

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

Records of the Government of India,

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

No. L.

REPORT

ON THE

SETTLEMENT OF THE SIAM AND TENASSERIM
BOUNDARY,

BY

LIEUTENANT A. H. BAGGE, R.E.

Published by Authority.

CALCUTTA:

PRINTED AT THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT PRESS,

1866.

the conclusion that our safest plan was to keep our elephants till we actually got others, although they wanted to make out that there was no road to "Weng-mok." We told the elephant-drivers that we couldn't possibly let them go till we got to "Weng-mok" and saw those which the Siamese said they would give us. I spoke very kindly to my own men, and told them to be patient and wait a few days longer and I would reward them. They left us apparently quite satisfied with our reason for not letting them go away, and we fancied it would be all right; but this morning before dawn 14 out of 30 went off as hard as they could go: and this is partly due to the Siamese Commissioner, "Prinza-key," because he allowed the three elephants I hired from him to go away without asking me. Had he refused, I dare say the others would not have gone off. It is more than likely that these elephant-owners will come to me for payment some future day, but both Captain Street and myself consider that it would only be a just punishment for them not to pay them at all, because they asked to go away, and we explained our unpleasant position to them. Such a punishment will, perhaps, prevent their behaving like this in future. The "Paghlat Myo-sa" left "Da-Yeik" this morning in his "royal barge," his band playing him down the river.

Towards mid-day we managed to find out that there *was* a road, but that it was not very clear for the first few miles. "Pinya-keng" came up to our camp and wanted to know what we intended doing. We said our heavy things would go down by rafts, but we intended following the land route, *however* bad it might be. He appeared a good deal "put out" at this, for he never dreamt that after all that had been said we should think of such a thing. But what was his surprise and astonishment at being told that *he* ought to accompany us, as it was his territory, and without him we might get into difficulties. He had made up his mind to go down easily and sleepingly in a boat, but he is a very sensible man, and a few minutes' talking persuaded him to give up his former idea and accompany us. The "Teik-pa-kyit" River here is about 100 yards broad, with little or no current; the "Mai-nan-nway" enters it through a rocky gorge opposite the village of "Da-Yeik."

The "Teik-pa-kyit" River is a succession of still-water basins and rapids from "Wenka" as far as its junction with the "Thee-tha-wot"

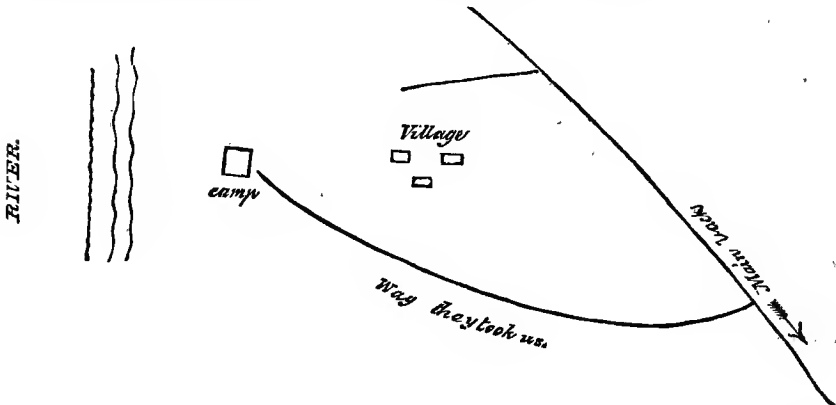
near "Camboorie." These rapids are more dangerous as the water supply sinks, for the obstructing rocks and ridges approach and rise above the surface of the stream. This naturally obtains where the water is saturated with "lime." The original small obstruction increases by successive deposits, which harden under the influence of the atmosphere when the water level has sunk, and year by year this continues till the erosive action of the "pent-up stream" rushing through the gorge prevents further encroachment, and maintains in some degree a balance between "production and destruction." Da-Yeik" is a "keng" or "outpost." A few men are posted here to apprehend criminals or others who may be trying to get out of the country.

These men reside in the village, and the only advantage they have over others is that they are exempt from capitation tax; they pay other taxes in common with the rest of the Taleings: inland it amounts to six annas for 1,600 square yards, which is roughly Rupees 1-2 per acre. But their "capitation tax" is different to ours: every poor man has his own peculiar lord and master, who requires three months' labour in the year at his hands, or an equivalent sum in money. These bondmen have the name of their Chief tattooed on the right or left wrist, according to the position and rank of the "Meng." They are generally marked early in life, about sixteen, but some manage to keep away at the marking time, and so protract their freedom till nearly 30. As each man is marked his name goes down into the general list, and from that hour they must either work or pay up. There is, however, a gradation in the working scale: though the majority have to work one-fourth of the year, there are many who, from their somewhat superior position, are only required to give up a month and a half in the year.

29th January 1866.—6½ miles. To head water of the "Krong-geng-yon" through dense tree jungle; the first three miles on level ground, and then an ascent into a high table-land, which is apparently the case of the limestone ridge which divides the waters of Teik-pa-kyit and Thee-tha-wot Rivers.

Captain Street and myself were just starting off this morning when the Siamese Commissioner's Interpreter came running up to us, exclaiming, "You can't go on; it's no use: there is no road; the forest is so

thick"—all this in quick breathless succession and in an excited manner. We smiled and went on. For the first 200 yards there was no track whatever, and we had to cut our way, and we began to think it didn't look as nice as we could have wished, when suddenly at the end of the 200 yards we came into a capital well-beaten path.



It is true that we found a few obstructions in the shape of fallen bamboos, but on the whole it was a very good path. We halted here at half-past 12, as they told us that, if we went on, we couldn't reach water till nightfall. These people had already begun their "Asiatic tricks," but so long as we are independent of them in "carriage" they won't gain much by deceiving us.

In the forest we met with some Tavoy boxwood and cinnamon trees.

30th January 1866.—To the Don-ka-lay Keng, $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Through the tree forest with undergrowth of bamboos: towards the end of the march the trees thinned considerably, giving place to bamboos and highish grass. The bamboos here were in flower; some had seeded and died. We have been gradually ascending into high table-land. The reading of the Barometer shows this to be about 1,200 feet above the sea; to the south-west towards the Teik-pa-kyit River a chaos of ridges and rounded hills line the horizon. The grass round about is trodden down here and there by wild animals, and we met with the footprints of the bison and rhinoceros.

Yesterday the Siamese told us not to go on, as we couldn't reach water till nightfall, and yet $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from camp we came upon a nice,

flowing stream, which is really the main "Kengyon" keng; yesterday's halting-place being at the rise of one of its feeders. About $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from camp we came into an "Eing," or drainage basin, much frequented by wild cattle. This stream where we are encamped is anything but the nicest spot for a camp, as the little water there is held up by a succession of natural bunds formed by the mineral saturated water; but they tell us we must halt, for there's no water further on.

31st January 1866.—To the head waters of the "Kron-kra," $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The first four miles through a forest of high trees and undergrowth of bamboos; ground generally level. Two miles from camp we came upon the Karen village of "Thee-moo," consisting of some six houses: for a mile and half beyond it the track goes through a belt of teak forest. Although the trees were of large girth, but few of them could be called fine trees, for they were mostly crooked, and the main trunks were shorter than those about the Thoungyoung River. Two miles beyond the village you come into a valley, and then you imagine you are leaving the high flat lands you have been travelling on and descending into the valleys to the south-east; but suddenly the route turns to the north-west up what seemed to be a ridge of limestone rock, but on reaching the summit you find yourself on a higher level plain covered with Engbouns and Htonk-kyans without any shade and a burning hot soil. This belt of forest continues till you first come upon water; it cannot be called a stream, even if it covers a large swampy area clothed with long "kaing" grass. The limestone ridge has disappeared, and you find yourself in a high plateau, so level that the water seems to hesitate which way it had better take. Here they made us halt, for there was no water further on, they said.

This morning but two miles from yesterday's camp on the "Donka-lay" we crossed the "Thee-moo" Keng, a nice, flowing stream. This is a second time that the Siamese have deceived us about water. We have pitched our camp in about the worst and most unhealthy place one could find, and Captain Street and myself had a consultation about it, and were fixed to accept what was told us as true, lest it should be the old story of the wolf, and thirst came upon us at last; we had lost sight of the Siamese Commissioner, "Pinya-keng," the very first day, but we found him to-day at the village of "Thee-moo:" the village was

crowded with Pongyees and Karens from other parts of the district. The tired-out, dirty look of the Karens and a rough-looking structure bearing upon a third story a box containing the precious bones (dust) of a departed Pongyee testified to what had taken place yesterday. No sooner did we get to the village than the Karens brought out the remains of their repast, and all our Burmese ate every conceivable trash that was put before them to their hearts' content. "Pinya-keng" knew perfectly well the whereabouts of this village, for he seems to have made for it to get in time for the "Pongyee-byan," but we knew nothing about it; and although the "Pongyee-byan" was nothing to us, we should have enjoyed a halt by a nice, refreshing stream of water instead of a series of stagnant pools. Since our arrival at Da-Yeik there has been a great change in the behaviour of the Commissioners; they tried to prevent our taking this "land route," and it appears to us to spring from a disinclination to permit us to survey in their territory. They fancied that once we got into rafts and flowing water there would be an end of surveying, as "who could possibly measure a distance on water?" They little know that by reason of the constancy of rate in a chronometer at rest relative longitudes are easily found, and that carefully-executed "time and compass" surveys of a river checked by latitude observations afford far better data than the rough route survey we are fixed to make. There is one thing certain: we have got our own elephants, and we are determined upon sticking to them till we actually see those the Siamese say they will give us when we get to "Weng-mok."

1st February 1866.—To the "Lon-thon" Keng, distant 16 miles. For $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles through a nice, shady forest, as far as the village of "Ta-ta-go," on the east branch of the "Teik-pa-kyit," after crossing the river through one of those hot Engbounng tracts up to the 15th mile. Here we came upon a small Shan settlement; the people were employed in cutting down the "sappan trees" for the Bangkok market.

This is our first happy encampment since we left Da-Yeik. Both elephants and men were quite exhausted with the long march from Ta-ta-go: even at this time of the year the heat was dreadful. The burning sun above combined with the refracted heat from the rocky soil reminded me of the days of the famine in the North-West in 1861,