upon it, with his elbows sunk in the crimson and gold cushions. He looks straight at us for about thirty seconds, and then falls to examining his finger-nails and the carpet. He is embarrassed; his father was embarrassing. The pious potentate used to scrutinize his visitors (at a distance of twenty feet or so) through a field-glass, and people who were not overawed used to grin, which required explanation. King Theebaw comes alone except that there is a page with cheroots. The gigantic gold spittoon and betel-nut box and other salivating and chewing paraphernalia, which were deposited before his late lamented father are wanting. He knocks off the ash of his green cheroot on the carpet and presently lets it go out. Meanwhile the than-daw-sin, the royal herald, has commenced chanting our names, business, and the list of our presents. This is done in a high-pitched recitative, and takes a long time, for all the names, styles, and titles of his majesty are declaimed for a matter of quarter of an hour, each sentence ending with a long-drawn *paya-a-ah*.

At last it is over, and Theebaw asks if we are well. We announce that we are, and the interpreter, who throughout "plays it rather low down upon us," says that by his majesty's merciful permission we are in the enjoyment of perfect health. Theebaw then demands our business. The interpreter replies that we have come to view the glories of his Majesty's mighty kingdom, and to lay our heads under his golden feet. This is a lengthy formality, for an epitome of the titles comes in with every



answer. Theebaw looks very ill at ease, and has an occasional glance at us out of the tail of his eye. Having inquired after the well-being of the Queen, the Viceroy, the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, and his dear brothers in Calcutta, who, he hopes, are being well treated, as befits their rank, it seems as if there was going to be a sudden end to the audience, to avert which we wildly grasp at the idea of saying that we had taken tickets in the royal lotteries, but had not been successful in the drawing. His majesty twirls his cheroot over his shoulder, which is a sign that he wants a light, and says he is very sorry, but hopes we will try again. We announce that we are going to make another attempt, and add, in the desperate hope of getting his majesty into a controversy, that lotteries are considered a very bad thing for the people in Europe. The interpreter gazes for three-quarters of a second reproachfully at us and says, that by reason of his majesty's great might, glory, and clemency, we are encouraged to make a fresh venture, and that we are lost in wonder at the wisdom which has fallen upon such a method of increasing the revenue, a system which had never occurred to the unilluminated minds of barbarian financialists. Burmese is a language with which some of us are acquainted, and which affords unusual facilities for the relief of the irritated mind, but while we are hesitating as to whether we shall break through Court etiquette and address the great Lord of Righteousness mouth to mouth, Theebaw graciously remarks that he is glad to hear that the wisdom of his ministers has increased the knowledge of political economy in the world, and adds that he is unacquainted with any trade which for an outlay of two rupees will bring in a return of ten thousand. Having announced that he will give orders to his *bohs* and *wouns* to show us every respect while we remain under the

shadow of his throne, he suddenly gets up and vanishes as rapidly as he appeared. The Pan-gyet Woon calls out, "get on your legs, gentlemen, 'long chairs' are better than this sort of thing," and we obey with great alacrity, and are regaled outside with brandy and water of considerable potency, poured out of a tea-pot into tea-cups.

## CHAPTER XX.

### KING THEEBAW.

#### II.—THE MANY-TITLED.

HIS most glorious, excellent majesty, the present ruler of the city of Mandalay, or Yettana-boing Nay-pyee-daw, ruler of the sea and land, lord of the rising sun, sovereign of the empires of Thuma-paranta and Zampoo-deepa, and of other great empires and countries, and king of all the umbrella-bearing chiefs, lord of the mines of gold, silver, rubies, amber, and the noble serpentine, chief of the Saddan, or celestial elephant, and master of many white elephants, the supporter of religion, owner of the sekya, or Indra's weapon, the sun-descended monarch, sovereign of the power of life and death, great chief of righteousness, king of kings, and possessor of boundless dominions and supreme wisdom, the arbiter of existence, has a very bad character. He killed his brothers and sisters and he drinks gin.

He is very far from being a fool for all that. All his predecessors killed certain of their relatives too, when they came to the throne; only they had not so many as Theebaw, and there were no electric telegraphs in those days. Besides they had not such pressing need to clear the field. Theebaw was put on the throne by a palace

intrigue, and if he had not disposed of his brothers they would probably have killed him. So says all his majesty's subjects, and they ought to know. The drinking of plebeian gin is another matter, and is likely to be the ruin of the many-titled monarch. It is telling on him fast. When he came to the throne he was a very good-looking young man, the handsomest Burman in the country, people used to say. Two years and a half have, however, made a very great difference. His majesty's flat nose has become flatter than ever; his eyes have sunk deep into their sockets, like snails in a fright; and his round face is all bloated and blotched. When we had an interview with him, the fair Soc-payah Lat, his majesty's consort, seemed to have been asserting her authority, for he had an extensive scratch, reaching from his eye all over his left cheek, and it did not improve his personal appearance. His majesty on the whole looked rather "hipped" on that occasion. It was a private interview certainly, and we did not therefore expect to see him gorgeous in a silk surcoat and spire-like tharapoo, or crown. But it seemed somewhat negligent to appear in a soiled white short coat and a plain check-pattern, yellow silk pasoh, such as any ordinary townsman might wear. In his ears certainly were splendid gold cylinders, with magnificent clusters of diamonds and emeralds at the ends, and on his finger glistened a sapphire ring, worth a monarch's ransom. There was a spray of diamonds in his hair too, but it only sufficed to draw attention to the fact that he wore a good deal of false hair and had been remarkably unsuccessful in concealing the borrowed tresses. All Burmans wear their long hair tied up in a knot on the top of their head. Theebaw, however, stepped out of a monastery on to the throne, and in the monasteries every one has his head shaved. The royal hair has therefore not had time to

grow very long yet, and his majesty makes up his young, or top knot, with false tresses, as many humbler Burmans do, only they take care over it, which he does not. This is the worst sign of all; for when a Burman ceases to take pride in his hair he must be very far gone.

There are very considerable doubts as to his Majesty's legitimacy. In any case he is not a pure Burman. His mother had a good deal of wild Shan blood in her veins. Just before Theebaw's birth it was discovered that his mother was unpardonably intimate with a *pohn-gyee*, one of the mendicants of the Royal Monastery. The monk was thrown into prison and died there very suddenly of official colic. The queen was sent to a nunnery, where she remained till Theebaw came to the throne. She had better have stayed there for good. A year ago there was a fearful scandal. Some thirty people about the Court were beheaded and the queen dowager was relegated to the convent.

Theebaw himself was brought up in an uncle's house and used to be unmercifully bullied by his cousins. When Dr. Marks, the eminent S.P.G. missionary, came to Mandalay and established a school, the late king asked what was the best age for a Burman to commence learning English. The reverend gentleman said, "About twelve years old." King Mindohn called for "all his sons that were twelve years old or thereabouts." Eleven were produced and among them was Theebaw. The future king went to the royal school, but he sat apart from his late victims, and never came to school on the same elephant with them. He was a surly, morose boy, not very good at his lessons, and once or twice narrowly escaping the usual result of such conduct. I believe he was never actually birched, but he had several times to stand in the corner. When he left he was able to read a little, but he has

forgotten all his English now. He used to be fond of cricket and slogged away in fairly good pendulum form, but he never would field out and used unprincely language to any one who bowled him. He was the youngest of the batch by a month or two, and was always quarrelling with his brothers and bullying the wretched slave who attended him and carried his cheroots and betelnut. But nobody paid much attention to his vagaries then, for he was twentieth or thirtieth son, and the Mekhaya prince, the eldest, might very easily have been his father, or even grandfather.

After he left the S.P.G. Royal School, King Mindohn made him a koyin, a neophant, in the royal monastery. There he seemed to get on better. At any rate when his novitiate was over, he passed with honours as Patama Ryan, an examination in the Beetaghat thohn-bohng, the three "baskets" of the Buddhist law, and sundry other volumes of ritual and controversy. This was what first drew the old king's attention to him. Mindohn Min was a very pious old gentleman and had a particular delight in his title of Convener of the Fifth Great Synod. When therefore young Theebaw made a score in the Turanian Theological Tripos, his father bored everybody with his talk about the juvenile divine, and was not far off imagining that he was an embryo Buddh. Theebaw an avatar of Arcemadehya! Bradlaugh in the Salvation Army! Other people knew better even then. Even in those days Theebaw was a disgraceful little rip. The present Queen of the South and sundry other little petticoats came to flirt with him and his companions in the monastery. An ascetic should not even look at a woman, and the old kyoung-poh-goh, the abbot of the royal mendicants was terribly scandalised, and it is whispered about that he tied the raffish young princeling's hands up

to a tree and "spanked" him soundly. Some colour is lent to the report by the fact that Theebaw dismissed the venerable recluse as soon as he ascended the throne. However that may be, the old king heard nothing about it and went on believing the "Senior Theolog" to be a miracle of piety and learning, and the sacred cocks and hens on Mandalay Hill had double rations for a month in honour of the event. Nevertheless, he did not by any means intend Theebaw to succeed him on the throne. The Nyoung Yan was the man he named. But the mother of the Soo-payah Lat, now Theebaw's queen, took the matter in hand. She knew that Theebaw was deeply in love with her daughter, and thought she could easily manage the moon-struck, Pali-spouting novice. She communicated her views to the Kin Woon-min-gyee, the head of the ministry. That crafty old gentleman was equally deceived and thought he would have no trouble in leading the verdant recluse as he pleased. The matter was arranged; the elder princes were all seized and thrown into prison before Mindohn Mindied. Theebaw humoured the Kin Woon-min-gyee for a short time and let him formulate a wonderful production which the Turanian Foreign Secretary called a constitution. When the simple quondam mendicant found himself firm on the throne, and when the Nyoung Yan, his great fear, had got away from the British Presidency in Mandalay, and was safe in Calcutta, Theebaw threw off the mask. Eighty-six of his blood relations were battered and choked to death, or buried alive. The Kin Woon-gyee's bastard constitution was crumpled up and chucked over the frontier, and Theebaw stood forth as the most inhuman of a long line of savage despots. The Kin Woon-min-gyee is now practically destitute of all power, and he has come to be very humble to the young innocent whom he fondly

thought to mould to his will. More than all, Theebaw has achieved a certain kind of popularity with his subjects. He insulted our representative and blustered at all foreigners, and finally frightened the Indian Government by covert threats, into suddenly withdrawing the whole *personnel* of the Residency. Then it was announced by sound of gong all over Burmah, British as well as Independent, that the Sovereign of Land and Water, by reason of his great might and glory, had caused the hated English to flee from his sight, and would, in his own good time, carry the great peacock flag to the south and plant it once more on the shores of the Gulf of Martaban.

It is a great triumph for the shaven-headed, bastard mendicant, and it will be remembered about him quite as long as the fiendish cruelty of his massacres. We have certainly not done with Theebaw yet. We cannot go on for ever keeping strong garrisons at Thayet-myo and Toun-goo, our frontier stations, where the soldiers have little else to do but die of fever and cholera, and heat-apoplexy. Constant scares ruin the trade in Rangoon, and as Lord Ripon says, when we are attacked in our mercantile interests we are wounded in our most irritable point. The abrogation of the monopolies is little better than a sham and the negotiations for a new treaty are little more sincere. Theebaw will not receive a new Resident in the Royal City, except shoeless and practically lying on his stomach. We can hardly agree to that again. Some day there will come a rupture and Theebaw's valiant soldiery will kill him and "strike for home," *i.e.*, bolt as hard as they can. Then we had better annex the country.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### KING THEEBAW.

#### III.—A KADAW DAY.

"THE princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together and fell down and worshipped at what time they heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music."

That is an exact description of the course of proceedings in Mandalay on a kadaw day. The gentlemen of the court and band as aforesaid, in the plain of Dura, must have greatly resembled Theebaw's worshippers, though we should be very sorry to asperse Nebuchadnezzar's name so far as to compare him with the bibulous young monarch of Burma. A kadaw-nay, means literally translated "a beg-pardon day." On such occasions all the officials and most eminent men in the country have to come to the palace and do homage and worship at the Golden Feet. There may be as many "Beg-pardon Days" during the year as his Majesty pleases, but the most regular and best-attended, as well as the most brilliant, are always at the beginning and end of Lent, which extends, roughly speaking, from

June to October. The end of Lent is probably the greatest occasion of all, and the audience sometimes, as was the case in 1880, extends over three days.

During Lent, every one is supposed to fast and be pious and improve his mind generally. On the conclusion of such a period, therefore, it is fitting that all loyal subjects should renew their allegiance to the Great Lord of Righteousness and prostrate themselves with humble regard at his magnificent feet. The giving of presents or *kadaw*—no one can go near the king without a present—is represented as a deprecatory offering to avert deserved punishment for offences.

The whole town is *en fête* on such occasions. The Lord Mayor's show, or the transformation scene in a pantomime, which are the stay-at-home Englishman's idea of supreme magnificence, are as nothing compared to the procession round the moat which encircles the city walls. *Min-gyees*, *a-twin-woons*, *myo-sahs*, and officials and vassals with names with which we will not further puzzle the reader; each man accompanied and adorned with his utmost possessions in the way of man, beast, weapons and raiment, file proudly round preparatory to entering the palace. The description of a prince's order of going may suffice to give an idea of the whole. First come the lictors, prancing along with their fasces and hoarse shoutings, yelling to everybody to clear the way, regardless of the fact that the populace is all down on its knees by the side of the road, *she-khoing* reverentially. They are about half-a-dozen in number, and to a shortsighted man like myself, appear to be stark-naked. A closer inspection with a glass, however reveals the fact that they have some regard for decency, if they have little for anything else. Behind them comes the family band, braying, and clashing, and tootling its loudest. Undisturbed by the din, stalk composedly in the

rear half-a-dozen elephants, the first couple splendid tuskers, in complete war-array, with fighting howdahs on their backs, and brilliant housings trailing to the ground; the second pair, with ordinary furnishings, and the others with no further incumbrance than the mahout on their backs. As near to these as their syces can persuade them to go, caper a number of led horses, harnessed with gay scarlet saddles, and saddle flaps, with tassels of the same colour sweeping the earth. Immediately in their rear is a bright-hued cloud of retainers, armed with guns, spears and swords, and many carrying fans of all sorts and sizes. Floating over their head like a great red cloud, is the prince's wide, satin-fringed umbrella, or perhaps it may be a gold one, if he enjoys his master's favour. Then there is a rabble of body-servants, carrying a gold-sheathed sword, a velvet pillow, spittoons, betel-nut boxes, and a variety of other things of uses more or less obvious. Last of all, surrounded by his page body-guard, comes the mingyee himself, reclining in a wan, a finely-carved litter, borne by many shoulders. Many of the officials are, of course, unable to make such a grand display as this, but every one does his utmost to surpass his fellows in some point or other, and the result is a spectacle which would furnish abundance of valuable notions to a pantomime scenic artist racking his brains for novelties.

All the retinue is left outside when they come to the nandaw and ascend the broad flight of steps, flanked by the two great gilded cannon, and approach the yohn-daw, the magnificent hall of audience. At stated points they pay lowly reverence to the graceful spire which rises over the throne and marks the centre of the palace, of the town, of Burma, and therefore of the universe. Inside the yohn-daw each man has his special place, according to his rank, Englishmen being ordinarily told off with ministers

of the third grade. They sit there and smoke, placidly awaiting events.

The Hall of Audience is a fine building of its kind; a long columned chamber, with gilt and red pillars, and a profusion of ornaments. The walls are made gorgeous with bits of looking-glass, porcelain, fragments of zinc and isinglass, and queer odds and ends fastened on with a resinous gum. This style of ornamentation is peculiarly Burmese, and is really very striking though the materials may not seem promising. The effect of the whole is unique, if a little bewildering. It is like a compound chromotrope out of order. But somehow there is an impression of tawdriness, and the national Burmese carelessness appears through all. Round the tops of the wooden walls runs beautifully carved lattice-work, but some of it has got broken in one place, and at another all the gilding has come off. There are some richly ornamented doors, but hinges have not been available when they were put up, or have been lost since, and the doors hang askew on the frail support of what appear to be two pieces of barrel-hoop nailed on. Nothing more characteristically Burman could be imagined.

The throne stands at the far end of the hall on a kind of raised dais. It diminishes by a gradation of little ledges to mid-height, and then similarly expands, like one dilapidated pyramid thrust down on another. Those of the royal blood sit ordinarily on either side of it, but there are lamentably few of the royal blood nowadays.

Every one is collected now. The scene is such as can be seen nowhere in the world but in Burma, and in Burma only in perfection in the Hall of Audience. A Burmese crowd is always a gay sight, but when all the highest in the land have assembled in the yohn-daw, it is magnificent. The Tennysonian "wind-stirred tulip beds" is a tempting

phrase, but it hardly seems sufficient. A stirabout of rainbows has an oriental sound about it, and perhaps more fitly suggests the brilliant contrasts of colour. What a magnificent sight it must be from the throne; the eye passing over the gaily dressed figures, every face bent low to the ground, down the broad steps, and through the towering eastern gate, over spires and pagodas away to the shaggy dark Shan hills beyond, like the entries to King Arthur's palace that—

“Open'd from the hall

At one end one, that gave upon a range  
Of level pavement where the king would pace  
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;  
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped  
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers.”

Little wonder the king of Burma thinks himself a deity.

Meanwhile the collected worshippers smoke cheroots and chew betel, and talk freely. Suddenly a little bell tinkles, and every one is grovelling on his stomach in a second. A purple curtain is drawn aside, and down a long corridor, laid with crimson and gold carpet, the Sovereign of Life and Death comes with a hurried, uneven step. He is in full regal dress, and the broad gold collar of the salute and the towering jewelled crown on his head, seem to weigh heavily on him as he ascends wearily to the throne. Now comes the presentation of the kadaw. The actual presents are all lying tumbled in a heap somewhere, and his majesty probably never sees them at all. Lists are made out on palm-leaf, scratched on with a sharp-pointed style, and these are brought up by a than-daw-hkan. The sight is in every way a remarkable one, and quite in keeping with the semi-barbaric character of the surroundings. The herald starts from the eastern gate, about three hundred yards off, and in full view from the hall the

whole way. Across the wide open space between the outer and inner stockades, and up between the gilded cannon he comes, with a fantastic, prancing gait, waving the palm-leaves at arm's length, and bowing lowly to the ground at every ten paces. Up the steps and between a long double line of the gorgeously uniformed a-hmoo-dan, and the blue jacketed marines with the anchor on their spiked helmets, all presenting arms. Throughout the whole ceremony, the courtiers within the hall, at intervals of a minute or less, raise a long-drawn shout of payah—a word expressive of deity. When at last the than-daw-hkan reaches the throne he bows thrice, deposits the palm-leaves reverentially, and lies prone. They are read out in part, or altogether, or not at all, according to his majesty's pleasure. Then he commences to talk. He is much more fluent in a grand audience than he is at a private interview. He asks one minister how the lottery under his charge is filling up; another what news there is from the army now fighting against the Shans: a French engineer is questioned with regard to some works going on in the royal gardens; a governor of a remote province enjoined to be regular in collecting the ngway-daw, the poll tax. His monastic studies have given him command of a copious fund of lofty moral sayings, and these he scatters about freely, and sends away aspirants to the royal favour exultant in the feeling that some golden words have been addressed, if not to them directly, at any rate to some one near them in the row. An audience occasionally lasts a couple of hours, so that Europeans, if they are at all stiff in the joints are apt to get frightfully cramped, and afford wonderful amusement to malicious old wooks by their uneasy attempts to find a more comfortable arrangement of their legs. Such receptions are, therefore, not in favour with Englishmen, except

those who may be in the royal service, or who are negotiating for a grant of some kind, and therefore wish to be well with his majesty. The king smokes a gigantic white cheroot all the time, and chews betel simultaneously, making up the morsel himself very often. An American who interviewed his majesty lately, was struck with admiration at the skill with which Theebaw manages to salivate without removing the cheroot from his mouth, but a fastidious Englishman is inclined to think he might wipe his chin afterwards without being accused of superfluous labour. Many of those in the hall smoke also, but the operation cannot be conducted with any great degree of comfort when your nose is close to the nether extremity of the spine of the man in front of you.

Theebaw's apparent affability at these public audiences counteracts the effect of any other habits he may have, not so favourably viewed by Buddhists, and there can be no doubt that he is on the whole more popular than any king of Burma has been since the days of Alompra, the founder of the dynasty. Nevertheless, apart from his dissipated habits, it is very unlikely that he will make old bones. There is too much scheming and plotting going on in Mandalay just now for that. If Theebaw dies a natural death he will be lucky. In the meantime the king rises and disappears behind the purple curtain. The durbar disperses immediately. The worshippers return home rejoicing and damn the king's enemies.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE PALACE.

THE palace of Mandalay lies in the centre of the four-square city, like the innermost of a series of Chinese carved boxes. The capital is a city within a city. The greater part of the wide plain from the Irrawaddy to the Shan hills, a space of about five miles broad and as many long, is laid out in wide roads running at right angles to one another, with abundance of houses of all kinds, from the brick house of the Chinaman, with its cumbrous tiles that bend in the rafters, and the white-plastered, flat-roofed habitation of the Mogul or Soorati merchant, to the wood or wicker dwelling of the Burman. They are not very close together, but there is plenty of space, and every house has its patch of garden, or clump of plantain trees, and its wide court where the buffaloes and the ox-cart can be disposed comfortably. But these only form the suburbs. The Myoh, the city proper of Mandalay, is a huge walled square, each face a mile and an eighth long. The mud-mortar built walls are nearly thirty feet high and about three thick, backed with a heavy mass of earth, but though they would be hard to batter down, there are no guns mounted for their defence on the bastions which rise at intervals of about two hundred yards, each surmounted by



an open-sided teak pavilion, carved in the usual gabled, joss-house, spire-like fashion. The crest of the parapet is deeply denticulated, with no other apparent advantage than that of ornament. There are twelve gates to the city, three on each side, but only one bridge to each three over the moat, except on the west, where there are two, one opposite the a-min-gala or south-west gate, specially reserved for the passage of funerals. Outside every gate is a post bearing the name and emblem of the gate, the latter being the signs of the zodiac. Sixty feet, or thereabouts, from the walls, runs all round a deep moat, about fifty yards broad, covered in many places with the lotos plant that the Buddhist loves. Here and there upon it float a number of royal craft, state barges, and despatch boats, some of them richly gilded, with the kalawaik, the crane, carved on the stern, others foundered and lying rotting, with their lofty sterns rising high in the air. Covering each gate is a traverse, or crenelated barbican, of the same construction as the walls. Inside, the streets of the city run parallel to the walls. They are wide and fairly well kept wherever the king is likely to pass, but there is no attempt at metalling. Young trees line the sides, and down most of them run little streams of water. There is no attempt at a drainage system, but the town is essentially clean and airy, the pigs and pariah dogs acting as scavengers, and the constant open spaces ensuring ventilation. Right in the centre is the palace, which has two successive inclosures. The outer is a quarter of a mile square, and consists of a high teak palisade, very massive and compact. Within this is a wide open space laid out as an esplanade, inside of which is a brick wall, edged round a great part of the way by the houses of high ministers and court officials. The outer court has four gates, each presided over by a special commander; the north, or water gate, being only

available for the royal barges. Except for members of the palace household, there is only admittance to the inner inclosure by the gate on the eastern face. There is a special portal in the centre here, opened only for the king, and none but the Lord of the Golden Throne may use it. All else must enter by the taga-nee, the red postern, a cramped little gateway, which makes the smallest man involuntarily bend his head as he approaches the golden palace. The front of the building is decorated with gilding and tinsel work, which looks well when it is new, but after the rainy seasons would be better not there at all. To the right is the Hloht-daw, the hall of the supreme council, a detached structure, raised some feet off the ground, and perfectly open, the roof, richly carved with flowers and figures, and adorned with the usual flamboyant pinnacles, supported on massive teak pillars, painted vermilion colour at the base, and gilt higher up. Straight ahead is the great hall of audience, a colonnade, or columned arcade, extending along the entire eastern front, and opening directly upon it. At the end of a pillared vista stands the throne, on a dais, reached by five steps from the level of the hall. The top is a cushioned ledge, like the box in a theatre. Just over the throne, and in the centre of the palace, which is the centre of the city, which is the centre of Burma, which is the Turanian "hub" of the world, rises the seven-roofed spire, emblematic of royalty and religion. The princes of the highest rank sit in front to the right of the throne; those of the blood-royal, but not so closely connected, to the left. Then in regular gradation, opposite one another, the woon-gyees, a-twin-woons, woon-douks, and the minor officials. On either side of the hall of audience are a number of minor throne-rooms, not rooms in the English sense of the word, but simply open-roofed spaces, separated from each other by skirtings of planking,

covered with gold-leaf, and supported by a multitude of teak pillars, dyed for the greater part of their height a deep red. Some rooms are almost entirely gilt, others are adorned with wall-paintings, others, again, with the favourite mosaic of bits of looking glass, and zinc covered by a gilt net-work. Every room is furnished with one or more stands of arms; there is a rack of sadly ill-cared-for muskets round the throne itself. The palace is, in fact, a gigantic armoury. All the cannon and guns in the country are kept there. Hence it is that when the palace is taken by a usurper, the country is conquered. The abundance of gold-leaf ought to make the effect splendid, but the quantity of alloy there is in the gilding makes it speedily lose its glitter, and the general impression is that of dinginess, if not indeed of actual slipshod tawdriness. But to be seen at its best the palace should be visited on a great beg-pardon day, when the rough plank floors are covered with gorgeous rugs and carpets, and the halls are filled with officials, dressed in all the hues of the rainbow.

There are a variety of matters to be carefully observed by all who enter, or have anything to do with the palace. Best known is the regulation with regard to the wearing of shoes. Burmans must remove them as soon as they enter the palace inclosure, just as they would on going inside of the parawoon of a pagoda or a monastery. Englishmen and white foreigners generally are required to take off their boots whenever they begin to ascend a step—the whole palace and all the buildings near it being on a brick platform some ten feet or more above the level of the ground. There are always a number of dancers and jugglers and loiterers about the royal buildings, and the necessity of being separated from your shoes sometimes leads to the loss of them altogether. It is on record that a British Resident incurred this misfortune, and had to

make the best of his way, partly in a pair of Burman sandals, and partly on his stocking soles—as being preferable—to the outside of the teak stockade where his pony was waiting for him.

Another ceremony, is that of shekhoing to the spire, the external emblem of the throne. All Burmans must do this at each of the gates, at the foot of the steps and at intervals in between, according to loyalty, or the supposed friendly or hostile attitude of lookers on. All the early English ambassadors had to conform to this regulation, notably Cox and Baker, who dropped down on his knees. After an intermediate stage of taking off their hats, permission was gained to dispense with everything but the removal of shoes and sword. But the court rejoices in the fact that no one can pass through the red postern without bending his head, regulations or no regulations.

No arms whatever can be taken into the palace, not even—perhaps I should say, least even, in view of conspiracies—by the royal princes. Similarly, all umbrellas must be left at the outer gate of the palace, except by members of the royal household, who may carry them to the foot of the steps of the audience hall. Common people must lower them when they pass any of the gates outside. Arrest, or rough handling by the guards, would be the infallible result of non-compliance. Another rule is that you must take no money out of the palace. You may take in as much as you please.

No one in the palace, or indeed in the whole town, must sleep otherwise than with his feet turned outwards from the spire. To show the soles of the feet to the throne is high treason. This is awkward for the inhabitants of some quarters, for there is a rule applying to all Buddhists, that they must not place their feet towards the east, where the sun rises and whence the next Buddha, Areemadehya,

will come, nor to the west, where the bawdee bin stands, or stood, the tree under which Shin Gautama attained the supreme wisdom. The superstition is probably derived from the Brahmins, who threaten grievous dangers to the man who places his feet on the shadow of a dewah, a king, a teacher, a saint, or another man's wife.

The frequent change of locality of the palace, and therefore of the capital, is a peculiarity of Burma. There are about a score of towns in the country, which have been at one time or other the metropolis. Such are Tagoung, Old Pagahn, and Mohtshoboh, above Mandalay, Prome (under the title Thare Kettara) Pagahn, Sagaing, Ava, and Amarapoora, below it. The last two are the best known; indeed some people to the present day persist in talking of the "Kingdom of Ava," though that once brilliant capital has been little better than a jungle for more than thirty years, and the lines of the old walls can only be traced with difficulty.

It is hardly correct to say, as most writers on Burma have hitherto done, that with a new king there should be a new capital. This has very frequently been the case, but the matter does not altogether depend upon the accession of a new sovereign. It is brought about by a very much more gruesome (the word is used advisedly) circumstance. On the foundation of a new capital, there are always a certain number of people buried alive. The idea is that they become *nat-thehn*, that their spirits haunt the place where they were put to death, and attack all persons approaching with malevolent intentions. The notion is entirely due to the royal astrologers, the Brahmin *pohnnas*, and as being repugnant to the tenets of Buddhism is strenuously denounced by the true brethren of the yellow robe. But it fits in very well with the popular superstition regarding the existence of spirits, and has hence always

firmly maintained its ground. It is a matter of common knowledge that this idea of sanctifying a building with human sacrifices is a notion which has prevailed in all parts of the world at different times, and instances of horrors of the kind are not unknown in Europe.

The virtue of the sacrifices only lasts a certain time, and when it is gone a new city should be built. There are certain signs, added to public disasters, which point out to the initiated when this alteration of site should take place. Mandalay was commenced in 1858, and two years later the seat of government was transferred from Amarapura, some five or six miles down the river. When the foundations of the city wall were laid, fifty-two persons of both sexes, and of various age and rank, were consigned to a living tomb. Three were buried under each of the twelve city gates, one at each of the four corners, one under each of the palace gates, and at the corners of the timber stockade, and four under the throne itself. The selection had to be made with care, for the victims were required to be representative people, born on special days of the week, and the boys buried were not to have any tattoo marks on them, the girls not to have their ears bored. When it was known that the troops were making the collection, no one was to be seen about the streets, except in great bands in the middle of the day. The government gave a series of magnificent dramatic performances, but no one went to see them. Eventually, however, the tale was made up, and the building went on apace. Along with the four human beings buried at the corners of the city, were placed four jars full of oil, carefully covered over and protected from any damage that might come from the weight of earth pressing down upon them. These were examined every seven years by the royal astrologers, and as long as they remained intact the town was considered safe.

At the third examination in 1880, however, it was found that the oil in two of the jars was either completely dried up or had leaked out. One was pretty far gone, and the fourth alone remained in a tolerably satisfactory state. At this very time, the January and February of 1880, a terrible scourge of small-pox was decimating the town, and two of the royal house, King Theebaw's infant son, his only child, and the ex-Pagahn Min, the cock-fighting king, had fallen victims. This was bad enough, but other signs portending evil had happened. One of the most valued of the crown jewels, the nansin budda-mya had disappeared, a huge ruby, cherished as emblematic of the fortune of the dynasty since the days of Aloung Payah. A tiger in the royal gardens escaped from his cage, a most ominous circumstance, not for the poor wretch whom he killed and half ate before he could be recaptured, but for the city and the entire kingdom. The appearance of wild animals in a town is a sign that it will speedily turn to a wilderness. It was the discovery of a tiger and some deer in the environs of Amarapura which decided the fate of that "City of the Immortals." All these circumstances, coupled with the outward and visible sign of the wrath of the spirits in the shape of the plague of small-pox, decided the pohnnas at once. It was no use filling the jars with oil again, or putting in fresh ones. Such parsimonious measures would be considerably worse than useless. A full conclave of the astrologers voted by a large majority for the change of the capital. This, however, neither the ministers nor Theebaw Min would hear of. Mandalay is very different from Amarapura and Ava. There are too many solid brick houses and mills and public manufactories—none of them working it is true, but too costly to be abandoned—in the present capital to admit of its being thrown over in the old casual way, when a royal order forced

everybody to migrate, on pain of imprisonment or death. The pohnnas therefore held another meeting, and it was decided that the only other alternative was the offering of propitiatory sacrifices. At the instance of the Pohinna Woon, a truculent old villain, it was resolved that the number should be the highest possible: a hundred men, a hundred women, a hundred boys, a hundred girls, a hundred soldiers, and a hundred foreigners. This the king agreed to, and a royal mandate was signed, and arrests forthwith commenced. A frightful panic spread in Mandalay after the first day. Every steamer leaving the capital was crowded to suffocation, boats went down the river in dozens, and there seemed every possibility that Mandalay would be deserted. Then the ministers took fright at the indignation which the announced massacres caused in England, and the whole thing was countermanded and denied. But upwards of a hundred people had been arrested, and some of these, when liberated months afterwards, declared that in the dark nights of terror, when no one ventured about Mandalay streets, people were buried under each of the posts at the twelve gates, as a compromise between the fear of the spirits and the fear that the English troops would cross the frontier. Each of these posts bears an image of an animal from one of the seals of the king, and before the post sits a figure of a beeloo, with a thick club, to act as watchman, in case the human guard should go to sleep. As Burman sentries generally sleep sounder than other people, the propitiation of these spirits at any rate was a very imperative precaution. Whether the oil jars were filled and reburied *alone* is a dark mystery. But the small-pox left Mandalay, and the place is as happy as ever it was, which however is not saying much.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE LORD WHITE ELEPHANT.

THE importance attached to the possession of a white elephant is traceable to the Buddhist system. The form in which Gautama Buddha entered the womb of Queen Maya to be born upon earth for the last time to "teach the Law and give the millions peace" was that of a white elephant. The Saddan, or celestial elephant was an avatar of his many existences previously. The Saddan is gifted with special endowments, and is one of the seven precious things the possession of which marks the Sekyawaday, the Mahah Chakra Vartti Rajah, "the great wheel-turning king," the holy and universal sovereign—a ruler who appears once in a cycle, at the time when the waxing and waning term of human life has reached its maximum of an athinkaya (a huge period represented by a unit and 164 cyphers) in duration. Thus the possession of an undoubted white elephant stands as a sign and symbol of universal sovereignty; and every Burmese king longs for the capture of such a treasure during his reign as a token that his legitimate royalty is recognised by the unseen powers. The great river of Burma, the Irrawaddy, is named from Airawata, the elephant of Indra, a sufficient assertion of the proper dwelling-place of all his successors. Hence the

reverence of the Hindoos for the animal, and their not infrequent pilgrimages to Mandalay to see the royal animal and have a dursun, or interview of worship, with him.

All the elephants in the country, whether wild or tame, belong to the king: whoever captures one must give him up to the king, and he grants permission to the princes and to a few of the higher dignitaries to use them. The lucky discoverer of a white elephant is made a *min-gyee*, and is exempted from taxes and burdens of every kind for the rest of his life. Red and spotted elephants are also held in great esteem.

White crows, rats, mice, and hares, are common and easily distinguished; but it is different with a white elephant. He is not to be considered as snow-white: very far from it. All the white elephants now existing in Siam and Burma are of a light mouse colour, somewhat of the same tint as the pale freckles to be found on the trunk of almost every ordinary elephant. This light grey is uniform all over, the spots on the trunk being white. The depth of the colour, however, varies greatly; and there are often blemishes in the shape of darker patches which would seem to ruin an otherwise eligible candidate's claims. It has been, therefore, found necessary to determine some infallible test points, which will demonstrate the right of the animal to his title. Determining white elephants is quite a science, and there is a very considerable literature on the subject. The Burmese skilled men fix upon two of these tests as superior to all others. One is that the elephant shall have five toe-nails on his hind feet instead of four. This is a good way of making certain, but occasionally there are indubitably black elephants which have the sacred number of toes. These are white elephants debased by sin, labouring under the

evil kan of previous existences, and therefore ineligible for the honours accorded to the real animal. The other test is considered perfectly decisive, no matter what the precise tint of the skin may be. It is this: if you pour water upon a "white" elephant he turns red, while a black elephant only becomes blacker than ever. This is the final test always resorted to in Mandalay. A swarthy specimen who had five toe-nails and turned red when he was washed would be forthwith installed in all the honours and emoluments of the Sin-pyoo-daw, no matter what scoffers might say about his colour. Such a creature is the present Lord White Elephant in Mandalay. He would not be recognised as an albino by any except those who are learned in the science and well-versed in the voluminous and puzzling minutiae of the question. To most people he would seem an impostor, for his colour is a mixture of light-brown and dingy, smoke-smirched cream colour. The eye, when you know it, is perhaps the best rough test for an amateur. The iris ought to be yellow, with a reddish outer annulus. The effect of this is decisive to the connoisseur, if only sinister to the outsider. But the red ring represents the circle of the nine precious gems. In other respects the Sin-pyoo-daw is not attractive in appearance; he is very big, but, notwithstanding the care taken of him, he is remarkably lean and hollow-sided. His tusks, however, are magnificent—white, smooth, and curving forward in front of his trunk so that they almost meet. In his young days he was suckled by women, who stood in a long row outside his palace, and the honour was eagerly sought after, for the creature is a national pride and not merely a royal monopoly. A hundred soldiers guard his palace, and the Sovereign of the Golden Throne himself makes offerings and pays him reverence. An establishment of thirty men waits on him, and among

them is a Minister of State who manages his affairs and looks after the revenues of the province that is assigned to him to "eat." His palace stands within the inner stockade and is decorated with the royal *pya-that*. Every day he is bathed with scented sandal water, and all his vessels and utensils are made of gold. Troupes of the palace *coryphées* dance for his pleasure, and there are choruses of sweet-voiced singers to lull him to sleep.

Nevertheless his lordship is very bad-tempered, and his attendants are much afraid of him. Such things are, however, not unknown with human kings. On one occasion the Sin-pyoo-daw killed a man who had ventured too near, and there was a good deal of trouble and noise before the body could be got away from him. The king—Theebaw's father—heard the commotion, and inquired what was the matter. When he was told, he expressed great concern and not a little alarm for the future state of the Lord White Elephant, with the red stain of murder on him, blotting out hosts of previous good deeds. But the elephant's minister calmed his mind and restored him to equanimity by saying, "Pray do not be disturbed, payah; loo ma hoh' boo, kullah—it was not a man, only a foreigner."

Probably because he is so vicious, the present Lord White Elephant has never been ridden, as previous incumbents were. No one but the king himself could do so; and latterly King Mindohn became very fat and feeble, while King Theebaw's nerves are not strong enough. The Sin-pyoo-daw is king of elephants, and therefore none but a king may mount him. His royal trappings are kept in his palace, and are very magnificent. Draperies of silk and bands of rich red cloth run from the head-stall to the back and thence to the tail, hanging in curves over the body. They are richly embroidered in gold and

studded with rubies and emeralda. On the forehead is a plate of gold, recording his majesty's titles, such as is worn by every man of rank in the country up to the Arbiter of Existence himself. Bosses of pure gold and clusters of precious stones cover the head-stall, and golden tassels hang down over the ears. When he goes forth to take the air, he is shaded by golden and white umbrellas. He and the king share all the white umbrellas in the country between them. The king of men has nine; the king of elephants two, but he has also four golden ones. Not even the heir-apparent, if there were one, has a right to use the white umbrella. He must be contented with his eight golden shades; the display of a white one would be regarded as a declaration of rebellion, and would result in his immediate execution. No wonder, then, that the attendants and visitors take off their shoes when they enter the Sin-pyoo-daw's palace, and that the people bow down low and do humble obeisance when he passes through the streets. These are swept and sprinkled with water for him as for the King of the Golden Throne himself.

The Lord White Elephant's suite account for his irritable temper by the bad treatment which he met with in his early days. The royal coffers were low, and the English were clamouring for the last instalments of the Yandabo indemnity money. So the rents of the elephant were appropriated to pay off the troublesome foreigners. Every care was taken to soften the indignity. The king himself wrote a long address on a palm-leaf, requesting the Lord White Elephant not to take it amiss that his revenues were devoted to the payment of the barbarians. In any case he should not suffer, for the whole sum would be refunded in two months' time. The circumstance, however, seems to have preyed on his

mind, for the body-guard say that his majesty (the elephant) has never been the same since.

There are frequent reports of the capture of white elephants, and special questing parties are sent out every now and then. But the candidates almost invariably fail to satisfy the water test, or the tail is not long enough, or the position of the eye is wrong, and the red ring is wanting. At any rate, genuine "white" elephants are very seldom found. As with the king, when the *Sin-pyoo-daw* is dead it is not permissible to say so in as many rude words. It must be whispered that his majesty has "departed" or "disappeared." He gets a royal funeral.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### MINISTERS OF STATE.

WHEN Mindohn Min heard in 1874 that the elections had gone against the ministry, and that Disraeli was to be Premier, he sighed, and said: "Then poor Ga-la-sa-tong (Gladstone) is in prison, I suppose. I am sorry for him. I don't think he was a bad fellow, and I gave him the Fifteen-string Saluè (the Burmese Order of Knighthood) a year or two ago." That is the Burmese notion of how to settle the Opposition. The lines of statesmen in the Royal City of Gems are not cast in pleasant places. If they rise rapidly, they come down with as much precipitation; and their fall is as crushing as ordinarily it is inevitable. The coolie of to-day may be the minister of to-morrow; and a month hence, he may be spread-eagled in the court of the palace, with a vertical sun beating down upon him and huge stones piled on his chest and stomach. Or he may be treated even more summarily than this. When King Tharrawaddy succeeded, he made Bah-gyee-daw's ministers work as slaves on the roads for a time, and when this exercise had quite worn them out, charitably put them to death, without the frightful barbarities which characterised his treatment of the upstart Queen Dowager and her quondam all-powerful brother

Min-thah-gyee. A more recent example is that of the Nain-gan-gya Woon-douk. This unfortunate statesman was sent in 1880 as an Ambassador to the English Raj, and after eight months stay on board of a steamer at Thayetmyo, a few miles inside the British frontier, came back to say that his mission had failed, and that in fact he had been told to go away. He did not survive long. It was a week or two before he was admitted to see the king; and when he did see him the meeting was unpleasant. Next day the portly woon-douk "died of apoplexy."

Sudden deaths were not at all uncommon in the late king's reign. An official displeased him in some way, and Mindohn Min said emphatically, "I don't want to see that man any more." The poor wretch left the royal presence to be seized by lictors outside and killed more or less rapidly. A day or two afterwards his Majesty would ask where so-and-so was. "Alas! sire," was the answer, "he died of chagrin shortly after the lord of earth and ocean cast eyes of displeasure on him." Then the Convener of the Fifth great Synod quoted a pious saw from the Lawka-needee, and turned his mind to other matters. He made it a special boast that never in all his reign had he ordered an execution. Yet many people died of "official colic" during the time he was on the throne, and Colonel Sladen arrived sixty seconds too late with a respite for one of the pious Monarch's own sons. The sound of the hoofs of the English Resident's horse as he galloped past the astrologers' monastery to the execution ground, only quickened the headsman's sword. The hapless min-thah should have perished with the setting sun. There were still long shadows slanting up from the trees by the royal foundry, when the Colonel reined in and upbraided the presiding Minister with his bloodthirsty



haste. The Linga-yahma Sadaw when he heard the story, said the ayay-baing should have been a Buddhist and might probably become a yahanda in no very distant existence.

Yet the late king was undoubtedly a kindly man. The stories which occasionally appeared about him in the English papers of ten years or so back, were not true. He never got a pea-rifle and "potted" his subjects from the palace verandahs when he was bored. They libelled him who said he did. He was a good Buddhist, and never took life of man or animal. King Theebaw is, perhaps, not quite so strict in his notions. When he first came to the throne he unearthed the spear with which his grandfather Tharrawaddy used occasionally to spit his counsellors. The young king's aim was not quite so good, or his purpose not quite so deadly. He prodded a few heralds and interpreters, and flung the spear at one or two of his father's trusted advisers; but it is not recorded that he ever actually killed anybody with his own hands. In fact, he gets on fairly well with his ministers now, having drilled the seniors into complete submission to his wishes and appointed among the younger members those who are most of his own way of thinking. The most characteristic man in the Cabinet is the Hlaydin A-twin-woon, better known as the Hpoung-woon. He is only of the second official grade, but none of the four woon-min-gyees have any real power. They date from the last reign and are practically over-ridden by the younger party. The king has, it is true, married the daughter of the Kampat Min-gyee, but that stolid old gentleman was always remarkable for his disinclination to do anything at all, and is not at all likely to exert himself unduly for the sake of precarious pre-eminence. Therefore, the ex-Mayor of Mandalay, in conjunction with the Yanoung prince, a favourite of the Queen Soo-payah-lat's,

and one or two others of the young Burman party, are the most representative ministers at present.

The A-twin-woon wears the dragon tattooed on the nape of his neck. Fourteen years ago he was a slave, and in position little better than a coolie. His rise from this rank might have been a credit to him if it had been effected by his own powers. But he rose by a mere accident, and has carried all the tendencies of his original position with him. In 1866, when two of King Theebaw's half-brothers, the Mingohn and Mingohndeing princes, rose in rebellion against their father, the late king, the Hpoung-woon—he seems more familiar under his old title—was one of the guards in the palace. After the rebels had killed their uncle, "the War Prince," they made for the Summer Palace, where the king was at the time along with Colonel Sladen, the British Resident. The Summer Palace is a small building outside the stockade of the actual nandaw, and it was foreseen that his Majesty would make immediately for the Eastern Gate, which is quite close at hand. A man was therefore stationed there with orders to kill King Mindohn whenever he made his appearance. All happened as had been surmised with one slight exception. Royal blood in Mandalay never goes outside the palace on its own legs, and when his Majesty reached the gate he promptly jumped on the intending regicide's back and bade him carry him over the esplanade. The man was so overcome by the royal presence, or so slavishly accustomed to do what he was ordered, that he obeyed. When they were safe within the inner stockade he stooped down to let the king dismount, and his sword fell from the folds of his waistcloth. None but the king may carry arms within the nandaw, and the Hpoung-woon, grasping the situation, snatched up the sword and cut the man's head off. Mindohn Min, with

a curious regard for this mixture of barbarity and rapidity of action, made the coolie a subordinate official on the spot, and since then the Hpoung-woon has gone on distinguishing himself as on this occasion. He has been promoted successively through the grades of slipper-bearer, tea-server, and betel-box holder to that of the Governor of the Royal Rafts, or Barges (Hpoung-woon), and Mayor of Mandalay (Myoh-woon), which latter steps he gained through his activity in the palace massacres—loyalty and energy his patent called it. King Theebaw found in the bloodthirsty and remorseless woon a willing and enthusiastic helper in the murder of the princes and princesses. The governor lost two night's sleep that he might not miss a single item of the horrors, and might be assured that none of the royal victims were allowed to die too easily. It was he who had a pregnant woman disembowelled before her husband's eyes. With his own hands he dashed out the brains of some helpless infants, swinging them by the legs against the prison-walls. Naturally he is one of the king's firmest supporters, for Theebaw's fall would mean his own certain death. His squat figure and repulsive face make him the most easily recognised of the court circle, and he repays the aversion of Englishmen with a most demonstrative hatred. As Hlay-din A-twin-woon, or Minister of the Interior, he has supreme command over all the lower fluviatile provinces, and has a large military force at his command.

Equally high in the king's favour, and not less fierce in their denunciation of the English, are the Teing-dat A-twin-woon and the Yaynangyoung, also of the same second grade. They, too, were prominent in the massacres, and have a particular penchant for drinking curaçoa in tumblers. Both were slaves of the young Theebaw prince when he was a boy in the English

Missionary school, and followed his fortunes into the Royal Monastery. As chiefs of the Let-thohn-daw, the Royal Page Body-Guard, they had the opportunity which won their rank. A daughter of the Tein-dat is married to a half-bred Frenchman, and the a-twin-woon in consequence gives occasional "dinners" to the European and quasi-European dwellers in Mandalay. The guests are, as a rule, not in a position to brave his anger by a refusal, and have to endure most elaborate indignities at his hands. All the most humiliating formalities of the palace have to be observed towards the young minister, and the *menu* is said, by the victims, to be the worst of them all. In regard to this, it must be remembered, that it takes a very great deal to hurt the dignity of a Mandalay European.

These three a-twin-woons are the most powerful ministers, and have greater influence with the king than any of their technical superiors. The four woon-gyees are, with the exception of the Oopathee, of very little account with any one. The Loung-shway Min-gyee has been for long nearly bed-ridden, and was not able to appear even at the late king's funeral. The other three have all been in Europe, but the most that can be said of the Kampat Min-gyee is that he is now the king's father-in-law, while the Yaw has been for nearly two years on an expedition against the Shan mountaineers. He has done nothing warlike, and rumour says that he is so fully occupied in keeping the troops from dispersing to their homes that he has no time to fight. The fourth, however, is a remarkable man. The Oopathee, better known as the Kin Woon-min-gyee, has been very prominent, and is likely yet again to be heard of in Burmese history. He used to be commonly spoken of as the premier on English analogy, but there is really no such dignitary known in Burma, and the Kin Woon-gyee's substantive appointment was, and is

that of foreign secretary. He has been twice to Europe on embassies, and his naturally acute mind has thus been enlarged in its views. Had it not been for his great command over the public feeling, and his influence even over King Theebaw, there would certainly have been war between Burma and Great Britain in 1879. The foreign secretary is the representative of order; and it is a bad thing for the country that he is now almost entirely driven from power, if not from office. He is a master of oriental craft, and has tided through all the intrigues against him. He holds a document from the late king, granting him immunity from all kind of death. The list is a very frightful one, and ranges from vulgar, obvious beheading to the refined cruelty of throwing on a spread-eagled victim a nest of the fierce red ants known as kah-gyins, whose mandibles drive a man raving mad in little over a quarter-of an hour. But the palm-leaf patent would have been of little avail without a head that is well able to take care of itself. Like many of the older and better ministers, the Oopathee Min-gyee came from the cloister to office. On the late king's accession to the throne, he at once appointed the Pakhan Min-gyee from a monastery to be an a-twin-woon, and in no very great time to the supreme rank of min-gyee, a skipping of the lower grades, which is very unusual, as was also the circumstance that the new minister married one of King Tharrawaddy's widows. The Kin Woon-gyee was in the Pakhan's monastery, shared his rise, and when the patron, who never lost the bilious, monkish look, and the cold, awkward pohn-gyee's manner, obtained the deliverance, succeeded him as min-gyee. Were he permitted, the foreign secretary would make Burma a very different country from what it is, and it is certain that if the king dies, or is assassinated, as many people believe he certainly will be, the Kin Woon-min-gyee

will be the first man in the field with a successor to the throne. He is commonly supposed to have his eye on the son of the late Melloon prince, a boy now lying *perdu* in some monastery, ready for eventualities.

The Oopathes is certainly a superior man, but undoubtedly the most singular of the Mandalay court officials is the Pan-gyet Woon. He is a polished gentleman, speaks English fairly and French and Italian fluently, and has considerably more than a veneer of civilisation. As a boy he was at school in Calcutta, and having been well grounded there, proceeded to France. There he took his degree at the Panthéon, obtained a diploma in the Central Imperial School of Arts and Manufactures in Paris, and was altogether nearly twelve years in Europe. Notwithstanding his reminiscences of Mabile and the Champs Elysées, however, he accommodates himself very well to circumstances. When the young woon returned to Mandalay, King Mindohn had a long talk with him, and finally said: "And these foreigners, then, have they in any of their cities, buildings such as adorn our Royal City of Gems?" "Alas! your majesty," he replied, "the luckless people have not the magnificent teak; how, then, can they hope to raise anything comparable to the meanest of your palaces?" This courtier-like caution never deserts the Pan-gyet Woon. He never meddles with politics, and is content with his governorship of the glass manufactories, which means anything or nothing, and commands a nominal salary. But none of the ministers have had any salary for a matter of two years now, so that the cultured sinecurist is not worse off than his fellows. He consorts a good deal with foreigners, but averts suspicion by saying that it is merely to keep up his knowledge of their languages. No doubt he might have a much higher post, but he has enough money, and does not care to run the

risk of trying for more. Under King Theebaw he would not care to rise. Perhaps with a new *régime* he might take his proper place; and were he to do so, relations between Upper and Lower Burma could not fail to be more cordial. The present savage system cannot continue for long; would not last two months longer if the English would do their duty. However it may end, it may be hoped that the Pan-gyet Woon is the type of the modern Burmese minister, or of the modern native official under British rule. The only redeeming point about the Embassy, which king Theebaw has at last sent to the Viceregal Court, is that the Pan-gyet Woon is at the head of it.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE BURMESE ARMY.

THE Burmese army is not thought very much of even by the most patriotic Burman who has seen soldiers in other parts of the world. Malignant people call it a rabble; more smooth-tongued and favourably-disposed critics are fain to acknowledge that it is deficient in discipline. In physique and courage the men are formidable enough, but flintlocks and long Enfields do not avail much against the breechloader, and when complete inability to manœuvre is added to this, it is evident that even in jungle warfare, except against an equally ill-armed foe, king Theebaw's forces would make but a sorry show. Military instruction of a certain kind they have, but it never extends beyond squad drill, and even this is but very perfunctorily learned, while movements of large bodies of men are never attempted, except the so-called reviews, which take place every now and again, and in 1879 were held within a day or two either way at the full moon of every month. These "reviews" are, however, nothing more than marches out on a big scale, and are only useful as a means of displaying the soldier in the glory of his uniform, and giving him a little exercise. Except on these occasions, indeed, it is seldom that you see the soldiery in military



dress. Even when on guard they dispense with every article of warlike attire, except the gun, and even that is more frequently to be found in the rack than in the sentry's hands. These military promenades, therefore, offer the most favourable opportunity of observing the royal levies.

The troops muster at an early hour in the wide glacis between the inner and outer stockades of the palace. There they fall in, in a formation of fours, and remain placidly waiting; conversation goes on freely, and smoking and chewing betel are not interfered with. The boh-gyees and other officers of rank meanwhile assemble within the inner court. After, perhaps, three or four hours' waiting, the king comes out and inspects the forces through a field-glass from the head of the broad flight of steps in front of the Hall of Audience, or, perhaps, a notice is sent out that his majesty will not even view his troops in this easy fashion, and the army is saved from the—to English notions—exceedingly unchivalrous attitude of grovelling on its stomach for a matter of two minutes while the king looks through his binocular.

This over, the non-commissioned officers say *hé*, and the men slope arms and start off anyhow. Outside the eastern gate a halt is made while the boh-gyees, colonels of regiments, mount their elephants, get into position, and marshal their body-guards round about them. The lesser bohs and thway-thouk-gyees, "great blood drinkers," are mounted on ponies and have their personal retainers about them too. The commanding officer comes at the head of his regiment, preceded by twenty pages carrying double-barrelled smooth-bores in red cloth covers. These pages are all dressed alike, according to the individual taste of the commander, in uniform turbans, tunic, and pasoh. The livery of the young Kachin colonel of the Fourth Regiment, is the most effective—red-flowered turbans,

French grey jackets, and red pasohs of the wavy "dog's tooth" pattern. The colonel of the Third Regiment, on the other hand, revels in bilious contrasts—pea-green goungebouns, flowing red tunics, and yellow waistcloths of what a 'Varsity tradesman would call a neat quiet plaid pattern. This body-guard walks at either side of the road in loose Indian file to see that the way is clear. The boh himself rides an elephant, gorgeously caparisoned, with tassels and streamers trailing to the ground from the velvet-covered howdah. He is dressed in the national turban and pasoh, but wears a tight-fitting tunic, covered with gold lace. All of them are either smoking or chewing betel. Behind the elephant comes the umbrella-bearer, or, perhaps, two or three of them if the officer has attained such distinction.

The actual commander of the regiment seldom comes out to the review, so that there are comparatively few gold umbrellas, but the red and green ones with deep fringes add perhaps more to the brilliance of the array, considered simply as a spectacle. Behind the htee-bearers come the minor officers, mounted on ponies, with the ordinary Burmese scarlet cloth saddle and tassels sweeping over the animal's flanks. Each of these minor chiefs also has his umbrella borne over his head, and a score or two of spearmen guard the flanks of the cavalcade. Mingled up among them is a confused crowd of cheroot-bearers, spittoon-holders, betel-box carriers, and similar functionaries such as accompany a Burmese grandee wherever he goes. Behind this motley assemblage come the regimental colours. These are bifurcated, red pennants, bearing the number of the battalion, and leogryphs, lions, dogs, dragons, and similar distinguishing emblems for the different regiments. The standard is not very ponderous, but occasionally the bearer—he is not an officer—gets tired of carrying it over his shoulder and lowers it to the

trail without seeming to injure any one's sense of congruity. He is followed by the band, or a portion of it, for the musicians are scattered in twos and threes all over the regiment, usually at the head of a company, but not by any means necessarily so. Burmese music is ordinarily far from soft and gentle. At a play, the trumpets blare, and the gongs, cymbals and clappers, clash and jingle and rattle in truly inspiring fashion. But no such spirit-stirring strains are considered necessary to rouse martial ardour. A military bandsman requires no preliminary education. All he has to do is to tap, tap away in the most stolid and monotonous fashion on a *chec-noung*. This is a brass, or bell-metal gong, about the size of a desert plate with a small round boss in the centre. The sound is sweet, and they are pitched in different keys, but a low-country Burman is at a loss to divine their precise use. The sound does not travel far, and they are not beaten in any fixed time, besides that the *a-hmoo-dan* would not step to it if they were; so that if it were not for the dignity of the thing, there might just as well be no band at all. But there they are, and they jingle away and stop and begin again in the most casual and independent possible way.

Now at last we get a sight of the *a-hmoo-dan*, King Theebaw's army of "immortals" in full array. It is not a pleasant sight for one who does not care to see his fellow-countrymen ridiculous. It is just possible to make out that they are marching in column. Here and there is a ragged resemblance to an alignment of fours, achieved for a few minutes apparently more by chance than anything else. The soldiers are very gorgeous. Peony roses and sun-flowers are as nothing to them. All have red tunics, but the facings, which are broad, are different in each regiment. Some are yellow, some green, some blue, some nondescript,

and the effect on the red ground is not always pleasing. The trousers are very various. Blue, with a broad yellow stripe down the side, or occasionally for the sake of variety down the front, or the back; green and red; yellow and maroon; scarlet and brown; are a few of the combinations. On their heads are worn helmets with burnished spikes, and a small metal dragon in front. These helmets do not suit at all with long hair. The top-knot of a good many is so large that the *pickelhauke* balances on it, and wobbles about in undignified fashion.

The majority however find that the most satisfactory way of avoiding this is to put the helmet on the back of the head, which imparts to them a dissipated appearance which is far from martial looking. Not a few find the difference in weight between their ordinary silk turban and a *papier mâché*, or plaited wicker helmet, more than they can bear, and solve the difficulty by carrying their head-piece on the end of their carbines. This meets with no remonstrance or opposition on the part of the non-commissioned officers, who, armed with spears, march at irregular intervals along the flanks of the column. The soldiers have no belts, and therefore no scabbards, and proceed with bayonets fixed. The third regiment, commanded by the young Kachin before alluded to, has a habit, whether for the sake of distinction, or as signifying that they are prepared at any moment to give cold steel, of sloping arms in an eccentric way. Grasping the rifle at the upper band, they throw the butt over the shoulder and proceed with bayonets sticking out in front. As a necessary consequence they do not straggle so much as the others, for if a man lags he is wakened up by a prod from the point of the bayonet in the nape of the neck, or between the shoulders. The chief objection to this method of keeping the men at fairly regular intervals, is that a prick in

the rear is as likely as not to pass right on to the head of the column, with the result of a volley of abuse and very considerable disorganization.

The marines are the strongest in point of numbers, and far and away the best in drill. They keep their alignment very fairly, and frequently as many as three men in a section keep step. Their uniform is a blue-frogged red tunic and blue trousers with a scarlet stripe. On the helmet they wear an anchor instead of the ordinary dragon of the line. Their colonel is the Hpoung-woon, Myo-woon, now Hlay-din A-twin-woon, the minister who was so energetic in the Palace massacres of 1879. The credit of their discipline is however entirely due to Commotto, a young Italian naval officer in the king's service, and engineer of all the river forts. The marines are quite a thousand strong, and their officers are mounted just like the rest. When there is practice in the war-boats, the mayor-colonel views the performance from the back of an elephant on the river-bank. Like all the great men, however, he does not trouble himself to go out to the reviews.

The men smoke in the ranks and hail their friends along the route in the freest possible fashion. When a man wants a light or a drink of water he simply falls out and goes in search of it among the spectators, rightly enough assured that none of the officers will bother their heads as to the reason of his departure. All along the line of march men who have been delayed in this way may be seen scuttling along to get somewhere near their proper places. Here and there one may be seen far away from his regiment, having been seduced into conversation with a friend. Now and then the non-commissioned officers catch sight of an Englishman looking on, and wake up to a sudden sense of their responsibilities, delivering sounding

thwacks with the butt end of their spears on the shoulders of any stragglers within reach in most energetic and official fashion. As a rule, however, they content themselves with getting over the ground. Many of the recruits view their trousers with very grave suspicions. They evidently think that unless precautionary measures are adopted, the article will slip off, and therefore, with a vigilance which does credit to their sense of modesty, hold on tight with one hand to their continuations. Perhaps the tailors are to blame. But in any case the attitude is undignified, and certainly not military. The garment is not regarded with any favour even by the veterans. When the a-hmoo-dan are on guard they generally wear the ordinary waist-cloth and carry the trousers in one hand to show their status. The tunics are almost never worn except at the reviews.

Between regiments come four cannon, pulled by men, and with little pennons stuck in the touch holes. Two gunners accompany each two-pounder, one carrying a galvanized tin bucket and the other a big canister, intended for shot and powder, but singularly unfitted for such material on a campaign. Sponges and rammers are wanting, and the men who draw the pieces are the bombardiers.

After the infantry, at an interval of two hundred yards, come two regiments of cavalry, numbering about five hundred lances in all. They wear helmets of Grecian pattern, but otherwise are in the national dress. The second of the two is the celebrated "Kathay Horse," who have won in English books on Burma a fame unknown in their own country. They are dressed in French grey jackets and red pasohs, and look very well; but their mounts are very poor for a country where ponies are so plentiful and where it is so easy for the commander to

demand their excellence. The saddles have long flaps or wings hanging down in front to protect the riders' bare legs when riding through underwood, but it is so long since they have been in the jungle that the flaps are now more of a decoration than a necessity. Cavalry is an arm of the service of little use in a country like Burma, but with their long slender lances and splendid trappings, they make a fine show, and not very much more can be said for the infantry—not so much in some cases.

The lancers are followed by the commissariat and control departments, a rabble of men carrying pots and pans and rolls of bamboo matting and boxes intended for ammunition, but containing none, and huge wicker baskets, besides a lot of other baggage which may be useful, but does not look like it. There are five or six hundred of these men, guarded by a handful of dah and spearmen.

In their wake follows the artillery corps; first, thirty or forty two-pounders, similar to those between the different regiments, and with the same complement of men to each gun, and the same appliances. Then the elephant battery, each elephant with two jingals mounted on the howdah. These jingals, throwing a half, or three quarter pound ball, with their long pointed tails and muzzles pointed up to the skies, look very much like telescopes from a distance. In actual warfare they would probably do nothing beyond scaring the elephant. Besides the mahout, each elephant carries a man to manage the guns. Fifty of them are loaded with this mosquito artillery, and behind them come fifty more with nothing on them but the mahout. Many are most magnificent tuskers, and they constitute the most valuable part of his majesty's army.

Behind the elephants come the heavier guns, drawn by

buffaloes, but they are apt to stick in the heavy, unmade roads, and the buffaloes themselves are not easy brutes to manage, especially on a warm day when their skin begins to crack. This battery, therefore, usually goes but a short distance. These heavy guns are mostly very ancient ship guns of Portuguese, Dutch, French and Arakanese make, and would be considered valuable in an English parish museum. They are innocent of any intent to kill any one, unless it be the firers.

This is not a very formidable account of Theebaw Min's boasted "Immortals," but British Burmans rejoice to think that it is a true one, and that when the time comes for adding Upper Burma to the British dominions it will be effected with the least possible amount of bloodshed on either side. It may be supposed from what has been said that the a-hmoo-dan have no drill, but this is very far from being the case. On the contrary, drill is going on constantly inside the palace and at the various guard stations. The French and Italian officers are always instructing them, but a want of belief in the utility of mass movements renders all their efforts useless. The recruits go through the balance-step with the utmost enthusiasm; when it comes to forming fours they are a little less ardent, but by the time they ought to be counter-marching and right-forming company they are tired of the whole business and poke fun at the instructor. European officers call themselves, and are called, generals and colonels and what not, but they are simply drill sergeants and nothing else. They are allowed no uniform; they never take command on a review day. Occasionally they complain of being insulted by their squads, and are told by a sententious min-gyee that patience is one of the ten virtues which go to the making up of a true gentleman. To recompense them for their trials they make a great deal of



money in a variety of ways, their salaries being the least part, and paid at long and uncertain intervals in a lump sum. The real "generals" are men who hardly ever come out at all, possibly not even if there were fighting. The commander-in-chief was for many months in gaol, but still retained his title, and two of his sons remained in command of regiments. The men who manage the reviews and any work that is to be done are all let-thohn-daw, the king's pages of honour. Few of them are over twenty, but their duties do not require much experience.

Besides the legitimate drill, conducted by the European instructors, there are other performances, the object of which would hardly be apparent to the compilers of the *Manual of Field Exercise*. The instructor, one of the junior officers, assembles the men in a big circle, round about him, and proceeds in a fashion dictated to him apparently by nothing but his own fancy. He throws his gun into the air, catches it and cries *hé!* and the men follow his example to the best of their ability. He goes through the same manoeuvre behind his back, cries *hé!* again, and the men probably get some hard knocks in dutifully trying to imitate him. He cries *hé* and hunches up his shoulders; cries *hé* and brings them down again; slaps one thigh and then the other with a *hé*; pirouettes on one leg and brandishes a jointless limb in the air crying *hé* vigorously, all which performances his squad copies as best they can. The men drop off as they get tired, and by and by the instructor sits down himself, and the party dissolves or not as it pleases. Laughter, criticism, and applause are constant throughout. This sort of exercise is not so frequent in the capital as it used to be, but it is still nearly the only drill the rural levies get. These latter are dressed in the uniform of the late king's reign, mostly cast off tunics and trousers of the Madras native infantry.

They wear round soup-tureenlike helmets, with a piece of looking-glass in front. Of these they are very proud, but do not disdain to drink water and eat their dinner out of them. There is only a limited supply of these adornments for the provinces, and as a consequence it is frequent for the man on guard to strip and hand over his uniform to the relief, and then go home happy.

There is no musketry practice. Occasionally on feast-days, or when His Majesty goes out, there is a lot of powder burnt, but it would be a very risky matter discharging some of the more ancient firelocks, and so it is perhaps as well that class-firing has not been introduced. The artillery never have any exercise. Burmans have not the same respect for big guns that the natives of India have. They imagine that such a big thing as a field-piece is sure to hit something, if it is only pointed in a general way in the right direction and conclude therefore that any fool can manage a big gun without preliminary practice. The late king appointed a French officer to look after the gunners. This gentleman thought he must do something for his salary—rather an unusual thing with the king's servants—and accordingly as the men could not be induced to drill, took a battery out to the paddy-fields, towards Yankeen-htoung for ball practice. There he got the guns into position and commenced firing. Loud sounds should never assail the royal ears, and when his Majesty heard the din, he was fiercely enraged. The Kathay Horse were sent out in a body to stop it. The over-energetic Gaul was told that if he had not been an ignorant foreigner, who did not know any better, he would have been made a target for his own battery, but the Burman officer was flogged round the town. The guns were stowed away in the palace lest such an enormity might by misadventure be again perpetrated. There they remained till Theebaw

Min got them disinterred for his reviews. He may be less sensitive on the score of noise, but he does not send his gunners out to practice, and they, as a rule, keep their spare clothes and cheroots and betel stowed away in the muzzles of their pieces.

The strength of the army at the disposal of King Theebaw is only limited by the number of men in the country. Every male is liable to serve as a soldier whenever he is called upon, and in 1879, when war with England was momentarily expected, levies of one man from every twenty houses, every twelve, every six, were called out, and finally an a-mehn-daw, or royal mandate was issued, summoning every able-bodied man in the country to hold himself in readiness for taking the field. But in ordinary times the amount of a Burmese force must depend not upon the number of the population, but on the body of men the neighbourhood can feed in a collected state, for it is the district and not the Government that supports them. At present Theebaw Min could supply probably between 25,000 and 30,000 men with muskets, more or less useless, from long Enfields to ancient flintlocks, which would be most readily induced to go off by putting them on a fire. The method of raising forces is somewhat as follows. The king, with or without the advice of his ministers, decides how many men are wanted, and informs the Hloht-daw, which thereupon issues orders to all the governors of provinces, calling upon them to muster the quota which custom has decided their districts must provide. The provincial rulers then send their instructions to the myo-thoo-gyees and teik-thoo-gyees, heads of townships and village circles, who in their turn communicate with the subordinate headmen of each separate village. This last official with the assistance of the house-reeves, singles out the men. Substitutes are

allowed, and as every thoo-gyee is absolute in his own place, he usually makes a very pretty thing out of such a levy, through fines and sums given to him to provide another man. The whole district is called upon to pay for the support and equipment of its contingent, and the men who are recruited are usually those who are unable to furnish their share of this tax. But the men who eventually go off as soldiers are not by any means commonly those whom the headmen first nominates. He expects to have money extorted from him by his superiors, and makes his arrangements accordingly, naming all the wealthiest men in the place in his first list. This method of raising troops is not expeditious, but nothing under Theebaw's rule is expeditious, and it gives abundant scope for palavering and extortion, the two chief accomplishments of the rural officials.

The inhabitants of certain districts, however, are considered the hereditary soldiers of the Aloung-payah dynasty, and these levies may be looked upon as forming the standing army. They hold their lands by military service and are exempt from all taxation. They consider themselves to be the flower of the service and adopt *Junker* manners. A dragon is tatooed on the back of their necks, just over the shoulders, to signify that they specially belong to the king, and, strictly speaking, they alone are entitled to the name of a-hmoo-dan. They mount guard in the palace and are almost never required to leave the capital. The chief Aloung-payah districts are in the north, round about Moht-shoboh, whence the founder of the present dynasty came. The rural levies get all the work there is to be done against marauding Shans and Kachins and garrison the various fortified towns along the frontier. Many of these contingents are armed with nothing but spears and dabs. At Min-hla, near the British

frontier, where there is a well-constructed fort, is posted the strongest and best-armed detachment out of Mandalay. But no real resistance could be offered to an English force of all arms. The only opposition would be met at Min-hla and Ava, just below Mandalay. At the former place, forty miles from the British frontier, there is a polygonal fortification capable of holding 2,000 men. Before taking it three lines of earthwork faced with masonry would have to be breached or escaladed, but on the other hand there are no ditches or flank defences, not even at the gates, and, further, there are only three guns in the place and those not mounted. Near Ava there are three forts; one, the face of the old city wall, an earthen rampart thirty feet thick and twenty feet high, faced on the outside with masonry; a second on the other side of the river at Sagaing, and the third farther up at the bend of the river, at Shway Gyet-yet. These command the river at a point where vessels proceeding up the river would have to round a dangerous reef of rocks. But with regard to these forts Captain Barker of H.M.'s 89th P. V., the best English authority on Upper Burma military matters, says, "without ditch, without flank defence, without expense magazines, without traverses to protect the gunners, they are mere shell-traps for the destruction of the garrison." He might have added that they are without armament. Mandalay itself has naturally a strong position because of its inaccessibility. To the east it is guarded by the Shan mountains and the marshy plains below. Rivers and creeks make the approach from the south difficult. On the north is an impassable morass. On the west of the city are wide-spreading, thickly populated suburbs, and the river-side is defended by a high embankment. But the weakness of Mandalay lies in the

worthlessness of the army and the feebleness of its armament. The kingdom of Burma is, in fact, nothing like so powerful as it was a quarter of a century ago, when the second Burmese war ended. May a bloodless war shortly obliterate the distinction between English and native territory.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION.

BUDDHIST law as at present administered in Upper Burma dates from the beginning of the now existing world. The first crime was theft; the first punishment was a scolding, speedily followed by a thrashing; and the first judge was Mahah Thamada, elected by vote of the people to be ruler over them. No doubt there were written laws then, but they have not come down to us. The written code now in use was given to the world by Manoo, originally a cow-herd, but afterwards a minister. He found them written in large characters on the walls of another world, to which he was transported when in an ecstasy. These laws formed the first code. There have been since compiled from them eight other codes in the kingdom of Prome and other ancient states in Burma. The last, called Mahah Menoo Tha-yah Shway Myeen, was drawn up on the foundation of the sixth kingdom of Ava, in the year 1137 B.E. (1775 A.D.), by Min-hkoung Gyee, who, with the aid of a learned monk, went through and carefully revised all the codes. These laws in their integrity are those which govern Burma Proper to the present day and British Burma in so far as they regulate social relations. The codes were written in Sanskrit and Magadha, a

language usually called Pali through an error. The name Pali signifies really not a *language*, but a doctrinal text, handed down to Buddhists, as composed by pious disciples from the teachings of Shin Gautama. The Magadha or Pali code accepted is called Menoo Woon-nah, from its writer and compiler, a minister of state in Ava. It is looked upon as a commentary on, or a key to, the codes, and contains the whole of the laws.

Besides the codes there exist also twenty standard collections of decisions, leading cases in which judgment was delivered by kings, queens, princesses, and ministers. These are by some regarded as obsolete, by many loo-gyees, however, considered to have still the force of law. The best known of these are :—

The decisions of Mahawthata, the embryo Budh.

- " Weedooyah, one of the ten great avatars.
- " Princess Thoodammasahree.
- " Kootha.
- " Dwotta Boun, first king of Prome.
- " Sin-Byoo Shin.

The laws given by Manoo to the ruler Mahah Thamada numbered altogether eighteen. From these all others have been framed. The eighteen original laws had regard to :—1. Borrowing money. 2. Deposits of money. 3. Stealing and altering the appearance of property and selling it. 4. When a gift may be had back on demanding it, and when not, there being six kinds of gifts. 5. Deciding the wages of carpenters. 6. Deciding the wages of labourers. 7. Breach of promise. 8. Deciding disputes between the owners of cattle and neat-herds. 9. Settling disputed boundaries. 10. Deciding whether property purchased may be returned. 11. Accusations. 12. Theft or concealment. 13. Assault. 14. Murder. 15. Deciding the



proper conduct of husband and wife. 16. The question of slavery. 17. Deciding if cock-fighting, betting, or gambling debts shall be paid. 18. Partition of inherited property.

Manoo also laid down, that persons appointed to administer the laws should not only have a competent knowledge of the code but should also possess fourteen qualifications, as follows:—1. To decide in strict accordance with the law. 2. To be respectable. 3. To be of moral character. 4. To inspire awe. 5. To command love. 6. To be of good birth. 7. To be religious. 8. To be virtuous. 9. To be truthful. 10. To be talented. 11. To be devoted to the study of the law. 12. To possess honesty of purpose and intention. 13. Knowledge of the principal parties and pleaders in a suit. 14. Fearlessness in deciding cases, or being lion-hearted.

The supreme court in Burma is the Hloht-daw, constituted of four woon-gyees, the chief ministers of state, who hold their meetings in a hall within the palace, which takes its name from the court. Each woon-gyee (great burden) has his woon-douk (prop of the burden) as an assistant to sit with him in court. These woon-douks form the third rank of ministers, under the four atwin-woons (inner burdens), who are a kind of household ministers, or privy councillors, and sit in a special court, called the Bya-deht, also in the palace. The latter have nominally principally to deal with the monopolies which Theebaw Min has recently re-established in such abundance. But as any man, no matter what special education or preparation he may have had, is considered eligible for any post, political, military, civil, or judicial, so both the Hloht and the Bya-deht conduct all manner of business, from the external relations of the country to ordinary criminal or civil appeal cases sent up from the yohn-daw, the

criminal court, where the myo-woons (city burdens), usually two in number, sit daily; or from the tayah-yohn, the civil court, where two tayah-thoo-gyees (great men of the law) preside. In either of these inferior courts it is not at all uncommon for a woon-douk, or even a woon-gyee, to attend and investigate important cases. But original suits are also frequently heard before the Hloht, and many cases are decided by the woon-gyees or any of the subordinate officials in their private houses. Formerly indeed this was the chief source of their salaries, for costs to the amount of ten per cent. on the property under dispute went of right to the judge. The late king instituted the custom of fixed salaries, and Theebaw Min retains it, but neglects to pay the money. It will thus be seen that law matters, even in the capital, are carried on in a very casual, hap-hazard sort of a way. There is no attempt at a distribution of public business into departments, and each individual woon-gyee takes his part in deliberations on all kinds of subjects with as much confidence as if he were an expert.

If the capital displays a lack of system, there is certainly little to be expected from the provinces. The same general system prevails in the separate districts. Each one is ruled by a governor, or myo-woon, appointed by the Hloht-daw or by the king, and armed with full powers, military, judicial, civil, and fiscal. Appeals may be sent from his decisions to the Hloht, but otherwise he is entirely irresponsible, as long as he is regular in forwarding the prescribed revenue to the myo-sah, the prince or princess, or other great personage who "eats" the province. The "town-eater" almost never goes to his district, so that it is entirely at the mercy of the myo-woon, and may be squeezed by him as much as he thinks proper and judicious. The subordinate officials vary in different

provinces according to their requirements. All, however, have myo-sayays, secretaries, or town-clerks, nah-khandaws, "receivers of the royal orders," and sikkès, chiefs in war, military officers, who form a provincial council or court holding daily sittings and making reports to the myo-woon. In some districts, according to the duties, there are in addition to these, an akohn-woon, or revenue superintendent, an akouk-woon, or collector of customs, as also in riparian districts a yay-woon, or myit-sin-woon, who has a jurisdiction over the entire river. This authority, however, very often vests in one of the governors. Thus the present Woon of Minhla has power of life and death, as high sheriff of the Irrawaddy, from his own town, close on the British frontier, right up to Sagaing, not far below Mandalay. Other officials are the htoung-hmoo, or gaoler, the tagah-hmoo, governors of the gates, called win-do-hmoo in the capital, where they are very important officers, and the ayat-goung, heads of quarters, in all the larger towns. Under each governor of a province are a number of governors of the separate towns under his jurisdiction. These are called myo-oke when the appointment is temporary, or only for life, and myo-thoo-gyee when it is hereditary, as is most frequently the case. Besides these, in some of the provinces there are taik-thoo-gyees, governors of circles or groups of villages, each of which has its own yua-thoo-gyee, who in turn has under him sundry goungs to look after each his specially allotted number of houses. As each of these subordinates has to send in regularly to his immediate superior a certain fixed sum, determined without regard to favourable seasons, health of the population, or anything of that kind, and as each man is judge over the people in his charge, it may naturally be supposed that the general population do not lead a very happy life. Complaints may be made against

extortion and illegal decisions, but the heads of tracts, if they have the money, can always stifle inquiry.

Some of the laws deduced from Menoo's eighteen original enactments strike one as being rather singular. For example, if two men quarrel and fight and one of them is killed, there is no penalty; but if a third party interferes and kills or injures one of the original combatants, he must pay the ordinary fine for murder, or causing hurt. Should he himself be killed, the other two are subject to no penalty. When a man is guilty of adultery with another man's wife, if it be proved to be the first time, he must pay the fine for adultery, usually the price of the woman, assessed according to the judge's opinion; if it is her second offence, he only pays half the fine; but if she has been guilty for a third time, he pays no fine at all.

If one man curses another and some evil happens, he must pay twice the price of the damage incurred: thus, if the man dies he must pay twice the value of a man; two cows if a cow dies, and so on.

When the king dies there is a general pardon of all offences and a remission of fines, except in the case of debt. There are also seven things which cannot be reclaimed after the death of the king under whom they were promised or given. These are:—1. Deposits. 2. Pledges. 3. Money paid wrongly by the parties in a law suit. 4. Things carried off by violence, or seized upon without sufficient title. 5. Promises. 6. Things secretly stolen; and 7. Things that have been voluntarily given up by one man and taken possession of by another.

The decisions of Mahawthata, Princess Thoodammahree and others, are of little value from a strictly legal point of view. They are chiefly of a religious character. The princess begins by saying that her cases are to be

considered as guides to nobles and judges as to the line they should follow. To an English barrister they would seem to be excerpts from the *Arabian Nights*, and as far from precedents as it is possible to imagine anything. The play of Mahawthata tells of the Lord Buddha in the birth in which he exhibited the most consummate wisdom and acumen, as in Waythandaya he embodies the spirit of liberality. In both these births, as in his last, Shin Gautama spoke from the moment he was brought forth. As Waythandaya he immediately entreated his mother for something to give in charity to the poor, and distributed forthwith the four hundred pieces of silver she gave him. As Mahawthata, he appeared in the world with a plant in his hand, and, holding it up, said, "This is a medicinal herb." Throughout all this life he was constantly displaying extraordinary wisdom, jealous ministers being in the habit of propounding difficult cases to him. Thus he was shown a log of sha (*Acacia Catechu*) from which cutch, stupidly called *Terra Japonica*, is obtained, and asked which was the upper end and which the lower end. He solved the problem by putting it in the water, when the lower end, as being the heavier, sank deeper in the water. Another case is exactly similar to the famous Biblical decision of Solomon. These decisions, though they may be interesting, are hardly valuable as standard leading cases.

Some of the definitions of crimes in the Dammathat are a little singular. Thus among the ten descriptions of assault are mentioned: "saying in regard to a lunatic, a drunkard, or a half-witted person who is ill, that he will die, and he dies" "refusing restitution for cattle killed;" "standing near an assailant." To avoid being summoned for one of the twenty-seven kinds of abuse, one must be very circumspect, for there is ground for action if one says "Heh" to a man, as the Mandalay people are fond of

shouting "Heh kalah" after Europeans. It is equally risky to address a man as "Hnin" i.e., in the third person; to say that he is "deficient in strength"; that he is a stammerer, bow-legged, broken-down, squinting, or afflicted with white spots on his body; that he is heretical, or, finally, that he is given to using bad language.

The niceties of the law may be illustrated by the following case from the Talaing Dammathat. A man in search of honey climbed up a high tree to get at a hive. His foot slipped and he fell off a large branch on to a small one below. He was afraid that this would not be able to support his weight, and called out for assistance to a mahout, who was passing by on his elephant. The elephant-driver held up the hook with which he guided his animal and told him to come down by it. The bee-hunter seized the hook, and while he was holding it, the elephant took fright and ran away. There were then the mahout hanging on to his hook and the bee-hunter clinging to the slender branch which momentarily threatened to give way. Fortunately just at this moment four persons passed by and were called to by both the bee-hunter and the elephant-driver to come and save them. They could think of no other expedient than to hold out their clothes, which accordingly they did, spreading them out as high above their heads as possible, so as to break the fall. The two men dropped from the tree on their four preservers, but what between their own weight and the awkwardness of the iron driving-hook, the whole six were knocked senseless and fell on the ground. Whilst they lay in a swoon a doctor came up and gave them medicines which brought them round. When all had recovered, he demanded his fee. But the question was who was to pay him. The elephant-driver said that he should not be asked to pay because he tried to save the

bee-hunter's life and was an innocent cause of the injuries sustained by his rescuers. The bee-hunter on his part maintained that he should not be called on for payment, seeing that if he had not held on so tight, the mahout would have fallen and been killed. Finally, the four rescuers said that it was utterly unreasonable to ask them to pay, seeing that it was through pure generosity that they had held out their clothes to save the lives of the mahout and the bee-hunter, and through this act of kindness they themselves had been hurt. The elephant-driver and the bee-hunter somewhat thanklessly retorted that if a ladder had been brought, or had been constructed, they could have come down in perfect safety and without hurt to any one, and that therefore the four rescuers should pay.

The question as to who is liable in this case is a nice one, as also is the point as to who should be made defendants, and who should be the witnesses. The Talaing Dammathat says that the incident occurred in the province of Kaw-dohnpah-yit, in Hindustan, and that the case gave rise to the recognition of the root, trunk, and branches of the law, which till then had not been defined. From whom, or whether the doctor got his fee at all, we are not told.

Advocates, pleaders, or barristers were, we are told, unknown until a case occurred when certain suitors from the jungle came before the king and were not able to understand the court language. A court official was therefore allowed to assist them and turn their rustic jargon into comprehensible speech. These as "standing before" the king were called Shay-nay, as it were mouth-pieces for the parties to the suit, and the king, who acted as judge. The convenience derived from their superior knowledge and experience afterwards led to the establishment of a regular body of barristers.

If the laws are, some of them, somewhat singular to those who are accustomed to the scientific Indian penal and civil codes, as well as to the growth of centuries of Western practice, the method of binding over witnesses to tell the truth, or at least the book on which they are required to pledge themselves, is sufficiently startling. The Book of the Oath, *Chehn-sah*, is still used in British courts of justice, and it is to be hoped that all the younger members of the population know what terrible punishments they are drawing down on themselves when they hold it over their heads and promise to tell the truth; what frightful penalties will befall them if they swerve in the least degree from the exact facts of the case. In the old times a man used always to be sworn on this book in a place where there was no shadow, or in a pagoda, and in most places in Upper Burma there is still a special shrine where the oath is to be taken. There is one in Mandalay, and at the Shway Mingohn Payah, near the oil-wells of Yaynangyoung, there is a stone, ordinarily deposited between two images of the Hentha, the Brahminy goose, which the swearer takes in his hand, lamps being lighted at the same time. The book itself might not be kept in ordinary places. Some copies were kept in the court in a specially consecrated box, some in a *zayat*, and some, more terrific in their denunciations, in little receptacles fixed high up in trees.

With the view of guarding thoughtless or reckless people against themselves there were certain classes enumerated who should not under any circumstances be allowed to take the oath, or to appear as witnesses. These were:—1. Those who do not believe in the merit of good works. 2. Such people as trade with the goods of others. 3. Parties interested in the case, as well as their relations, friends, and enemies. 4. Great talkers.



5. Sick persons. 6. Old men. 7. Children. 8. Overbearing men. 9. Public singers. 10. Actresses. 11. Women of ill fame. 12. Goldsmiths. 13. Painters. 14. Blacksmiths. 15. Cobblers. 16. Asthmatic persons. 17. Low people. 18. Gluttons. 19. Gamblers. 20. Hot-tempered people. 21. Doctors. 22. Thieves. 23. Pregnant women. 24. Hermaphrodites, a by no means uncommon class in Burma. If, however, both parties to the suit gave their consent, some of these classes might be allowed to give testimony. Another curious old provision was that when one of the litigants produced a witness, he himself was not required to take the oath, while contrariwise, if he swore on the book, it was not imperative that he should call witnesses.

The Book of the Oath is not quite fixed in its length, nor in the number of the imprecations which it threatens to false witnesses. Some copies are much more diffuse than others. It is always written on palm-leaf, in the ordinary character, and these in English courts are kept wrapped up in the ecclesiastical kabbalùè, usually sewn for greater convenience. The commonest version is as follows:—

I will speak the truth. If I should be influenced by the laws of demerits, namely, passion, folly, anger, false opinion, immodesty, pride, scepticism, hard-heartedness, then may all these calamities attend me and my relations, wherever we may be, by land or by water, travelling or remaining quietly at home. May the nats who guard the sacred heavens, the athoora nats and all other giants, the nats who guard the three Baskets of the Sacred Law, delivered by the most excellent Buddha, and all the other holy writings and sermons; may the nats, the guardians of the sacred relics, the holy hairs, the teeth, the jawbone, the frontal bone, and all the other relics; the keepers and

warders of countless shrines, all golden and made famous by sacred memories; the protectors of the images and figures of the supreme Buddha; may the nats who guard the sacred mount and all the hills of the Southern Island; the nats who watch and ward the mighty rivers, the lesser streams, the lakes, the torrents, cataracts, and whirlpools; the nats who preside over the vast forests and the single trees; the nats of the sun, the moon, the stars and meteors, the clouds, winds, mists, and exhalations; may the nagah and the galohn, hideous dragons, and cruel birds, all beelocs, ogres, demons, warlocks, all the evils that come from without the body; may all these spirits and ill things unite to slay me and mine, to the utmost limits of kinship, if I speak not the truth.

When I and my relations are on land, let all the hideous land creatures, tigers, beelocs, elephants, male and female, demons and giants, buffaloes, poisonous serpents, the cobra, and the hamadryad, the scorpion, and the centipede; may they all seize, bite, crush, strangle, and devour us; may the earth open and swallow us up; a thunderbolt from heaven descend and annihilate us, if I speak not the truth.

When we travel by water, may our boats sink and be shattered by storms; may crocodiles, writhing snakes, and ravenous fishes, kill and devour us, that we suddenly die, perish, and come to utter destruction, if I speak not the truth.

May the five calamities, occasioned by fire, water, thieves, governors and enemies, oppress us; may we be subject to all the maladies of the body; may we be as fools and idiots, afflicted with madness and leprosy, with all kinds of loathsome disease and evils that deform the body, with itch, scurvy, ulcers, deafness, blindness, dysentery, the plague, and all manner of mental and corporal miseries;

may we incur the hatred and punishments of judges and rulers; may we be for ever separated from our forefathers, children, and relations, throughout all succeeding worlds; may fire destroy our goods; lances, swords, arrows, and knives, and all sorts of weapons cut and pierce and maim our bodies; may I die instantly, vomiting up clotted, black blood before the assembled people, if I speak not the truth.

Moreover, if I speak not the truth, may I and all my family after death be instantly cast into the abyss of hell, there to wander for a cycle of worlds through the eight great hells and all the smaller ones, suffering all the torments of these places; and when at length I shall emerge thence, may I become a *pyehtta*, or a *thooyakè*, and thereafter some hideous animal, passing through all the wretchednesses of the four states of punishment. Finally, when after innumerable worlds I shall at length once more become man, may I be the slave of other men a hundred and a thousand times, if I speak not now the truth.

But if I speak truth, may I and all my relations escape the three calamities, the four states of punishment, and the five enemies; may all the ills in the body and all that are without the body keep far away; may our wealth, honour, and estimation ever increase, and when we die may we attain the happiness of men and *dewahs*, and speedily entering on the noble path, reach the cloudless peace of *Neh'bañ*.

A desire to avoid denouncing on themselves all these fearsome penalties led in the old times to a good deal of trying by ordeal, a form of decision which still prevails extensively in country districts in Upper Burma, and occasionally is made use of even in Mandalay. The forms used are those familiar in old times in other parts of the

world, such as eating consecrated rice, like the first English *corsmaed*, plunging the finger wrapped in a thin palm leaf, into melted tin; immersing accuser and accused in water to see who would remain longest below and prove his innocence, or guilt. The yahans are usually present on these occasions, and recite certain formulæ beforehand, a great concourse of people assembling to see the test. The opposing parties wade into the river, or into a tank, up to the chest and then duck under, a couple of men holding a board over their heads to keep them down. The one that comes up first is cast in the case. Another form common at the pagodas is for both parties to resort thither, when the monks again recite the precepts and sundry other phrases. Then equal parts of wax are carefully weighed out, and from these candles are made for plaintiff and defendant. They are lighted simultaneously, and the holder of the candle which first burns out is adjudged to have lost the case, and judgment is delivered forthwith. The winning party, for all the friends are always present, immediately cause their band to strike up, dancers perform and songs are sung, and every token of triumph is exhibited. Unfortunately, however, for any supposed efficacy of the system, substitutes are allowed, and in addition to this, bribery plays as important a part almost as it does in the law courts themselves. The man whose money goes farthest wins his case, whether it is decided according to the principles of the *dammathat*, or the lottery of the ordeal.

The punishments inflicted are sometimes very cruel, and the treatment of the prisoners occasionally savage in the extreme. In criminal cases torture is frequently applied to extort confession from the accused, or evidence from the witnesses. Rich men usually suffer nothing worse than a fine. For the impecunious, sentences vary from

sundry stripes with a rattan, with or without imprisonment, to mutilation, perpetual slavery, and death. Except for debt, a man sentenced by the court to slavery, becomes so with all his descendants for ever, and they are usually allotted to some pagoda, doomed to support life by begging as *ta-doung-sahs*, or relegated to some other of the out-cast classes. Death in Mandalay is almost invariably by decapitation, the agony of the condemned being occasionally prolonged by a fiendish executioner; the custom of throwing victims to be devoured by wild beasts, or trodden to death by wild elephants in the elephant-trap, is now almost wholly given up. In the provinces, however, other methods are very frequently adopted. North of the capital "crucifixion" is particularly common. The *le'wakat*, or *waka' teing*, does not at all resemble the ordinary pictorial representation of the cross. It is more like a double ladder, consisting of three stout bamboos fixed upright in the ground, three bars lashed to them horizontally with canes, and over these again, two cross-bars in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross. These punishment stakes are always put up on the river-bank or on sand-banks in the stream, and are particularly common where the Shan and Kachin hills come down anywhere near the Irrawaddy. Sometimes the criminal is killed before he is lashed up, sometimes he is tied up first and then disembowelled with a sword-gash across the stomach, or rendered helpless by a few spear thrusts. In either case the body is left hanging, to be picked clean by the vultures and the bones gradually fall off. Formerly, when the mouth of the Irrawaddy was Burmese territory, a favourite method used to be to tie the convict down at the edge of the stream at low water and leave him to be drowned by the incoming tide. The fishes were often more

expeditious than the vultures in devouring their prey. The favourite kind of stake for this purpose was the "stump of hell," the irregular short stem of the undeveloped trees in a mangrove swamp, looking like pinnacles or knobs rising out of the confused net-work of exposed roots.

But imprisonment is often worse than death. The prisons have never been cleaned out since they were made, some of them noisome underground cells, some flimsy wooden or bamboo structures open all round. The prisoners sit with their feet in the stocks perpetually, and the long bamboo which unites them is occasionally triced up so far that the poor wretches only touch the ground with their shoulders. A favourite time for thus inverting them is at night. But a man who has not had enough money to satisfy the judge may often manage satisfactorily to square the gaoler. If he effects that he is on the whole comfortable; he is allowed to go away in the morning, have his meals at home, and go back and deliver himself into custody at night again. But if he has no money, or no friends to pay it for him, he had better die at once, indeed he certainly will before long, for the only food to be had in prison is that supplied by relatives of the convicts. If no friend brings it, the gaoler certainly will not supply any. It is better to be "proclaimed," to suffer mounng chaw, than to go to gaol. This is a punishment almost confined to the capital, and greatly resembling the old English naval practice of flogging an offender "round the fleet." The criminal is taken to each gate of the city, to the corners of all the chief streets, and to sundry other frequented places. At each of these points his crime and sentence are read out and he is flogged. None but the strong-constitutioned can stand it, but those who survive are free men.

Notwithstanding the severity of the treatment in the gaols, the laws are really very mildly administered, and there are very few whose relations cannot muster up enough to secure them immunity from torture. Capital sentences are on the whole rare, except when political considerations come in. Then there is no mercy.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### REVENUE SYSTEM.

THE first people, when they took counsel together and appointed a ruler to repress crime and manage the affairs of the country, agreed that each man should pay a tenth of his thalay rice, and this tithe system remained in force in Burma till the last reign, not merely for supplying the royal coffers, but also for paying all public servants. King Mindohn abolished the tithe system as far as the payment of local officials was concerned, and arranged to give them fixed salaries; but even in his time this law was somewhat of a dead letter, and under the present *régime*, if governors and secretaries did not resort to old methods they would get nothing. Unfortunately for the people, the ancient system was by far the most profitable, and the collectors are not at all likely to agitate for their payment at stated times from the treasury. The actual exactions of these worthies far exceed what appears in their black parabek note-books, and are in fact only limited by the possessions of their victims, and occasionally by a slight fear of consequences, if a desperate man should complain to some powerful minister in Mandalay. Then the delinquent might be turned out to make way for a friend of the woon-gyee's. But, alas for the people,



the change, if not exactly from king Log to king Stork, is only too likely to be from a well-filled stork to a lean and hungry one.

The division of the country for the collection of revenue is identical with that for administrative purposes, and the several duties are carried out by the same persons with the same assistants. The one man is civil administrator, judge, colonel of the local militia, and revenue collector for his locality, whether province, circle, or simple village. The fixed revenue demanded by the myo-sah, be he prince of the blood royal, minister, maid of honour, royal spittoon-bearer, or white elephant, is remitted to Mandalay by the resident lord-lieutenant of the province, together with a certain overplus for the "province-eater's" secretary, clerk, and treasurer. The whole amounts to from sixty to eighty per cent. of the money nominally raised from the people, and the money kept back is supposed to pay for the services of the myo-woon and all his subordinates. But they would be very much less great people if they got no more than this. It is impossible to say how much money is collected in any one district, or even in any single town. The slate-pencil records are easily effaced and altered, even if they were ever accurate, and no one knows anything of the details of taxation. A certain circle of villages is called upon to produce a certain amount of revenue to go to the capital, and as long as this is regularly paid no questions are asked. The governor divides out amongst the circles the quota each is expected to pay, and the taik-theo-gyee in his turn makes the allotment for the villages under his control; finally, the village headman gives his instructions to the tithing-men, and they extort all they can from the householders under their control. The system is admirably planned, but the working of it is execrable in

its cruelty. Every Burman is the king's slave, and cannot leave the district, far less the country, without the royal permission, granted through the local authorities. The men who come down to reap British Burma paddy-fields in November and December have all of them to leave hostages behind, their wives and families or some near relation, to guarantee that they will return when the season is over, to pay their *ngway-daw*.

This *ngway-daw*, or "royal silver," is the main source of the revenue. It is a house-tax, or family-tax, not a capitation-tax, though its incidence is generally so arranged that it practically comes to be a poll assessment, or at any rate a kind of rude property-tax. The amount of land cultivated, which naturally varies according to the number of hands available for the purpose, serves as a guide, though it seems to be a very misleading one, for the amount demanded in successive years and in adjoining districts differs in the most capricious way. But the *t'sè-ehng-goungs* never fail to scent out where money is, and to get the lion's share of it; for where the tax-collector may also be the judge, there is small room for hesitation and attempts to shirk payment. The *myo-sah* has a very summary way of deciding the matter. He announces to the governor that there are so many houses in the province, and that he is to collect three, or five, or seven rupees a head from them. If the estimate of the number of houses is too high, the *myo-woon* shifts the trouble on to his subordinates; if it is too low—but there is no use considering that case, for I never heard of an instance when the "town-eater" under-estimated what was due to him.

Next in importance are the imposts on produce. These are estimated in a still more arbitrary way. A *pè*, a land measure not very much different from an English acre, is

assumed to produce a hundred baskets of paddy. Of this any amount from ten up to forty per cent. is taken, occasionally in money-value, but more frequently in kind. Such dues would be heavy enough in any case, but they are particularly burdensome when the land does not produce the hundred baskets, assumed to be stored in the public granaries, where all the farmers must lodge their grain. The amount assessed would be a good crop for an actual pè, but when the land-measurer starts with a cubit settled by the standard of the breadth of his own hand, the result is rarely favourable to the cultivator. Sometimes the process is varied by imposing a tax in kind or money on every plough, or, more often, on every yoke of oxen or buffaloes. In a similar way, tobacco, cotton, wheat, sesamum, pepper, onions, and all kinds of vegetables are put under contribution. A small sum is also levied on cocoa-nut, areca and palmyra palms. Fishermen have to pay in coin or fish-paste for each of their nets or fish-traps; sometimes the fisheries are farmed out. Then there are dues on timber, and on the gums, resins, oils, and other forest produce, and a multitude of other minor imposts; dues on the sale of cattle, licenses to sell various articles, a tax on brokerage, transit dues, and so on, all imposed whenever the district offers an opportunity for them.

A fertile source of profit to the officials are the fees on lawsuits and criminal cases, as well as on minor matters, such as the settlement of petty quarrels, divorce suits, and the like, which do not require to be formally tried, but can be settled in the verandah of the thoo-gyee's house over a cheroot or a fid of betel. At the beginning of the year, and on other great kadaw days, special sums have always to be wrung out of the people to furnish the presents required to be offered to the king by all the officials, from the myosah downwards. *Corvées* and enforced duties of all

kinds are frequent, and the men selected for such service can only get off by furnishing a substitute, or bribing the tithing man. The king or some great man wants to build a pagoda, and orders are sent round to the various circles that they must furnish a regular supply of workers daily. The taik or myo-thoo-gyee draws up a roster, and each man has to go and work for a certain number of days. If he fails to go he is triced up to a post or a tree and gets a sound flogging. Similar forced duties are the protection of the frontier and the pursuit of dacoits. Such work is particularly detested, for the men have to keep themselves supplied with food, or get their friends to bring it to them, and this is not always an easy matter. Besides such service may last an indefinite time.

Added to all the ordinary imposts are occasional extraordinary contributions to the Crown on the occasion of entering upon war, or upon other public emergencies. The Hloht-daw in Mandalay fixes the amount, and it is divided among the governors of districts. In 1798 a call of thirty-three rupees was made from every house in the country. It was two years before the collection was finished, and the result was six million rupees. But how much more the people paid is quite another thing. Very heavy calls were also made in 1827 to meet the first instalment of the indemnity due to the British after the treaty of Yandabo. The money was sent down at dead of night to the British Commissioners and all the people were ordered to close their doors and remain inside that they might not see the national humiliation. As an instance of Burman carelessness in money matters it may be mentioned that when the final instalment was paid, considerably over the sum due was sent to Calcutta. When the overplus was returned, there was great discussion among the Ministers as to what could be the motive

of the Indian Government in being so singularly scrupulous.

A good many districts are almost entirely exempted from taxes in recognition of special services required of them. The inhabitants of the capital are particularly well off in this respect. They furnish the troops to guard the palace and city. Moreover, it would be much more difficult to oppress them with impunity, apart from the fact that if they were disaffected it would offer a premium to rebels. For similar reasons some of the townships about Moht-sho-boh are free from the *ngway-daw*. It was from this district that *Aloung-payah*, the founder of the dynasty came, and insurrectionist princes always make for Moht-sho-boh when they levy war. Several villages on the *Irrawaddy*, in consideration of supplying the royal gilded boats, manning the royal barges, and passing on Court despatches, are relieved from the family tax. But the petty officials take very good care that they do not grow rich on their immunities.

All these methods are more or less sanctioned by ancient custom. Modern ingenuity and requirements have, however, found out new ways of raising money. The pious ardour of the late king led him to spend vast sums on the erection of pagodas and religious buildings of all kinds, as well as on the manufactories, cotton mills, foundries and powder mills, with which he crowded the suburbs of *Mandalay*, and closed when he got tired of them. All this cost a very great deal of money, which even the exaction of benevolences from wealthy courtiers failed to supply. Consequently *Mindohn Min* turned merchant and established a great number of royal monopolies. The producers were allowed to sell to none but to him, and he could fix the price which he was prepared to pay. For long, cotton, jaggery, timber, wheat, precious stones, and

earth oil could only be had from the royal merchant, and the trade with British Burma was in anything but a satisfactory state. Then in 1867, Colonel Fyche, holding out the inducement of increased Customs' dues from the newly started Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's steamers, persuaded his Majesty to give up all the monopolies, except those of earth oil, timber, and precious stones; and to agree to a uniform import and export duty on all other goods and merchandise, passing between British and Burmese territory, of five per cent. *ad valorem*. This treaty lapsed in 1877 and was not renewed. Nevertheless, King Mindohn did not renew the monopolies.

When his son came to the throne, he issued, or there was issued for him, a proclamation, stating that he was going to adopt Western forms of government, and expressly announcing that he had no intention of reviving the monopoly system. He was, however, with his wild, extravagant habits, very soon in as great monetary difficulties as his father, and since 1880 has been steadily selling monopolies and giving grants of forest land for hard cash payments. The new monopoly buyers, haunted by a fear of British interference, and not by any means assured in their minds as to the stability of Theebaw Min's rule, are only anxious to get as much money as they can, and therefore will pay only the most absurdly low prices for produce. The cultivators, finding all their labour is in vain, are consequently in large numbers giving up farming or working in the forests, the consequences of which will be a still further shock to the trade with British Burma and an entire inability on the part of the population next year to pay the house-tax. Besides the monopoly system derived from the craft of his predecessors, Theebaw Min also hit on the notion of lotteries for the replenishment of his treasury. The system worked very well for a time,

and brought in great quantities of money, but latterly the loose coin of the populace has all been netted, and the lottery source of revenue is pretty nearly worked out now. In 1879 and 1880 Mandalay was perfectly flooded with lottery-offices, each under the superintendence of a minister of high rank. Those who were able to show the king the most money were highest in the royal favour, and consequently the rivalry between these worthies ran very strong. All manner of dodges were tried to entice speculators away from all other offices to the minister's own. The Hpoung-woon, Myo-woon, the lord high admiral, and lord mayor's establishment was generally admitted to be the largest and best, and it was certainly he who first began to try and allure the people. He secured the old custom-house buildings for his office, and inclosed a wide expanse round about it, with a strong bamboo fence. Porous pots of deliciously cool drinking water, each pot supplied with a number of tin mugs, were arranged on stands all round the sides. The antiseptic letpet, the gigantic, but soothing, green cheroot and the good betel lay in great heaps on the tables everywhere, and vanished with extraordinary rapidity. A dozen or more punkahs were hung up and worked by coolies, so as to calm the brains and cool the heated faces of excited clients. Later on, when other woons and let-thohn-daw followed his lead, the energetic Hpoung-woon added bands of music, dancing girls, and even regular dramatic performances, kept up perpetually, to the other attractions of his place of business. Some managers strove to get the better of their neighbours by giving the people unlimited supplies of palm-toddy, in the hope that the heady liquor might induce them to risk their last coins. Others hit upon the device of returning one pice—about one farthing—on each ticket taken. Others again, desperate at the thought of being unable

to render a good account to their royal master, engaged gangs of bullies, who went about threatening people with violence or false accusations in the law-courts if any but their master were patronised, while the Zay-gyo-daw myo-woon, Oo Thah Oh, in virtue of his official position, sent his subordinates to the Chinese gambling-house keepers, and forced them to subscribe periodically for fifty tickets at a couple of rupees each, if they hoped to retain their gambling licenses. Fired by his example, the Yaw Shway-deik and Teing-dat Atwinwoons also made use of their court influence to draw subscribers. Brokers and traders of all nationalities who had business with the palace were put down for a couple of hundred tickets or so, on pain of losing their contracts. One of the woon-douks was advanced and heedless enough to select the Damma-yohn, a place of worship and prayer, for his lottery-office. All the old lines were upset. Drawings were held whenever the lists were filled up, no matter whether it was an oobohnay, or a more sacred feast, and, as a consequence, the minds of the people were kept in a state of perpetual unhealthy excitement.

Neither buyers nor sellers were to be seen in the bazaar. Cultivators sold off their farming stock and implements, and launched all their money into the state lotteries. Fathers sold their daughters, and husbands their wives, to have a final try for fortune, until the lottery managers issued a notice that they would give no more tickets in exchange for women. To fill up the totals faster, and draw in every available coin, twenty, or even more, people were allowed to club together to buy a single ticket. Business was entirely suspended, and all the people hovered about the lottery-offices, longing for the drawing, while cleaned-out speculators prowled about day and night, watching for an opportunity to thief and



rob. How it was that the plundered people did not rise against the government, or at least against the lottery managers, is a mystery, but they did not. The suburbs of Mandalay were filled for a time with ruined gamblers, until the soldiery were employed to drive them farther afield, when many made their way to the frontier, and recouped themselves by raids on British Burma villages. Eventually money failed, or the people were disillusioned, and the lottery offices, though several are still open, drive but a very slight trade. Then Theebaw Min had to resort to other measures to meet his expenditure, and since July, 1881, has been disposing of monopolies right and left. Having finished the export monopolies, he is commencing with those on imports. The British trade with Upper Burma is being steadily ruined, but the English government will do nothing, notwithstanding the sufficiently known fact that all Burmans whose opinion is worth having, long for the annexation of the whole of Burma Proper to the British flag.

Since the above was written, the monopolies have been abolished, in deference to a remonstrance sent by the Governor-General of India. The abrogation must have cost the king very little concern, for he has received all the money from the unlucky speculators, and it is they alone who suffer. But the people may be expected to derive some little benefit from the renewed freedom of trade.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### LAND TENURE.

IN India the Rajah has always been considered the chief proprietor of the soil and the lord paramount over all those who own it or dwell upon it. In Burma precisely the reverse of this system obtains. The king is indeed considered entitled to a share of the produce, and, as a matter of fact, in Burma Proper gets pretty nearly all of it; but the origin of the land tenure rests on an entirely different foundation. The Burmans go back to the first peopling of the earth and the appointment of the saintly Payah Aloung to be ruler over them. Mahah Thamada came after the lands had been pretty generally taken up by the people, and therefore the cultivators of the original thalay san had no intention of appointing him supreme landlord, when they chose him to be the source of the Law and of the administration of justice. He acquired a share of the produce of the country only by the free gift of the people, who, to provide revenues for him, of their own accord surrendered a tenth part of all their crops that he might be free to devote himself entirely to the management of the public affairs and the execution of the laws. This right to a tithe of the produce of the soil, and no more, is explicitly laid down in the Indian Buddhist code, the Dhamma-that, or laws of

Manoo. This ancient book, which, by the way, is entirely distinct from the Indian *Institutes of Manoo*, enunciates as follows in the sixth chapter: "The king, who is our ruler, must abide by the ten kingly laws. All land which is unclaimed shall be his, but he shall have no right to take all. Such lands as are cultivated by man, or have been previously reclaimed, shall remain to the cultivator and his heirs. But he shall have a tenth of the produce of all rice-lands, orchards, and gardens; and all excise and ferry duties, as well as canals and public works, shall belong to him. Through a succession of worlds the first king, the great Mahah Thamada, has established one-tenth to be his portion for ever, and let this be regarded as an everlasting precedent."

According to the Dhamma—that there are seven methods by which landed property may be acquired. These are as follows:—1. By gift from the king. This is made only to soldiers and officials. 2. By inheritance. 3. By purchase. 4. By allotment from civil officers. 5. By personal reclaiming from the jungle. 6. By gift. 7. By unchallenged occupation for a period of ten years.

The first two titles are called perfect. The remainder are open to question, and may be disputed by any one who can show a prior claim. In actual fact, however, it may be said, that the man who reclaims for himself a piece of land out of the jungle, becomes by his industry proprietor of the clearing, without reference to local authorities, village elders, or any one at all, and has, thereafter, an inalienable right to his tenure, with no dues to pay whatever, except the sum the *taik-thoo-gyee* may see fit to assess him at. That worthy's valuation, however, always displays an enthusiastic belief in the fertility of the soil. The landed proprietor can dispose of it by gift, or he may sell it; otherwise it descends to his heirs

and assigns in the order of succession; the whole right and title is essentially vested in the owner and the heirs of his body. The tenure is, therefore, by what lawyers call fee-simple, udal, or allodial right. The estate left by the original occupier is seldom broken up. The heirs till parts of it, or gather the whole crop in successive years; so that the land does not require to be split up into infinitesimal parts. This practice is rendered all the easier by the thinness of the population. It is open to any one at any time to carve for himself out of the forest a holding of his own, and thus there is no temptation to break up the original family acres. It is singular that under a rule so completely despotic as that of Burma, where every man is the king's slave, and cannot cross the borders without his permission, the right of land tenure should always have been so fixed and certain. The fondness with which the people cling to their ancestral lands has something of almost religious fervour in its tenacity. As long as a family remains in the neighbourhood of their inheritance nothing will persuade them to give up their connection with it. In Upper Burma, to the present day, land is never sold as the term would be understood in Europe. The transaction, which goes by the name of a sale, is, in reality, a kind of mortgaging, or, more exactly, pawning, if such a term can be used with regard to land.

The estate passes from one occupant to another for a certain sum of money, and it is clearly understood that if at any time the original owner is in a position to reclaim his property he may do so whether the purchaser likes it or not. Farther than this even, the buyer cannot sell the land to a third party without first obtaining the consent of its former owner. Notwithstanding this feeling, however, it is seldom that a property can be found which has remained for any considerable length of time in the same

family. This is owing to the constant rebellions and wars between Peguans and Burmese and Shans, which have torn the country for the last five hundred years. All those who were not killed, were driven away from their former homes by ruthless invaders or were drafted off to fight for the king. In the short intervals of peace rival governors, in desperation for means to raise the revenues expected from their provinces, would tempt people away from their former homes by the offer of rewards or a reduction of body service. Thus in some cases the proprietors were killed out, in others they left for districts so remote that it was impossible to retain a hold on the ancestral property, however great their attachment to it. As an illustration of the sanctity attaching to ownership of land, the law concerning church lands may be quoted from Buddhaghosha's Parables: "Whoso shall take for himself or for another, woot-myay, consecrated or glebe-land, shall become a mite, or a white ant upon that sacred ground for the whole of 100,000 cycles."

The eighteenth of the original eighteen laws given by Manoo to the king, refers to the partition of property, and an elaboration of this points out sixteen descriptions of children who cannot claim a portion of their parents' property. The distinctions are more minute than is at all necessary or indeed comprehensible. They include all children born out of wedlock, among whom are reckoned such as are born before the parents have been married ten months; all children that are purchased, or adopted by any other ceremony than that of *abadeeta* or *keektima*; and such as "from respect or affection style their guardians father or mother." The settlement of boundary marks was one of the earliest duties of the first ruler. The thalay rice became constantly scarcer and scarcer, and it was determined that

it would be well to give every person his share and mark it off distinctly. The appointment of persons to execute this duty was the first occasion on which executive officials were found necessary. Manoo enumerated twenty-five objects suitable for legal landmarks. These included, all natural objects such as lakes, rivers, ridges and hills, remarkable large trees and clumps of bamboos; artificial boundaries of an equally permanent character, such as pagodas, shrines for demon-worship, zayats, or rest-houses, stone pillars and sacred posts, wells and cairns; finally such singular distinguishing marks as heads of cattle, chaff, ashes, charcoal, sand, broken earthenware vessels and men's bones. "Beating the bounds," one would think, must have been very necessary with the younger members of the household in the case of such perishable boundary lines as could be constituted by chaff, or even sand. In Upper Burma the cultivating population is so sparse that no difficulty is found in the matter of boundaries. In Lower Burmah farms are as distinctly marked off as land-surveyors' chains can effect the operation in pointing out the little raised ridges which separate the plots of paddy land from one another. Nevertheless they are hardly such as the south of England farmers would approve.

These allodial tenures are the only ones which exist in British Burma. In independent territory there are two other kinds of holding, which are not, however, very numerous or extensive. The first of these are called thoo-gyee-sah fields, and consist of certain tracts of land near the town or village set apart for the maintenance of the headman. As that official is anything but a permanency, the tenant for the time being very seldom cultivates them himself, but lets them out to farmers, who are required not only to pay him his rent, but as a rule must also supply

the revenue demanded from the owner by the State. There is therefore no very enthusiastic bidding for his lands, but he always gets a tenant somehow or other. It would be a bad day for the village if no one came forward. Every man in the place would be called upon to work for a certain period on the Thoo-gyee's paddy-fields.

The third class of arable estates consists of the lands known as *bhanda*, treasury, or royal fields. These are the private property of the king, and are cultivated ordinarily by the outcast lamaing, crown predial slaves. Sometimes, however, the whole of the farmers in the neighbourhood are summoned by roster to do their one, or three, or five days' work, for which they receive no payment; on the contrary, if they try to escape they are tied up and receive a dozen or two according to the humanity of the district governor. Near the capital, where oppression never is so gross as in the outlying provinces, the cultivators of the *let-daw-gyee* are frequently freed from all taxation but the payment of the family tax, and some even, as in the neighbourhood of *Oung-bin-lay*, whose revenues are assigned by the king to the great "Arakan" pagoda, are let off even the *ngway-daw*. But these *corvées* are very irksome, for the payment of a little money will always ensure the omission of a name from the *taik-thoo-gyee's* list, and the work falls all the harder on the luckless remainder. The whole of the produce of the *bhanda* lands belongs of course to the king, unless where he has otherwise assigned it. What with revenue paid in kind and the crops of the *let-daw-gyee*, the late king had granaries as vast as those which Joseph built for the king of Egypt. *Mindohn Min* drew from them to pay his soldiery, varying the monotony from time to time with pieces of rotten Manchester grey shirting. Offerings to the Sacred Order, of whom he daily fed several thousands,

also served to keep the storehouses within reasonable bounds. Theebaw Min turns his grain into money with all possible expedition, and the money vanishes with equal rapidity.

The only analogy to the crown lands in British territory is found in the reservation of forests by the government for the preservation of teak and other valuable trees such as the thit-ka (*Cedrela toona*), thit-kadoh (*Pentace Burmanica*), and padouk (*Pterocarpus Indicus*), which are absolutely reserved, that is to say, no tree may be felled which has not been girdled by government forest officers, even by those who have bought the right to remove the timber. It is expressly stated that the lessee is in no case allowed to girdle trees on his own account, and the rules are in other respects of the most stringent and Oriental description. No toun-g-ya, or hill-gardens may be made in the demarcated tracts. A selection of rivers and streams is made which must be kept free from all artificial obstructions, whether for fisheries, irrigation, or other purposes. Unauthorised felling, cutting, marking, killing, or injuring trees of all kinds, shrubs or bamboos, the collection of wood oil, resin, and even leaves, and any interference with the soil, or its produce without permission, is made penal. Even the use of existing roads and bridle-paths may, if the forest officer sees fit, be prohibited. At present, out of a total area of about 28,000 square miles of teak-producing forests, some 1,300 square miles are thus reserved, but it is intended very shortly greatly to extend the State property. The Burman, who knows nothing whatever of game laws or edicts against trespassers, is inclined to look upon this stringent reservation of land which the ancient code declares free for all, as something far more despotic than the enforced labour and extortionate demands of national rule. Doubtless



time will prove to him that it is a wise precaution to guard from destruction a slow-growing tree like the teak, and when the wandering hunter gets to understand that forest fires are a calamity and not simply an easy method of making a clearing, the State forests will come to be something less like pheasant covers than they now are.

Otherwise, waste lands, as in Upper Burma, are by the law of the Dhamma—that open to all-comers. Any one can select for himself a tract of such land at his pleasure, and may clear and cultivate in any way he chooses, paying his tax upon it when the time for the annual assessment of land revenue comes round. In many cases, however, he is allowed to hold his land free from taxes for such a period as may be necessary to bring it into a thorough state of cultivation. In such a case as this he has to apply to the Thoo-gyee—the old hereditary officers being retained throughout British Burma—of his circle, if the land does not exceed five acres in extent. If it is above that area, application has to be made to the English assistant-commissioner, or to the Deputy-commissioner in charge of the district, if the average of the new claim exceeds fifty. The land is then surveyed and a grant is drawn up specifying the term of years during which he shall be free from imposts. This varies according to the kind of jungle which is to be cleared away, and the kind of crops intended to be grown. The exemption is in no case for less than a year. If rice is to be grown, seven years is the longest term of rent-free tenure, but for orchard cultivation it extends to twelve years. In a few cases, where the nature of the ground necessitates, in addition to clearing away the forest growth, the digging of channels for irrigation, and the erection of dams, extension even of this long period is granted. As in France, Norway, Japan, and Switzerland, the farms are all very small, in some cases almost absurdly

so. Along the frontier the holdings average only about five acres, in the Rangoon district from sixteen to twenty acres is the ordinary size, but here and there are a few considerably larger. It would, however, be a great mistake to endeavour to introduce larger tenancies. It is entirely against the genius of the people, and the appearance of foreign capitalists could not fail to be otherwise than disastrous. The present mode of cultivation is slovenly enough, and larger farms would most certainly not tend to remedy the defect, which is due in great part to the superabundance of available arable land lying waste. Burma is progressing fast enough as it is. The abundance of rich land, the facility with which rights over it can be acquired, the great demand for rice, and the ever-increasing counter demand for European goods, the fixed, though heavy taxation, the cessation of all irregular and unexpected collections, the absolute personal security enjoyed by all under the English administration ; all these benefits have resulted in the trebling of the population of British Burma during the twenty-six years since the annexation of Pegu ; in the more than trebling of the trade—the value of the seaborne merchandise alone having doubled and reached twelve and a half millions sterling during the last ten years—and in the wonderful increase in revenue, which makes Burma the most valuable of all the provinces under the Indian government.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MANDALAY AND RANGOON.

AMERICANS talk, and with good reason, of the magic growth of their cities. But for mere mushroom growth, Mandalay will compare even with Chicago itself, and if we are to judge of the progress of a commercial place by the fair criterion of business results, Rangoon may hold up its head in confident rivalry with any of the typical American cities. Twenty years ago the site of Mandalay was swampy paddy land and rank jungle. Now an area of five square miles is covered with houses, many of them squalid enough certainly, and with large patches of unused land round about them, but none the less contained within the city limits. Rangoon came into British hands in 1852, and at that time possessed no commerce worthy of the name, indeed it was only known as the place for pilgrims to the Shway Dagohn pagoda to stay at, and the residence of the Regent of Pegu, as being the guard station on the most accessible mouth of the Irrawaddy. Ten years later, ships entered or cleared from the port, having a tonnage of 295,000 tons, and the imports were worth 1,200,000*l.*, the exports 1,400,000*l.*, and since that date—about the same period when Mandalay was founded—the tonnage has increased to 1,000,000, the value of the imports to

5,000,000*l.* sterling, and the exports to 4,000,000*l.* In a quarter of a century the commerce of British Burma has risen to nearly 20,000,000*l.* sterling. The population has quadrupled; public works are carried on; education is widely disseminated; the administration is carefully managed by British officials; a railway, 163 miles long, has been made; there are 1,300 miles of telegraph lines; stately law courts and other public buildings have sprung up, and so far from the work being a tax on the Indian Imperial Treasury, British Burma has been, after its first few years, more than self-supporting. For a considerable time it has contributed to the Imperial treasury a clear surplus of a million sterling. The mere figures are in themselves surprising, but they cannot be truly appreciated unless they are read along side the obvious, undeniable, and acknowledged prosperity and contentment of the native population. When Upper Burma is annexed, as every Burman believes it will be annexed, and every true Burman hopes, even more astonishing results may be expected, and the Ashay-pyee will prove the brightest jewel in the British crown.

In contrast with this, Mandalay has nothing to show but its size and its forced growth. So long as the king is a man who, like Theebaw Min, has never travelled twenty miles at a stretch in all his life, it cannot be otherwise. Now he has ascended the throne, he cannot leave the capital, and scarce dares even leave the palace. The perpetual incense of flattery naturally makes him

"Take the rustic murmur of the bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round the world."

Some of the ministers have visited Europe, and could reform the country, if they dared, but it is ill persuading the tiger to give up flesh-eating. They find it difficult enough to keep their heads safe, even when they do

nothing, where there are so many lurking about for a chance to oust them. The fall of Burman rule is already over due. Two ancient prophecies have been fulfilled; a hat-wearing nation has settled in the land, and ships have gone up the Irrawaddy, without rowers and without sails, and the old legend tells that these signify the doom of the princes. When the English Government ceases to mistake moral clap-trap for humanity, and nursery tracts for sound principles, we may hope to see all Burma cultivated and happy.

The mushroom growth of Mandalay is not to be mistaken for a sign of either prosperity or an advantageous situation. The astrologers and the king settled the new site between them, and when this was arranged a royal order came out bidding all remove themselves from Amarapura to Mandalay on pain of death in case of refusal. The transference of a bamboo hut is certainly no very great undertaking, and occupies less than a week in the pulling down and setting up. But the hardship was none the less where the people had gardens, or fruit-trees growing in their yards. The Chinese alone remained firm. Their houses were of the usual substantial, heavy, Celestial architecture, and, moreover they had built for themselves an elaborate joss-house, in splendour quite equal to the best in Rangoon. Consequently, they flatly refused to migrate the two or three miles distance to the new capital. The astrologers were as usual for using force, but Mindohn Min had more sense. The Chinamen were almost all British subjects, and moreover their dealings contributed substantially to the revenue. Their village therefore remained, and has served to drag out a long suburb beyond the Arrakan Pagoda as a kind of connecting link. Numbers of later arrivals, however, settled in the royal City of Gems, and the wealthier merchants all eventually moved their head-quarters thither,

so that his Majesty triumphed in the end. The best houses in Mandalay, the only brick ones, in fact, are all in the possession of the Chinese and Mogul merchants. Burmans have neither the right nor the money to build anything but wooden erections. These latter have, however, the compensating advantage that they stand all but the most violent earthquakes, while the brick houses, even when they are strengthened by an elaborate wooden framework, usually collapse when there is anything like a heavy shock.

But the great majority of the houses are simple wattled huts, with large open spaces in their rear which serve to keep the town airy and well-ventilated. According to Burman custom each house has its little shop with the entire stock in trade displayed to the view of the passer by. As in all Eastern towns, those who occupy themselves with a regular handicraft all flock together. Thus the umbrella-makers and sellers of saddlery live to the south of the Palace, vendors of bamboo-work and lacquered boxes to the west, while the potters and miscellaneous goods shops are mostly along the street that leads to Payah Gyee.

There is no attempt at metalling any of the roads, except the broad thoroughfare which leads up from the steamer ghaut, past the ministers' "villas," up to the outskirts of the town, for Mandalay lies two miles away from the river-bank, the idea being that at Amarapura the noise of the foreigners' steamers disturbed the royal repose. The big stones which represent the metalling on this one road are rather a trouble than otherwise, except to the vultures and egrets in the wet weather, when all around is a sea of mud, and the boulders form an eligible coign of vantage. Elsewhere the streets are cut into huge ruts, and the bullock-carts go along in the hot weather in a

pyramid of dust, and in the rains a ploughed field would be smooth going in comparison. But the gaily-painted "carriages," which always suggest a dog-kennel on wheels to a European, are strongly-built, and the fair dames inside are used to the jolting. It is only when the king or one of the queens goes forth that any attempt at road-mending is carried on. Then an amehn-daw is issued, Shin-buyin Twet daw moo mee, the Golden Majesty, will make a royal progress, and all along the route the house-reeves see that the rough places are made smooth, and the crooked places straight. Thus the main thoroughfares are kept in a state of fair repair. In other respects, however, Mandalay is vastly superior to all Indian towns. In all the city there is not a drain, but it is equally certain that neither is there a smell. There are no such slums as constantly offend every sense a man has got in the Black Town of Madras or the native quarters of Calcutta. This cleanliness is due to the exertions of the great multitudes of swine and dogs. The pigs form most efficient scavengers during the day-time and wander all about in the most independent and ownerless fashion, charitable people in search of merit setting out daily meals for them, while all in common throw out their scraps and leavings in the confidence justified by experience that nothing will be left to decay. The great majority of the dogs, equally with the porkers, belong to nobody in particular, and make themselves comfortable under any house they come to, sleeping nearly all day and howling and fighting all night. These animals are all strenuous adherents of the Old Burman party, and cherish a most fanatic hatred for Europeans. The old boar will run between the legs of the white man or of his pony, in a simulated state of alarm at the faded ghost-like face, while the pariah dogs let all the town know the progress

of a white man by their fierce barking and snapping of teeth a yard or so off his calves. The dogs of one street pass him on to the next, so that it is impossible for a wandering Briton to go about the town unobserved. It will not soon be forgotten how the English Assistant Resident had to run for his life from the Mandalay bazaar. He had killed a snarling brute with a quick backward swing of his stick, and the pious life-regarding populace came out upon him armed with billets of firewood and formidable dabs. He managed to keep away from them, but he had a half mile race of it, and the Residency gates were smashed in by the mob. Then the guard dispersed the people. Next day, an old lady, who claimed to be the owner of the dog, visited the big Englishman and told him she forgave him. He was barely polite.

Burmans have no trouble with the pigs and dogs. They find their own countrymen much more awkward to meet. There is constantly some prince or min-gyee passing along the streets, and then the road must be immediately cleared, and every one must get down humbly on his knees till the great man passes. Any delay in clearing the path, or an imagined want of reverence in the shekhohing, meets with very summary punishment. Before every dignitary rush along a posse of half-naked lictors, yelling out to the people to bow down, and hitting round about them with their fasces and dabs. These masterful ruffians particularly love to insult Englishmen. During the late king's reign an edict was published exempting Englishmen from the necessity of getting down on their knees in the mud and dust, but ordaining that they should lift their hats. The letya tounge dearly love to launch torrents of abuse at their victim, and make him dismount from his pony and remove his hat when the prince is half a block distant. In the spring of 1880 an



English mercantile man was actually bullied into going down on his knees. But, as a rule, where they can, foreigners turn down a by-street, or into one of the waste plots of ground. This method of avoiding the annoyance is not open to a Burman. If he should try to avoid paying due obeisance he would be denounced as a disaffected man and thrown into gaol.

But there are plenty of other obstructions to be met with in the streets of the royal city. Each householder is considered, or considers himself, perfectly at liberty to do what he pleases with the section of the road in front of his house. Accordingly, when the spirit moves him, he calmly blocks the thoroughfare by erecting a temporary theatre for the performance of a *pwè*. The construction of such a *mandut* does not take very long. A framework of bamboo is run up and covered in on the roof, and one side with bamboo matting, and there you are; the stage is all ready, and the spectators deposit themselves where they can find room. After the three or four days' performance is over, the stage is pulled down, and the thoroughfare is clear again. During the season a dozen or more of these plays are going on in Mandalay on the same night, and the entire population turns out to see them, thus effectually blocking as many streets as there are performances. This might be awkward for the ordinary wayfarer were it not that he would probably infinitely prefer staying to see the drama to continuing his journey. Great men are not so complaisant. Two of the massacred princes, the Mekkhaya and the Thohnzay, seemed to take a special delight, when they were belated on some roistering expedition, in breaking up such plebeian gatherings. They would come sweeping down the street with all their retinue, and the spectators, deafened by the music and engrossed with the action on the stage, would get

their first hint of the torrent coming in the vigorous blows dealt all round about them by the howling lictors. Everything would be disorder and alarm for a time, men and women down in the ditch, the stage thrown over, and the spectators scattered far and wide. Then, ten minutes later, they would all come back again; there would be a few remarks concerning his Royal Highness—"very often out at unexpected times, and always making his appearance so suddenly," &c., &c.; the bamboo erection would be propped up again, and the actors continue with the scene as if nothing whatever had happened, though the clown, no doubt, makes as much fun out of the incident as he dares.

Going about at night in Mandalay is not much practised. Theatre-goers usually return home with the rising sun. There are no lamps in the streets, and so every one who has business after dark is required to go about carrying a lantern or beating a drum or gong. If any one ventures abroad without thus marking his movements, he is promptly arrested by the night watch, and once you are arrested in Mandalay it costs a good deal of money to get free again, no matter how good an account you may be able to give of yourself. To save themselves the trouble of being constantly on the look-out as well as to trip up any one who tries to run away, the guardians of the peace have an unpleasant custom of tying ropes across the road an inch or two above the ground, and these are quite as effectual man-traps as have ever been invented.

When a fire occurs in the Golden City, it is usually a very big one and burns until it can find no more fuel. There are two reasons for this. The most obvious is, of course, that wood huts, with an inflammable roof like the dance leaf, catch fire with the slightest spark and there is

nothing in the shape of a fire-engine, even in the palace. The second is very characteristic of a despotism and vastly more disastrous. Immemorial custom has served to connect a conflagration with a revolution. When an attempt is to be made to seize the throne, the attention of the people and the soldiery is always diverted by incendiary fires. Therefore when a house takes fire the people found nearest to it by the night watchmen are always arrested and made responsible for the catastrophe. As a natural consequence, the moment flames burst out, not only the inmates of the house, but all the neighbours take to their heels and run, without incommoding themselves with even the smallest portion of their property. A few of the royal troops come down after a time and unroof a house here and there, and perhaps even pull down some altogether, but their efforts as amateur firemen are usually of the most feeble and futile description, and the flames go on till there is nothing more to burn. Next day the unhappy burnt-out people come back and make for themselves little hovels of bamboo matting among the charred posts till something better can be run up again. The neighbouring quarters contribute something to support them, or they get their meals at the monasteries, and in a few months all traces of the fire have disappeared, the same rickety huts, with the old scanty store of wares rise up again and the scorched leaves fall off the trees and are replaced by fresh green foliage.

The population of Mandalay is a very queer one. Of the Burmans the great majority are soldiers or hangers on of the various great men about the court. The residuum is composed of a few honest tradesmen and a vast quantity of bad characters, broken agriculturists, gamblers, thieves from Lower Burma, and outlaws from all parts. The number of yellow-robed yahans is extraordinary. The

late king used to give alms to 5,000 of them daily, the jars of rice being arranged in long rows on a platform erected specially for the purpose, with mountains of bananas, and trays heaped up with nga-pee, curries, and condiments of all kinds. Theebaw Min is not so eager for merit, and actually went the length of driving a couple of thousand of the holy men out of the capital. Still even he gives them periodical feasts, and there must be quite 10,000 of the religious in the Golden City and its immediate neighbourhood. Besides these there are numerous other nationalities; the Chinaman, smooth-shaven and prosperous as always, whether gaunt and big-boned from Yunnan and Szechuen, or sleek and sturdy from Rangoon and the Straits, defying the most grinding official to rob him of his profits, and drinking his tea and smoking his opium-pipe with supreme composure and good-humour; the bearded Mogul with solemn face and Jewish tricks of trade: the Paloung come down from the north with his bamboo rafts laden with pickled tea; the stalwart Shan with baggy blue trousers and tattoo marks down to his ankles, journeying in a long caravan with sword-blades and ironwork and a cavalcade of mountain ponies; the heavy, easy-going Karenn; the lithe, treacherous Kachin, bringing tribute perhaps from his chief, and spying out on his way down villages easy to raid in a night attack; all these, and a host of others, may be seen any day in the royal City of Gems. There are not a few white men too, even nowadays, when evil times have fallen upon them, and there are not the pickings that were to be had when Mindohn Min was king. But many of them are there sorely against their inclination. Mandalay has become an asylum for insolvent debtors, runaway soldiers and sailors, and unlucky adventurers from British territory, just as Rangoon used to be for India in the old Burman days. There are numbers of

French and Italians in government service, as military instructors and superintendents of the various factories; officers who have been cashiered, or disowned by their families, or are in other ways under a cloud. One Count there is, who constitutes the scientific branch of the service in himself, manufactures and sells fruit syrups to the captains of steamers, preserves a pocket-handkerchief with a coronet in the corner, and carries his lands in his fingernails. The old king was shamefully cheated by a variety of speculators, not a few of them Englishmen. Perhaps it was his own fault. He had a perfect monomania for making cannon and thought that every white man must have some notion of how they were to be manufactured. Consequently, whenever some fresh wanderer came to the royal city and requested employment, he was brought before the king, and some such dialogue as the following ensued: "What is your name?" "John Smith." "What can you do?" "May it please your Majesty, I am a sea-cock." "Can you make a cannon?" Whereupon John Smith, if he was a wise man, would profess his ability to make the attempt at any rate. A lump of metal would be made over to him and he would chisel and hammer away at it and draw his monthly pay as regularly as he could get it. When results were demanded he would either run away, or boldly ask for a grant of money to enable him to go to Europe to get the requisite tools. Neither tools nor man were ever seen. Such lack of moral principle was believed by the king to arise from the want of a Buddhist training, and he continued to be imposed upon to the very end. Theebaw Min still retains some foreigners in his service, but they find it exceedingly hard to get their pay.

Thus Mandalay presents a series of violent contrasts; jewel-studded temples and gilded monasteries, standing

side by side with wattled hovels, penetrated by every wind that blows; the haughty prince preceded by the respited murderer, his lictor; the busy Chinaman next door to the gambling scum of the low country; the astrologer, learned in his mantras, overpersuaded by the glib talk of the western adventurer; and over all hanging the fear of prison with its nameless horrors, and the knife of the assassin.

In the beginning of the century, Rangoon was in much the same condition, except that it was very much smaller, and far more miserable and desolate. Now it has broad, smooth roads, beautifully laid out public gardens, abundant street lamps, spacious mercantile offices, mills, schools, gaols, hospitals, clubs, and halls. The population forms an even more motley assemblage than is to be found in Mandalay. There are Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Siamese, Natives of India of all parts, Bengalis, Madrassis, Moguls, Parsis, Persians, Suratis, together with Armenians, Jews, English, French, Germans, Italians, Greeks, and all the European nationalities, mixed up with the native races, Burmese, Talaings, Shans, Karenns, but they are all kept in order by the strong arm of the law, which is the same for the rich man and the poor. May it not be long ere the same benefits are extended to Mandalay.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### ERAS, COMPUTATION OF TIME, WEIGHT, ETC.

BURMESE chronology recognises five different eras, only the last of which however is ever practically used. These are:—

1. The Kawza era, which was abolished by Shin Gautama's grandfather. It had extended over 8,650 years, and came to an end in the year 691 before the Christian era.

2. Bhodaw Eensahna, the Buddha's grandfather, then established an era of his own. It lasted only 148 years, or till B.C. 543, in which year Shin Gautama died.

3. The Religious era. Fixed by Ayatathat, King of Magadha in India, dating from the death of the most excellent payah, and current till A.D. 82.

4. King Thamohndayit's era, established by that monarch in A.D. 82 at Prome, and lasting till A.D. 639, or for a period of 562 years.

5. The current era, established by the Yahan Pohppasaw, when he usurped the throne of Pagahn in 639 A.D. The year 1244 of this era begins in April, 1882.

The changing of the eras was in most cases to avoid calamities, threatened for certain years by old prophecies,

and in a few instances of eras which gained no permanent place, merely for the sake of gratifying royal vanity.

The ordinary year consists of twelve lunar months, of twenty-nine and thirty days alternately. Every third year a thirteenth month is intercalated between the fourth and fifth. The date on which the year begins in the month of April is determined by the calculations of the royal astrologers in Mandalay, and published throughout the country by the pohn-gyees and district officials.

The months with their corresponding English equivalents, are as follows:—

Tagoo	about	April.
Kasohn	"	May.
Nayohn	"	June.
Wahsoh	"	July.

(A second, a Dooteeya Wasoh, intercalated every third year, last in 1242 B.E. 1880.)

Wahgoung	about	August.
Tawthalin	"	September.
Thadingyoot	"	October.
Ta'soungmohn	"	November.
Na'daw	"	December.
Pyathoh	"	January.
Tabohdwè	"	February.
Taboung	"	March.

The days are not counted right through the month as in the European system, but as with a watch, or as with the "day" itself, the month is divided into two parts: the la-san, or waxing moon which lasts from the first to the la-byee, the full moon; and from the following day, the 16th, to the end of the month (the la-gwè) comes the waning, la-soht or la-byee-gyaw.



Besides this, there is a division corresponding to that into weeks in the European system. The seven days are named after the eight planets, or astrological houses. Sunday is Taninganoay (the day of the Nay Yawee, or Sun); Monday, Taninla (from La, or Sanda, the Moon); Tuesday, Inga (from Inga, Mars); Wednesday, from one in the morning till noon, Bohddahoo (from Bohddah, Mercury); the rest of Wednesday, from midday till midnight, Yahoo (from the dark planet of the same name, a monstrous, foul nat, who strives to swallow the sun and moon, and causes partial eclipses by licking and pawing them; once every three years he attacks the sun, and once in six months the moon); Thursday, Kyathabaday (from Prispatee, or Pyehpatee, Jupiter); Friday, Thouk-kya (from Thoukkya, Venus); Saturday, Sanay (from Thaurae, Saturn). The selection of the planets to denote the days of the week by races so different now, whatever they may originally have been, as the Chinese, Scandinavians, Greeks, and all the Mohammedan tribes, is singular.

For ordinary purposes the day and the night are divided into four periods of three hours each: from six to nine, which is called ta-chettee, the first watch, one blow; twelve o'clock, the next quarter, is announced by hni'-chettee, the second watch, two blows; three o'clock, thohn-chettee, the third watch, three blows; and six, lay-chettee, the fourth watch, four blows. These hours are sounded in Mandalay by alternate beating on a huge gong and drum placed in the clock-tower by the eastern gate; and at lay-chettee, sundown or sunrise, the palace gates are closed, or opened, as the case may be. Noon is styled mohn, and midnight tha'goung; and the word byan is added in the sense of the English p.m. Thus nayee byan thohn-chettee would be three p.m.

In English territory of course the English system has been adopted, but it has not yet made any way in Burma proper. For astronomical purposes, such as the casting of the horoscope and the calculations for fortunate days and the like, an exceedingly elaborate scale exists, but it is never made use of in ordinary life, though references to it in religious books are not uncommon. The unit is a *naya*. This is the period of time in which ten flashes of lightning may take place, or the time it takes to wink the eye ten times, or to throw out the arm as often.

4	Naya	are equivalent to one	Kanah, an "instant."
12	Kanah	" "	Kayah.
10	Kayah	" "	Pyan.
6	Pyan	" "	Beezanah.
15	Beezanah	" "	Pad.
4	Pad	" "	Nayee, an "hour."
60	Nayee	" "	Yet, a day and night.
15	Yet	" "	Bekkha, or side (of the moon), a half month.
2	Bekkha	" "	La, a month.
12	La	" "	Hnit, a year.

Besides the ordinary names given above for the twelve months, the soothsayers for the sake of the increased learning it seems to give them are accustomed to refer to the months by the names of the twelve signs of the zodiac, called *Yathee*.

Thus	Tagoo	is known as	Meht-tha, the ram.
"	Kasohn	" "	Pyeht-tha, the bull.
"	Nayohn	" "	Maydohn, the union of the procreating powers of the male and female.
"	Wahsoh	" "	Karakat, the crab.

Thus Wahgoung is known as Thehn, the lion.

"	Tawthalin	"	Kan, the virgin.
"	Thadingyoot	"	Too, the scales.
"	Ta'soungmohn	"	Pyeht-sah, the scorpion.
"	Na'daw	"	Noo, the bow.
"	Pyathoh	"	Makahya, the sea monster.
"	Tabohdwè	"	Kohn, the water-pot.
"	Taboung	"	Mehn, the fish.

There are reckoned to be three seasons, the cold, the hot, and the wet.

The cold season, soung-dwin, hayman, or haymanta ootoo, lasts from the first of the waning of Ta'soungmohn to the first of the waning of Taboung, from the end of November to the beginning of March.

The hot season, nway, gehunman, or gehmmanta ootoo, lasts from the first of the waning of Taboung to the first of the waning of Wahsoh, from the beginning of March to the beginning of July.

The wet season, moh, wathan, or wathanta ootoo, lasts from the first of the waning of Wahsoh to the first of the waning of Ta'soungmohn, from the beginning of July to the end of November.

This is a very hard and fast division, but it is fairly accurate. The cold weather is, however, only perceptible in the early morning. Fifty degrees is about the lowest known in Rangoon, but it is colder in other stations. Still you have to journey beyond Bhamaw in the north before you come to the region of duck frosts. There is no mistake about the rains. In Rangoon the annual average rainfall is a hundred inches, but in Maulmein, Akyab, and other towns, considerably over twice that amount is registered. In Rangoon, on November 3rd, 1879, between one o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon

eleven inches fell. Happily this sort of thing is not usual.

In Mandalay, time is calculated by means of a water-clock, which stands in the bo-hoh, the clock-tower by the eastern gate, where are also the gong and drum, on which the watches are sounded by one, two, three, or four alternate blows. The water-clock is a simple enough affair. It consists of nothing more than a large vessel filled with water, in which cups are placed, perforated, so that an hour—a Burmese nayee—elapses before they sink to the bottom. It is only at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes that the hours of the day and night are equal. At other times they vary, and the Brahmins make a great fuss over their complicated calculations. In July the days are longest with thirty-six hours, the night only lasting twenty-four, while these figures are exactly reversed in January. Any inaccuracy in Burmese computations arises from the loss of the fourth book of Baydin (the Indian Vedas), which was destroyed in the bonfire made by the religious of all fishing-nets, snares, weapons of war, and such writings as are denounced in the sacred books. It was by pecking at the ashes of this volume that the domestic fowls of Burma acquired that astronomical lore which induces them to crow all together at midnight (tha'goung kyet).

It is only, however, in the capital that the water-clock is found, and in the rest of Independent Burma and in all the smaller villages in British territory, time is only roughly indicated by a reference to the position of the sun or the moon, or to certain daily occurrences taking place at fixed times, as "in the morning when the sun was a span above the horizon"; or "when the sun was as high as a toddy-palm"; "before the sky was light"; "when the light gets strength" about half-past five; the earliest

cock-crowing time"; "when the monks go a begging," that is to say, six or seven in the morning, according to the custom of the local monastery; "monks' returning time," usually about eight, but varying, of course, with the charity of the neighbourhood; "breakfast time," usually eight o'clock; "dinner time," about five; "after midday"; "sky-closing time," about six p.m.; "brothers don't know each other time," that is, just after dark; "when the lamps are lighted"; "children's go-to-bed time," about eight o'clock; "lads go courting time," about the same same period; "when grown-up people lay their heads down," ten o'clock in the country, twelve with the kablahahs of the towns; "all the world quiet time"; tha' gounng gyaw, "the wee short hour ayont the twal"; when "the iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve," as Shakespeare has it; ah-yohn cheh-nee paw, "when the red star rises"; all these and a multitude of others are in common every day use, and from the simple habits of the people, and their own graphic force are quite sufficient to mark the desired time and ensure punctuality. Many can tell the time simply by looking at their own shadow. Burmans not being yet affected by this "age of machinery," as Carlyle calls it, are quite satisfied with equally simple methods of indicating duration of time. Athet ta-doung, "a breath's space" serves to denote a moment; "the chewing of a fid of betel," occupies ten minutes; "the time it would take to boil one pot of rice," twenty minutes, is well known to everybody where the cooking goes on in the front of the house. These being recognised, the chewing of two betel nuts, the boiling of three pots of rice, do not imply too great an effort of mental arithmetic. The simple rural Burmans understand as little of the English system of horology, as they do of the *nayas*, and *beezanaba*, and *pads* of the royal

astronomers—measures of time which nevertheless appear in all their horoscopes.

Measures of distance are described in equally picturesque language. Thus we have "a stone's throw," from fifty to sixty yards, bests on record with throwing the cricket ball being unknown; "a call," about a couple of hundred yards; "a musket's sound," half an English mile; "morning meal's distance," that is to say as far as a man could walk between sunrise and breakfast time, say six miles English; a "moo," the eighth of a teing, quarter of a mile; a "mat," twice as far; "nga moo," literally five mocs or half a teing, an English mile.

The book measures of length are, however, very elaborate. A san-chee, or hair's breadth is taken as the unit.

10 San-chee	=	one hnan, a grain of sessamum seed.
6 Hnan	=	one mû-yaw, a barley-corn.
4 Mu-yaw	=	one let-thit, a finger's breadth.
8 Let-thit	=	one meik, the width of the fist with the thumb extended.
3 Meik	=	one toung, a cubit (19½ inches).
4 Toung	=	one lan, a fathom.
7 Toung	=	one tah, a measuring rod.
20 Tah	=	one oht-thaba.
1000 Tah	=	one teing, one Burmese, nearly two English miles.
20 Oht-thaba	=	one kawtha.
4 Kawtha	=	one gawoot.
4 Gawoot	=	one yoozana.

A yoozana is reckoned to measure 6,400 tah, that is six teing and 400 tah. The teing, or post, is the standard in common use with the Burmese for the measurement of

long distances. It is also used as a generic term for any measure approaching it in length, such as a league, a kos, an English mile, and so on, as engaleik teing, an English mile.

Twelve fingers' breadths are reckoned equal to one htwa, a span. Tah implies measure in general, and is used as an auxiliary to the other measures of length, as tounge tah, a cubit.

The hill tribes have a peculiar way of speaking of a place as being "one hill," or "three hills" distant. The expression may be very vague, but it gives the wayfarer an idea of what is before him which could not be expressed in the simple statement that he had ten miles to go. The road might be all down hill, or all up, for all this would convey to his mind.

The measures of capacity start from the ear of corn. One ear, ta-hnan, ought to contain 200 grains.

200 A-say, or grains = one let-sohn, as much as can be placed on the ends of the fingers joined together.

2 Let-sohn = one let-soht, the quantity of grain which may be grasped in the fist.

3 Let-soht = one let-hpet, as much grain as can be heaped on the palm of the hand.

2 Let-hpet = one let-koht, the quantity which may be heaped on the surface of both hands joined together.

2 Let-koht = one kohn-sah, what is sufficient for the meal of one person.

5 Kohn-sah = one pyee, a small measure.

2 Pyee = one sa-yuet.

2 Sa-yuet = one seht, quarter of a basket.

2 Seht = one hkwè, half a basket.

- 2 Hkwè = one tin, a basket.  
 4 Tin = one toh.  
 20 Toh = one ta-pohn, or ta-soo, a heap, or two  
 cart-loads—hlè hni' see.

The pyee is also sub-divided into four salè. Practically, the only measures used are the tin, the seht, the pyee, and the salè. All depend upon the size of the tin, but as this varies not only in almost every district, but also in many parts of the same district, the results are somewhat embarrassing to merchants making purchases from the cultivators. The English have made an attempt to introduce a standard "basket," containing 2218·19 cubic inches, but without any very great success. Application for legal establishment of the standard would cause disturbance to trade and irritation of the old-fashioned people, but it is evident that it must come some day. If Burmans had the money-grubbing instincts of the natives of India it would have been done long ago, but as long as everybody gets enough to eat and there is overplus, after offerings to the monks and the pagoda, wherewith to get money for new clothes, the Burman farmer cares very little what entangled sums in arithmetic have to be worked out by the unlucky purchaser.

The standard of weight begins exceedingly low in the scale. Paramah noo-myoo are atoms of a subtle fluid, invisible to men, but visible to nat-dewahs and the highly advanced in religion.

- 36 Paramah noo-myoo = one a-noo-myoo, visible particles of dust, such as the motes dancing in the sunbeam.  
 36 A-noo-myoo = one ka-nyit-chay, a gross particle, such as the dust which falls from the style, when a scribe writes on a palm leaf.



7 Ka-nyit-chay = one than ohk-koung, a louse's head.

7 Than ohk-koung = one mohn-nyin say, a mustard seed.

3 Mohn-nyin say = one hnan say, a grain of sessamum.

4 Hnan say = one san say, a grain of rice.

4 San say = one hkyin yuay, a seed of the *Abrus precatorius*.

2 Hkyin yuay = one yuay gyee, a seed of the *Adenantha pavorina*.

4 Yuay gyee = one pè.

2 Pè = one moo.

2 Moo = one mat.

4 Mat = one kyat.

5 Kyat = one boh.

20 Boh = pyeht-tha, a viss, 3·652 lbs. avoirdupois.

4 Pyeht-tha = one toolah.

4000 Toolah = one tapohng, or tasoo.

The only weights in ordinary use are the moo, mat, nga-moo (or hkwè) half a kyat, and the kyat. The standard weights are usually formed with a figure of the sacred hantha on them, or sometimes with the animal representing the royal birthday.

Formerly the Burmese had no stamped coinage, and the silver and gold used, mixed in greater or less amount with alloy, which necessitated the calling in of an assayer for every transaction, was always dealt out by weight. Now, however, there are gold coins stamped with the lion and the peacock, silver and copper with the royal peacock, and lead with the hare. The lead coins are simply blobs of metal like a spherical bullet squeezed out of shape. I have examined thousands of them, but seen never a hare. Mandalay rupees, though the same size as those of the Indian Government, are not in favour in Rangoon. They

only run to fourteen annas, so that you lose two annas on each. The gold coins are practically not in circulation at all. Englishmen buy them as curiosities in the bazaar and get cheated if they do not carefully ring every one. The smaller ones, struck from the same die as the silver two-anna bit, are principally used by the king to fill silver cups presented to distinguished visitors.

Being derived from the measures of weight the coins have received the same names. The rupee is *kyat*, sometimes also called *ding-ga*, that is, a circular piece of metal, whether a coin or a medal, and the sub-multiples go by the names of the smaller weights: *pè* is one anna; *moo*, two annas; *mat*, four annas; *nga-moo* eight annas; *thohn-mat*, twelve annas; *kyat-moo-din*, fourteen annas, literally a rupee less two annas; one piece is *ti'-bya*.

The Burmans have no bankers. In Upper Burma there are exceedingly few who would have anything to lodge with such a personage. In Lower Burma superabundant coin is almost always dispersed in giving a *kyee-gyin pwè*, or in building a pagoda, a monastery, digging a tank, or some such work of merit. Whatever money there may remain over is turned into use or display in the shape of fat oxen, and silver and gold cups and jewellery. These are pleasant things to look at and easily convertible into money when necessary. Burmans detest hoarding. A miser is threatened with as terrible a hereafter as a parricide. The portion of both is in *awidzee*, the lowest hell.

All this sort of thing shows a very unbusiness-like, certainly a very uncommercial spirit, but it is at least open to argument that the Burman is philosophically right. He cares little for the troubles of the world and the manifold questions of the day which distract the more highly cultured nations. His eyes are fixed uninter-

ruptedly on the dark mysteries which surround our beginning, our end, and every moment of our life. The earth is only a camping-ground, in which it does not repay the trouble to establish one's self firmly and comfortably. The rich man carries his gold and silver, the poor his last handful of rice, to the pagoda, and deposits it there at usurer's interest for his future home beyond. Let the black coolie of India talk all day and dream all night of his filthy pice; let the greasy Chetty money-lender gloat over his bloated money-bags; let the English merchant delight in all the refined luxuries wealth can bring him: the Burman is content if he has enough to eat and remain a free man, happy if he accumulates sufficient to build a work of merit, or give a free festival to his less fortunate brethren. Who shall say he is not wise?

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE LANGUAGE.

THE Burmese language is monosyllabic, and is, therefore, like all the other monosyllabic languages, forced into the tonic system on account of the limited number of combinations of which the consonants admit. The multitude of meanings which a slight difference of accentuation gives to an otherwise identical sound is the greatest difficulty which a stranger has to contend with in studying the language, and never fails to land the beginner in a most embarrassing maze of complications. The modulations of the voice which European nations employ only to express astonishment, disbelief, interrogation, and alarm, become in Burmese and other Indo-Chinese tongues a means for distinguishing between words of different meaning; and this peculiarity offers particular difficulties to the phlegmatic, monotonous-voiced Englishman. It does not simplify matters that Burmese is, of all these languages, the softest and most pliable, and has therefore received the title of the Italian of the far east. The varying cadence of the sounds produces to the ear the semblance of a chant, and all the people seem to speak in a kind of rhythm, so that as long as a man has ideas, it is not a very difficult matter to compose *linga*. But this only renders it more puzzling

to the Occidental, and accounts for the fact that very few Englishmen learn Burmese, and still fewer speak it well. Of the mercantile community not one in fifty has any knowledge of Burmese at all; and the civil officers, who have to pass examinations before they get promotion, are but poor hands in conversation. The chief reason of this is, of course, that the European is accustomed to learn by the eye, while the Burman learns almost entirely by ear, and the language is correspondingly affected. The semi-civilised man has a gift for catching faint distinctions of sound; and a modulation hardly perceptible to the European is enough to give to the Burman an entirely new meaning to the word. Fortunately the grammar is of the easiest possible character, and there is an extensive written literature, so that recourse may be had to the system of learning by the eye; but this only produces book scholars, and without a knowledge of the pronunciation it is impossible to appreciate the smooth flow of the dramatic metres. Individual sentences, too, may be clear enough, and the immediate connection of subordinate ideas with the leading thought is a great help, but longer compositions can often only be understood by a careful collating of the whole meaning, when once reading aloud would make the whole idea perfectly evident to a Burman.

One of the principal features in the language is the arrangement of words in a sentence, which, as is the case also in Thibetan, is the exact reverse of the order followed in English. This is the more singular and significant to the philologist because the surrounding Shans, Talaings, and Karens observe practically the same sequence as in English. Another peculiarity is in the nouns, adjectives, and tenses of verbs, which are all formed by the addition of suffixes or affixes to the verbal root. Passive verbs are in very many cases transformed into the active form by the

aspiration of the initial consonant, and transitives from intransitives in the same way; as *kya-thee*, to fall; *bkya-thee*, to throw down, or cause to fall; *pyet-thee*, to be ruined; *hpyet-thee*, to bring to ruin; *loht-thee*, to be free; *hloht-thee*, to set free. The language is written from left to right, and there are no spaces between the words, and but very few *peik*, or stops, to mark separate sentences, except the *peik-gyee* which divides paragraphs, and consists of four short perpendicular lines arranged in couples. The written characters are, all but one or two, composed of circles, or segments of circles, having acquired that shape from the original Nagari, by the custom of writing with a pointed style on palm leaves. The alphabet is derived from the Magadhi or Pali (the latter word properly meaning a text and not a language), and was doubtless imported into Burma with the teachings of Buddhism. The monosyllabic character of the language has however considerably changed the sound of many of the letters. There are ten vowels and thirty-two consonants, every alternate vowel having the sound of that preceding it, but considerably longer and broader in tone. The consonants are divided into groups of gutturals, palatals, cerebrals, dentals, and labials, with five liquids, a sibilant pronounced *th*, and an aspirate. In each class there are five letters; the first the simple sound, the second its aspirate, the third the sound rough and hard, the fourth its aspirate, and the fifth the corresponding nasal. The letters of the alphabet have all names descriptive of their shapes, beginning with *ka-gyee*, and *ka-gway*, "great ka," and "curved ka." Some of the names are singular; "big-bellied ta," "elephant shackles hta," "bottom indented da," "steep pa," "hump-backed ba," "bridle za," and "supine ya." The vowel *a* is inherent in every consonant, and is pronounced in every case, except when it is "killed" by the "that" mark, when the consonant

itself is also killed, and the effect produced is a short, sharp, abrupt termination to the word, as if the letter were strangled in the attempt to pronounce it.

A peculiarity which Burmese shares with all the other cognate tongues is the use of help words in counting—"nouns generic" as they have been called. One cannot say in Burmese, as in English, "two dogs," "four spears," "three trees," and so forth. It is requisite to mention first the thing spoken of, second, the number or quantity of objects, and finally, the genus, or class to which they belong. Thus *kway hni'-goung*, dogs, two animals, or two dogs; *hlan lay-sin*, spears, four long, straight things; *ohn-bin thohn-bin*, cocoa-nut palms, three trees, and so forth. The cardinal is not placed in immediate juxtaposition with the noun, but has the guiding word in between. There are a vast number of these generic nouns, and they come quite naturally to a Burman. He speaks of boxes and pots as so many "round things"; books and letters as "writings"; mats, as "flat things"; horses and carts as "things to be ridden on"; coats and waist cloths as "things to be worn"; and so forth in infinite variety. Even the numeral auxiliaries applied to human beings vary. The Buddha, as well as superior beings and pagodas, is spoken of as *ta-zoo*; kings, members of the Sacred Order, and persons in power generally are referred to as *ta-ba*; respectable people to whom it is wished to be polite are numbered as *ta-oo* (so many "foreheads"); and in ordinary conversation, mankind generally are denominated *ta-youk*. Foreigners—regarded as aliens and indeed not entitled to rank as human beings at all, since they have never worn the yellow robe—receive but scant reverence from the tongues of the older people, and all Upper Burmans, the same auxiliary being applied to them as would be used in speaking of a buffalo, or a pig. Thus you would say *kalah hui'-goung*, foreigners, two

animals, or "two beastly foreigners." In Mandalay, however, nowadays, at least with respect to Englishmen, this is considered more graphic than civil. A hint of the same style of enumeration occurs in the English "twenty head of cattle," and perhaps in the military "five hundred sabres," or, "two thousand bayonets," where the weapon is more typical and perhaps of greater value than the man who wields it.

Chinese and Siamese perhaps exceed the Burman language in the number of almost identically sounding syllables, in which the slightest difference of intonation makes a change of sense, but most people are of opinion that it is quite rich enough. Thus pay in its simple form may mean (1) the palmyra palm, or leaf, whence pay-sah, a palm leaf book; (2) an anvil; (3) to have the edge, or point turned; (4) to lay the ears back, as a horse; (5) to be dull of sight, or blunted in feelings; (6) to be dirty; (7) an euphonic verbal affix.

Pay, with the heavy accent (denoting a lengthening of the sound) means to give, and pay-sah in this form, to give in marriage.

Hpay, with the heavy accent (practically the same sound to an Englishman's ears) means (1) to scab over; (2) to ward off evil; (3) to tack off shore with a boat in order to gain an offing; (4) to be broken down in bodily strength or ability.

Pè with the light accent (cutting the sound short) means (1) the stern of a boat; (2) to steer; (3) to be broken off, to crumble. Pè, with the heavy accent, means (1) a measure of weight equal to six seeds of the *Abrus precatorius*; (2) any leguminous plant, such as bears seed in a pod, of which there are many varieties including a pè-sah; (3) to put aside, reject; (4) madam, a familiar term applied by men to their intimate female friends; (5)



a square measure of ground; (6) one of the four states of punishment. The last three usually have *a-* prefixed to them.

Hpè, with the light accent, means (1) to break off, as a small piece from a larger; (2) to separate and take a different course.

Hpè, with the heavy accent, means (1) satin; (2) a playing card, hpè-sah hpè-chay meaning to have shifting luck; (3) to get out of the way; (4) to remove. Chay hpè, derived from this, means to be splay-footed.

Thus we have nearly thirty separate meanings for a syllable which in rapid speaking seems, to an unpractised ear, to have throughout the same sound. This is philologically interesting, but practically it spoils the temper.

Myin, means to see, high, and a horse; and to translate the sentence "I saw a high horse," and read the same aloud, is a good test, both of the knowledge of the arrangement of words, of the accent, and of the power of appreciating delicacies of pronunciation.

I do not remember ever coming across an Englishman who could properly appreciate the difference in sound between kyoung, a cat, and kyoung, a monastery. They always lose their temper when you try to impress it on them. Hundreds of other instances might be given, but they would only tire and perhaps frighten off those who do not know the language, and would certainly irritate those who have begun the study of it.

It is a common saying that you cannot pronounce Burmese properly till you take to betel chewing. I may be allowed to protest that this is said more because it looks smart than because it is true. It is, however, undeniable that the practice of chewing renders it very much more difficult to catch the sound of a word. The result appears in the grotesque names which have been given to

various places and things by old writers. Captain Hiram Cox persisted in calling the town-clerks mew-jerrys, which was neither correct nor dignified. Still the stately old king, Upa-Raza, had greater cause of complaint when he appeared in another book as "Upper Roger."

It is certain that in rapid talk, and among the lower classes, words do get softened down most remarkably. Nyong-oo, the great lacquer manufacturing town, dwindles away in the colloquial to Ngee-a-o, and the consequences are lamentably evident in the transliteration of its name in many English books. Similarly a youth named Thah Htoon Oung, will respond to the call of A-o-aw, but this hardly justifies the assertion that you do not need consonants in Burmese at all.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SELECTIONS FROM THE LITERATURE.

THE following is taken from the Mahah Yaza-win.

#### *The Queen Shin-saw-boo.*

In Ava there lived a very learned pohn-gyee called Bamèsodah, and a rich man in the capital gave him his son Damma-saydee to bring up and instruct. This youth was possessed of very wonderful powers, due to virtues which he had exercised in previous existences. By means of these powers he brought to life one day a fowl which had been roasted and placed on the platter before his teacher. From this circumstance, to the present day, the place where the fowl scratched and sought its food is called Shway Gyet-yet [the more popular legend assigns a different reason]. On the same day it happened that a young hunter appeared in the monastery and begged the holy brother to teach him wisdom. As a present he had brought with him a roasted hare. He lifted the cover off the basket and the hare sprang up alive and healthy immediately and ran away. The pohn-gyee was very much struck at these two miracles, all the more because they happened on the same day, and he took the two highly gifted youths for his only scholars and taught them

all he knew in the way of scholarship and mystic lore. Both were very zealous in their studies, but Damma-saydee learnt one letter more than his fellow-student.

Engwa-min, Theehathoo, the Burman king, levied war upon the King of Rangoon, Bya-ngya-yan, and having defeated him, carried off his sister Saw-boh-mee. The young lady, who now got the name of Shin-saw-boo, agreed to share his throne on the condition that she should be allowed to institute religious ceremonies to remind her of the holy pagoda of her own Talaing town. Captivated by her charms, the king consented, and recommended to her notice, as being the most likely to give her aid, the two most highly honoured pohn-gyees of the capital, Damma-saydee and Damma-bahla, the ex-hunter. The crafty princess managed to arrange a love-intrigue with the two yahans, and by their aid succeeded in escaping to Rangoon, where in no very great time she was placed on the throne and built a golden monastery for the two holy men to live in. Out of gratitude she wished to raise one of her two friends to share the throne with her, but the choice was a hard matter, for they were both equally well-favoured and no man could say which was the more learned. She resolved therefore to put their wit to the test and to abide by the issue.

The two holy men were summoned to her audience-chamber, where before her throne were placed two alms-bowls: one perfectly empty and plain, but decorated with the royal insignia; the other more elaborately worked and full of the choicest delicacies. The rivals were bidden to place themselves, according to their liking, by the one or the other. Damma-bahla chose the juncates, but the wiser Damma-saydee walked straight to the royal thabeht. The latter therefore received the hand of the queen after he had left the order.

Damma-bahla was full of wrath and envy, and forthwith created countless armies by reciting powerful baydin linga over a bowl full of rice, every grain of which grew into a soldier. But Damma-saydee was skilful in the same arts, and by virtue of the additional letter which he had learned was able always to overcome the machinations of his opponent, so that at last Damma-bahla saw himself overcome at all points, and took to flight to save his life. But he had not thrown off his long monkish robes, and his feet got entangled in them, and he fell and was overtaken by his pursuers, who killed him at a place where now the village Thengan Nyohn stands, "the spot where the yellow robe betrayed." The queen only reigned three years, but in that time she greatly enlarged and beautified the pagodas of Shway Dagohn at Rangoon and Shway Hmaw Daw at Pegu. Damma-saydee reigned after her gloriously and highly honoured for thirty-one years.

The main points of this bit of Mahah Yaza-win history are correct. Shin-saw-boo was carried off in 1439 A.D. and did escape from Ava to be placed on the Peguan throne. Rangoon cantonments are to this day known among the Burmese as Shin-saw-boo Myoh. King Damma-saydee was celebrated for his wisdom and for his intercourse with foreign powers. He received embassies from China, Siam, and Ceylon. He was also certainly originally a monk; his magic arts are another thing. His death is placed in 1491 A.D. The slight suggestion of the casket scene in the *Merchant of Venice* will be noticed.

The following is a favourite fable :—

*Why Ants are found everywhere.*

All the animals of the forest came to the lion-king to pay him homage. The little ant came with the rest to bow

down before the king of beasts, but the noblemen drove it away with scorn. When the king of the ants heard of it he was very angry, and sent a worm to creep into the ear of the lion and torment him. The lion roared aloud with pain, and all the animals came running from every side to offer their services and fight the enemy, wherever or whoever he might be. But none of them could do any real good. They could not get at the worm. At last, after many humble embassies, the king of the ants was prevailed upon to send one of his subjects, who crept into the lion's ear and pulled out the worm. Since that time the ants have enjoyed the privilege of living everywhere and in any country, while the other animals had all of them their special places assigned at the division of the earth.

The following, the fourteenth decision of the Princess Thoodammasahree, is considered a legal precedent as well as the inculcation of a moral principle :—

*The Dog, the Cat, and the Ichneumon.*

In the time of the Buddha Gawnagohng, four pupils, a prince, a young noble, a rich man's son, and a poor man's son, received their education together in the country of Tekkathoh. When they had finished their course they asked their teacher what was the value of learning. The sayah replied as follows :—Long ago there dwelt in the land of Gahapatee Waytha four wealthy men who were great friends, and each sought to further his friends' plans as much as possible. At last one of them died and left an only son. The widow said to him, "My dear son, my husband your father Mounng Bah is dead, and you take his place and succeed to all the property; but you are still very young. It would be well, therefore, if you went to your father's three friends to acquire learning and

prudence from them." With that she gave him three hundred rupees and sent him off with a company of servants.

On the way they met a man leading a dog. "Hallo! you there," said the boy, "will you sell that dog?" "If you want to buy him," replied the stranger, "you must give me a hundred rupees." The youth paid the money and sent the dog back to his mother. She took it for granted that her late husband's three friends had approved of the purchase, and fed the dog and took great care of it.

Another day, after he had eaten his noontide meal, he met a man carrying a cat, and called out, "I say, you sir, will you sell that cat?" "Yes," said the man, "for a hundred rupees." The money was paid, and the cat sent back to his mother as before. She thought that this cat must have been recommended by the three merchants as a purchase, and took as great care of the cat as of the dog.

Another day, after his dinner, he came upon a man with an ichneumon in his arms, and wanted to buy it also. The man agreed to part with it like the others for a hundred rupees. The rich man's son paid the money and sent it back home. The mother, still under the same impression, looked after it as carefully as the dog and the cat.

Now the dog and the cat were domestic animals, and she kept them about the house without any concern, but the ichneumon was a wild creature, and she was in such a state about it that she wasted away. One day when the monk from the monastery came round on his usual alms'-begging tour, to receive his dole of rice, he noticed her appearance and said, "Dear me, my good supportress, how thin you have grown." The rich man's widow replied, "Yes, the reason is this: I gave my son three hundred rupees, and sent him off to his father's three old friends to learn business habits, and one day he sends me a dog, the

next a cat, and then again an ichneumon; and he gave a hundred rupees a-piece for them. Now I don't mind about the dog and the cat for they are house animals, and I get on very well with them; but the ichneumon is a jungle-beast, and the mere sight of it frightens me so that my body and limbs and eyes are all pining away." The yahan advised her to turn the creature loose in the jungle. It is wrong to disregard the counsel of one's teachers or one's parents, and so she set the ichneumon free, not however, without giving it some food well soured in oil to keep it alive till it was able to look out for itself.

When the ichneumon got into the forest he fell a-thinking; the rich man's son gave a hundred rupees for me, and since I came into his possession I have been well looked after and fed, and better than all, I have now got my liberty again. I must repay him the debt of gratitude I owe. Then he found in a pool in the forest a ruby ring, and carried it off to the rich man's son, and said: "This is no common ring, it possesses the power of gratifying every wish of its owner. Put it on your finger, therefore, and be sure you do not allow any one else to wear it." Thereupon he went off to the jungle again.

The rich man's son wished, and during the night a great palace with a pya-that rose up before his house. The king of the country with all his subjects, came to see the sight, and the king gave him his daughter in marriage. Soon after this the princess's spiritual teacher came to see if he could spy out her husband's charm. He looked everywhere, but he could see nothing but the ring. He therefore came to see the princess by herself, when the prince had gone out, and after making a great number of pretty speeches to her, asked if she was sure of her husband's love. "What a stupid question," said she, "he is only a rich man's son, and I am the daughter of a king."



"Oh! if he is so very fond of you then, you have probably been allowed to wear his ring," insinuated the pohanna sadaw. "If I have not," returned she, "I would like to know who should?" Then the reverend gentleman went away.

A day or two afterwards, the princess asked her husband to let her put on his ring. He was very fond of her and so he took it off and let her have it, but told her on no account to show it to any one, but to wear it constantly on her finger. The pohanna came again another day when the rich man's son was out, and began talking in his usual smooth-tongued way. The princess said: "I have got that ring you were speaking about the other day." "Have you?" said he; "where is it?" "On my finger," she said, and showed it. He begged her to take it off and let him examine it, and her nurse, who was also present, at last prevailed on her to gratify the sadaw's wishes, and so at last she drew it off and handed it to him. As soon as he got it, he slipped it on his finger, changed himself into a crow, and flew away to the middle of the Thamohddaya ocean, whither no one could follow him, and there he stayed under a seven-roofed spire.

When her husband came back and heard what the pohanna had done, he said to the princess: "You showed the ring, though I expressly told you not to do so, and now it is in middle of the great Thamohddaya sea, and we shall never be able to get it back again." He then remained sunk in a deep melancholy.

One day, a bevy of the daughters of nat-dewahs came to bathe in a pond grown over with water-lilies, not far from the house where the rich man's son was born. They took off their necklaces and jewellery and laid them down on the bank. The cat found them there, caught them up, and ran off and hid them. The houri maidens came to the

cat and begged her to return their necklaces, saying they were only fit for nat-dewahs and not for mortal men. The cat replied, "If I do, will you promise to make me a road to the place where the pohanna sadaw is living under his pyathat in the middle of the Thamohddaya sea? That is the only condition on which I will give them back." So the daughters of nats made the road, and the cat crept stealthily along till she reached the spire, where she found the pohanna asleep, with the ring on his finger. She pulled it off and brought it back to her master as a return for his kindness, saying, "You paid a very large sum for me and have fed and treated me well ever since." The sadaw, for his part, fell into the sea and was drowned, while the rich man's son having now regained his talisman had every wish of his heart gratified.

Some time afterwards a band of five hundred robbers came to kill the rich man's son and carry off his ring. The dog saw what their purpose was, and flew straight at the leader of the band, and bit him to death and dropped his body down a well. The other robbers were so frightened that they ran away. Next day the dog said to his master, "I did not get any sleep last night; I had hard work to do," and then he told how the robbers had come to slay his master and pillage the place, and how he had killed their leader, and so frightened the rest away. He finished by saying, "Now I have made some return for your kindness to me. I have been enabled to save your life and property." "Aha," answered the rich man's son; "everybody called me a fool for giving a hundred rupees for you who are only an animal, but I owe all my fortune to three animals, each of which I purchased for that sum." Then he went away into the jungle and brought back the ichneumon and kept him in his house.

Now the ichneumon, the dog and the cat, each of them

asserted that he had a right to eat before the others. The ichneumon, because he first gave the ring to his master; the cat, because when the gift was lost she had taken the necklaces of the dewah daughters, and so by getting a road made for her, had recovered the ring and thus restored her master's fortunes; the dog, because, when five hundred robbers came to strip the rich man's son of what the others had given him, and to take his life, he killed their leader and dropped him into the well, whereupon the rest of the band ran away; "and thus," said the dog, "I am the preserver, not only of our master's property, but also of his life."

At length they agreed to leave the arbitration of their dispute to the decision of Princess Thoodammasahree, the daughter of King Dammarit, who reigned at Mahdarit in the kingdom of Kambawsa. She dwelt in the palace of a Tabindeing (the princess who remains single to be married to the next king), and was well versed in the Ten Laws (1. To make religious offerings. 2. To keep the commandments. 3. To be charitable. 4. To be upright. 5. To be mild and gentle. 6. Not to give way to anger. 7. To be strict in observing all the religious ceremonies. 8. Not to oppress any one. 9. To exercise self-restraint. 10. Not to be familiar with inferiors); and learned in the civil as well as the criminal code. The fame of her wisdom had spread to the eight quarters of the world so that the most eminent men from every country came to her for judgment.

The three animals therefore came before the princess, and the ichneumon opened the case as follows, "A certain rich man's son paid a hundred rupees for me, fed me and housed me well, and set me free in the forest. Having regard for his kindnesses, I gave him a ruby ring, by means of which he obtained a palace with a royal spire,

which sprang out of the earth ; therefore I am entitled to take precedence and to eat before the dog and the cat." The cat then followed and, recounted how the pohnna had carried off the ring which the ichneumon had given her master, and how she had got it back again, and so had renewed all his fortunes. Then the dog stated his case, saying, " When robbers came to take from our master the ring which the ichneumon had given him, and which, when it was lost, was restored to him by the cat, I killed the leader of the band and then they all fled. Therefore I preserved not only my master's property, but also his life, and therefore I ought to have precedence over the other two."

When they had finished their arguments, Princess Theodammasahree pronounced her decision as follows: " The dog, in addition to saving his master's treasures, prolonged his life also; therefore he is entitled to the first place amongst you ; but, of a truth, there are none among animals who so well understand how to repay a debt of gratitude as you three do."

Thus ends the story of the dog, the cat, and the ichneumon, from which you may learn, that although man is superior to all animals, yet kindness shown to them will always meet with its reward.

The following sermon of the Lord Buddha is the most favourite with the Burmese. In its present form it is said to have been handed down by the favourite disciple, Ananda, who heard it from the lips of Shin Gautama himself. The Mingala-thoht is one of the first books the young scholar gets into his hands after he has learnt the ordinary formulæ of worship. There are few Burmans, even in these later days, who cannot repeat the Pali text from end to end.

*Mingala-Thoht, the Buddhist Beatitudes, or Chapter  
of Blessings.*

Praise be to Buddha the holy, the allwise.

When the adorable and most excellent Buddha dwelt in the great monastery of Zaytawoon, built by the rich man Anahtabehn, in the country of Thawattee, there came to him a dewah at the hour of midnight, when the whole building was illuminated by the effulgence which streamed from his body. The dewah placed himself neither too far nor too near, neither to the right nor to the left, but in the proper spot, and after bowing low in humble obeisance, thus addressed the Buddha :

"Most adorable and excellent Buddha, during twelve long years, many dewahs and men, desirous of reaching to the holiness of neh'ban, have striven to discover what things are blessed, but they still remain in ignorance. Do thou therefore instruct us in those matters which are most blessed."

The Adorable replied :—

"Thou son of dewahs, to shun the company of the foolish ; to pay homage to the learned ; to worship what ought to be worshipped ; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to dwell among good men ; to have with one's self the consciousness of good deeds done in a former state of existence ; to guard well all one's actions ; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to hear and see much in order to acquire knowledge ; to study all science that leads not to sin ; to make use of proper language ; to acquire a

knowledge of propriety of behaviour (from the Weenee); these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to treat parents with tenderness and affection; to nourish well one's wife and children; to perform no action under the influence of sinful temptation; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to make offerings and give abundant alms; to act in accordance with the precepts of the law and of virtue; to assist relatives and friends; to perform virtuous actions; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to avoid sin, to be most instant and strenuous in such avoiding; to abstain from spirituous liquor; to remember always the principle of accumulation of merit; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to pay respect to all those who are worthy of regard; to be ever humble; to be ever contented; to be grateful for favours received; to listen to the preaching of the sacred law at the proper times; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to be patient and endure suffering; to rejoice in edifying discourse; to visit the holy men when occasion serves; to converse on religious subjects; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to practise religious austerities; to continue firm in the sublime truth; to study always to act in the most virtuous way; to keep the eyes firmly fixed on the attainment of neh'ban; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Thou son of dewahs, to be unmoved; to be of tranquil mind; to be exempt from passion; to be perfectly composed and fearless amid all earthly dangers; these are blessed things. Dewah, mark them well.

"Oh dewah, whoso possesses and observes these thirty-eight blessings shall never be overcome, and shall find happiness in all things. Dewah, mark thou them well, so shalt thou enjoy the peace of the Areeyas."

Thus the adorable Buddha replied.

Of this sermon the venerable Bishop Bigandet writes : — "Within a narrow compass, the Buddha has condensed an abridgment of almost all moral virtues. The first portion of these precepts contains injunctions to shun all that may prove an impediment to the practice of good works. The second part inculcates the necessity of regulating one's mind and intention for a regular discharge of the duties incumbent on each man in his separate station. Then follows a recommendation to bestow assistance on parents, relatives, and all men in general. Next to that we find recommended the virtues of humility, resignation, gratitude, and patience. After this, the preacher insists on the necessity of studying the law, visiting the religious, conversing on religious subjects. When this is done, the hearer is commanded to study with great attention the four great truths, and keep his mind's eye ever fixed on the happy state of *neh'ban*, which, though as yet distant, ought never to be lost sight of. Thus prepared, the hearer must be bent upon acquiring the qualifications befitting the true sage. Like the one mentioned by the Latin poet, who would remain firm, fearless, and unmoved, even in the midst of the ruins of the crumbling universe, the Buddhist sage must ever remain calm, composed, and unshaken among all the vicissitudes of life. There is again clearly pointed out the final end to be arrived at, viz., that of perfect mental stability. This state is the foreshadowing of that of *neh'ban*."

Prefixed to every Burmese work is the phrase "Namawtatha bagawa-daw araha-daw thamma thamohddatha," which has the same significance as the A. M. D. G. of the Jesuits—"Praise be to Bagawa [the Buddha as the displayer of the six glories], the holy, the all-wise."



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### STRAY NOTES.

THERE are some curious national superstitions about the subba-gyee, or boa-constrictor. Although he is now innocuous as far as biting is concerned, he was originally the only poisonous snake. The way in which he lost his dangerous qualities is rather curious. The crow, that great benefactor to the entire race of fable writers, one day set himself to annoy the python, and declared that though he might think himself very big and very dangerous, he never killed anybody for all his biting. The subba-gyee got very angry, and eventually spat up all his poison in a pet. It was swallowed by a great variety of other creeping things, and so the race of thanatophidians was vastly increased in numbers, if not in size, while the python would be harmless were it not for his vast strength.

Nevertheless the Tavoy fishermen make a domestic pet of him, and declare he is invaluable as a weather prophet. When they put out to sea they carry their boa with them, and he remains coiled up comfortably in the bows of the vessel until a storm is coming on. Then he promptly slips overboard and makes for the

shore, and the sailors hoist sail and follow him with all possible expedition. The subba-gyee is a much surer guide than the Meteorological Office. He is kept quite quiet and tame by being well fed on nutriment that does not excite his blood. His diet is usually eggs, with vast platters of pouk-pouk, "gummy rice," which is sufficiently heavy to deprive the eater, whether man or boa, of all desire to exert himself unduly. It is somewhat curious, as a first experience, to see the cat, the dog, and the baby curled up together in a corner with the boa, making one another mutually cosy.

The gall-bladder and fat of the subba-gyee are much prized for medicinal purposes; the fat especially being esteemed as a sovereign remedy for rheumatism and strains.

Of the poisonous snakes the most dreaded is the ngan, or oo-gwet, the "spotted forehead." This creature, the hamadryad or ophiophagus, is, as his name imports, a cannibal, and lives on his neighbour snakes. Specimens as long as nine feet from nose to tail have been killed near Rangoon, and, unlike all other reptiles, the ngan does not get out of the way of a man approaching his haunts, but attacks him immediately. He is worse than the walrus that roused the indignation of the French poet.

Bees are kept in a good many places in the country, but it is necessary to be very careful where you put the hives. It is a most ill-omened circumstance if wild bees make a nest under the house, or if bees of any kind fly under the floor. On the other hand, a hive on the house-top is very lucky. Honey is in great request to present to the pohn-gyees at various feasts, and especially for the embalming of the body of a dead brother. After the cremation the honey is sold in the bazaar. It is

not eaten by Englishmen in Burma. "Tapping the governor" does not commend itself to everybody.

Rhinoceros horns are in as great favour with the Burmans as with Chinese medical men. Shavings of the horn are considered an invaluable cure for epilepsy, and also guard against poisons of all kinds. There are two distinct species found in the eastern forests.

Near Yay-nan-gyoung, in the petroleum district, when a new oil-well is wanted, the workmen place a marble image of an elephant on a smooth, flat stone, and surround it with gifts of all kinds, and then sit down to watch. If the elephant itself moves it indicates the direction in which borings are to be made; if not, the offering on which its shadow first falls as the sun sinks down, is marked, and a baydin sayah consulted.

A woman who has seven sons or seven daughters in unbroken succession is almost certain to become a witch; her husband had better not quarrel with her, at any rate.

At Kahma, a small place between Prome and Thayet-myo, there is a spirit flame, a kind of Jack o' Lantern, in a hollow near the town. Long ago a smith was killed in a brawl and became a nat after death. He liked his old profession and set up a nat-mee, and worked away at nights on a spectral forge. The inhabitants soon found out what was going on, and after their first terror was over used to go out in the middle of the day and leave a piece of iron, saying, "Good Mr. Spirit make me an axe, a dah, a hoe." Next day they found it all ready made. At last a Chin—just the sort of thing one of these stupid people would do—hid himself, and just when the midnight cocks had finished crowing, up rose the smith in human shape, dressed in a red pasoh and a flaring red turban. He began hammering away on his anvil, welding a sword. The

infatuated Chin at last shouted, "Make it quick." The demon smith whipped round on the instant and flung the red-hot dah at him, burning his cheek. The spy took to his heels and ran. After he had got a mile away, he rubbed his blistered cheek, and in after times there rose at that place Pah-poht, "the cheek-rubbing village." A mile farther on he began to shake all over with fatigue and terror, whence the name of Tohn, "the trembling village." Finally when he reached the site of Pouk-poh-goo, the "swelling burst" and he sank down on the ground and was found there next morning with just enough life left to tell his story. The smith never worked again, but his fire may be seen to this day. Once a year all the house fires in Kahma are put out and lighted again from the nat-mee. Should any one neglect so to pay honour to the nat, his house and all his goods will be burnt before the year is out. The resemblance to the legend of Wayland Smith at Lambourn in Berkshire is obvious.

The common notion of earthquakes is that the earth is supported on the shoulders of four creatures called nga-hlyn. These monsters are less sturdy than the classical Atlas, and occasionally want to shift shoulders. When they do so an earthquake is the result. Others declare that the quaking of the earth is caused by gusts of wind on the under surface of the world. The idea is that the solid mass of the earth is supported on a double thickness of water, and this again by twice its thickness of air, below which is a vacuum, occasionally however disturbed by storms. The Buddha gave a much more extensive explanation to his favourite disciple Ananda. "My son," he said, "eight causes make the earth tremble. First, the earth lies on a mass of water, which rests on the air, and the air on space; when the air is set in motion, it shakes the water, which in its turn shakes the earth;

second, any being gifted with extraordinary powers; third, the conception of a payah aloung for his last existence; fourth, his birth; fifth, his becoming a Buddha; sixth, his preaching the Law of the Wheel; seventh, his mastering and renouncing existence; eighth, his obtaining the state of neh'ban. These are the eight causes of earthquakes."

The Law of the Wheel is the doctrine of the four great truths: pain, the production of pain, the destruction of pain, and the way leading to that destruction. These constantly revolve upon themselves, and the manifestation of these truths is the great work a Buddha has to perform.

Omens are drawn from the appearance of the sun and moon, and especially from the particular constellation which presides over one's birth. The howling of dogs, the flight and song of birds, the appearance of any strange creature, or of a wild animal in an unexpected place, all have their special meaning. So have the nervous twitching of the eye, or of any part of the body. If the sun or any of the planets approaches the moon there is danger about. In the four months when Venus is not to be seen, in a month when there is an earthquake or an eclipse, and on the first or last day of a month, it is advisable not to cut one's hair, marry, build a house, or begin any important business whatever. These and hundreds more may be found in the *Delitton*, a book very full of singular information. Palmistry is a science of which every educated person professes to have more or less knowledge. The less a man knows, the more truculent his deductions are.

A state envelope is a very curious affair. It is nothing else but two large elephant's tusks. Half-way up they are hollow, and on the mouth there is a heavy gold cover. The tusks are mounted in different parts with gold of no mean thickness. The letter of the lord of the Golden

Throne is deposited inside, and borne to its destination with the flourish of trumpets and the braying of drums. The majesty of the Burmese king would suffer if he forwarded a communication to the Viceroy in a cover which cost anything under a couple of hundred pounds sterling. In similar fashion the reports of subordinate officials are written with steatite pencils on coarse black paper, and this is rolled up and put in a hollow joint of bamboo. The whole is then enveloped in cloth and sealed with the peacock seal. Communications of this kind are sometimes received by English officials on the British Burma frontier.

The following are a few proverbs:—

If you want to go fast, go the old road.

Wisdom guards life; no one can escape bad luck. The man gifted with wisdom is never left in peace.

Every bird is handsome compared with the vulture.

A mountain is climbed by degrees; property acquired by degrees; wisdom learnt by degrees.

Have regard for a whole family of rats, instead of for one cat.

The more you know, the more luck you have.

A short boat is hard to steer; a dwarf is quick in the temper.

If a cock ruffles up his feathers, it is easy to pluck him. If a man gets angry he is done for.

Constant cutting dulls the knife; constant talking dulls the wits.

A pot half full of water is hard to carry [on the head of course; because the water sways from side to side]; the less a man knows, the harder he is to argue with.

A cow that can give no milk will kick. An ignorant man is to be feared for his ignorance.

If there is much paddy [unhusked rice] in the bowl, it

is hard to eat. If there is much talking it is hard to understand.

Don't speak like a mountain, it is so easy to fall off.

Eat little, stomach slender; eat much, stomach-ache.

Beware of a man's shadow [i.e. his relations] and a bee's sting.

A coward tiger growls; a coward human howls.

The well-born are fair of speech; the low-born crooked.

A slave's son is a stupid son.

If a great man flatters you, be afraid.

A great man's sword is never blunt.

There are three chances in a nagah's stare; there is but one in a king's. [That is to say, you may escape from the dragon, but if the king is angry with you, speedy death is all you can expect.]

"Kyet-go a-yoh,  
Lee-go a-myoh."

Blood always tells; literally, you know a game-cock from his bones, a man from his family.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### A POHN-GYEE BYAN.

THE veneration and respect which meet the yahan all through his life are extended to his remains when he dies, or rather when he leaves this world. The monk does not "die" as a common layman does, he does not even, like the king, "ascend to the nat-dewahs' village." The holy man in his last existence must have been holy in order to have accumulated the sum of merits which enabled him upon earth to remain steadfast in the sacred order. When he passes away, he "returns," to the highest heavens of nats, or to the meditative states of zahn, or perhaps even to the pure and immaterial realms of arupa. Therefore a mendicant's funeral is called a pohn-gyee byan—the return of the great glory. Even a junior member is burnt with great solemnity and state; but when a distinguished brother dies, one famous for his learning, his austerity, or the great number of Wahs he has spent in the cloister, the obsequies swell into a ceremonial which attracts people from all parts of the country.

As soon as life leaves the body, the corpse is carefully washed in the usual way by the dead pohn-gyee's chief supporters and some of the monastic scholars. Then the



intestines are taken out and buried in a quiet corner of the monastery grounds, or near the pagoda. The cavity of the stomach is then filled up with hot ashes, sawdust, a few spices, and whatever other available substances may be presumed likely to dry up the humours, and then the skin is sewed together again. A layer of wax is sometimes spread all over the body, but more often it is simply tightly swathed in white cloth from head to foot. This linen cloth is then varnished over with wood oil, so that every particle of the corpse may, if necessary, be covered with gold leaf, and this, except in very poor neighbourhoods, is always done. Where there is not money enough, the yellow sacred garments are wrapped round the corpse instead. The arms are always folded on the chest. The body is then placed in the coffin. This is not, as is the case with laymen, made of planks, but of a single log roughly hollowed out, and with a very substantial lid. This lid is not fastened down for a considerable time, and occasionally a bamboo pipe leads from the coffin into the ground to assist in drying up the embalmed body. The fastening down of the cover is sometimes rather an unpleasant spectacle. Many of the old pohn-gyees keep logs in their monasteries to serve for their coffins, and these, when hollowed out, are not always a satisfactory fit. Bishop Bigandet tells of a horrible sight he witnessed, when the lid had to be crushed on with wedges and the blows of a heavy mallet. The majority of aged yahans are, however, so shrivelled and shrunken before they die, that such an occurrence, which, it must not be supposed, is any less dreadful to a Burman than it is to an Englishman, could only happen very rarely, and then probably would not be carried out in the way which so justly shocked the good bishop.

The inner coffin is then, like the body, varnished with thit-see, and gilt all over. For it is prepared an outer casket called a payoung-bohng, which is as magnificent as the skill of the local artificers, and the liberality of the "benefactors" permit. This sarcophagus is often very large, and is richly gilt and painted in the panels, which are fringed with the usual mosaic of bits of mirror, coloured glass, and zinc. The paintings naturally represent religious subjects, usually scenes from the life of Shin Gautama; his famous meetings with the old man, the sick, the dead, and the monk; his departure at night from the magnificent court of King Thoodawdana; his ascent to Tawadehntha, and the like. Rearing itself over the top of the sarcophagus is usually the figure of a nagah, recalling the pious dragon chief that sheltered the Lord Buddha from a flood of rain by coiling seven times round his body and expanding its hood as a covering.

Meanwhile, money is being steadily collected for the remainder of the rites, and as this comes in from the elders of the surrounding villages and the kappeeyadayakas of neighbouring religious houses, the kyoung-thah-gyee of the deceased's monastery sets about erecting an edifice like a thehn, a "monastery of the dead." This is a building, more or less substantial, according to the sanctity of the departed, built of teak, and open all round, with the tapering ecclesiastical pya-that rising over it. Hither the coffin, with the sarcophagus, is carried and deposited as a dais in the centre, a slight railing serving to keep off wild animals. Over it a large white umbrella, with a deep paper-lace fringe, is fixed, and round about hang a number of paintings, similar to those on the payoung bohng, some of them, however, representing the favourite subject of the different races of men as known to

the artist—the swarthy Hindoo, the oblique-eyed Chinaman, the Karenn with his pig on his back, and the ghastly white-faced Englishman with dog and gun. Others are simply grotesque, and a few horrible, in their delineations of the horrors of hell. Nevertheless, they are all allowed to hang there, for though it is expressly stated that paintings are among the five species of gifts which are not meritorious (dancing is another), the ordinary layman thinks that the painting he gives must certainly be an exception. Here and there in this odd kind of mortuary chapel are also kehnaya, gay tinselled pasteboard figures of men with birds' lower extremities, manoh-thah kehnaya and nat kehnaya, the latter having the wings and gorgeous aspect of nat-dewaha. Here the body lies in state, and there is a constant stream of pilgrims—some of them from far distant parts of the country—who come to say their religious sentences, make offerings of flowers and fruit as they would at the pagoda, and contribute what they can afford towards the remainder of the ceremony.

The body remains till the required sum is collected. During that time numbers of festivals are celebrated at the neh'ban kyoung; bands of music play frequently, and the same people often make three or four different offerings. The lying in state usually lasts several months, sometimes considerably over a year, and it is to be noted that a pohn-gyee byan never takes place during Lent.

At last all the funds are collected. An open space outside the town is cleared of jungle, and in the centre of it is erected the funeral pyre. This is constructed of bamboo matting, pasteboard brightly painted, and covered with the usual tinsel. It is, of course, in the form of the seven-roofed spire, the number of roofs, as some think, representing the number of heavens of nat-dewaha. It is square up to a height of fifteen or twenty feet, where there

is a platform, on which is placed a sort of cenotaph, resembling the payoung bohng in construction and decoration. Above this towers up, fifty or sixty feet higher, the bamboo canopy. When this is ready, a fortunate day is selected by the elders of the town, for they have the management of the funeral rites, to the exclusion of the brethren of the yellow robe. This is announced all over the country side by sound of gong, and when the appointed day arrives the people come flocking from every side, each quarter or village bringing its pya-thats and padaytha-bins, the former similar in construction to the spire on the funeral pile, the "wishing-trees" laden with a-hloo for the surviving brethren of the pohn-gyee who is to be cremated. The spires are arranged round about the great central one to be burnt along with it; the padaytha-bins are delivered at the kyoung.

There is always a great gathering round the monastery of the dead, where the sramana has been lying in state. The coffin is taken down with great ceremony, and placed on a strongly built, low four-wheeled car, surmounted by the eternal bamboo spire. Now comes a part of the ceremonial which always seems strangely absurd, not to say indecorous, to foreigners. Two, or sometimes four, stout rattan, or coir ropes are fastened to the car, and forthwith all the able-bodied men present commence a frantically contested and uproarious tug of war. No sides whatever are selected, or numbers agreed upon. Reinforcements are always ready to back up a side which seems on the point of losing, and prematurely ending the struggle; and when a man loses his wind he leaves go his hold and sits down to have a rest. Sometimes the rope breaks, and then the progress of the funeral has to be suspended till a new one is procured and fastened on, for there is no rule as to a side abiding by its accidents. Sometimes the

contest goes on for two or three hours, and there are instances recorded where it was not till the third day that a definite result was arrived at. The explanation is simple enough to a Burman, and I am surprised that it has not hitherto been given by any writer on Burma. It is a work of the greatest possible merit to drag a pohn-gyee's body to the funeral pyre, and this koothoh falls to the share of those who win in the tug of war. The late Captain Forbes said that the explanation was that "the conquering village will get the better of their losing rivals in all sports, contests, or other matters during the year." But this is impossible where the winning side may be composed of men from a score of different villages in circles remote from one another. Besides, there are no championship meetings in Burma. It is to be noted also that during the lohn swè thee it is usually only the payoung bohng that is on the car. The actual coffin is brought down afterwards.

At last the coffin is brought to the pyre and hoisted up to its lofty platform, beneath which is stored a great quantity of combustible material; wood soaked in oil, pitch, and abundance of scented chips. Then nothing remains but to light it. When a layman is burnt, fire is set to the pile by the nearest relations with a box of Bryant and May's matches. But this is much too worldly a method for a member of the Thengha, and even the fire obtained by the friction of a plug in a hollow bamboo—an ingenious amplification of the two dry sticks of a variety of barbarous tribes, common in most monasteries—would fail to satisfy the dignity of a pohn-gyee. The pyre is lighted by rockets fired from a distance. Scores of these dohn have been prepared weeks beforehand, and many have been carried round triumphantly in procession by the people who have made them, a band of music preceding.

and young men and girls dancing and singing of the potency of the powder and the accuracy of the aim which will gain for them the glory of setting fire to the pyre. Each rocket has a figure of some kind, a nat-dewah, a tiger, a hare, or a beeloo attached to it. Some of them are of huge size, constructed of the stems of trees hollowed out, and crammed full of combustibles, in which sulphur largely predominates. Many are eight or nine feet long and four or five in circumference, and secured by iron hoops and rattan lashings. Up in Mandalay some are very much larger. These are let off at the funeral pile from a distance of forty or fifty yards, the largest being mounted on go-carts, and many others guided by a rope fastened to the pyathat, the rocket sliding along by means of twisted cane loops. The great majority fail to have any other effect than making a great splutter and poisoning the air. A few refuse to budge at all; others topple off their carts and fizzle erratically on the grass. A pohn-gyee byan in Burma Proper is always attended with loss of life. Some one, at any rate, of the bigger rockets is sure to fly off at a tangent and plunge into the crowd, where its weight, to say nothing of its fiery belchings, is sure to find one or more victims. In Lower Burma it is only by the strictest police regulations, and a rigorous maintaining of order in the spectators, and system in the pyrotechnists, that like catastrophes do not happen. At last some lucky dohn plunges right into the inflammable materials piled below the bier, and in a few minutes the flames are leaping high above the topmost pinnacle of the spire. Roof after roof falls, setting fire to the offerings placed round the basement. The joints of bamboo explode with a noise like a pistol shot; the crowd cheer each separate occurrence, and when finally the central spire falls with a hiss, a shout rises from the

multitude which suggests anything but death and pious observance. But here in the *manoht-tha pyee* all is changeful, sad, and unreal, and one more death brings but nearer to the final rest of *neh'ban*.

When the last smouldering embers have cooled, the monastic brethren search for any pieces of bones that may remain, and these are carefully gathered up and buried somewhere near the pagoda. Sometimes, in the case of a particularly saintly man, they are pounded down, mixed into a paste with *thit-see*, and moulded into an image of the Buddha, which is stored up in the monastery. The custom followed in other Buddhist countries of erecting a shrine over the dead, is, in accordance with the teachings of Shin Gautama, an honour but rarely accorded in Burma.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### DEATH AND BURIAL.

WHEN a Burman dies, after the first interval of poignant grief on the part of those present, the body is carried to the side of the central room of the house, abutting on the front verandah, and there deposited between the house posts. Messages are then sent to the monastery, to the friends and neighbours, and a funeral band is summoned. Meanwhile the corpse is carefully washed from head to foot, and the two big toes, and usually also the thumbs, are tied together with the hkyay-ma gyoh and the let-ma gyoh, which, if practicable, should be locks of the hair of a son or daughter, but if this is not to be got, a strip of cotton cloth is used. The whole body then, from the arm-pits downwards, is closely swathed in new white cotton cloth, and when this is done the best clothes the deceased possessed are put on. If the family is wealthy the pasoh or tamehn is often very rich and costly. The face is always left uncovered, unless there are special reasons for concealing it arising from the cause of death. Between the teeth is placed the kadoh-ka, a piece of gold or silver as ferry-money to pay for the passage of the mystic river, which is known to exist, but concerning which no further particulars are to be got from any Burman I ever met. It



is no doubt a relic of old demon-worship, the meaning of which is forgotten, while the custom has clung on. Charon's toll of course immediately occurs to the classical reader. If the family is very poor, a copper or lead coin is used, or perhaps nothing more valuable than a betel nut. The coin, whatever it is, is usually quietly carried off by the grave-diggers. None but an outcast would venture to do such a thing.

By this time, or if the death occurred at night, in the early morning, the band has arrived, and commences to play dirges in front of the house. The Soola-gandee monks greatly disapprove of this practice, as savouring of ostentation, and their followers therefore often dispense with the band, as do many Burmans in the large English towns. But otherwise the band is always engaged, and plays on steadily till the funeral takes place. Almost invariably, too, one or more of the yabans from the monastery comes along and stays in the house, their presence being invaluable in keeping away evil spirits, who might otherwise loiter about the place. The monk may or may not deliver a discourse, just as he sees fit. The body is then put into the coffin, which is a very flimsy kind of affair, ordinarily made of let-pan (*Bombax malabaricum*), a very light and porous kind of wood not unlike deal, or sometimes of eng tree (*Dipterocarpus tuberculatus*). This is fastened down roughly with any kind of nails that come to hand. A number of the relatives and friends now come to condole and lend their assistance in making and ornamenting the bier and hearse, most of them bringing presents of money or food with them. A few years ago a very meritorious society called Oopathakah was started in Rangoon, the object of which was to provide decent and honourable burial for all members. The actual society did not last very long, but it served to show that

for the poor, some carried by men, some by women, the sexes going in separate lines. After this come the pyin-sin, never in any very great numbers, unless the a-hloo be particularly bountiful. Following them comes the band, and often a troop of singers. These are always hired for the purpose, and their callousness is as little to be cast up against Burman natural affection as the unlovable doings of the mutes at an English funeral. Close upon the musicians comes the bier carried by six or eight young men. Then in a general crowd follow the relations, friends, and neighbours, all on foot. Many passers by, total strangers, join in the procession from motives of piety. Here and there the men carrying the bier stop and dance in a curious fantastic way to the measures of the dirge of the singers. The funeral *misereres* are usually the composition of an improvisatore in the chorus, and deal with the life and death and good actions of the deceased. A measure called mounng pyoung is the most generally used. Occasionally there is a tug of war with a rope as at a pohn-gyee's funeral, one side exclaiming, "We must bury our dead," the other, "You shall not take away my friend." As a matter of necessity the former party must conquer, but they sometimes have to get recruits from the crowd before they can manage it.

It is a matter of regulation that a funeral should never go to the north or to the east. The graveyard is usually to the west of the village, and the dead should all be carried out of a walled town by a gate reserved for this purpose. In Mandalay this a-mingala tagah is that to the south-west, and it is avoided by those who have business in the myoh as cursed, as indeed its name imports. Other rules are that a corpse must never be carried towards the centre of the town, still less can it be taken into it. If the man has died in the jungle, and the

funeral has to pass a village, it skirts round the outside of it.

When the cemetery is reached the coffin is taken out and placed on the ground near the grave. The immediate mourners collect round about it; the rest of the people go to the *zayats*, of which there are always several at every graveyard. The music stops as soon as this place is reached. The alms are set up in order before the *pohn-gyees*, and these again intone the five secular commandments, and the ten good works, besides a long string of Pali doxologies. As soon as they have finished they leave and file off to the monastery, the *a-hloo* being carried after them. The chief mourner at the same time pours water slowly out of a cocoa-nut shell, saying, "May the deceased and all present share the merit of the offerings made and the ceremonies now proceeding." This performance, called *yay-set-kya*, is a regular accompaniment of all alms-giving. The idea is that the earth will bear witness where men may forget. When Shin Gautama ascended the throne under the bawdee tree, *Mahn-nat*, the devil, claimed that it was his, because he had discovered it first, and all his mighty host shouted aloud when he called upon them as witnesses. The Lord Buddha had no witness but the earth, and to it he appealed, asking whether he had not achieved the Three Great Works of Perfection, the Ten Great Virtues, and the Five Renouncements. The earth gave testimony to this *koung-hmoo* with a terrible roaring and a violent earthquake, so that *Mahn-nat* and all his legions fled in terror. Hence the pouring out of water when alms are given.

While this is going on women are walking about the *zayats* giving cheroots and sweet drinks, betel, *le'pet*, and biscuits among the visitors. The nearest relations are carrying out the final rites. The coffin is swung three

Sometimes a small pagoda is erected over the cremated ashes of a highly respected relative. These are regarded simply as monuments, even when they are over a king, to whom alone of laymen in Upper Burma they can be erected. They must not be used as places to offer worship, and that this may be known, the members of the sacred order ordain that such pagodas shall have no htee, no umbrella, on the top. To obviate this it is usual with the builder to dedicate the place to Shin Gautama, and thus at once secure a monument and a htee. Pagodas erected in honour of yahandas, or particularly sainted pohn-gyees, receive the umbrella of right, and are places very eminently suited for the pious laymen to worship at. Such temple tombs are called a-yoh saydee, but are not of such frequent erection as they used to be.

In some cases the relations grind down the bones to powder, and mixing this with the wood oil called thi'-see mould the paste into a small image of the Lord Buddha, which they set up in an honoured place in their houses, and make use of as the object of their morning and evening doxologies. Such images are called tha-yoh.

In British territory, money and public estimation alone determine the character of the funeral; but in Mandalay, apart from the ceremonial provided for a pohn-gyee byan, there are five kinds suitable for a layman—one for the sovereign; then for members of the royal family; thirdly for nobles, and those who have received official rank, a rather precarious and dangerous possession; then for thootays, rich men—so designated by special patent, which places them under the "protection" of the court, that is to say, makes them accessible for the demand of "benevolences;" and finally a funeral for ordinary people. The burials of the poor in Mandalay are gruesome spectacles. The body is carried to the grave-yard in a big, roomy box, grown rickety with much use, or, more simply still, in a mat.

The sandalabs have dug a hole, little more than three feet deep. If it is not long enough the body is squeezed in. I have seen it jumped on for this purpose. Enough earth to cover it slightly is thrown on by the grave-diggers, and the howls and fights of the pariah dogs at night suggest how it is that epidemics do not arise.

In the case of the funeral, say of an a-twin-woon's wife, the coffin may be gilt, with a web of white cotton cloth fastened at the head—velvet is only permissible for a person of royal blood; the bamboos composing the bier are covered with red cloth; the pasohs, tamahns, and so on, given in alms, are carried on long poles, each pole borne by two men. In the procession the insignia of the woon, his umbrellas, fans, kamouk, and the rest are carried in front; after the alms and yahans come a dozen or more young women, carrying the court dress and decorations of the deceased, then her state carriage and that of her husband, hers being usually a palanquin. The billets of wood on the funeral pyre are gilt. These honours are so greatly valued that not a single privilege will be pretermitted, though the husband had to borrow money for every single item. Indeed were he to omit any of them he might be in danger of losing all, as not sufficiently appreciating the dignities conferred upon him.

As soon as Mindohn Min, the late King of Burmah died, or at least as soon as it was officially made known that he was dead (for there are great doubts as to whether he died on the 12th September or on the 1st October, 1878, or on some date between these two), as soon as the ministerial announcement came out on the latter date, the bo-hoh, the great drum and gong suspended in a tower by the eastern gate, was stopped. The new king's drum and gong were not sounded till nine o'clock on the evening of the funeral, after which they were struck in the ordinary way every three hours. Bands of soldiers and

police with gongs patrolled the streets all night long, to see that everything was quiet. The princes had been seized and cast into prison some time before, but there was a chance that their adherents might raise disturbances on their behalf, and this precaution was kept up for some time. Meanwhile a pagoda, to serve as a mausoleum, was being run up with the greatest expedition close to the Mint, on the eastern side of the palace, in the outer inclosure, and this was finished in four or five days. The king had specially requested that his body should not be burnt according to ordinary royal custom, and the Sin-byoo-mè, the head queen and chief mourner, had resolved that this wish should be respected.

The corpse was laid out in state, and on the 3rd October the greater number of the foreigners and the officials of inferior rank were admitted to look upon it. This ceremony was conducted in the Hman-nandaw, the "Glass Palace," a room in which Theebaw Min has received most Europeans since. The body lay in the fore part of the chamber on a gilt couch, or bedstead, studded with bits of glass, and was robed from head to foot in white, a piece of white satin covering the face. The royal number of white umbrellas was canopied overhead, and at the top part of the couch were arranged the regalia in a row. On this occasion the Sin-byoo-mè and the A-nouk Nan-ma-daw, the favourite queen of the West Palace, sat by the couch and slowly waved gorgeous peacock fans. At other times the sonless queens took it in turn to watch by the body, two at a time. Round about were grouped all the other queens and princesses, weeping piteously. The deceased king's brother, the ex-Pagahn Min, the newly elected Theebaw Min, and all the high officials were behind at the farther end of the room. Suspended over the corpse was a small flat piece of gold shaped like a heart, called thay-nyohn, and in this the lehp-bya, the butterfly spirit, of the

departed king was supposed to dwell till such time as he should be buried. The public lying in state only lasted a few hours, but the body remained there unaltered till the time of the funeral. It was not certainly known whether any attempt at embalming was made, but the body was very much shrunk, and contrasted forcibly with the genial presence of his majesty when last he was seen alive. A sadaw informed me that the good old king died with the words "Payah, payah, neh'ban," on his lips.

The funeral took place on the 7th, at noon. It was the first that took place that day, and no other was allowed until the royal obsequies were entirely over. The city gates were shut and strongly guarded to prevent any such going forth if any one had been bold or ignorant enough to attempt it. From the gates of the interior palace stockade to the tomb, the whole route of the procession was laid with scarlet cloth, and round the mausoleum was a wide bamboo fence covered with longcloth, inside of which were some slight sheds, run up for the accommodation of the queens and the chief ministers. It is worthy of notice also that, in a favourable position to view all that passed, was erected a similar mundut for the accommodation of the late Mr. Shaw, then British Resident in Mandalay, his assistants, and the Residency Chaplain, the Rev. J. A. Colbeck. The Resident and Assistant Resident were admitted in full uniform, wearing their shoes and swords, and it was thought that at length a solution of the great shoe-question had been arrived at, for though in the outer court this dignity had always been allowed them, the fact that later on they saw the king not very far off roused hopes of an audience at a remote date with similar appendages. But alas, the hopes were vain.

Punctually at twelve the procession left the palace gates. At the head of the *cortège* came the late king's wan, a huge palanquin, borne on men's shoulders. Close

upon it came six elephants, in royal purple and gold housings, and after them two richly caparisoned ponies. Following these were three of the min-gyees and a woon-douk, the fourth chief minister, the Loung-shway being too old and feeble to appear. Then came the band, called byeing-doung, on such occasions, playing an ancient royal *miserere*, and after it a great crowd of the minor officials, wearing bouns, white official hats. Behind these came a number of men and women, bearing the regalia and the utensils of the royal dead, the crown, the heavy court dress, the gold betel box, the spittoon, the henthia, and the rest. Then came an empty coffin, overlaid with scarlet velvet and plates of gold, and immediately behind it the body in a ta-nyin, or hammock of white velvet, attached to a bamboo, swathed in red velvet, across which was thrown a white velvet covering spangled with gold. To the ta-nyin were attached two long cloths, sanda-ya-mya, held by a multitude of queens, princesses, and exceedingly young princes (all the elder ones being in gaol). Above were the eight white umbrellas and over the Sin-pyoo-mè, the chief mourner, were held three of the same royal colour. Her three daughters, one of whom, the Sco-payah Lat, is now Theebaw Min's queen, were shaded by bright yellow htees, a colour which ranks even over gold. Thus they proceeded to the bamboo enclosure. Then it was announced that the new king, Theebaw Min was coming, having just received the beht-theht, been anointed by the Brahmin pohnnas. He appeared shortly, seated in a lofty wan, at each of the four corners of which crouched a maiden with bowed head and clasped hands, the whole being carried on the shoulders of forty men. Preceding him was his body guard of twelve pages all dressed alike and armed with double barrelled breechloaders in red serge cases. The Shway nan-yin payah, the new possessor of the golden throne, remained for half an hour, looking



very ill at ease, and little inclined to inspect the splendid spectacle before him. Then he gave the order for the last rites, and in accordance with custom returned immediately to the palace. The actual ceremony of burial was now concluded with as little ceremony as previously there had been superabundance of it, and in a very short time the yahans, of whom there had been a great multitude present, were superintending the carrying off of the 108 (representing the number of divisions in the foot of the Lord Buddha, and the beads on the rosary) heaps of alms piled up in great mountains in a long shed to the east of the mausoleum. This was the last of the pious king, Moungh Lohn, Mindohn Min, the Convener of the Fifth Great Synod.

The following is the substance of a funeral dirge sung in Mandalay by a Rangoon man whose wife had died in the royal city.

"Gone, gone art thou, sweet wife; gone far away,  
 Fair still and charming, stretched on thy cold bier,  
 As erst thou wert upon that joyous day  
 When first I wed thee; gladsome brought thee here,  
 And joyed to think that thou wert mine. Ah me!  
 The butterfly's silk wings are shred; no more,  
 Ne'er more to rest upon thy head, Mah Mee'—  
 Sweet name for wife 'affectionate.' Deplore  
 Her death ye nats that rule forests and streams,  
 The hills and vales, and greater ye who guard  
 The sacred law, the holy shrines, the beams  
 Of silent moon, and sunlight baking hard  
 The hot-scorch'd earth, not scorched more and seared  
 Than is the parchment of my tortured heart.  
 Nay, bear with me, good neighbours. Be not feared.  
 I am not mad. The nat-soh hath no part  
 Of me or mine. The spawwife sure hath said it.

"Ay, thou wert mine when last I trod the earth,  
 Ere yet, all sinful, I was born as man,  
 And yet again, in yet another birth,  
 I'll claim thee; when mayhap a happier kan,

A fairer sum of merit, hardly won,  
 Will lead us on, linked-armed, to linked death,  
 That so progressing, joyful we may run  
 Through all life's changes, and with single breath,  
 Through heavens and mahn and rupa, we may bound  
 To neh'tan, blissful home of rest. So mote it be.

" Alas, thou wert from Hanthawaddee's plains,  
 And were we there, where thou so fain hadst strayed,  
 A stately pomp had honoured thy remains,  
 In silk and velvet wound, with gilded shade  
 Of wide umbrella's pride, and regal spire  
 That towered to the skies, all seemly draped  
 With flowing cloths and princesses' attire,  
 Such as now thou dost wear, from earth escaped  
 To heavens of nata. Yea, and of fretted gold  
 With mirror-work inlaid had been this case,  
 The last sad dwelling of thy earthly mould;  
 But here it may not be, not in this place.  
 In Mammy's soil the stranger finds a tomb  
 As poor as doth the meanest in the land.  
 The trumpet's wailing note, the drum's low boom,  
 May not be heard; all callous as the strand  
 That threatens the sailor on a stormy night,  
 The law stands fast and bids the mourner pass  
 With smothered moan; and hurry from its sight  
 The alien clay. Far from thy home, alas!  
 Thy dirge e'en waxeth faint. Oh, Awgata,  
 The Lord, the Law, the Order, the Three Gems,  
 I bow me low. Grant me the holy calm."

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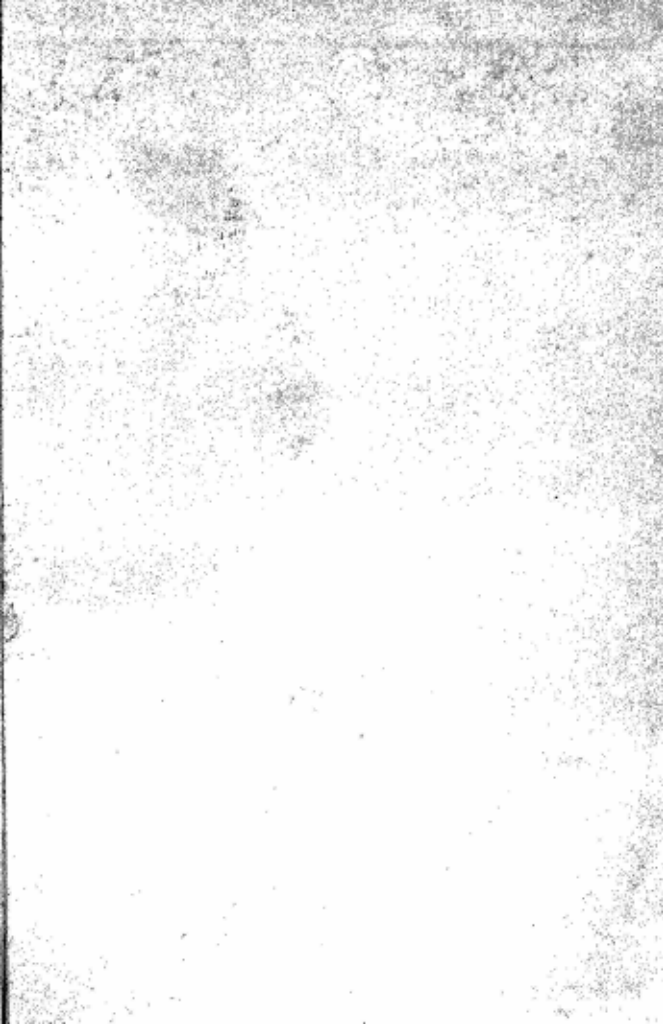
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