

THE VICEROY IN COOCH BEHAR.

THE correspondent of the *Pioneer* at Cooch Behar writes on Feb. 20:—

Cooch Behar is *en fete*, this being the first occasion on which a Viceroy has visited the State. Their Excellencies arrived here this afternoon, Lady Lansdowne from Calcutta, and the Viceroy from Darjeeling.

The Viceroy left Darjeeling yesterday at noon with the small party accompanying him, and performed the journey from Goompahar where the descent begins, by trolley to Sukna, the rest of the journey being done by train. His Excellency and party were joined last night at the Parbutia station, *en route* here, by Lady Lansdowne, Prince Christian Victor, Lord William Beresford, and Lord Valletort. The Teesta was crossed this morning by ferry, trolleys being used for conveyance over the sandy stretch adjoining the river. His Highness the Maharaja met their Excellencies at the Mogulhat station at ten o'clock, after which the Dharla was crossed, trolleys being used as before to take the party some distance to the ferry. Breakfast was served at the Gitaldah dāk bungalow, and in the afternoon the party left for Cooch Behar, arriving about four o'clock. The Maharaja drove His Excellency, Prince Christian Victor, Lord de Vesci, and Captain Harbord in the last two stages, Lord William Beresford accompanying Lady Lansdowne. The whole route for twenty-four miles was spanned at intervals by arches bearing suitable inscriptions expressive of loyalty and welcome, while on either side were rural policemen carrying spears, and posted at a distance of about fifty yards apart. The road was in excellent condition.

On His Excellency's arrival at the palace he was at once conducted by the Maharaja to the Durbar Hall, where the Town Committee of Cooch Behar presented an address of welcome, which was read by Mr. Lewis, Superintendent of the State. To this address His Excellency replied:—

I thank you for the friendly words with which you have welcomed me to Cooch Behar. My visit is, as you have pointed out, a private and friendly one, the result of a kind invitation which your Maharaja, for whom I have a sincere regard, has more than once renewed, and which I am delighted to be able to accept this year. I shall, however, certainly not complain of you for having taken advantage of my presence, in order to bear witness to your feeling of loyalty towards her Majesty the Queen-Empress, whose severe affliction has elicited such genuine and widespread sympathy throughout her Indian dominions. You have pointed out to me the advantages which the State of Cooch Behar has derived from its close proximity to the adjoining province of Bengal, and you tell me that your administration and laws are framed on the model of those to be found in the Lower Provinces. I am far from saying that it is desirable that the Indian States should, in all particulars, imitate to the letter the institutions to be found in British India. There can, however, be no doubt that in many respects those institutions, in so far as they provide for even justice and for the security of life and property, afford an example which the States may do well to follow to the best of their ability, and with due regard to the different conditions of each portion of the country. I am particularly glad to hear that you are exerting yourselves to promote the sanitation of the town and other measures for the comfort and well-being of its inhabitants, and you may certainly congratulate yourselves upon the liberal measure of assistance which you have received from his Highness the Maharaja in furthering those objects. Cooch Behar is famous for its sports, and I could not have a better mentor than your Maharaja, who, amongst his many admirable qualities, possesses in a high degree the love of those field sports and manly exercises which are so dear to my fellow-countrymen.

At half-past five the same evening the Viceroy laid the foundation-stone of the Lansdowne Hall in the presence of large numbers of spectators, who were seated under an immense shamiana which was pitched on the site of the proposed hall.

Subsequently the Maharaja entertained the Viceroy and about twenty-five guests at dinner, after which his Highness proposed their Excellencies' health. He said this was the first occasion on which a Viceroy had honoured Cooch Behar with his presence, and he considered himself singularly fortunate in having been the first ruler who had been so honoured. He could not miss this opportunity of thanking his Excellency for accepting his invitation, the more so when he thought of the cares and anxiety which, as head of the Government of India, his Excellency had. He also thanked Lord Lansdowne for the kindly sentiments he had always expressed towards the native princes of India, and for the extremely kind manner in which he was pleased to speak of him (the Maharaja) when replying to the Town Committee's address, and at the laying of the foundation-stone of Lansdowne Hall that evening. He begged to express his deep sense of loyalty to her gracious Majesty the Queen-Empress, whom his Excellency represented in this country, and to assure his Excellency that his service personally, and the services of those belonging to him, were at all times at the disposal of her Majesty's Government. It was a matter of extreme regret that the Maharani was not present there to welcome their Excellencies.

The Viceroy, in replying, expressed the great pleasure which it gave him to visit Cooch Behar, in compliance with the hospitable invitation made to him by the Maharaja. Soon after his arrival in India his Excellency said that he had observed that although Indian tourists differed very much in their appreciation of the country, there was complete unanimity among those who had the good fortune to spend a few days in Cooch Behar as to the attractions of that place. His Excellency then referred to the pleasure with which he had noticed, during the few hours which he had spent at Cooch Behar, the many evidences of the Maharaja's solicitude for the welfare of the people committed to his charge, and he thanked His Highness for his hospitality to him and his friends. He added that the only drawback to their happiness was the absence of the Maharani, whose illness he sincerely deplored.

In proposing the health of His Highness he would couple with it that of the Maharani, with the sincere hope that she would, before long, be completely restored to her usual health. (Applause.)

His Excellency and party, with the Maharaja, left the palace for the shooting camp on Feb. 21.

THE CHIN-LUSHAI QUESTION.

THE *Pioneer* of Feb. 25 says:—Our telegrams from the Chin Hills prove how successfully the cold weather operations in the wild country west of the Lower Chindwin valley are being carried out. The routes of the various columns were carefully planned, the main idea being to coerce such clans as had shown hostility in the past, and to visit all villages of importance that had not yet been "looked up" by our political officers. There was to be as little bloodshed as possible, though the safety of the troops was to be ensured by vigorous measures in the case of threatened attacks, while at the same time the tribal sections who refused to pay up their fines and surrender their Burman slaves were to be adequately punished. It was thought that the Kanhows to the north would oppose the passage of any column through their hills, but the little force which pushed onwards to the Manipore border were well received, and they got through to their destination without any assistance being required from Imphal. Their march has demonstrated that the natural difficulties of this particular route are not so great as was anticipated, and that consequently pressure can be brought to bear directly upon the Kanhows from Manipore in case of turbulence among them. The peaceful attitude of this clan may in part be due to the expedition of last spring, which brought about the downfall of the Senaputty Tekendrajit; for the concentration of three "armies" upon Imphal must have become widely known among the tribesmen. However this may be, the Kanhow Chins are now on their best behaviour, and with a little management they may be weaned from raiding and head-hunting. It may be remembered that last April, when Grant was cut off from communication with Tammoo, the Kanhows were reported to have risen, and serious mischief was apprehended. The alarm died away in a little time, but it is clearly important to bring completely under control a clan that can block the road between Tammoo and Manipore. It is true there is no danger of further trouble in that quarter, but the first principle to be observed in settling borderlands is to provide for the absolute safety of lines of communication. The land-route between Assam and Upper Burma must be by way of Manipore, and looking forward to the time when a grand trunk road will connect the two provinces, one sees how necessary it is now to have the tribes on either side well in hand. Kukies and Nagas on the north and Kanhows on the south must alike be brought under civilising influences if the Burma-Assam road is to be generally used by traders and immigrants.

The columns which have Haka as their base have as important work to do as those operating from Fort White. There are, apparently, a number of hostile clans that refuse to recognise the changed conditions in Upper Burma, even though our troops are in evidence on every side. They are loth to give up their Burman slaves or to part with their rude firearms, and hence in their case coercion is necessary. In many a village in the Myit Tha valley are bitter memories of past raids when the Chins swept down into the plains, pillaging and burning homesteads, and returning to their hills with their tale of human heads and strings of wretched captives. The Burmans were never able to check these raids, and the hillmen terrorised the borderland until a few years ago. They are now being brought under subjection by the only methods they can understand, but coercion is tempered by a very lenient policy towards all who make submission. All that is asked by our political officers is that every slave should be surrendered, that fines imposed for past offences should be paid, and that a certain number of the firearms in the possession of each tribal section should be given up if it is necessary to demand them. The unarmed Chin has nothing to fear from our soldiers, but if he will persist in carrying weapons after being duly warned, he must take the consequences of his obduracy. Again, villages that tender their submission are not touched in any way; but persistent opposition by headmen and their armed followers may involve the destruction of their houses. We have all along set our faces against the indiscriminate burning of villages in the Chin Lushai country, and for this reason. The people have become British subjects, and they are no longer to be regarded as savages with whom our civilisation has no concern beyond inflicting upon them terrible punishment from time to time. When the Lushais alone had to be dealt with, the most that could be done to check their raids was to carry fire and sword through their country and then retire behind the frontier again. The system served the purpose in a way, but no permanent results were obtained. "The white men have come and gone: they will never return again" was a common saying in Lushai land; and as generation succeeded generation, the memory of past punishment died out, and head-hunting raids were ordered by this or that chief anxious to win popularity with his people. Now, however, that the country inhabited by Lushais, Chins and others, lying between our old frontier line and Upper Burma, has by the force of circumstances passed into our hands, the question of the treatment of the people inhabiting it has assumed an entirely different phase.

They have been so hemmed in that they are powerless for mischief in the old traditional way; but their savage instincts cannot all at once be eradicated. Blow after blow has been struck at them in the last five or six years, their most powerful chiefs have been killed, captured or forced to make their submission; and slowly, but surely, the subjugation of the hill tracts from Manipore to Arakan has been accomplished. A few clans, such as those which the Haka and Fort White columns are dealing with, have not submitted; but they are not of any great importance. With the tribesmen now cowed, the field lies open for the exercise of that political tact and persuasiveness which British political officers have used so effectively in other parts of the Empire, when savage races have had to be dealt with.