

CHIN-LUSHAI LAND

INCLUDING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS EXPEDITIONS INTO THE
CHIN-LUSHAI HILLS AND THE FINAL ANNEXATION
OF THE COUNTRY

BY

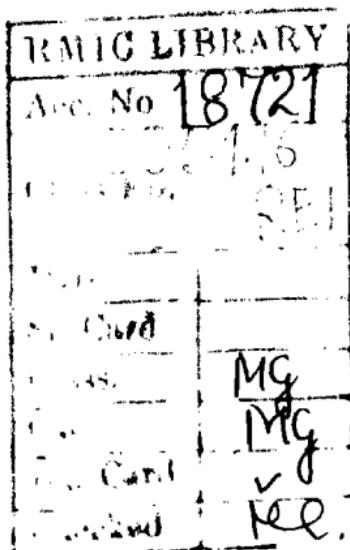
SURG.-LIEUT.-COL. A. S. REID, M.B.
*Indian Medical Service: Medical Officer in charge 2nd Battalion
4th Gurkha Rifles.*

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Calcutta
THACKER, SPINK AND CO.
1893

CALCUTTA:

PRINTED BY THACKER, SPINK AND CO.



D E D I C A T E D

T O

S. V. R.



PREFACE.

IN a campaign or expedition into a new country, it can easily be understood that the matters regarding military operations, political negotiations, or characteristics of the people concerned, which come within the personal observation of a medical officer, must, from the nature of his duties, be of very limited extent, and that he is usually debarred, by his position, from acquiring an accurate knowledge of the undertaking as a whole.

It is therefore almost entirely owing to the kindness of Colonel W. P. Symons, c.b., of the South Wales Borderers, Colonel V. W. Tregear, c.b., of the 9th Bengal Infantry, and Colonel G. J. Skinner, d.s.o., of the 3rd Bengal Infantry, who commanded the Chin Force, Lushai Force, and Northern Column of the latter respectively in the expedition of 1889-90, and who placed the information in their possession at my disposal, as well as to that of Mr. G. M. Chesney, Editor of the Allahabad *Pioneer*, who allowed me to search the files of his paper for former records of the Chin-Lushai Country, that I am enabled to place the following volume before the public.

I have also to thank Colonel R. M. Clifford, i.s.c., Lieutenant E. W. M. Norie, Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant M. E. Wiloughby, 2nd Bengal Lancers, and Surgeon-Captain A. G. E. Newland, of the Indian Medical Service, for generously furnishing me with information, etchings and photographs.

A. SCOTT REID.

CALCUTTA,

October 1893.

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CHIN-LUSHAI LAND.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND ETHNOLOGICAL.

PRIOR to 1889, the interior of the tract of country known as the Chin-Lushai Hills, was a *terra incognita*, and, even now, there are probably many members of the general public included in the class of well-educated to whom the title conveys but little meaning, and in whom it arouses still less interest.

Consisting of parallel mountain ranges rising to heights of over 9,000 feet, this, the most recent acquisition to Her Majesty's dominions, embraces every variety of physical feature and climate, from the dense and deadly jungles below, through the tangled mazes of which the ponderous elephant and rhinoceros push

their way, to the invigorating summits, crowned with pines, where the sheen of the pheasant's wing catches the eye, as, with lightning speed, he skims down the mountain side.

People this region with dusky tribes, almost as numerous in dialect and designation as the villages in which they live, owning no central authority, possessing no written language, obeying but the verbal mandates of their chiefs, hospitable and affectionate in their homes, unsparing of age and sex while on the warpath, untutored as the remotest races in Central Africa, and yet endowed with an intelligence which has enabled them to discover for themselves the manufacture of gun-powder.

Such in general outline is the Chin-Lushai country, and such were its inhabitants until some three years ago they were touched by the transforming wand of civilization. The world moves rapidly in these times, and, before many decades shall have passed, the descendants of Lienpunga and Jahuta may perhaps be seen peacefully wending their way along roads, formerly the lines of "Kuki" paths, and used principally for murderous raids, but now leading to trim railway stations, whence the powerful engine and pioneer of progress conveys them to Rangoon or Calcutta as candidates for University degrees and Government appointments.

No less strange things have happened within comparatively recent years. In the words of a writer in the *Englishman* : "The future of Lushai-land may be fore-

seen from what we know of the Khasia Hills that lie to the north of it. Sixty years ago the Khasias, who are the bravest and most warkike of all the wild tribes of India, were more bloodthirsty than the Lushais. On the 4th of April 1829, they rose in arms, and murdered Lieutenants Bedingfield and Burlton and some sepoys. That led to the inevitable military expedition which was protracted through several cold seasons, and the accounts of which differ from the accounts of the present Lushai Expedition chiefly in the determined resistance offered by the brave hill-men armed only with bows and arrows and *dhas*. The last of the Khasia chiefs did not tender his submission till 1833, and for the next twenty years Colonel Lister was Political Agent with the tribes. In his time Welsh missionaries entered the hills, learned the strange language, and reduced it to writing, prepared a grammar and vocabulary, introduced a printing press and opened schools.

"Now the Khasias are running the Bengalis a close race as clerks and accountants in the *cutcherries* (Government offices) at Shillong; they have beaten them in both the high schools there; their foremost youths are aspiring to University degrees; and in female education they are officially stated to take the lead of all the Indian races. There can be no doubt that the future of the Lushais will be similar, whichever missionary denomination enters the field. A few years will see the hill-sides dotted with schools, while the garrisons at Haka,

Sangal Klang and Fort Tregear will be asked for subscriptions to build churches."

The above reads like a page from Mark Twain's "A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur," but is none the less true as to facts and probable as to speculation.

The Chin-Lusbai country is said to extend generally between latitudes 21° and 24° north, and longitudes 92° and 94° east; to be bounded on the north by Manipur and Cachar, on the east and south by Burma, and on the west by Arakan and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, being some two hundred and sixty miles in length, with a maximum breadth of about one hundred and twenty.

Since beginning this work, however, I have received a note from Lieutenant E. W. M. Norie, of the Middlesex Regiment, late Intelligence Officer with the Southern Chin Column, in which he says, referring to the Chins: "They extend very far to the north—to parallels 28° or 29°, or further. Since I saw you, I made a trip up the Chindwin, about 150 miles beyond where any white man had been before, and they were there and to the north, living quite distinct from the Kachins and entirely in the hills. The Kachins called them by the Burmese name of 'Chins,' and say they extend north as far as they know anything of the country. Of course they are distinct tribes, but of the same stock, I fancy."

"The women wear a different style of dress from the Baungshès, and very little of it. In many parts men and women tattoo their faces."