

TRAVEL AND COLONISATION.

BURMA.

"SOUTH-WEST," writing in The Field of Oct. 31, relates his experiences of the Burmese frontier. As probably for the next few years our force will be considerably augmented in that country...

The low scrub around Thayet Myo contained not only jungle fowl, but a fair amount of hares. By crossing over to Meaday in high season, one can see the occasional francolin and a few quail, can be had; whilst by going to Proms, first-rate small game shooting can be had between it and Namyan, whilst snipe in thousands are to be found in many places...

Our principal force will advance up the Irrawaddy. Soon after crossing the present frontier the aspect of the country changes. It is no longer subject to the monsoon; rain may fall at any time, there is no rotting of the land...

At its landing-place is the Pumpkin Pagoda; there is still a considerable village there. A few of the pagodas are intact, and the most beautiful in Burma, and second only to the Taj Mahal in beauty of design and construction.

floods they are tortuous and narrow, but with our modern artillery it would not take us long to batter the city about the king's ears.

A force landing and advancing on Mandalay would meet with many difficulties, as the country is so hilly and the water courses, and all the bridges would be broken down. A pontoon train would be necessary. Near Mandalay live the Manipurees who form the king's cavalry. I have no doubt these men would be as good as dead.

Opposite Mandalay, on the other side of the river, there is the largest mass of brick-work in the world—the second largest ball. The Pagoda of Mandoon was intended to be 600ft. high. Its approaches were to be guarded by two monstrosities, each 200ft. high.

The Arrakan idol is so covered with gold leaf—which is added to every pilgrim—that it is misshapen in parts, and but that I fancy they occasionally shove it over the edge of a precipice, and strictly equalising several Daniel Lamberts long ago; but it must be a valuable trophy even now.

The river contracts above Mandalay, and is very beautiful towards Bhamo, where the sport is also very fine. The samain, or brown of Burma, is a beautiful beast, is seen here and there; but in Manipuree it becomes a variety differing from that of Burma in the shape of its horns and the number of tines.

AMONG THE KUKI.

(Continued from page 651.)

THE METHOD of clearing the jhoom needs little notice; the time chosen for the commencement of operations being decided by those signs that indicate the sap is running down after the cessation of the rains, although ringing large trees may be seen in the open sites on in a desultory kind of manner throughout the previous season. All tall straight trees are rung and lopped, not so much to save the trouble of felling them, but that they may serve for supports to the various kinds of vine or other creepers the jhoomeers intend to raise.

A Kuki jhoom may be said to form a crude botanical garden, and upon it and in the surrounding jungles an interesting epitome of the commercial products of these hills may be compiled, and an idea obtained of the vast undeveloped resources of the north-eastern frontier of India, inasmuch as it is represented by the hills surrounding the Burma valley.

Sport among the Kuki settlement must, from the nature of the country and density of the jungle, be all pursued on foot; but the danger is considerably lessened by the wonderful pluck and intrepidity of the people, and the fact that the Kuki animals may be in quest of the sportsman to encounter. As trackers they are second to none, and I have had a Kuki hand me my second gun (when I had missed a rhinoceros in thick

woods high up the Langai river) with as much calm indifference as if it were an every-day occurrence.

Elephants may be eliminated from the list of animals found here, that the sportsman may come across, for, though the penalty is £500, he is not legally excused, and he will kill one under the foot of the hills, the authorities would be sure to try to get on, and a vexatious interference with your movements would result. Buffalo abound in the swampy basins that exist between the spurs that stretch out into the plains from the higher ranges, and that use the true buffalo, and that use the smooth-looking hybrid beast that seems a cross between the one and the buffalo of the way, in shooting buffalo under these hills, you should not be in too great a hurry to fire when coming suddenly on these animals, as the Manipuri villagers have a custom of driving their tame female ones well down into these southern jungles, that they may be served by the wild bulls; hence it is just as well to reserve your fire until the herd turns round, after the first skeddadle, and faces you, as these creatures invariably do, when the rattan head-stall, that all tame buffalo are provided with, will guide you. Bulls you are quite safe in letting drive at, as they are never kept in captivity; and indeed a buffalo bull, especially when put to rest while in company with his harem, is rather apt to take the initiative and open the ball on his own account, but your guide, with a very cursory glance at the track, will soon tell you pretty accurately what kind of animal he is.

These animals may be found in gettable ground in the swampy land immediately beneath the Chatachura peak to the south-west; but the best way to secure one is to offer a reward to some men at the place. They are almost always found hanging about the outskirts of the Chatachura, that still roam south of the Chargaola tea plantations; and about July and August, when the calves are born, may be had at the head of the ravine, but not very far from the swamps from which their food is derived. The calves are the most vulnerable, and the hunter must take his chance. The Kukis scoure them in pits, but the spearing of them to death when so entrapped is a tedious and a cruel piece of business; shields made from their hides are common enough, and they are not particularly difficult to stop an ordinary bullet. The calves have occasionally been shot, but, unless fed on buffalo milk, are very difficult to rear, and the only youngster I ever secured I was fain to let loose again, as he steadily refused all food. The huge red swamp deer (locally known as the bhesoon) is plentiful, and is abundant in all the swamps as it inhabits these wilds. They lie so close that one almost tumbles over them as you wade through the Kyrga weed that fringes the swamps. At night they resort to the freshly burnt ground, and the hunter may see them in the front of the moonlight. The sambur is met with in all the hills, and he sticks pretty close to the forest, while the barking deer is a perfect nuisance upon all cultivation, prancing about among the pumpkins, and nibbling the young shoots of cotton, rice, and even the rice plants themselves. Another exceedingly pretty variety of the deer tribe, though not peculiar to the hills, is abundant here than in any other easily reached part of the southern Assam districts. The body is not much larger than a full-sized antelope, and the animal stands about sixteen inches in height. It is easily captured, and when once tamed, but is not particularly useful as a source of food, and is not particularly useful as a source of food, and is not particularly useful as a source of food.

Tiger and leopard are met with, but the nature of the jungle prevents them being often seen, and they are chary of roaming the low lands, as buffalo, when their calves are at foot, invariably give chase to them; this is really a well-ascertained fact. The sambar deer is well represented—the common wild one (both grey and brown)—and the sambar is the most numerous, and probably the domestic pig run wild from being left behind in an abandoned jhoom. Otters are very numerous, as may be supposed from the streams and pools that intersect the country at the foot of the hills, and they are very common, and are not particularly useful as a source of food, and are not particularly useful as a source of food.

Of birds there is a great variety, and all are easily obtained. In fact, I saw a collection of skins made in these hills by one of the Government surveyors that would have formed a most valuable addition to any museum. The great and lesser hornbill are so numerous that I found a pair of each in an early morning stroll on the upper Langai. Woodpeckers, jays, the common white-winged pie, bulbul, dial, doves, and all the pigeon tribe, are met with in profusion. Of pheasants, we have the common one, Swinnow's, and one almost white, that at first might be mistaken for a freak of nature, but which, on being shot, proved to be a Swinnow's pheasant, and last, though not least, the polyplectron, which fits and scuttles about in all directions, making the forest resound, morning and evening with its noisy clatter. These latter hand-some birds are easily kept in captivity if people were once made to understand that its consumption of grain is in the proportion of one-third to that of worms and insects. It is found both low down in the plains and as high as 6000ft., from which conditions, it seems of sufficiently robust nature to make the experiment of introducing it to the woods and forests of our own country well worth a trial. Almost any number of these birds can be brought in at one or two rupes the pair, though hens with young broods, from eight might be had, and they are equally procurable about July and August.

For a commercial man or naturalist no better field offers in N.E. India; but the botanist, and he who expects sport on the battue system, will be rather disappointed with the country.

SYSTEM.

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