

The Geographical Journal

Vol. LXV No. 4

April 1925

NEPAL

Brig.-General the Hon. C. G. Bruce, C.B., and Major
W. Brook Northey, M.C.

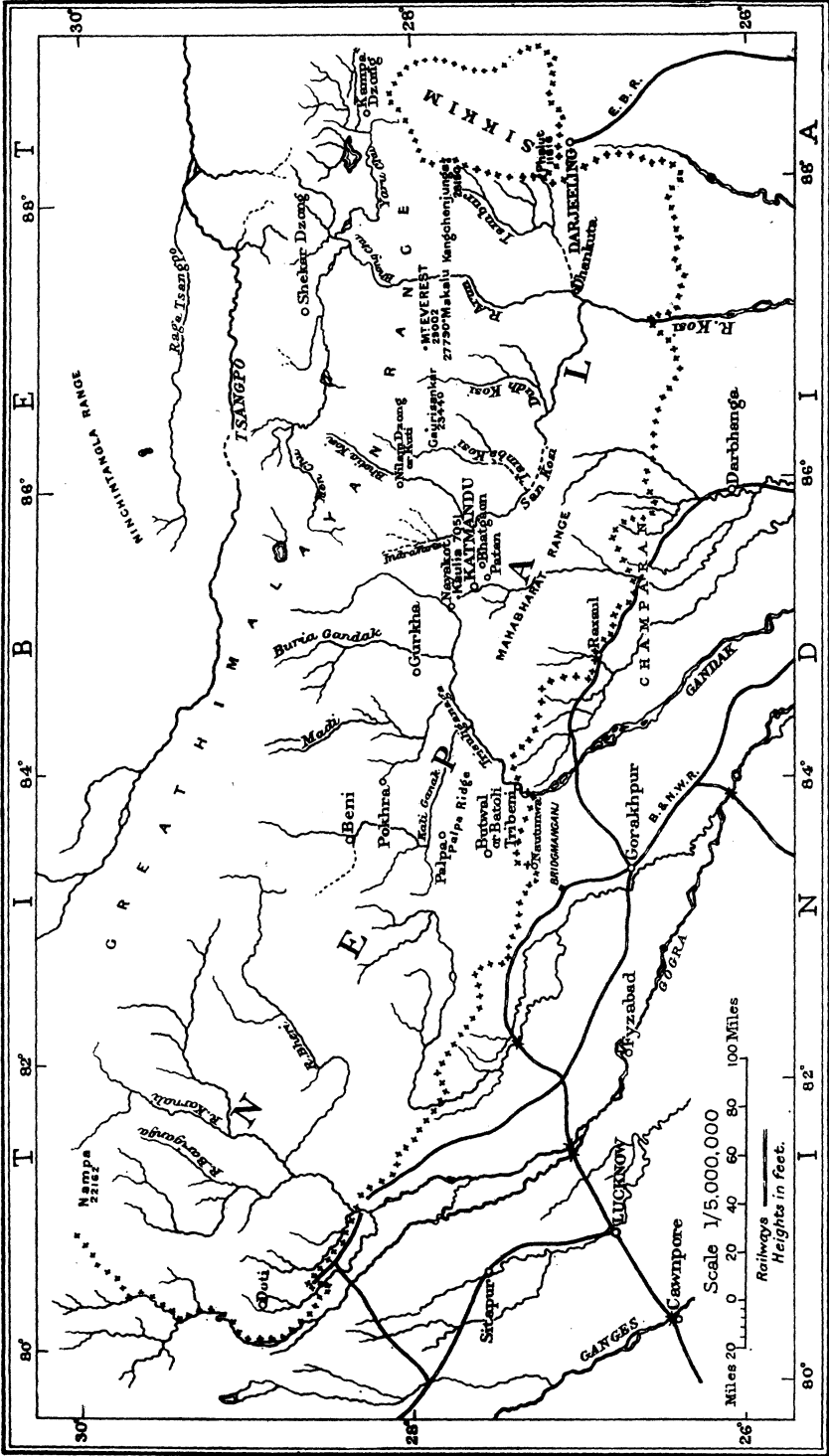
Read at the Meeting of the Society, 26 January 1925.

PART I: GENERAL BRUCE

WHEN Major Northey and I undertook to give a lecture on Nepal we both had at the back of our minds the idea of bringing out the relationship of the present Gurkha Raj with the Imperial Government, and of showing more clearly the position, and possibilities, and some of the present difficulties with which our relations with that country are faced. But in order to do this it is necessary to give a very short sketch of the history of Nepal, and the rise of the present reigning Gurkha dynasties. With this question is very much wrapped up the geographical aspect.

That part of the Himalaya between the Singalela ridge on the east and the Mahakali on the west is almost as little known as any part of Asia. Between these two boundaries lies the territory known as the Kingdom of Nepal—a name which has been given to it only as being the most convenient, and as representing the boundaries of the kingdom as fixed by Treaty. The name Nepal itself is, and has been for innumerable centuries, confined to the valley of Nepal, or, as it is called in Nepal itself, “The Country contained within the Four Passes”: to the east, the Saga pass; to the south, the Phar Ping (through the Mahabarat Range); to the west, the Panch Mané; and to the north, the Pati pass. Within these four passes lies the historic and true valley of Nepal, and these four passes separate Nepal from the outer world.

For many centuries the valley and the lowland, especially to the east, were in the hands of what are now looked upon as among the original inhabitants of Nepal, the Newars—a race distinctly and clearly of Mongolian origin and speaking a language also Mongolian in origin. Their country has been a religious centre for untold generations. It is called, after a great Hindu Rishi, Ne Muni, Ne Pal—the beloved abode of Ne. It went through all stages from early Hinduism, and then was for many years the sanctuary of Buddhism, visited by the great



SKETCH-MAP OF NEPAL, TO ILLUSTRATE THE PAPER BY GENERAL BRUCE AND MAJOR NORTHEY.
 The northern frontier of Nepal runs along the Great Himalayan Range, but not always on the line of the highest peaks.

Saint Manjusri, who probably was Shri Manchu, the Illustrious Manchu. Latterly it has been the home of Hinduism and Buddhism flourishing side by side. To the Newars are due all the culture, the arts and crafts of Nepal, and under them a considerable civilization must have been developed in this curious hidden land. From far back beyond the historic period the country has had a succession of dynasties, almost more confusing than Asiatic dynasties usually are. It was from them that the present Gurkha rulers of Nepal in the eighteenth century conquered and annexed the heart of the country.

Let me now roughly sketch the geography of the country. The region included under the term the Kingdom of Nepal is contained from east to west between the Singalela ridge, which divides it from Sikkim on the east, and the Mahakali, or Sarda, which divides it from Kumaon on the west—about 500 miles in a straight line. On the north its boundary is usually the main axis of the main Himalaya, but by no means altogether, as there is a certain amount of country, especially in central and westerly Nepal, beyond the first great snowy range. Its greatest breadth is from Mustang on the north to Makwanpur on the south, about 140 miles. In many parts it is a good deal less than that. Within these narrow confines one can pass from the wonderful tropical jungles of the Terai to the eternal snows.

To describe the country, possibly more as it is understood in Nepal, we may say that from east to west Nepal is divided up into four regions. The first is the Kosi system of drainage, known as the Sapt Kosis—the seven Kosis—which drains the whole of the eastern Nepal Himalaya, not only carrying off the waters from the southern slopes, but also from the northern slopes, *viâ* the Arun and the Bhotia Kosis, etc. This system is composed of the seven great tributaries of the Kosi river: the Tamor, the Arun, the Dudh Kosi, the Thama Kosi, the Sun Kosi, and the Bhoti Kosi. To which may be added the Indra Vati and the Likhu Kosis.

Then comes the valley of Nepal, included between the four passes as before stated, and principally drained by the sacred Bagh Mati.

Leaving the valley of Nepal we meet another great drainage system known as the Sapt Gandakis, which drains the main central Himalayas; from Gosain Than to beyond the Kali, and the great mountains of Dwalagiri and Mackhapuchri and Jhib Jhibia. The Sapt Gandakis consist of the Tirsuli, the Buria Gandak, the Marsiangdi, the Seti, the Chépé, the Madi, and the Kali (also known as the Krishna Gandaki), to which may be also added the Dharmadi.

To the west again we find the drainage system of the Karnali, with its great affluents the Bheri, the Buri Ganga, and the Seti Ganga; and then to the border, the Mahakali, which itself is an affluent of the Karnali. Many of these rivers, notably the Arun, the Bhoti Kosi, the Kali, and the Karnali, rise beyond the main axis of the Himalaya. Doubtless as our knowledge advances we shall find many more breaks through it.

As a matter of fact these very bald geographical facts have a great bearing on the distribution of the population, and the valleys down which these different rivers flow have generally their own human characteristics. It may be said that the system of the Sapt Gandakis is the original home of the Gurkhas, and of the old military tribes of Nepal.

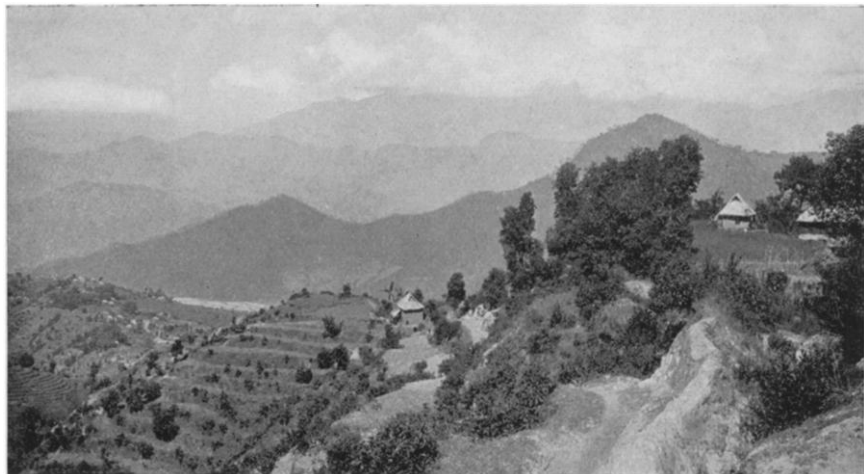
The whole of this very wonderful mountain country may be described as unknown. Reports brought by our native surveyors, who have been allowed into Nepal or have travelled in that country; the primitive maps of Nepal, of which there are a few; information collated at the Residency in Nepal or at our recruiting offices; and measurements made by our Survey officers, either from outside Nepal or from the valley and its neighbourhood, really supply all we know of this interesting country, which contains in itself some of the most magnificent scenery on the face of the globe. The most glorious panorama—a view I have hardly seen surpassed—was that which spread out before me one February morning, after bad weather, as I stood on the Chandragiri pass and looked down into the Nepal valley. Opposite to me lay the entire range of the Nepal Central Himalaya, deep in fresh snow, and appearing on that gorgeous winter's morning, in its sparkling white radiance, to be completely dominating the lower hill country which lay in the blue valleys immediately below me.

Nepal itself, the historic heart of the whole country, the ancient centre of culture in a sea of mountains, is the one considerable piece of flat ground, or, I should more truthfully say, *flattish* ground, to be found on the southern slopes of the Himalaya until the far greater western valley of Kashmir is reached, to which valley, however, it bears but little resemblance, being far more accidented, and being only some 15 miles in length by 7 in breadth. It is very thickly populated, and contains several towns of great antiquity and of great architectural interest.

In aspect these towns, their buildings, and surroundings are curiously un-Indian. The dominant impression one receives is Chinese, this being due to the Pagoda-like character of the architecture of all, or nearly all, the old temples and buildings. It is stated in Silvain Levi's book on Nepal that the Chinese got the idea of the Pagoda from Nepal, but I cannot vouch for the correctness of this theory.

Before I deal with the extraordinary mixture of peoples contained in this strip of the Himalaya, it will be necessary to trace briefly the establishment of the present dominant race and the rise of the Gurkha dynasty. As I have already said, the only seat of culture in this district for many hundred years lay in the valley of Nepal. This valley and the neighbouring districts were ruled over by many and various dynasties, dating back into prehistoric times. Notwithstanding the authority of the book popularly called the "Bangswali," we may neglect for the present purpose all those previous to the Newar kings.

It is clearly evident from buildings and roads that the Newars



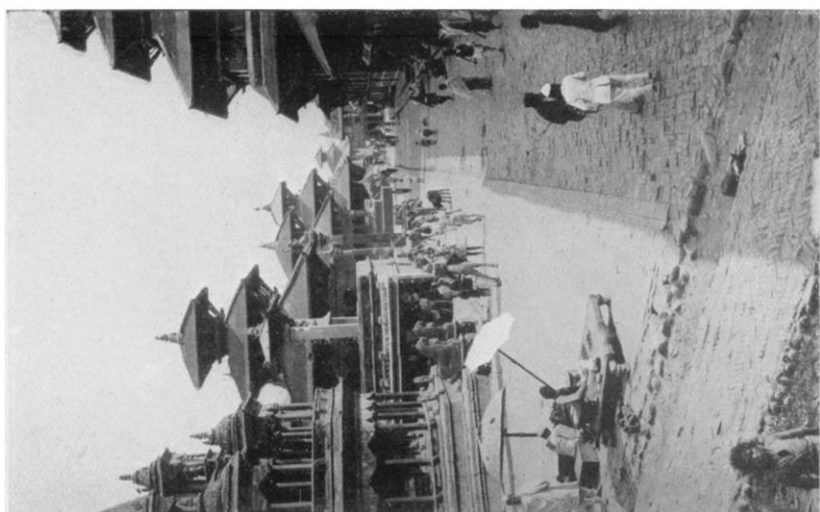
LIKHU AND NAYAKOT VALLEYS



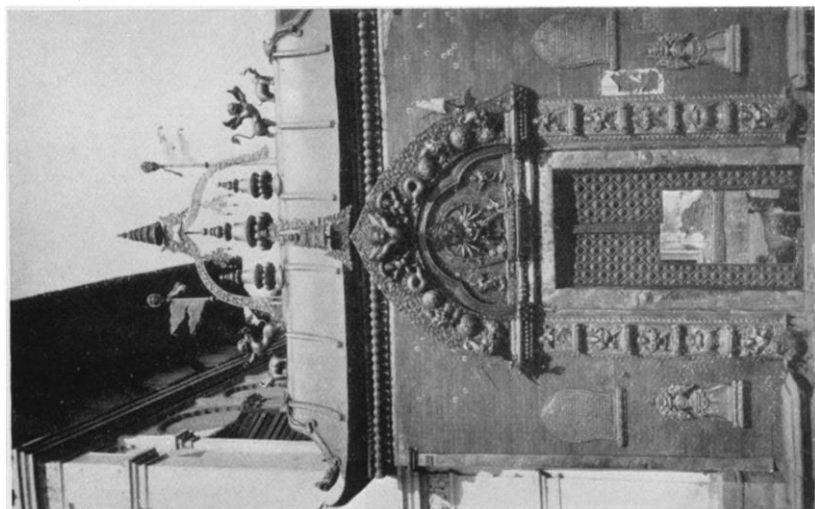
ROAD TO KATMANDU: KARRI RIVER



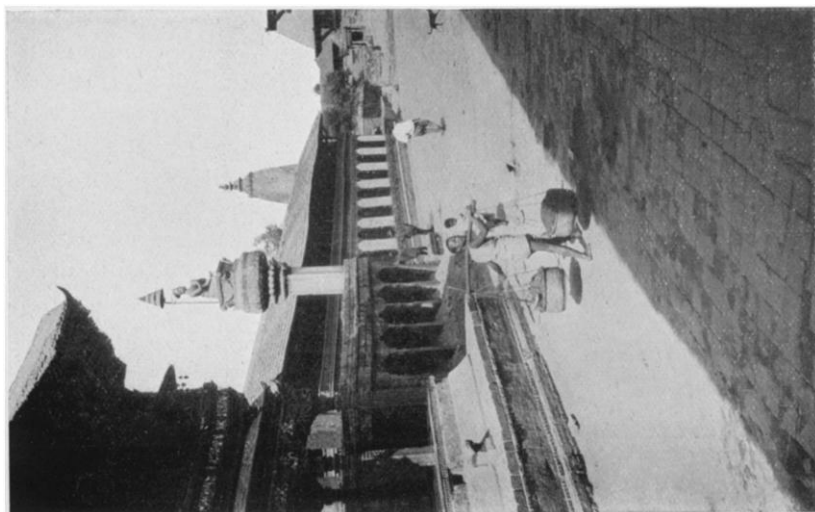
CORNFIELDS, LIKHU VALLEY



PATAN, NEPAL VALLEY



GOLDEN DOOR, DUREAR



DUREAR STREET, BHATGAON

influenced greatly, and probably entirely controlled, the low-lying hills as far as the Ilam to the east, and even Tansing to the west ; otherwise the whole mountain country was ruled by little hill chieftains, every valley being a law unto itself.

But another influence made itself felt as well during the course of centuries. Dating from the first and continuing throughout the subsequent Muhammadan invasions of India, there was a great movement of Brahmins and Rajputs from the plains into the mountains, far beyond the present Nepal Kingdom. Thus was the mixed Khassia race formed ; that portion of it, now the Khas, or Kshetriya class, being a mixture of high-class and aristocratic Hindus from the south with Mongolian barbarians from Nepal. The only difference between the Khas of Nepal and those hill tribes further west was, that although they had the same fathers they had different mothers.

Tradition has it that in the fourteenth century, after the fall of Chitor, certain scions of the house of Chitor fled northwards, entering the mountain country at Batoli, where their prestige assured them a welcome. Two hundred years later we find their descendants in the kings of numerous little hill states. But what a change has come over the high-bred, intensely aristocratic features of the Rajput ! Their faces have broadened and flattened. Can it be that the aristocratic Rajput type has demeaned itself by blending with the barbarian Mongolian ? That is undoubtedly what happened.

The whole of the country drained by the Gandakis was thus divided up into little kingdoms known as the Chaubissia Raj (the twenty-four kingdoms). One of these is the little state of Gurkha. Its inhabitants, Gurkhalis, followers of the King of Gurkha, are themselves precisely the same as those of all the neighbouring kingdoms, that is, they consist of the priestly class ; the Khas, or Kshetriya, the ruling class ; the Mongolian military tribes ; and a large number of inferior classes all of whom show Mongolian extraction.

At this period, about 1740, nearly the whole of the inhabitants of the mountains had been obliged to accept the Hindu ceremonial laws, thus coming more and more under the domination of the ruling classes. The then King of Gurkha was Prithwi Narain Sah, a man of ambition and a soldier by instinct. He was strong enough in 1742 to invade the Nepal valley, and for over twenty years he continued his attempts to conquer the three Newar kingdoms of Katmandu, Patan, and Bhatgaon. By 1768 the whole of the Nepal valley and the lands previously ruled by the Newars were in his possession, but so serious was the opposition that he had encountered that the Newars were never forgiven, and though becoming subjects of the King of Gurkha, they have never been allowed the title of Gurkhali.

I must explain what the title of Gurkhali means to a Nepali purist. It merely signifies a follower of the King of Gurkha, and is not a racial

term. So much so is this the case, that although the many neighbouring kingdoms, such as the Chaubissia Raj, and others which were rapidly incorporated with the Gurkha conquerors without fighting, received the title of Gurkhali, neither the Newars nor the many Mongolian classes to the east, who at the present time furnish us with many of our very best Gurkha soldiers, are allowed by the Gurkha purist the title of Gurkhali. There is, however, one striking exception. Those Newars, the traders of the country, who had for generations been living in the town and district of Gurkha, were, and still are, permitted to call themselves Gurkhalis.

Prithwi Narain and his army, having established themselves in Nepal, quietly annexed the states immediately right and left of the valley, his successors pushed further to the east and west, and after considerable fighting, engulfed the whole of what is now called Eastern Nepal, including the military tribes known as Kirantis, or Rais, and Limbus, as well as other tribes in the great valleys running down from the main chain.

The Gurkhas were now full of ambition. They had, in fact, the lust of conquest, and besides that, were prodigiously swollen-headed. They acquired and incorporated into themselves the many hill states of the Sapt Gandakis, including the most powerful, the King of Palpa, who was in 1803 disposed of in true Oriental fashion, by poison, having been invited over to discuss the situation at Katmandu.

They then pushed west, acquiring all the hill country of Humla, Jumla and Baghang and Doti, and finally, crossing the Mahakali, overran and acquired Kumaon, Garwhal, and Jaunsa Bawar, etc., pushing their outposts up and through the Kangra Valley as far as the present hill station of Bakloh. Even this sweeping conquest did not suffice, and an attempt was made to acquire also a dominating influence in Tibet, and especially to acquire the two main routes, *viâ* the Kerong Pass at the head of the Tirsuli, and the Kuti Pass beyond Nilam, and high up on the Bhotia Kosi. They even extended their expeditions, though little better than raiding parties, through Tingri to Shekar, and as far as Shigatse.

This brought upon them condign punishment from the Chinese, who rapidly collected a force superior in arms and numbers, and not only defeated the Gurkhas but followed them into their own country, to within two marches of Katmandu itself. The Gurkhas claim that 70,000 Chinese drove them back, but it is extremely doubtful whether the Chinese army numbered even 20,000. Nepal, of course, in those days, neither in organization nor power, could compare in any way with what it is at the present time, and it is unlikely that the Gurkhas had even 10,000 men to oppose the Chinese. At all events a treaty was entered into by the Chinese general, who effected his retreat before the winter snows. The most notable factor in the treaty was that the Nepalese

should send a Tribute every five years to Peking ; this continued without a break until the establishment of a Republic in China a few years ago.

After this escape from China the Gurkha mentality went from bad to worse. They still held their advanced posts to the west, but naturally their forces were very attenuated, and the Sikhs, who then held the Kangra Valley, very soon obliged them to pull in their horns. Their conduct, too, all along the British Frontier was so arrogant and so provocative, that in 1814 war was declared between the Gurkhas and the British Government. This war was remarkable for a great deal of hard fighting on the part of the rank and file, and the failure of many British generals, redeemed however by Jasper Nicholls and Ochterlony, Nicholls in Kumaon, and Ochterlony at Bichia Koh on the main road, threatening Nepal. The Treaty of Segowli was shortly afterwards signed, the confines of the Nepal frontiers fixed, and a British Resident established at Katmandu. By this treaty, also, the Nepalese allowed their subjects to be enlisted for service in the Indian Army, and, it is specially stated, to be officered by British officers.

About this time another most important fact arose in Nepalese history. The descendants of Prithwi Narain had rapidly degenerated in character, and the power had been placed in the hands of regents, passing thence into the hands of prime ministers. Thus was established in Nepal, and still continues to this day, a system similar to that of the *Roi Fainéant* and the *Maire du Palais* of French history. It is not necessary to follow very closely the political history of Nepal from this time. It became chiefly a fight for power among the different clans and their leaders, who aimed at becoming prime minister. It is moreover a history of continual murders and treacheries—now, we may confidently hope, a thing of the past. At first the power was in the hands of the great Thapa faction, its most distinguished representative being the Prime Minister Bhima-Sena Thapa, who was finally murdered.

In 1845 the great Jung Bahadur came on the scenes—the great outstanding figure in all later Nepal history. He was a very remarkable character ; he rose to power, first of all, by the murder of his maternal uncle, the then Prime Minister, Mat Bar Singh, following it up by taking a leading part in the great massacres at the Kot, where the Thapa faction was completely wiped out. From that time forth he was supreme, and his family furnish the hereditary prime ministers up to this day. Jung Bahadur must not, in spite of his lurid youth, be too severely judged. He proved himself later to be far superior to his surroundings. To him is largely due our friendship with the Nepal Government—so clearly demonstrated when Jung Bahadur headed a large contingent from Nepal to assist us during the Mutiny. He also, at about the same time, conducted a successful war against Tibet. But beyond that even he made himself felt in every department of government, enormously ameliorating the Criminal Codes of Nepal, and attempting in many

ways to advance his country. In fact, he is remembered in his country as much for his civil reforms as for his reputation as a soldier. He was also, during his whole life, a man of great daring, of great bodily activity, and a fabulous hunter of big game.

I will read, without comment, an appreciation of Jung Bahadur taken from his Biography :

“ Looking back at the career and character of Jung Bahadur, the reader feels irresistibly tempted to compare him with one or other of the world’s greatest heroes, Cæsar or Charlemagne, Cromwell or Frederick the Great, Napoleon or Wellington.

“ But the attempt is soon found to result in dissatisfaction. The parallel is never complete. And the only character in all History towards whom the comparing mind, in its persistent efforts to find out a type or prototype, is bound to turn back to with equal persistence, as the only character fit to challenge comparison with Jung Bahadur, is Jung Bahadur himself.

“ And so the stately figure of Jung Bahadur stands out in bold relief among the deified spirits of the world, peerless, matchless, unique.”

The modern history of Nepal doubtless dates from Jung Bahadur’s visit to England, before the Mutiny.

He passed the succession on, not to his sons, however, but to his brother, and in fact, up to the present, that arrangement has more or less held good. After his death, in 1877, he was succeeded after a short interval by his nephew, Bir Shamsher, an even more enlightened ruler, who in his turn was succeeded by his brother, the present Maharajah, Chandra Shamsher, our very good friend and ally, and by far the most enlightened ruler Nepal has had. They were both the sons of Jung Bahadur’s younger brother, Dir Shamsher, who had seventeen sons himself, some of whom still survive.

To pass on now to modern Nepal and its present conditions ; it is entirely a military state, and almost, but not quite, a complete Despotism. It is governed by the Maharaj Adhiraj, known as the “ Five Governments ”—the head of the Reigning Family ; and by the Maharajah, the hereditary Prime Minister, known as the “ Three Governments ”—the head of the Ruling Family ; and by a theoretical Council of State. The only other official, however, who may be said to have any real power, is the Raj Guru, the “ Archbishop of Canterbury,” so to say. The country is still isolated from India. That, up to the present, has been a settled policy.

There is only one main road into the kingdom, and even in that there is a hiatus. This road runs from Raxaul in Bengal, through the great Terai jungles, to the foot of the Mahabharat range of mountains which divides the Nepal valley from the plains of India. Crossing them, it descends by two passes of about 7000 feet into the valley of Nepal. A motor road has now been made to the foot of the hills at Bhimphedi,

and I hear rumours of motor lorries being provided, and aerial rope ways are in course of construction. Having descended no less than 2300 feet from the last pass, the Chandra Giri, by stone steps, a short motor drive brings one to the British Residency, the seat of the British Envoy.

Other communications throughout Nepal are little better than mule tracks or riding paths, that is, beyond the valley of Nepal itself.

This valley, as I have stated before, is the actual hub of the whole kingdom. It contains three towns of first-rate importance and of the greatest interest: the capital and seat of government, Katmandu, and the capitals of two previous Newar states, Patan and Bhatgaon. Both of the latter are remarkable for their temples and palaces, their brass work and carvings, but they do not show a progressive spirit in other ways.

The whole life of the country centres in the capital, Katmandu. Here are the palaces of the reigning and ruling families and of their relations; here are situated all the great Government offices, mostly in the ancient palace of the Thapatali, while in the centre lies probably the most picturesque parade ground in the world, the Tunikhel, large enough to manœuvre 25,000 troops at a review. Here is also situated the Darera, a great minaret, and near it the very spirited equestrian statue of Jung Bahadur.

The Police Department of the Government is entirely run on military lines. All the civil police and the judiciary have military titles; I am sorry to say that the District Judges are, however, only given the title of Lieutenant. The Civil and Criminal Law has been coded, but it is almost entirely based upon ancient Hindu religious statutes, for the Gurkha Raj poses as being intensely ancient and orthodox in its Hindu outlook.

The Gurkha, *par excellence*, is the ruling Khas, or, as he now prefers to be called, Kshetriya. When a Gurkha of high position refers to any custom, saying "the Gurkhas do this or that," he always and invariably refers to the ruling classes.

I have in my possession a geography book lately published under the auspices of the Nepal Government. In dealing with the inhabitants of Nepal and their religions, it divides them into the Brahmin classes, the Kshetriya, some followers of the religions of Buddha, and Sudras—the Sudras being the lowest class in the Hindu hierarchy. That is to say, this geography book, issued under the authority of the Nepal Government, classes all the Mongolian military clans with not only the lower types of hillmen, but with all the menial classes as well. This doubtless is more or less a settled policy to tighten the ceremonial hold of the ruling class over the hillmen.

But in order to make things clear I must classify the inhabitants of the present Nepal Kingdom. Contained within its borders is a great strip of the Plains analogous to our Bengal and United Provinces, the

people of which are of the Plains type, and doubtless supply a good revenue to the State. I am now, however, treating only of the hill populations.

First there are the tribes included under the term Gurkhali ; Brahmins of two great classes, the great Kshetriya clans, providing all the nobility and ruling classes of the entire country—military classes *par excellence*.

Then there are the pure Mongolian military clans, Gurungs and Magars from the Sapt Gundakis, Sunwars, Rais, and Limbus from the Sapt Kosis, with a heterogenous crowd of Mongolian clans and menial classes, still called Gurkhalis, many of whom make excellent soldiers.

There are then the pure Tibetan clans, living on the southern side of the chain, from whom we drew our excellent Sherpa porters on the Mount Everest Expedition. Finally—for slavery is an established custom in Nepal—there are the very large class of hereditary slaves, known as Kamaras. Both the Prime Minister, Bir Shamsher, and his brother, Chandra Shamsher, the present Maharajah, have suggested methods for ameliorating this custom, and for its final abolition ; but public opinion has been too strong, and such measures have had to be dropped. A new attempt is now being made at this very time with much greater prospect of success.

Ordinarily speaking, we draw from the subjects of Nepal twenty battalions of Regular infantry, and numerous military and armed Police battalions, quartered in Assam, Bengal, and Burmah. Here I must draw attention to the effort of Nepal during the War, and the number of men supplied. I do not think I am underestimating if I place the inhabitants of all classes of the kingdom at $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people. From that $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions it would be very much overestimating to say that the military classes of all sorts numbered 2 millions ; but the normal 20 battalions were expanded to 38, and were kept up to strength, 56,000 recruits being enlisted for regular units. The Police battalions were kept more or less up to strength, and besides that, the Government of Nepal provided a contingent of 12,000 Nepalese troops for service in India.

I should like for a few moments to describe what manner of people these hillmen are.

The upper classes, grouped around the Court, certainly live curious lives. There are a very large number of relations of the reigning and ruling families, and these have to be provided for. They occupy very nearly all of the higher civil and military appointments. It is a very curious thing, among a people whose lower orders are really devoted to field sports, how weak their sporting instincts, compared to members of the same classes in India, appear to be. They seem to devote themselves almost entirely to the parade ground, and to have the same attachment to drill, as such, as is characteristic of the ordinary Gurkha soldier.

The other clans, or classes, from which soldiers of the rank-and-file are drawn are all peasants, cultivators of the soil, shepherds, etc. They all evince a great attachment for shooting and fishing—for "the Chase," in fact, although the accomplished shikari is as difficult to find among them as in other races. Owing to the complete lack of good roads away from the main routes, all transport is very scarce throughout the kingdom, agricultural produce, merchandise, and so forth, being carried on men's backs. Even in the case of the well-to-do and the plump, if travelling on bad roads, this was also very often the only means of travel. They used to have to ride on the backs of slaves, who carried a little saddle and stirrups, on which the owner rode.

One of the great characteristics of the country, and of village life in the mountains, is the weekly fairs, usually held at the junction of several valleys, where the hillmen barter their produce for other commodities, and where usually a gentle revel is enjoyed. Indeed, singing and dancing are a great feature of the life of the people. There are many types of songs and dances, several of them having their special times and seasons, such as sowing and reaping time, and especially at the transplanting and dividing of the rice crop. There are also long semi-religious dances, taken from stories from the Ramayun, or from other Hindu classics, and numerous folk-songs, differing greatly according to the clans. They often, too, have singing competitions, singing backwards and forwards against each other, exactly in the same manner as Welsh Pennillion singing. Some of them, such as the Limbus of the east, have to sing for their brides. They compete in song with the young woman they want to marry, and unless they can outsing her are not supposed to win her.

Many of their folk-songs, indeed, although very primitive, have quite interesting sentiments. A couplet, to be a good couplet, should have its first two lines in slight metaphorical relationship to the second part. Here are instances :

" In the heavens above are more than nine lakhs of stars.
 I cannot count them.
 Thus the words of my heart surge up into my mouth,
 But I cannot utter them."

" O my elder brother, who is gathering crab apples,
 Don't break the boughs ;
 But if you break the boughs they may grow again—
 Don't break your love for me."

" The swallow builds his nest under the eaves of the house.
 My soul has arisen and arrives in heaven.
 My body is soaked up in the earth."

One may get half a dozen sentimental ones, but it is quite beyond the

Mongolian to remain sentimental for long, and the next verse may run like this :

“ After seventeen years of married life a son was born to me,
 But unfortunately he was eaten by the cat.
 I searched for him all over the house
 And finally found his head in the pantry.”

This is considered very funny.

In conclusion, I must point out that the Rulers, taking their cue from the Raj Guru, exact from all military classes, and from all others too, for the matter of that, implicit obedience to Hindu ceremonial laws laid down for their observance by him. Any man travelling abroad has to carry out on his return the ceremony of Panipattia, for which he also pays a small fee. From the Nepal Government's point of view this is a good arrangement, as it becomes a kind of ceremonial passport, a re-entry to the national life.

PART II: MAJOR NORTHEY

As General Bruce has already pointed out, the country of Nepal is closed to Europeans, and none but the British Envoy, the Legation surgeon, and one or two other persons, such as the British officer who is generally detailed annually to supervise the training of the Envoy's escort, an occasional engineer in the employ of the Nepal Government, and their friends, are permitted to reside in the country, and even they are confined to the limits of the valley of Nepal. Hence it follows that the only inner parts of the country of which Europeans can claim any intimate knowledge are the Nepal valley and the main road leading to it from British India which has as its starting-point Raxaul, a small station on the Bengal and North-Western Railway, a picturesque but exceedingly arduous journey of some 70 odd miles from Katmandu.

The Terai or lowlands of Nepal, celebrated for its magnificent big-game shooting, is comparatively well known nowadays, as many Europeans—notably the planters on the northern frontier of the provinces of Champaran and Behar, whose estates in many cases adjoin Nepal—obtain passes to shoot or fish or are invited to join the shooting camps of the Envoy, who leaves the valley of Nepal for the cold weather, making his winter quarters at any convenient place near the frontier.

It has been my good fortune, during my service in a Gurkha regiment, to be brought much into contact with the Nepal Government. Such appointments as British Officer supervising the training of the escort, a year's service with the Nepalese Contingent, and finally four years as Recruiting Officer for Gurkhas (which entailed annual visits to Katmandu) afforded me facilities for acquiring a knowledge of the country not granted to many. As a result, the Prime Minister very kindly gave me permission



BATOLI, WESTERN NEPAL



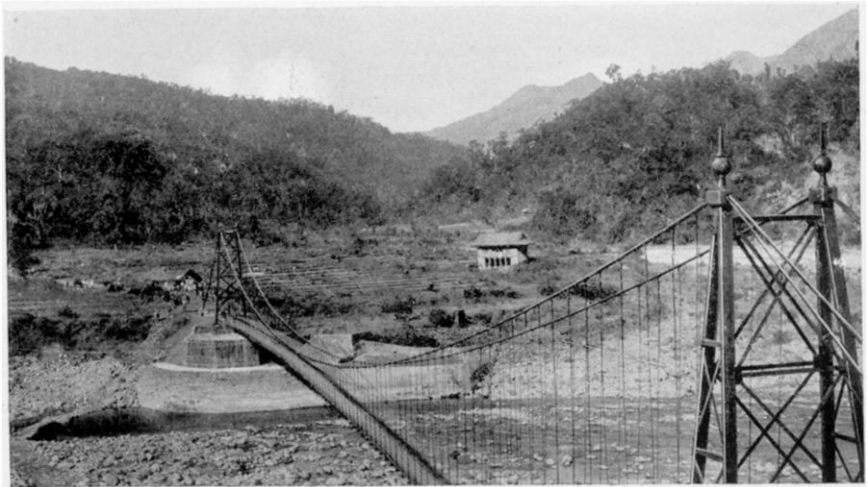
TANSING AND PALPA HILLS



PALPA HILLS, LOOKING EAST



APPROACH TO BATOLI



DHOBAN RIVER, BATOLI HILLS



TIRSULI NAYAKOT, AND PASS TO GURKHA

to make several short trips which gave me a glimpse of the unknown and mysterious country which lies off the beaten track I have previously mentioned. Three of these trips I will attempt to describe: one into the Palpa Hills in Western Nepal; one to Devi Ghat and the town of Nayakot, due north of the valley of Nepal; and lastly, for a few miles across the border into Eastern Nepal, over the Tonglu-Phalut boundary road in the Darjeeling district.

The town and valley of Nayakot and Devi Ghat are not entirely unknown to Europeans, as occasional Residents or their surgeons have visited it, but their number must be exceedingly limited, and beyond a description—and that, too, none too accurate—by Doctor Oldfield in his book on Nepal, and another by Brian Hodgson in one of his many pamphlets, there is little if any modern information, and certainly no illustrations which have any bearing on the subject.

On leaving the Residency, a march of some 10 miles, the first part through the ricefields that skirt the town of Katmandu on its northern side, the latter up a steep and winding mountain path, brings us to our resting-place for the night, the pleasant well-built rest-house of the Maharajah on the top of the Kakanni ridge, which forms with Manichur, Sheopuri, and Kaulia the northern boundary of the valley of Nepal. From here on a clear morning a magnificent view of the snow range is obtained, including Mount Everest, Dhaulagiri, and Gosainthan. In the foreground are numerous minor ranges, between which lie several large fertile and well-watered valleys, the most prominent being the Likhu, Tadi, and Nayakot valley. The Tadi and its tributary the Likhu can be clearly seen, as they thread their way through the fertile valleys that bear their names, and away to the south-west the red bricks of the buildings of Nayakot stand out clearly in the morning sun. From the rest-house the path falls steeply and in some parts precipitously, to the south-west. We descended rapidly for several miles through rough scrubby country, with occasional cultivated patches of Indian corn, and with villages nestling amongst groves of Nim and Pipal trees, until we reached the first large valley, seen clearly from the top of the ridge just to the left, the Likhu valley. Passing through fields upon fields of corn, and leaving on our right the Government gardens of Khinchat, we gain the valley of Nayakot and cross the well-built suspension bridge over the Tadi. Then after threading our way through ricefields we ascend through fine groves of Saul trees to our camping-place, the little Thunri Khel or parade ground of Nayakot.

Nayakot consists of a single street, with two durbars and a temple to Bhairavi in the Chinese style of Katmandu. Once the favourite residence of the Regent Bahadur Shah, and also for a long time the station of Prithwi Narain's court, the little town has lost all the glamour and importance of its bygone days, and is now but rarely visited by any member of the ruling house, except when used as a halting-place for a

journey into the western provinces. The valley of Nayakot, some 2000 feet below the valley of Nepal, is intensely malarious from March to November. It is extremely fertile, and some seventeen different kinds of rice are grown in large quantities. Of fruits the chief is the mango, and next come the oranges, reputed to be second to none in the world. After these come the tamarind, jack-fruit, guava, custard-apple, and all the ordinary fruits of India. Forest trees not found in the valley of Nepal and peculiar to the district are the Saul, Pipal, Semal or cotton-tree, Neem, and pines; but generally speaking all the trees and fruit, as well as the superior Cerealia of North Behar and the Terai, can be found there. The lowlands, owing to the malarious climate, are but thinly peopled, the permanent dwellers therein being races of Nepalese that are not otherwise encountered, bearing such names as Dari, Kumha, and Kuswar. The higher grounds, such as the ridge on which the town stands, being above the malaria zone, are peopled by Nepalese of the ordinary castes, such as Newars, Khas Magars and Gurungs, Bhatias. The town is on a spur descending south-west from Mount Dhaibung or Jibjibia, about a mile above the Tadi river on the south and flanked on the west by the Tirsul or Tirsul Gandaki. This last is a deep blue beautiful stream, that conducts not only the pilgrim to the sacred lake of Gosainthan, a lake reputed to be not less than 15,000 feet above sea and lying immediately beneath the peak which bears its name, but also the trader and traveller to Tibet. Skirting the town on the west, it joins the Tadi at Devi Ghat.

The scenery at Devi Ghat is of the wildest, most romantic kind, both rivers rushing over stony beds, bordered by stupendous rocks, and the waters of both being blue and perfectly transparent. Devi Ghat itself is a very holy spot under the protection of the goddess Bhairavi, whose temple stands in the town of Nayakot. Three miles up the Tersuli from Devi Ghat the river is spanned by a bridge, over which no European has ever crossed, on the high-road to Gorkha.

From Devi Ghat the Tersuli flows south-east towards the plain, forming the eastern boundary of the province of Gurkha, and is joined in its course by several feeders from the western side of Nepal proper; eventually, after joining at Deo Ghat the great Gandaki river, it flows nearly due south and quits the hills at Tribeni through a pass in the sandstone range to the west of the Sameshwar ridge. I will ask you to imagine that we too have followed the course of the Tersuli from Devi Ghat to this intensely picturesque border village of Tribeni, for this will bring us closer to the scene of the little trip into the Palpa country.

If the high-road to Katmandu is well known to Europeans as the main, if not the only, means of entry to this inaccessible country, it is unknown to many thousands of Gurkhas who leave their hill villages to seek service under the British Raj. For the bulk of the recruits for our Gurkha regiments—in fact, eight out of ten regiments—are recruited from

Western and Central Western Nepal, and for these the main road or track into British India is *via* Butwal and Nautunwa. In former days, when recruiters used to smuggle their recruits into British territory, a favourite route was across the Cheryaghat range into Tribeni, but nowadays when recruiters by arrangement with the Government of Nepal bring their recruits through openly, fully 90 per cent. of the Gurkha recruits for the Gurkha regiments that come into the recruiting Centre at Gorakhpur pass through the Nepal town of Batoli, entering British India at Nautunwa and entraining at Bridgemangany on the Bengal and North-Western Railway.

On two occasions I was able to visit the town of Batoli, and on the last occasion the Prime Minister kindly gave me permission to proceed to the Massiang ridge, some 10 miles into the Palpa hills due north of the town, a country in which no European had ever before set foot, save possibly Jesuit missionaries who are reputed to have journeyed in Western Nepal at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Leaving the train at Bridgemangany station, I travelled some 22 miles over a flat and exceedingly uninteresting country on a rough unmetalled road till I reached Nautunwa, a large village on the frontier and formerly an outpost for the Gorakhpur recruiting depôt. Nautunwa has little if anything to recommend it from a picturesque or interesting point of view, save, in the winter months of the year—like many other places on the northern frontier—a magnificent view of the snows. From Nautunwa to Butwal or Batoli the track leads for some 15 miles over country which differs little if anything from the plains of North Behar, save for occasional large and rather solidly built residences of Nepalese officials to be seen here and there. After this, and for the remaining 5 miles, the track—and it is so small and indistinct a path that neither coming nor going could I possibly have followed it by myself—leads through country that is less cultivated and becomes more akin to the ordinary scrub jungle and long grass of the typical Terai. Batoli itself is a large and important Nepalese town at the foot of the Palpa hills, the winter headquarters of the Governor of the province and winter station of the garrison of Tansing. Here I will interrupt the journey by a very brief reference to the system of government in Nepal. The whole country is, for the purpose of administration, divided into some forty districts or provinces, each of which being under the control of a Hakim, or governor. These governors are usually officers of military rank, and in the case of the larger provinces, such as Palpa and Ilam in the east, are often connections or relations of the ruling family. Though the power these officers possess is very large, the whole system of Government is very much centralized at Katmandu, and little if anything can be done even in the most outlying provinces without previous reference to the Prime Minister. Enormous progress in the shape of schools, medical and veterinary facilities, and so forth, have been made during

the tenure of office of the present Prime Minister, Sir Chandra Shamshere, who has worked untiringly in promoting the welfare of his subjects.

To resume our journey. My camp was pitched on both occasions on pleasant open ground in the village of Kasauli, on the other side of the river Sindhu from Batoli, where the winter barracks of the garrison are, away from the bustle and noisy atmosphere of the town. The larger buildings of Batoli have the same distinctive Nepalese appearance noticed in other parts, and the Governor's palace is a large handsome building surrounded by a pleasant garden ; otherwise there is nothing very picturesque about the town save perhaps its site, nestling at the foot of thickly wooded hills.

On commencing the ascent up the steep rocky bridle path that leads past the palace of the Governor to the hamlet of Nawakot, an entire change of scene, inhabitants, and surroundings is experienced. The sudden transition from the plains with their Aryan inhabitants to the rough mountain bye-ways and villages of an entirely different kind, with sturdy mountaineers of obvious Mongolian type, is very striking, and in crossing the spur of the hill on which Nawakot stands one bids farewell, as it were, to India, for thence on not a trace of it is discernible. Passing over the fine suspension bridge that spans the Dhoban river, the path leads through picturesque and wooded scenery to the customs outpost of Morek, then up for several miles along a small clear stream, the Siswa river, till by a steep ascent the goal, the Masyang ridge, some 4500 feet above sea-level, is reached. From here, a magnificent view is obtained of the Palpa country, the home of many of the Magars, a tribe which forms so important a part of the Gurkhas enlisted in our Gurkha regiments. The hand camera I had with me was unfortunately quite insufficient to reproduce satisfactorily the panorama that was unfolded before me, a scene made more interesting by the fact that no European, certainly of modern time, had ever witnessed it before. The houses, chiefly of a red hue from the clay with which their walls were coloured, and surrounded by a patch of garden or field, looked comfortable and cheerful, and there was no sign of poverty or discontent amongst the local inhabitants.

Before us lay the Palpa ridge, to the west of which the white roof of a Palpa temple was clearly visible ; while to the east, some 3 miles from where we stood, the town of Tansen could be seen with its parade ground, its few large buildings, its durbar, and its temple. On the further side of the Palpa ridge, unseen from where we stood, runs the river Kali, on the banks of which lie Riri to the west, the valley of Andikhola to the east, and numberless places known by name to officers in Gurkha regiments, but never visited. Beyond are tier upon tier of lofty mountains, flanked and crested with groves of black firs, terminating in snow-sprinkled rocky peaks. The intense pleasure I felt at this glimpse of unknown country was only equalled by a craving to proceed to the next

ridge, the Palpa ridge, which became almost intolerable ; but I retraced my footsteps with the satisfaction that I had seen much and that it was well to let it rest at that.

Before leaving the Palpa country a few words should be said of the Nepalese army of Nepal, which is represented in this district by three regiments, stationed in Tansing in the summer and Butwal in the winter. The Nepalese army, numbering some 45,000 men, is composed of material which in point of view of physique is superior to that of our Gurkha regiments. Three contingents of Nepalese troops came down to India during the Great War, where they rendered valuable assistance both by internal defence and in active operations on the frontier. Their old-time picturesque blue cotton uniform with its distinctive head-dress has very largely given place to the more serviceable khaki, and though there is a tendency to revert again to the purely formal pre-war training, the army has, in common with many other departments, made great progress in instruction and efficiency in the last few years.

To turn for a few minutes to Eastern Nepal : the traveller who has made the Tonglu-Phalut trip in the Darjeeling district along the Nepalese border, will doubtless often have looked down with curiosity and interest into the deep-forested valleys and distant villages lying in forbidden territory, and perhaps in many cases he will have felt an intense desire to penetrate into the unknown and mysterious country that lies outside his reach.

It can be well imagined, therefore, with what delight I was granted a pass to travel in Nepalese territory some 7 miles from the border, staying the nights either at the Dak Bungalow on the Tonglu-Phalut road, or at any convenient village in Nepal. Though I had selected a time which in ordinary circumstances should have been propitious, even for a climate so variable as that of Darjeeling—namely, early May—with the exception of the first day, the elements fought against me with all their power, the thickest mists often accompanied by drenching rain preventing my seeing much more than a very few yards ahead. An escort of a Subadar, Jemadar, and five or six soldiers of the Nepalese army met me at Tonglu Bungalow, and under the most favourable auspices we descended the Myong valley to the village of Jamuna, the first village Sir Joseph Hooker visited on his memorable journey through Eastern Nepal. The scenery and vegetation are similar to those met with in the Darjeeling district, and the proximity to the frontier results in the type of houses, inhabitants, and general cultivation not differing greatly from what is seen on the British India side. Unfortunately, heavy mists set in the day after our arrival in Jamuna, and continued practically without a break for the next six days. As a result I was unable to take any photographs, and, despite the excellent arrangements made by the escort and their unfailing good humour, the trip from a sight-seeing point of view was a failure.

A word in conclusion as to the extent to which militarism prevails

in Nepal. On the various occasions on which through the kindness of the Prime Minister I have made these few journeys off the beaten track, I have had great opportunities of observing the extraordinary power that is accorded the representatives of the army and the deference with which they are treated. The peaked cap of Lieutenant Ganesh Bahadue Regmi, my companion to Batoli, and the gold crest on the head-dress of Sub-Barbahadur Gurung were always the means of producing anything I wanted, access to everything and to everybody. This implies a complete domination of the civil population by the army, but such is the queer military spirit which imbues all classes, that it is not particularly resented. A matter however that is causing the Maharajah the gravest concern at the present moment is the ever-growing desire of the Gurkha to emigrate and seek service in any country, as it were, but his own. This condition of affairs is very largely a result of the War, which has produced a feeling—a feeling which is by no means confined to Gurkhas—of restlessness and craving for new scenes and spheres, and which is further enhanced by one or two factors, one being the great demand from all parts of India, and even from countries as far afield as the Malay States, for Gurkhas to be employed as watchmen, overseers, and any positions where a sturdy frame and an honest mind are required. Another and not less important factor is the unauthorized recruitment, very often on a very large scale, of Nepalese for coal-mines, rubber planting, and work generally under conditions that can but be the reverse of beneficial to the hillman. Prompt measures are needed to prevent this emigration becoming a real menace to the future welfare and prosperity of the nation. When we reflect upon the hundreds of thousands of little hillmen who during the last hundred years have helped to fight the Empire's battles, I think we must endeavour to assist Nepal to our utmost capacity.

Before the papers the PRESIDENT said: To-night we are to have papers by General Bruce and Major Northey upon the country of Nepal. Nepal, owing to its being closed to the ordinary traveller, is a country which is very little known. It is, nevertheless, a country which is in close relations with the Indian Government, and a country whose ruler did yeoman service to this country during the trying days of the War. Indeed, the magnitude of that service, upon which possibly General Bruce will touch this evening, is very little realized in this country. General Bruce is certainly qualified to tell us of Nepal, for he is a close personal friend of His Highness the Maharajah, and has on more than one occasion visited the capital of the country. General Bruce will be admirably seconded by Major Northey, who for some years was recruiting officer for the Gurkha regiments, and was consequently brought by his duties into close touch with the authorities of Nepal. He has, indeed, been fortunate enough to have travelled over considerable parts of that country which have never been visited by any other European, and we may look forward, therefore, with feelings of the keenest interest to all that he will have to tell us of this unknown land. I now have much pleasure in calling upon General Bruce to give us his introductory description of the country, and Major Northey will then follow with a description of those parts of Nepal over which he has travelled.

Brig.-Gen. the Hon. C. G. Bruce and Major Northey then read the papers printed above, and a discussion followed.

The PRESIDENT : I had hoped that Colonel Kenyon, a former representative of Great Britain at Katmandu, might have been present this evening, in which case he no doubt would have been pleased to have added something to the discussion. Unfortunately he has not been able to come, and I have some doubt, therefore, whether there is any one who is competent to say anything on the subject of this very little-known country. General Woodyatt is present, and he might care to say something ; he has a wide experience of military matters in India.

General WOODYATT : I came here to-night to enjoy myself, and had done so to the full, until I now find I am required to talk about Nepal without any preliminary forethought at all. It is quite true, as Lord Ronaldshay said, that I have had a good deal of experience of Gurkhas. As we have heard a great deal of what the Nepalese did during the War, I might tell you something about them when they came over to India in the early part of 1915. Very soon after war was declared the Maharajah, the Ruler of Nepal, Sir Chandra Shamsheer, volunteered to raise about 50,000 men, and sent a proposal in regard to the matter to the Government of India. The latter did not quite know how to deal with so large a contingent, and it was eventually arranged that the Maharajah should send over a much smaller number so that it might be seen how they would assimilate with our troops, for it was difficult to decide whether the units should be put into our brigades, or form separate formations of their own. There came at first 4000 men, who were stationed at Dehra Dun, where I happened to be commanding a brigade. The men were not trained quite on our methods. They were very good at ceremonial, but had had no experience whatever in what you might call barrack or camp life, in parading together, or in any kind of field manœuvres. It was rather difficult to arrange their discipline, and they had all sorts of strange rules and regulations to which we are not used.

During the first months we had an outbreak of cholera, about which I was much concerned, because the Nepalese—and indeed Gurkhas in general—are particularly susceptible to this scourge. I therefore issued very stringent orders, particularly regarding a river my medical officers considered the probable source of infection, which no man was to approach. I went the next morning to see the Nepalese parading on their exercise ground which overlooked, in one corner, this very stream, and to my horror saw about a dozen men bathing there. Sending for the senior General, I asked if the necessary orders in conformity with my injunctions had been issued. He said he had done so, and I then asked why the men were there. He said, "There are no men there." But when I took him to the corner and showed him the bathers, he was very upset and rode rapidly away. He came to my house about 3 o'clock and said, "I have had those men flogged." "I did not think you would do that," said I. "I only wanted you to make sure they would obey orders in future, and especially never bathe there again." I gathered they had undergone a species of bastinado, and I am not sure he did not contemplate having them shot ! That was their way of dealing with their men, and showed their keen desire to instil good discipline. I may mention that on learning of the outbreak of cholera the Nepalese Inspector-General came down from Simla immediately and encouraged and visited the patients himself.

From Dehra Dun I was moved to a station called Abbottabad, where there were 6000 more Nepalese troops, commanded by a General Padma, a very

fine specimen indeed of the royal family. He is a son of the present Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, who is a brother of the Maharajah. I formed a strong friendship with this officer, almost as strong as with the Inspector-General of the Nepalese contingent, General Sir Baber Shamsher, the second son of the Ruler and a most able officer, from whom I often hear. General Padma and two or three other generals were accommodated in very poor quarters, for it was all we had to give them ; but to preserve their privacy and incur less heat they preferred these quarters to tents. All these officers, with occasional moves, owing to the exigencies of the service, remained in those quarters for considerably over two years, and I never heard one single word of complaint.

There is one little incident in regard to General Padma which I thought showed a very gallant spirit. For some time he had been anxious that I should have a ceremonial parade, which was finally arranged. The troops were concentrated —about 6000 of them—on the Abbottabad parade ground some 4 miles from their camp. No sooner had they finished the march past than we had a most terrific and torrential downpour of rain, which came on without any warning whatever. So heavy was it that in about two minutes we were drenched to the skin. My wife was at the saluting post in a car, and when I told General Padma that he should dismiss his troops to run into some adjacent barracks, and gallop home himself to change, he only smiled and said, "I must first pay my respects to Mrs. Woodyatt." Off he went at full gallop on the slippery turf to the car to say how-do-you-do to my wife, because he thought it was the right thing to do. I said to myself, "Blood will tell."

The PRESIDENT: I should like to say that I am very glad of this opportunity of bearing my witness to the loyalty and friendship of His Highness the present Maharajah of Nepal. I know little of the actual country, as I have travelled only over the small eastern corner of it to which Major Northey made some reference towards the close of his lecture. But I have the honour of being acquainted with His Highness, who came as the guest of the Government to Calcutta during my tenure of office and found life, presumably, so agreeable there that his projected visit of a few days prolonged itself into one of some four weeks. He was always a most courteous gentleman and a most thoughtful guest. I am delighted to have this opportunity not only to pay my tribute of admiration to him as a gallant ruler of a gallant people and a loyal ally of this country, but also as a courteous gentleman.

Let me conclude by expressing to General Bruce and to Major Northey the gratitude of this audience for the admirable pictures which they have been able to give us of this little-known land. I am sure what they have been able to tell us to-night must have stirred in us the desire to know more, if possible, both of the land and of its people. It is with feelings of profound regret that I have learned from Major Northey, who is *persona grata* with the people of Nepal, that the serious wound which he received in the late war has disabled him from returning to his particular duties in connection with the Gurkha regiments, and that he will probably not have further opportunities of extending his studies in that particular field. I am sure you would wish to convey to him, as I do, our profound sympathy in what must be to him a matter of much disappointment. But we are grateful both to him and to General Bruce for the great pleasure which they have given us this evening.