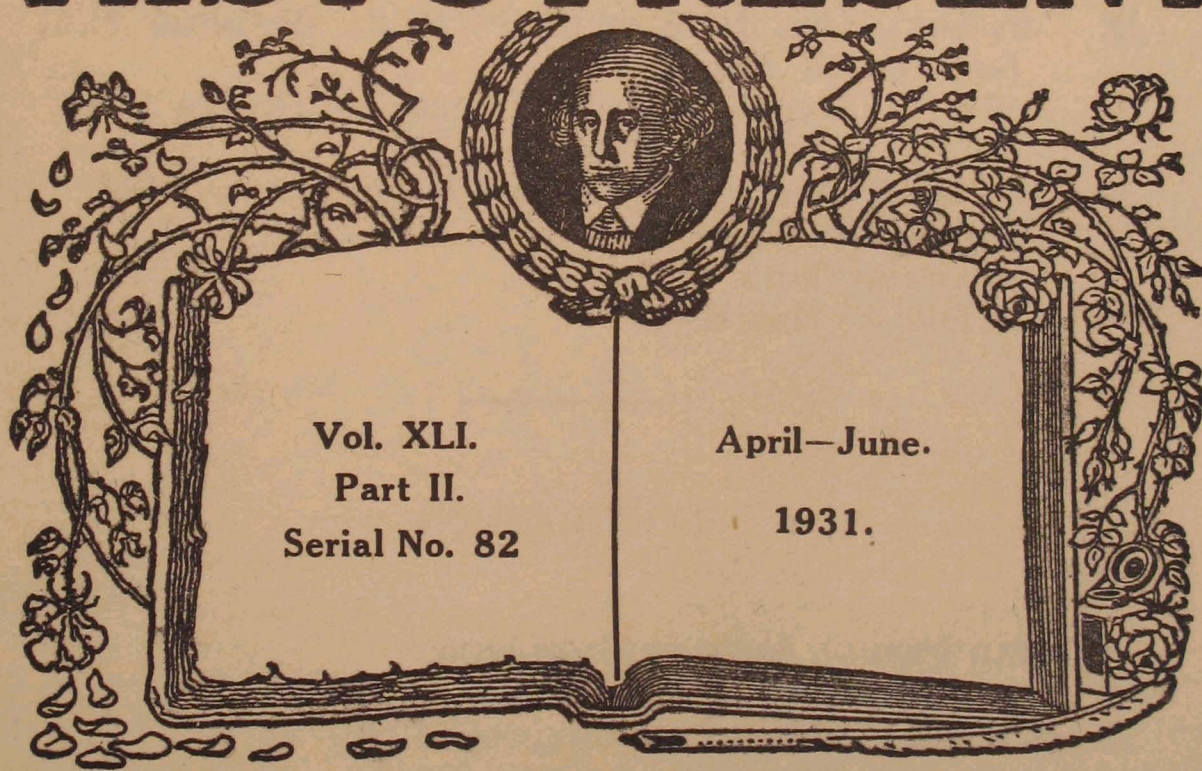


BENGAL PAST & PRESENT



JOURNAL OF THE CALCUTTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CONTENTS.

ARTICLES.

	PAGES
I. GEORGE DUNCAN BEECHY: BY SIR WILLIAM FOSTER, C.I.E.	101-4
II. AGA CATCHICK ARRAKIEL: BY MESROVB J. SETH, M.R.A.S.	105-18
III. SOME NOTES ON THE INTERCOURSE OF BENGAL WITH THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: BY DR. S. C. SARKAR, M.A., PH.D.	119-28
IV. SHIPPING IN BOMBAY IN 1795-96: BY DR. R. BHANDARKAR ...	129-33
V. THE WRECK OF THE LORD AMHERST: BY MISS F. M. SACHSE	134-37
VI. OLD-TIME CONVEYANCES IN CALCUTTA: BY FRANK E. BUSHBY	138-40
VII. CAPTAIN ALEXANDER GRANT (ADJUTANT-GENERAL DURING THE SIEGE OF CALCUTTA, 1756): BY MAJOR V. C. P. HODSON ...	141-42
VIII. SOME SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE: BY CAPTAIN H. BULLOCK, F.R. Hist. S.	143-48
IX. MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION IN THE U. P. II: BY CAPTAIN H. BULLOCK, F.R. Hist. S.	149-56
X. A FAMOUS CALCUTTA FIRM (THE HISTORY OF THACKER SPINK AND Co.): BY SIR EVAN COTTON, C.I.E.	157-64
XI. THE INDIAN MEDICAL SERVICE: BY SIR EVAN COTTON, C.I.E.	165-73
XII. THE GOOD OLD DAYS	174-75
XIII. OUR LIBRARY TABLE	176-78
XIV. THE EDITOR'S NOTE-BOOK	179-88

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	TO FACE PAGE
1. FIELD MARSHAL VISCOUNT COMBERMERE	101
2. ARMENIAN CHURCH OF ST. NAZARETH, CALCUTTA	105
3. OLD TIME CONVEYANCES IN CALCUTTA	138-40
(a) PALKI GARI } (b) GREENFIELD } (c) BROWNBERRY } (d) TONJON }	
4. THE TOMBSTONE OF THE CHILDREN OF GENERAL PERRON ...	149
5. GOVERNMENT PLACE, NORTH, CALCUTTA: 1842.	157
6. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH AND LIBRARY: 1825	158
7. THE TOMBSTONE OF SURGEON WILLIAM HAMILTON ...	167
8. THE LUSHINGTON MONUMENT IN EASTBOURNE PARISH CHURCH	179

Some Notes on the Intercourse of Bengal with the Northern Countries in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century.

THE history of the intercourse of Bengal with her northern neighbours—Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan in the second half of the eighteenth century, is fairly well-known. Good accounts of it occur quite early, amongst others, in Markham's Introduction to the Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle (second edition, 1879), and in an article by Gourdas Basak in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1890. Forrest, in his Selection from State Papers printed certain records in this connection from the material in the Foreign Department. My object in this paper is simply to examine the documents on this subject, preserved in the Home (Public) Department of the Imperial Record Office in Calcutta.

The main political events in Bengal's relations with the North in this period will perhaps bear recapitulation. The story really begins with the commencement of the Gurkha conquest of Nepal. The Gurkha attack on Muckwanpur led to the expedition of Mir Kasim against the aggressors but the army of the Nawab led by his celebrated general Gorgin Khan was destroyed near the fort of Muckwanpur.(1) The appeal of the Newar Chiefs caused the expedition of Kinloch, during Verelst's administration, but it failed to penetrate into the hills, either by Siduli or through Muckwanpur, perhaps on account of the inclement season. (2) Kirkpatrick in his Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul, 1811, (p. 174) suggests that the desire to secure gold, which in reality came from Tibet and not Nepal, stimulated both of these unsuccessful attempts. Meanwhile, trouble was brewing from another direction. Deb Judhur, the Debraja of Bhutan, emulating Prithwi Narayan the Gurkha conqueror, overran Sikkim and attacked Cooch Behar, so that Hastings, shortly after assuming control of the Bengal government, had to organise the expedition of Jones (1772-1773). The Tashai Lama of Tibet sent a letter of intercession for the Bhutanese to the English government, which was received on March 29, 1774. (3) Hastings concluded the Treaty with Bhutan in April, 1774, and immediately followed it up by sending George Bogle's mission (1774-1775) to the court of the Tashai

(1) Copy of Records from India Office, Public Consultations, 1771 (p. 150) Seir Mutaqherin, Section X (pp. 446-449)—English Translation, Kirkpatrick's Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul, 1811 (p. 25n).

(2) Home Department—Original Consultation No. 1 of 31-10-1769. Father Guiseppe in Asiatic Researches quoted in Kirkpatrick (384).

(3) Turner's Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshu Lama, 1800 (ix-xii).

Lama, through Bhutan, as the route through Nepal had been blocked by the Gurkha power. Missions to Bhutan were sent under Hamilton in 1776 and again in 1777, to congratulate the new Debraja (4). In 1778, a cherished wish of the Tashai Lama was fulfilled by the granting of land to him, on the banks of the Ganges opposite Calcutta, for the purpose of establishing a Temple. This episode was fully discussed in Gourdas Basak's article mentioned above and Mr. Ramsbotham recently wrote about it again in *Bengal, Past and Present*, Vol. XXVI, Part II. In his northern policy,—Warren Hastings had grand designs—namely to establish relations with China, through the good offices of the Tashai Lama, who had great influence over the Emperor and his advisors (5). In a Minute, preserved as the Original Consultation No. 1 of 19-4-1779, Home Department, Hastings referred to this project in these characteristic words—"Like the Navigation of unknown Seas, which are explored not for the attainment of any certain and prescribed Object but for the Discovery of what they may contain ; in so new and remote a Search, we can only propose to adventure for Possibilities. The attempt may be crowned with the most splendid and substantial success ; or it may terminate in the mere satisfaction of useless curiosity. But the Hazard is small, the Design is worthy of the pursuit of a rising State". Accordingly in 1779, Bogle was deputed again to Bhutan and Tibet "for the purpose of cultivating and improving the good understanding subsisting between the Chiefs of those countries and this Government" (6). But the journey was never undertaken because the Tashai Lama left for the Emperor's Court, and though Bogle proposed to meet him in China (7), the Lama's death in Peking in 1780 shattered the plan while Bogle himself died in the next year. The friendly messages from Chanzu Cusho, the half-brother of the late Tashai Lama and regent for the new infant Tashai, however led Hastings to send Turner to Tibet via Bhutan on a fresh mission with a salary of Rs 3000 a month (8), (1783-1784). Hastings' idea of sending yet another mission to Tibet was carried out under Mcpherson when Puran Gir Gosain, the messenger of the Tashai Lama in 1774 and the faithful companion of Bogle and Turner, was sent in 1785 and attended the installation ceremony of the new Lama (9). His report was presented to Mcpherson on February 6, 1786 (10). With Cornwallis, there is a distinct reversal of policy and no attempt was made to continue Hastings' efforts to maintain contact with the northern countries. Meanwhile, strained relations between the Gurkhas and Tibet had culminated in the Gurkha invasion of Tibet and the sack of the seat of the Tashai Lama. This promptly provoked a Chinese expedition against Nepal. The Gurkhas, who had concluded a commercial treaty with the English, through Duncan, the Resident at Benares, on March 1, 1792, applied for help from Cornwallis who declined to interfere,

(4) Markham's Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle, 1879 (lxi-lxx).

(5) Home Dept., Original Consultation No. 1 of 19-4-1779.

(6) Home Dept., Public Body Sheets of 19-4-1779.

(7) Markham's Bogle (209).

(8) Home Dept., O.C. No. 3 of 9-1-1783.

(9) Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, LIX Part I, No. 1.

(10) Markham's Bogle (lxxv).

September 9, 1792 (11), because of the British policy of friendship towards all countries and out of consideration for the China trade (12). He sent Kirkpatrick on a mission of mediation to Nepal (1792-1793) which however was too late. Nepal had already submitted to China. The passes leading into Tibet were closed by the Chinese, suspicious of British interference, at this time, and intercourse with Bengal was consequently broken off (13).

The records of the Home Department are full of many interesting details about the commercial intercourse between Bengal and the northern countries. There was much eagerness on the part of the English authorities to expand trade in this direction. Thus the Court of Directors on March 16, 1768, recommended the obtaining of intelligence as to whether a trade with Nepal was possible and whether cloth and other European commodities could find a market through that country in Tibet and West China (14). Again in 1771, the Directors enquired regarding the possibility of the Northern trade and of sending explorers to Bhutan and Assam (15). In 1774, the Directors recommended enquiry into the chances of successful exploration of the interior of Bhutan and Assam and adjacent countries, on the suggestion of Mr. Baillie, who had resided near Goalpara for several years and reported that woollens and metals may be disposed of in this region in return for lacs, mugga, black pepper and specie (16). In 1773, enquiries were addressed to Pulling and Harris, Collectors of Cooch Behar and Rangpur respectively, regarding the promotion of sale of British staples in Bhutan and neighbouring countries (17) and rather unfavourable replies were received from them (18).

These efforts to open new markets indicate a break in Bengal's northern trade at the beginning of our period. But formerly there was a brisk trade with the north and our records contain many particulars on this point. Patna, we are told, had a considerable trade with Nepal and Tibet. "The chief exports of Patna in this trade were coarse woollen cloths called Parpeteens, Coral, Salt, Betelnut, Cotton Cloths, Patna Chintzes, Nutmeg etc. The imports Gold Ingots, Gold Dust, Borax, Musk, Cow Tails, Chirres etc. The common current value of gold in Neypall (and it is chiefly brought there from Tibbett) is said to be 50 per cent. less than it is at Patna" (19). Hastings wrote in his Minute (Home Dept. Original Consultation No. 1 of April 19, 1779) that the drain of money from Bengal being alarming, it was necessary to supply that money by opening new channels of commerce. "Gold Dust, Musk, Cowtails, fine wool similar to that of Karamania and other valuable commodities" could be found in Tibet and were formerly extensively exchanged with "Broad Cloth, Coral, Bengal Manufactures and other Goods either

(11) Markham's Bogle (lxxvi).

(12) Kirkpatrick (350).

(13) Turner (440-442); Markham's Bogle (lxxix).

(14) Public Letter from Court, 16-3-1768, para. 41.

(15) Home Dept., O. C. No. 1 of 9-12-1771.

(16) Public Letter from Court, 7-1-1774, para. 13.

(17) Home Dept., O. C. No. 10 of 21-6-1773.

(18) Home Dept., O. C. No. 11 of 19-7-1773 and O. C. No. 3 of 13-9-1773.

(19) Home Dept., O. C. No. 1 of 31-10-1769.

Native of these Provinces or imported from England". Bogle in a Memorandum (Home Dept. O. C. No. 3 of April 19, 1779) gives the information that in Tibet, broad cloths of red, yellow and blue colours were most prized and adds a list of prices. According to this note, small quantities of European commodities imported by the Gosains were much esteemed. Common people in Tibet demanded amber beads and higher classes pearls and diamonds. Returns from Tibet were made in gold dust, musk and cowtails. Bogle concludes his memorandum with an account of the charges of transport from Bengal to Tibet. Tibet being barren, it might be added, required large supplies from outside which were paid for by the valuable products of the country (20). Turner in his Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshu Lama (pp. 381-384) gives a list of the articles of commerce between Tibet and her neighbours.

There were different routes followed by the Commerce between Bengal and Tibet. The Nepal route was the old high road of trade. We are told that Katamandu was only 8 or 9 days from Patna "and the road at the most rugged place is such as loaded Bullocks etc. may and do travel". Again, "the Gandak is navigable for the largest boats used on the Ganges, at all times, to within two days journey of Neypall, and in the Rains to within a few Coss. The Bagmatty is also Navigable to within 20 Coss" (21). In Home Dept. O. C. No. 20 of 25-11-1789, there is a good account of the different routes to Tibet, taken from Bogle's Report of 1775-1776. The Nepal route, we learn, was closed after the Gurkha conquest when the Gosains were expelled from Nepal for sympathy with the old rulers. They then frequented a second route through Morung (from the Kusi to the Tista) (22) and the adjoining Tibetan province of Demo Jung (Sikkim). Unhealthiness and the Gurkha expansion however threatened this road. A third very difficult route is mentioned from Benares and Mirzapur through the Mustang country and the Hills to the northward of Bulivang Sing's territories. It may be mentioned incidentally that Bogle (p. 139) found in Tibet a wakil from Chait Singh's Court, who tried to hinder him. Bogle himself was instrumental in opening the fourth route through the Debraja's country.

The agency of the Gossains in this trade has been mentioned already. The report alluded to just now gives a good description of these persons. "The Gosseines, the Trading Pilgrims of India, resort hither in great numbers. Their humble deportment, and holy character heightened by the merit of distant Pilgrimages, their accounts of unknown countries, and remote Regions, and above all their possession of high veneration for the Lamas, procure them not only a ready admittance but great favours. Tho' clad in the garb of poverty there are many of them possessed of considerable Wealth. Their trade is confined to articles of great value and small bulk. It is carried on without noise or ostentation, and often by Paths unfrequented by other merchants". Kirkpatrick describes them as at once devotees and pilgrims,

(20) Home Dept., O. C. No. 20 of 25-11-1789.

(21) Home Dept., O. C. No. 1 of 31-10-1769.

(22) Markham's Bogle (150).

beggars, soldiers and merchants (23). Turner tells us that the Tibetan trade was in the hands of a few opulent Gosains (24). The most famous of these Gosains is of course Puran Gir who played quite an important part in the transactions between Bengal and Tibet. Gourdas Basak in *J. A. S. B.*—Vol. LIX—Part I—No. 1, gave a full account of this interesting man but additional details can be gleaned from the records. Thus, Puran Gir was about to visit Lhasa on his own account in 1790 and he was consequently asked to procure the tea plant from Tibet (Home Dept. O.C. No. 22 of 14-1-1790 and O. C. No. 17 of 21-12-1789). He kept in Nagri a Diary of his journeys into Tibet and China and this Journal was proposed to be translated (Public Body Sheets of 14-1-1790, pp. 20-21). The presence of many merchants in Tibet was reported by Puran Gir in 1785. Turner mentions another Gosain named Pranpooree who travelled in Turkey, Russia and China and told the Tashai Lama that he had seen a country in which half the year was day (25). A third Gosain, Sukh Dev, accumulated much wealth in mercantile journeys for forty years (26).

The records reveal many efforts to secure interesting commodities from the north. In 1769 Will. Mirtle was deputed to the Morung country to obtain wood for masts, tar, pitch and turpentine (27). On his death, this task was entrusted to Francis Peacock and James Christie, in 1770, on the recommendation of the Directors, with elaborate instructions not to interfere in politics or dabble in private trade (28). The enterprise was unfortunate for they failed to enter Bhutan (29). Peacock interviewed the Raja of Morung, "Coran Singh" and got from him sole grant of cutting firs in his country (30). The timber he brought down to Calcutta however was pronounced to be inferior in quality—"rotten at heart and over weighty" (31).

In 1783, Hastings wrote to Turner as follows:—"I have lately seen in the Possession of Poorungeer Gosein, a small Paper of Powder, which he said was produced from the dried Bark of a Tree and administered at Tibet for the case of intermitting Fevers. It had to my Taste, and in the Judgement of both of Messrs. Campbell and Francis every Appearance of being the same Substance as that which is called the Jesuit Bark. I desire that you will endeavour to procure both Seeds and young Plants of this Drug, and send them to me, sparing no Expense for their safe and expeditious Transportation" (32).

In 1789, Kyd in charge of the Botanical Gardens, Calcutta, suggested to the Government the procuring of the seed or the plant of Tea from Tibet

(23) Kirkpatrick (iii).

(24) Turner (370).

(25) Turner (269-271).

(26) *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. LIX, Pt. I, No. 1.

(27) Home Dept., O. C. No. 2 (a) of 26-10-1769.

(28) Home Dept., Public Progs of 29-11-1770.

(29) Home Dept., O. C. No. 2 (a) of 8-6-1772 and O. C. No. 7 of 28-12-1772.

(30) Home Dept., O. C. No. 20 of 23-1-1775.

(31) Home Dept., O. C. No. 1 (a) of 1-9-1772 and O. C. No. 12 of 10-9-1772.

(32) Home Dept., O. C. No. 10 of 13-3-1783.

with the enticement of a suitable reward if it could be delivered in a state of vegetation to the Chief of Rangpur, if possible with a native practised in the cultivation (23). The scheme was that of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, contained in a Memo of September 9, 1789 (34).

Cattle and wool from the north were also wanted. In 1779, Bogle suggested the procuring from Tibet a species of small goats remarkable for their fine silky wool of the Karamaniah kind. He had sent some goats formerly to Hastings who tried to transport them to England (35). In 1787, Kyd suggested sending to England the Bhutanese bull and cow obtained from Tassesuddon through Rangpur" in order to pave the way to an exchange of the good things, peculiar to both countries" (36). Kyd also procured in 1791, from Davis who had accompanied Turner to Bhutan, patterns of cloth made in Bhutan from a dress once worn by one of the principal priests (37).

to. When the Tashai Lama sent presents to Hastings they included "Ingots The attraction of gold, which existed in Tibet, has already been alluded of Gold and Silver Bullion also some Gold Dust" (38). It might be mentioned incidentally that currency difficulties had some share in creating the strained relations between Tibet and Nepal in the time of Cornwallis (39).

During Kirkpatrick's embassy to Nepal, the Mint Committee suggested the procuring of antimony through him for the purpose of use in refining gold bullion but the proposal was turned down on the ground that it would be cheaper to import it from Europe (40). Kirkpatrick however appointed an intelligent native of Nepal, Dayaram Upadhyaya, to collect useful plants and seeds, chiefly for dyeing (41).

There are certain documents in the Home Department which are perhaps more interesting than the details of trade recorded above. They belong to three topics—the uncertainty in the relations between the Bengal Government and Nepal after the Kinloch expedition ; the commercial treaties between Bhutan and Bengal ; and the reversal of policy under Cornwallis.

In 1769, Surgeon Jas Logan was sent on a mission to penetrate into Nepal and he was "permitted to undertake it as he proposed" (42). What he proposed can be seen from his letter to Verelst preserved as Home Dept. O. C. No. 1 of 31-10-1769. Logan argued that after the part already played by the Company on behalf of the Newar Chief of Khatmandu, abandoning him would create a very bad impression. Support of the weaker party in the conflict in Nepal was bound to improve future prospects of trade—through the restoration of the old chiefs or even through concessions likely to be

(33) Home Dept., O. C. No. 17 of 13-1-1790.

(34) Home Dept., O. C. No. 19 of 25-11-1789.

(35) Home Dept., O. C. No. 8 of 19-4-1789.

(36) Home Dept., O. C. No. 13 of 13-8-1787.

(37) Home Dept., PP. of 18-11-1791 (3825-3826).

(38) Copy of Records from India Office—Public Consultations 15-1-1776.

(39) Kirkpatrick (339-340); Home Dept., O. C. No. 20 of 25-11-1789.

(40) Home Dept., PP. of 26-10-1792 (p. 1850).

(41) Home Dept., O. C. No. 11 of 3-6-1793 and No. 16 of 12-8-1793.

(42) Home Dept., Public Body Sheets of 31-10-1769.

granted by the Gurkha conquerors. Moreover, "Raja Juyper Cuss" of Khatmandu is also closely connected with "the Goora, or white, Lama, the Pontiff of Laissah" and might thus be useful in expansion of trade to Tibet. "The Choudind Raja, Coran Sine", to the east of Nepal, was the sworn enemy of the Gurkhas who had treacherously overthrown his cousin of Muckwanpur. He had proposed to join Kinloch's expedition and invited Logan to "his Capital in the Hills to settle the terms of this Coalition". "At this place, provided my business is unfavourable to the Goorka, I'm pretty sure of a hearty welcome, and here I wou'd get intelligence Guides etc. in order to prosecute my journey. Such penetration into Nepal was obviously practised for Bogle tells us (p. 158) that the Gurkha Raj informed the Tashai Lama that a Firingi was being sent back from Nepal.

The copy of Public Consultations in 1771, obtained from India Office, unfolds (pp. 119-123 and pp. 147-153) a story equally suggestive as Logan's letter to Verelst. The Patna Council in July 1771, wrote to President Cartier about the possibility of occupying the Tatar Parganas (bounded by Champaran, Purneah, the Tarai and the Gandak) consisting of 23 mahals together with Janakpur and belonging to the Tirhut circar, but then in Gurkha hands. The Patna Council pointed out that this would of course mean an invasion of Nepal or at least the stationing of two battalions of Sepoys on the Bettiah and Tirhut frontier. The Board made enquiries and received a report from Raja Sitabray. The parganas had been seized by the Muckwanpur people 200 years ago. They used to pay a tribute in elephants to the Subah of Behar. The Gurkhas conquered the territory from the Muckwanpur Raja, foiled Mir Kasim's expedition and remained in possession of the territory with only a brief interval during Kinloch's operations. The Gurkhas agreed however to pay a tribute of Rs. 12,500 in elephants at the customary rate. The Board disapproved of an expedition on the ground of expense and apprehension that the Gurkhas would give much trouble before they could be reduced. "The Board do not mean by thus letting it lay dormant to give up their demand entirely but would have our claim kept up to the annual tribute paid for those Purgunnahs and should the Raja commit any hostilities it will be a proper opportunity to advance our pretensions and reunite these Pergunnahs to the province of Tirhut to which they originally belonged."

To turn to the subject of commerce treaties with Bhutan, the Treaty of April 25, 1774, at the end of the Coochbehar Campaign, promised to allow Bhutia caravans to visit Rangpur annually free from any duties (43). Bogle concluded a Treaty with the Debraja in May, 1775, which, in return for the free passage of non-European merchants of Bengal across Bhutan, promised freedom of access to the Bhuteas and their 'gomastas' to all places in Bengal ; the privilege of selling horses duty free and the abolition of the duty on the Bhutea caravan in Rangpur ; and the reservation for the Bhuteas exclusively the export of indigo, tobacco, red skin and betelnut from

(43) Markham's Bogle (4).

Bhutan (44). The Tashai Lama promised Bogle to write to the Debraja to remove Bogle's uneasiness about his attitude, adding that he had already written to Nepal to re-open the ancient route to Bengal (45). Hamilton recommended and Turner carried out the cession to Bhutan of two pieces of territories, held formerly by the Baikuntapur zemindar (46) for the trade had been hindered by Bhutea complaints about boundaries, as well as the influence of the regent at Lhasa (47). On the death of the Debraja with whom Bogle had concluded his treaty, secular as well as spiritual power was concentrated in the hands of Lam Rimbochay—the scion of one of the three Lama houses of Bhutan (48). In 1778, this ruler sent his wakil Narpoo Paigah, to Calcutta, where he delivered a declaration under his seal ratifying the existing treaty. The originals of this declaration have come down to us—one being in Bengali bearing the date of the 9th Paus, 1185 of the Bengali era (December, 1778). [A copy of this document is attached herewith in an Appendix.] The Bengali version confirms the articles of Bogle's treaty in a different order on behalf of the Devadhanma Lama Rimbochay (49). The Bengali language and script were evidently much used for Turner mentions a paper in the Bengali language sent to him in which the Debraja expressed his wishes (50). Hastings was anxious to preserve good relations with Bhutan for we find him instructing Turner to enquire into Bhutanese complaints against English agents in Assam interfering in a territorial dispute (51). The validity of Bogle's Treaty of 1775 was still acknowledged by the Debraja in 1783 (52). The Directors testified to "the most ample and voluntary assistance" which Puran Citr Gosain received in Bhutan in 1785 (53).

The harmonious relations with the north broke down in the time of Cornwallis. The following document is of some interest in this connection—(Home Dept.—O.C. No. 27 of 22-12-1788).

"To The Right Honourable

Charles Earl Cornwallis K.G.

Governor General etc., etc., etc.

My Lord,

Last night arrived at this place two Ambassadors named Mahomed Redjeb and Mahomed Willee, deputed by the Grand Lama of Thibet, with Dispatches for your Lordship. They also brought a letter for me from the Lama, requesting me to provide them with the necessary guides and Attendants, to conduct them to Calcutta with as little delay as possible, their business being, as the Lama informs me, of the most urgent nature.

(44) Home Dept., O. C. No. 4 of 19-4-1779; Markham's Bogle (184).

(45) Home Dept., O. C. No. 5 of 19-4-1779.

(46) Markham's Bogle (lxx-lxxii).

(47) Home Dept., O. C. No. 1 of 19-4-1779.

(48) Home Dept., O. C. No. 1 and No. 2 of 19-4-1779.

(49) Home Dept., O. C. No. 6 of 19-4-1779.

(50) Turner (324).

(51) Home Dept., O. C. No. 10 of 13-3-1783.

(52) Turner (376).

(53) Public Letter from Court, 27-3-1787, para. 231.

In conversing with them respecting the State of the Lama's Dominions, they informed me, that they had lately been invaded by the Goorkas who had taken possession of several frontier forts, and a large extent of Country. That the Lama had sent them offers of peace, but that they refused to listen to any terms, unless the Lama would consent to relinquish to them all the Gold produced in his Country, for the collecting of which, they insisted on appointing their own officers.

From these Circumstances I am led to suppose, although I did not think it proper to ask, that the purport of their Embassy is to solicit the protection of the English Government against the Goorka Rajah.

I have the honor to be
with great respect
My Lord

/ Your Lordship's most obedient
and most humble servant
D. H. McDowall—Collr''

Rungpore
9th December 1788.

The Gurkha invasion of Tibet in 1788 (distinct from the later attacks which were followed by the Chinese expedition of 1792) mentioned in the above letter is corroborated by Markham (LXXVI) who says that they overran Sikkim in 1788 and Tibet had to cede the head of the Kuti Pass to them. Kirkpatrick (345-346) alludes to a Gurkha invasion of Tibet prior to the well-known events of 1790-1792 and adds that this resulted in the exaction of a tribute from Tibet. The letter of McDowall, introducing the Tibetan Embassy to Bengal, did not produce any action, and probably Kirkpatrick's statement (346) that Lassa sent an embassy for help to Mcpherson in vain, had reference to this episode. Military aid by the English Government "could not be afforded without a direct departure from the system of policy laid down for its general guidance by the legislature" as Kirkpatrick remarked (vii) in another connection. But British inactivity had unfortunate consequences in this direction—for it must have encouraged the more serious Gurkha aggressions on Tibet in 1790-1792 which in turn led the Chinese to close the passes leading into Tibet. Turner makes the general observation (440-442) that British failure to help the Lama was resented and it was suspected that Nepal had been assisted. This was an unpleasant end of relations which had promised so much and commerce with the north was naturally interrupted. It was rather unexpected, for the Directors so late as March, 1787, expressed themselves sanguine of a beneficial commerce with Tibet, hoping for import of bullion and export of British manufactures. They left the actual method of conducting this trade to be decided by the local authorities (encouraging Gosains, Tibetans etc. to come to Calcutta—sending out caravans or setting up factories near Bhutan) but they

did suggest the conclusion of a treaty of commerce with Tibet and the Debraja (54). All such hopes were idle after 1792 but the crisis had commenced as early as 1788.

A few miscellaneous notes on McDowall's letter to Cornwallis suggest themselves. Rangpur, as we have seen repeatedly, was on the high road of communication with the north. The sending of Moslem ambassadors is not surprising. Mahomedan merchants are described in the Bengali declaration of 1778, mentioned above, as in the habit of visiting Tibet. Turner (339-340) remarks that 300 Gosains and sanyasis and even some Mussulmans were daily fed by the Lama at Teshu Lumbo. The Tashai Lama quoted Persian verses (55) and the Lama sent letters in Persian (56). Finally, it is significant that the embassy of 1788 was the first overture from Lhasa to the English—for hitherto the court of the Grand Lama had kept itself haughtily aloof from foreign contract.

S. C. SARCAR.

(54) Public Letter from Court, 27-3-1787, paras. 232-235.

(55) Home Dept., O. C. No. 5 of 19-4-1779.

(56) Markham's Bogle (45); Kirkpatrick (351).