

BRITISH RELATIONS WITH THE
HILL TRIBES OF ASSAM
SINCE 1858

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To

My Parents

SRI PARESH CHANDRA CHAKRAVORTY

AND

SRI SATYABHAMA DEBI

PREFACE

A large number of virile and freedom-loving tribes dot the hilly outskirts as well as the inner tracts of Assam. From 1826 onwards the British Government had an uphill task to stop their incessant attacks. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the gradual establishment of British rule over these tribal belts in the teeth of stiff resistance. As there is no standard research work on the political relations between these tribes and the British Government over that period I have made an attempt to study them and show the development of British policy towards these tribal communities of Assam.

The materials of my work have been collected from published and unpublished sources, especially from the Foreign Proceedings of the Government of India preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi, and in the Assam Government Records Office, Shillong.

During the five years of my work in Assam as a lecturer in a local College and also during my pre-commission training in the Assam Regimental Centre, Shillong, I came in contact with the hill people of Assam-Naga, Lushai, Garo, Khasi, etc., and my imagination was fired by the human panorama that these tribes of Assam and the borderland present. Gradually I made up my mind to make an enquiry into their political relations with the British Government. As some work has already been done in this field over the period 1826-1858, I took up the next period, beginning with 1858, and ending with the close of the last century.

The tribes of the north-eastern frontier of India had not been of much political significance when I started the work in 1954. But of late they have acquired a great political importance with the launching of a freedom movement by the Nagas in 1955, and more so, very recently, as a result of the Chinese incursion into the Indian borderland. The problems of the North-East Frontier are now matters of current and topical interest. When I selected the subject of my research

in 1953 I had a foreboding that the North-East Frontier of independent India would be of prime importance in her international and frontier relations. Indeed, the bogey of the North-West Frontier of British India would be transferred to the North-Eastern frontier of free India. (That foreboding is now being tested by current history.) But to understand the present-day tribal problems of this frontier a study of the past relations between the British Government and the hill tribes of Assam is necessary.

This publication has been adapted from my doctoral thesis "British Relations with the Hill Tribes of Assam, 1858-1900". In order to bring the story down to the present time I have added a new chapter entitled "Postscript" and a map of NEFA. I have left 8 appendices out of my original work and made some minor alterations in the original text here and there.

I must be failing in my duty if I do not mention the names of the two learned Doctors under whom I worked. One was late Dr. Indu Bhushan Banerjee, who left this world before half of my work was complete, and the other is Dr. N. K. Sinha, Asutosh Professor of Medieval and Modern History, Calcutta University. I must also record my indebtedness to Dr. R. K. Dasgupta of Delhi University, Prof. Tripurari Chakrabarty, and Dr. A. C. Banerjee of Calcutta University for their advice and encouragement. Sincerest thanks are also due to Prof. Sushanta Banerjee, M.A., my friend and colleague, for reading the proofs and preparing the Index, to Sri K. L. Mukhopadhyay, the learned publisher, Sri J. C. Sarkhel, the printer, Sri Atul K. Roy, cartographer, for their technical assistance and advice, and to my younger brother, Sri Rabindra Chakravarty, for seeing the book through the Press. I also remember the co-operation and kindness shown to me by the staff of the National Library, Calcutta, the National Archives, New Delhi, and the Assam Govt. Records Office, Shillong, during my work at their places.

Calcutta,
1st January, 1964.

B. CHAKRAVORTY

A NOTE ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is hardly any history on British relations with the hill tribes of Assam covering the second half of the nineteenth century. Of course, some monographs and notes are available on different hill tribes of this part of India. But these are anthropological studies or memoirs and diaries of some frontier officers rather than historical writings as such. Regarding these, reference may be made to J. P. Mills' "The Lhota Nagas", T. C. Hodson's "The Naga Tribes of Manipur", J. H. Hutton's "The Sema Nagas", W. C. Smith's "The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam", and Lt. Col. Shakespear's "The Lushai Kuki Clans."

The sources of this book may be examined under five heads: (1) Unpublished official records preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi, (2) Unpublished Official Records preserved by the Records Office, Government of Assam, (3) Published Papers, (4) Published Historical Books, and (5) Publications of general interest.

Unpublished official records, again, may be classified as (a) Political Proceedings, (b) Secret Proceedings, (c) Minutes of the Governor-Generals, (d) Correspondence with the Chief Commissioners, Assam, (e) Judicial Proceedings, (f) Revenue Proceedings, (g) Foreign Department Consultations, and (h) 'Assam Proceedings' belonging to the Bengal Government, Government of India, and the Assam Government respectively. The abovementioned documents may be studied in the National Archives. Of these documents the Political Proceedings marked 'External A' have been liberally used for my thesis. This source has thrown sufficient light on many important things, for instance, the Anglo-Bhutanese relations in connection with Bhutanese raids on the villages of North Kamrup, gun-running in the Naga Hills, the punitive expedition against the trans-Dikhu Nagas in 1888-9, the Abor Expe-

dition of 1894 with special reference to General Brackenbury's comments, outbreak of the Eastern Lushais in 1892, the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition of 1899, the Aka Hills Expedition of 1883-4 and the dispute between the Akas and the rubber traders of Assam.

Certain 'Foreign Proceedings', preserved by the Records Office, Government of Assam, of which no copies are found in the National Archives, are a valuable mine of information. The documents of the Assam Records Office have referred to many sporadic tribal raids besides dwelling upon certain important matters like the violation of the 'inner line' of Lakhimpore by the Singhpos, the Punitive Expedition against the Mezami Nagas in 1896, the Somra Expedition of 1897, demarcation of the boundary between Chittagong Hill Tracts and Lushai Hills, demarcation of the boundary between the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills, the rising of the Western Lushais in 1890, South Lushai Hills Expedition of 1891, and so on.

Amongst published papers A. Mackenzie's "Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal," 1869, Capt. J. Butler's "Report on the exploration of the Angami Naga Country," 1874, Woodthorpe's "Naga Hills Expedition," 1877, Damant's "Report on the Administration of the District of the Naga Hills" (1879), "Papers relating to the frontier tribes of North-East Frontier (Calcutta 1855)," "Selection of Papers (1825-46) regarding the hill tracts between Assam and Burma and on the upper Brahmaputra," Calcutta 1873, and "Assam since the expulsion of the Burmese," published in Calcutta Review, Vol. XIV, January to June, 1853, may be cited. Over and above these, articles like F. M. Bailey's "Journey through a portion of South-Eastern Tibet and the Mishmi Hills," published in Geographical Journal (Vol. XXXIX), G. Dunbar's "Tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley," published in the Journal of Royal Society of Arts (Vol. LXIII), H. I. Halliday's "The Abors of Assam," published in United Empire (Vol. XIX), C. H. Hessemeyer's "The Hill Tribes of the Northern Frontier of Assam," published in the Journal of Asiatic Society

of Bengal (Vol. XXXVII), H. L. Jenkins' "Notes on a Trip across the Patkoi Range from Assam to the Hookong Valley", C. H. Lepper's "Notes on the Singpho and Khampti Country, North-Eastern Frontier," published in the Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal (1882), and a number of others—though shorter in length—, are quite informative as far as the land and the people of this frontier are concerned. Reports of many military and Survey expeditions have been made use of for their authenticity and vividness.

In the fourth category, there are not many books among which special mention may be made of Sir E. Gait's "History of Assam," 1926, Dr. R. Lahiri's "Annexation of Assam," 1954, Sir A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal," 1884, R. Reid's "History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam—from 1883-1941," 1942, and L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and the North East Frontier," 1914. A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-east Frontier of Bengal" is a very useful book. It is based on some research of a lot of official records covering the period, 1826-1884. Reid's "History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941" is an attempt to supplement Mackenzie's above-mentioned book. It is a compilation of notes made by a Governor of Assam in his spare time intended to be used by the members of the Administration. The book throws some light on the development of the relations between the British Indian Administration and the Hill Tribes of Assam during 1883-1941.

Different kinds of books fall in the last category, for example, J. P. Wade's "Geographical Sketch of Assam", 1805, W. Robinson's "A Descriptive Account of Assam" 1841, U. G. Bower's "Naga Path", 1950, A Hamilton's "In Abor Jungles", 1912, R. B. Pemberton's "Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India", 1835, and the like, which give one a general idea of the geography of Assam as well as some

account of the tribes therein ; J. T. Moore's "Twenty Years in Assam", 1901, A. Macleish's "The Frontier Peoples of India" 1931, J. Johnstone's "My experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills", etc., are useful memoirs ; and J. C. Geddes' "Notes on the Frontier of the Eastern Dooars", 1865, and Capt. G. Beresford's "Notes on the North-East Frontier of Assam", 1881, are of some political interest. Besides, F. M. Bailey's "China—Tibet—Assam", 1945, C. Bell's "Tibet—Past and Present", 1924, J. C. White's "Sikkim and Bhutan", 1909, V. Elwin's "India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century", 1959 etc. have been found useful in as much as they have discussed the British relations with Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, and to some extent, China.

About the general policy followed by the British Government towards the hill tribes of Assam and its north-eastern frontier little has been said in the published treatises as well as in the unpublished records. Perhaps in those days nobody gave any serious thought to the tribal policy of the Government as regards our eastern frontier, and everybody was absorbed with the tribal problems of the then North-West Frontier. Indeed, the tribes of Assam and the north-eastern frontier were yet to come in the limelight of political importance or international significance. R. Reid in his "History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam" has in some places dealt with the policy adopted by the Government in different periods towards different tribes individually, but he has not traced the general policy as such. J. C. White and Charles Bell in their respective works "Sikkim and Bhutan" and "Tibet—Past and Present" have occasionally made some observations on the Anglo-Tibetan, Anglo-Bhutanese, or Anglo-Chinese relations, but they too have not said anything about British policy, in general, towards the tribes of Assam. I have made my humble attempt with the help of different sources, published and unpublished, to upturn that virgin soil: besides discussing the British policy towards the tribes at different stages separately, I have tried to unfold the general texture of British policy as developed

in course of years by the local administration and the Supreme Government acting and reacting on each other's views.

It should be noted here that it is very difficult to consult maps of the hill tracts of our north-east frontier. The books on this frontier hitherto published hardly contain any detailed map of the tribal areas, and the few maps that have found place in Government records only illustrate very small regions, e.g. a border. In respect of maps relevant to my subject the most illuminating publication I have come across is C. U. Aitchison's "Treaties, Engagements and Sanads" (vol. 2, Calcutta-1909) which contains not only some elaborate maps of this region but also some important "imperial" as well as international engagements. Map No. 1 is after drawing by L. W. Shakespear, Col., 2nd Goorkhas ; Map Nos. 2, 3, and 4 have been adapted from maps of External 'A' Proceedings.

A full-length bibliography is appended at the end of the text.

ABBREVIATIONS

A. S. P.	...	Assistant Superintendent of Police.
Buckland	...	C. E. Buckland's "Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors", Vol. I, Calcutta 1901.
C. C.	...	Chief Commissioner.
D. C.	...	Deputy Commissioner.
Ext.	...	External.
For.	...	Foreign.
Gait.	...	E. Gait's "A History of Assam", Cal. 1926,
J. A. I.	...	Journal of Anthropological Institute, London.
J. A. S. B.	...	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
J. R. A. I	...	Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute, London.
J. R. A. S. B.	...	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
J. R. S. A.	...	Journal of Royal Society of Arts, London.
Judl.	...	Judicial.
Mackenzie	...	A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal", Cal. 1884.
Pol.	...	Political.
Prog.	...	Proceeding.
Reid.	...	R. Reid's "History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941" (Shillong, 1942).
R. G. S.	...	Royal Geographical Society, London.
Shakespear	...	L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma and North-Eastern Frontier" (London, 1914).
Suppl.	...	Supplementary.
S. P.	...	Superintendent of Police.

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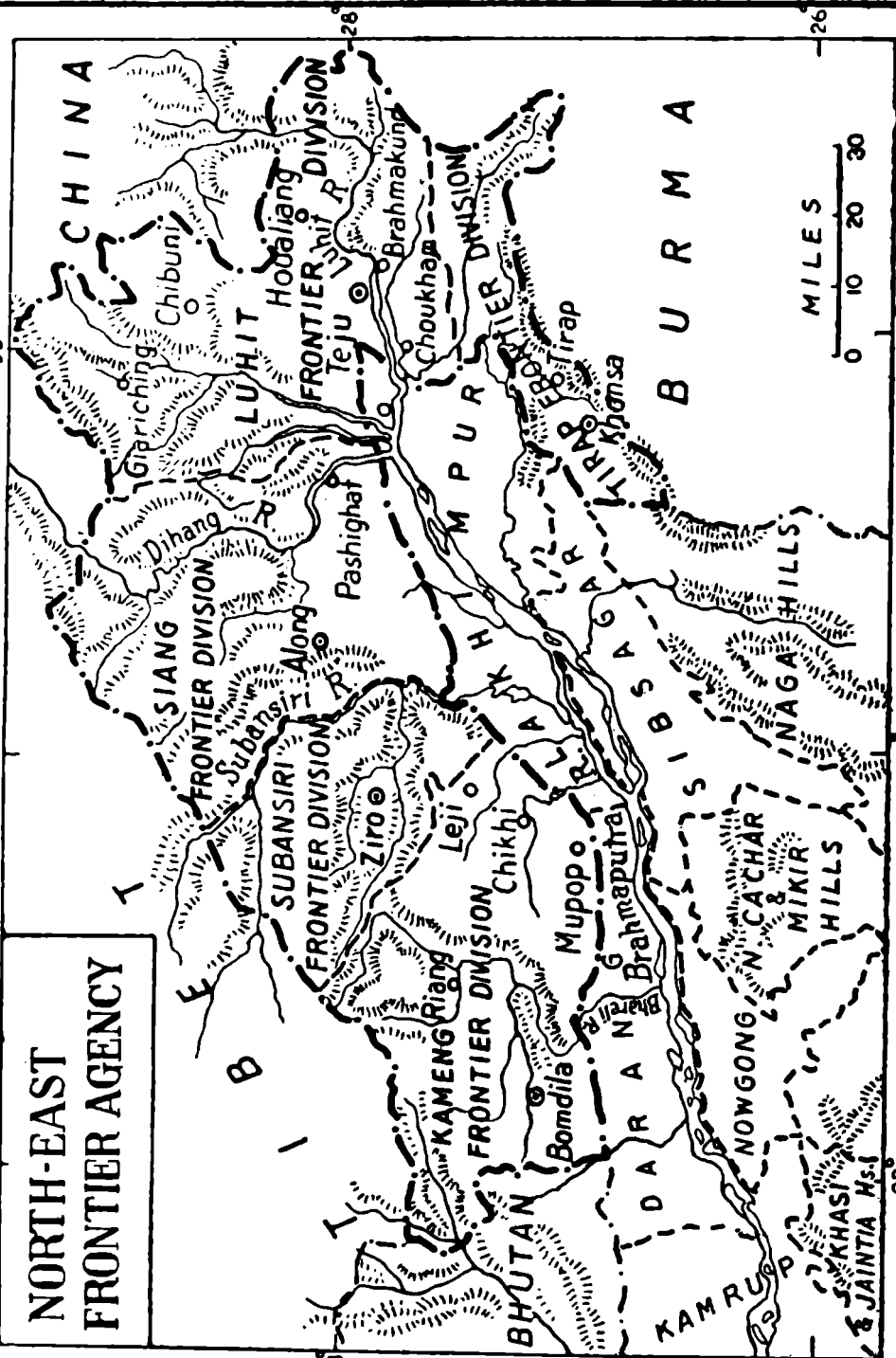
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NORTH-EAST FRONTIER AGENCY



CHAPTER I

THE TRIBES AND EARLY CONTACT WITH THEM UP TO 1858

Assam, the north-east frontier State of India, is a colourful and picturesque land. It is colourful not only from natural and geographical points of view but also from the standpoint of racial patterns. The North-East and the North-West Frontiers of British India had more or less similar physical appearance. Both were characterised by rugged hills and deep gorges, and inhabited by virile, warlike and freedom-loving tribes, with this major climatic difference that the North-East frontier enjoyed a much higher rainfall than its north-western counterpart. G. Dunbar has given a fine description of the Abor-Mishmi territory in the following words: "It would be difficult to find more tremendous inhabited country than the home of the Abors and their neighbours. A close succession of thickly wooded mountains, their sides as steep as the roof or the walls of a house, rise higher and higher northwards to the main Snowy Range. Upto the furthest limits of the Indian monsoon these highlands are drenched under very nearly the most torrential rainfall in the world... One of the greatest rivers in Asia thunders in its deepest gorges on the long journey from Tibet, through a labyrinth of mountains echoing with streams, down to the wide expanse of the Assam Valley and out into the Bay of Bengal. The razor-edged foot-hills are covered with dense sub-tropical forest, where orchids grow on the branches above and the thick undergrowth is infested with leeches.. Midway between the foot-hills and the main Snowy Range there is a narrow zone of open valleys, where flourishing villages are set amidst their fields. This is the heart of the tribal country. It is beyond the influence of Assam with its Indian and

western forms of Civilisation and it is too far south to be affected by the religious ideas and customs of Tibet".¹

Ethnologically, the hill tribes of the North-East frontier are primarily of the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock with a sprinkling of Austric and Dravidian blood².

Though the account of the British relations with the hill tribes of Assam has been given in this book chronologically, for the sake of an easy understanding it has been deemed proper at the outset to have a bird's eye view of these tribes in their geographical juxtaposition. It will be convenient in locating the lands of these tribes if we follow the course of the Brahmaputra towards its source up to Sadiya and turning south take up the eastern hill tracts and then move westward along the southern ranges of the Assam Valley.

Covering the southern base of the Bhutan hills there stretches from west to east a tract of fertile land ranging from ten to twenty miles in breadth, extending from the Dhansiri river in Assam, on the east, to the river Tista, or the frontier of Darjeeling district of Bengal, on the west, and sloping downwards to the plains. This tract is linked up with the hills above by a number of hill passes, called 'duars' by the local people. Of these, eleven are situated between the Tista and Monas, and the remaining on the frontier of Darrang and Kamrup districts of Assam. The possession of these slopes was always a bone of contention between the rulers of Bhutan and those of Assam, and the inhabitants of these unhealthy, malarious tracts were mostly the Bhutanese. These Bhutanese called 'Bhutias' in Assam and Bengal, are racially of the Tibetan stock³. They are brave and sturdy, and, though ordinarily peaceful, can prove their war-like qualities when necessary. The most easterly tribe of the Bhutias are the Thebengeas who live in the region near the river Gabharu. These tribes trade with our people in the annual fairs which are held during the winter months in the border areas. They sell ponies, dogs, bulls, handloom products of cotton and wool, precious stones and herbs to

the Indian traders and purchase from the latter all sorts of cheap industrial commodities.

That part of the Eastern Himalayas which lies between the $92^{\circ}40''$ and $95^{\circ}30''$ East Longitudes, or, in other words, between the eastern boundary of the land of the Tawang and the Khampa Bhutias, and the Dibang river,—having Assam on its south and Tibet on its north—constitutes the habitat of four tribes—the Aka, the Miji, the Dafla and the Abor. Three of these tribes, the Aka, the Miji and the Dafla, occupy the hills on the southern side of the backbone of the snow range of the Himalayas; the Abors alone dwell on both sides of it.

Eastward of the Bhutias, and between the Gabharu and the Bharali (or, more correctly the Desserai) rivers live the Akas, called by themselves Hrusso. Roughly speaking, the Aka territory lies between the parallels of 27° and 28° north latitudes and between 92° and 93° east longitudes. The Akas are divided into two clans—the Hazari-Khawa Akas (or “eaters of a thousand hearths”) and the Kapachors (or “Thieves who lurk amid the cotton plants”).⁴ These two clans live apart, and at times fight with each other. They intermarry also, but in all other respects behave towards each other as separate tribes. Of late years the Akas by intermarriage have brought into existence a third clan known as the Miri Akas, but the latter are not recognised as belonging to the Aka tribe proper. They also intermarry with the Mijis to the north, but seem to have no social intercourse with the Daflas or with the Bhutias. They assert that they came originally from the south-east of the Assam Valley, and this might be true, since their language assimilates more with that of the tribes bordering Manipur than with that of their immediate neighbours, the Daflas and the Bhutias.⁵ They also claim that they are of noble origin, and every free Aka considers himself more or less a ‘Raja’. “‘Noblesse oblige’ is clearly marked in their deportment, if not in their conduct.”⁶ The Kapachors established certain control over the inhabitants of the Balipara Mouza who had to provide them with free board and lodge whenever it pleased the Akas to visit the

plains and also to pay them an annual tribute in the shape of pigs, fowls, and silk cloths.

The land of the Hazarikhawas is bounded on the north by the territories of the Bhutias and Mijis, on the south by the district of Darrang, on the east by the territory of the Kapachors, and on the west by the Tengapani river and Bhutan. The Kapachor territory is bounded on the north by the Mijis and the Digeng river, on the south by Darrang, on the east by the Phusung river and the Miris, and on the west by the Hazarikhawas. There are two passes into the Aka country from the plains, viz. the Bharali and the Balakpung. Three to four days' climbing over thickly wooded hills, nearly pathless, stumbling up the dry bed of the Bharali and other less important streams, thickly strewn with large boulders, clambering up the steep faces of rocks, holding on by cane ropes, bring the traveller to the Aka villages. But one can choose a better road, which is somewhat circuitous, through Bhutan and reach the Aka land. This road leads first to the settlement of the Sat-Rajas due north, about 4 days' march, and then to the Aka territory due east, to be reached in another two days.

The Akas are great agriculturists, and no idlers. They grow different food crops,—tobacco, chilli, job's tears and various kinds of vegetables by means of jhum' cultivation. They also hunt wild beasts and birds. They do not, like the Angami Nagas, try for terrace cultivation, probably owing to the precipitous nature of their hills. They trade with Bhutan and Assam. From the former they purchase warm clothes, ornaments, 'daos' and swords, and to the latter they sell rubber.

The Akas are demon worshippers. They believe in the existence of various spirits—good and evil—who may harm them if not properly propitiated. In the Aka land corpses are buried and not burnt. Some years back a priest from Lhasa preached Buddhism amongst them, and set up a monastery. Though polygamists, the Akas show considerable respect to their women. They are hospitable and not

inclined to criminal acts. Besides bows and arrows the Aka carries a long sword, the blade being 4 feet long and the handle about 4 inches. The Aka stockades are strong and well-built. Macgregor thinks that the Akas do not take kindly to the warpath. The importance of the Akas lies in their geographical position between Assam and the numerous Miji clans over whom they exert a great influence by acting as middlemen in trade. As the Mijis are not in the habit of visiting Assam they purchase Assamese silk and cotton cloth from the Akas. Captain Maxwell, Political Officer with the Aka Field Force, 1894, observed: "Of all the Savage races on the Northern Frontier of the Assam Province, the Akas have been most contumacious and troublesome."⁸

Eastward of the Bharali river up to the upper courses of the Sunderi and to the north of Naoduar (the Nine Passes) in Darrang and Cheduar (the Six Passes) in Lakhimpur live the various cognate tribes called the Daflas. They are more or less a tribe of the outer hills inhabiting the southern slopes of a spur of the Himalayas which divides the Bharali from the Subansiri drainage. The spur is well defined as far as the Lollupo peak and at this point it is split into a number of minor valleys and spurs among which the Daflas have set up their villages. On the west a very distinct ridge coming down from Lollupo has separated the tribe from the Akas who inhabit the basin of the Bharali. Similarly on the east another ridge sloping down also from Lollupo has divided the Daflas from the Miris of the Khru (an affluent of the Subansiri) and the Subansiri. The interior of the triangle, called the Dafla Hills, formed by these two spurs, is drained by the Ranga or Sunderi and the Dikrang. The Dikrang has a small tributary from the west called the Borpani, and further west are the still smaller streams of the Buroi and its tributaries—the Poma and the Papum, and the Borgang. The general direction of these rivers is easterly, and the valleys lie east and west.

The Daflas are thus separated from the Akas on the west and the Miris on the east and the north. Their boundary on

the south is the 'Duphlaghur', an old road running along the frontier from south-west to north-east. No name has yet been assigned to the range dividing the Ranga valley from the Dikrang valley, but that on the southern side of the Dikrang is known as the Misr Parbat. The inhabited hills vary from 2000 to 7000 feet in height, and a great portion of them have been cleared for cultivation by cutting and burning the forest. Many of the lateral valleys on the banks of the Ranga have been terraced and irrigated, and consequently permanent rice cultivation is possible. The northern part of the Ranga valley is an open grassy land, and from here a low pass leads to the Khru valley.

The Daflas call themselves "Bangni" meaning "men".⁹ The Daflas who live on the border of Darrang are now generally known as Paschim (Western) Daflas, and those inhabiting the North Lakhimpur borders are called Tagin Daflas. Their features are decidedly Mongolian, and their language is closely allied to the Miri tongue. Their form of Government is oligarchical, there being sometimes eighty chiefs in one clan. The Daflas are, however, not so much a single homogeneous tribe as a horde of petty clans independent of each other and generally incapable of a combined action. They tattoo their faces, the reason assigned being that it will enable them to be recognised in the next world.

To the north-east of the Daflas live the Miris and Abors. The Miris and Abors belong to the same tribal stock and originally came from the same habitat. While the Abors being the later wave of immigrants into the border hills of Assam have retained more of their pristine savagery and hardihood, the Miris have been polished by their association with the plains and the sedentary habits of civilisation. The Abors and Miris are very much alike in all material respects, and the intercourse between them is constant and intimate. In Assamese the word Abor means "independent" as contrasted with Bori meaning "subject." But the Abors call themselves "Abuit" and all foreigners "Madgu" (this includes

Tibetans also). The Miris inhabit the plains and lower hills along the north banks of the Brahmaputra from the Sisi 'mouza' (a land revenue area) of Lakhimpur to the Dihang; numerous Hill Miris live in the hills west of the Dirjmoo, which separates the Hill Miris from the Abors.

Thus, the Hill Miris are bounded on the south-east by the Dirjmoo, on the north-east by a low range of hills forming the southern boundary of the Dihang valley, on the south by North Lakhimpur Sub-division; and on the south-west by the hills to the east of the Ranga river which separates them from the Daflas. The Subansiri river divides the Miri Hills into almost equal parts east and west, and its two main tributaries—the Sidan and the Kamla—divide the hills north and south. While the Sidan flows from a comparatively low range on the south-west of the Dihang, the Kamla flows from the high mountains of the north-west. The Miris inhabit the low hills overlooking these rivers, but do not appear to live in an altitude above 6000 feet. Looking due north great snow-capped mountains shut out the view; but to the north-east low passes give a view over the Abor country and the Dihang valley. Generally speaking, the Miri hills are more rugged than the neighbouring Dafla hills; passing through them is very difficult due to the existence of steep ascents and descents.

G. W. Dun has made a zonal classification of the Miris. According to him the Ghyghasi Miris inhabit the country to the west of the Dirjmoo and to the north of the Sisi 'mouza' of North Lakhimpur, the Ghasi Miris live between river Dhol and the Subansiri, the Sarak Miris live in the outer range between the Subansiri and the Ranga, the Panibotia and Tarbotia clans inhabit the hills to the west of the Subansiri, and the Anka tribe, or Tenai Miris, possess fifteen villages on a tableland to the north-west of the Miri hills, beyond the watershed of the Ranga river. The Ghyghasi and Ghasi Miris may be considered as the same clan, and they are regarded as such by other Miris. It is doubtful whether the Tenai Miris are really Miris. They may be altogether a

separate tribe. They trade with the Daflas and supply them with salt.

Mr. G. W. Dun has also referred to the Lhokaptra clan as one of the neighbours of the Miris. "The Lhokaptra or the people of Lhokhalo inhabit the country south of the Sanpo, and were formerly known as the Tacponi."¹⁰ They are believed to be a harmless and industrious people who avoid intercourse with their neighbours of Tibet and the Miri Hills.

The Abors live further east in the hills between the Dihang and the Dibang, the Bor Abors occupying the ranges of the interior. The Dobah Abors living in the hills above the Sisi call themselves Dobahs, but are called Galongs by Miris. The country of the Abors and Galongs is bounded by the Subansiri on the west, by the Sisseri and the Dibang on the east, and lies in the highlands between the Himalayas proper and the plains of Assam. G. Dunbar has found it convenient to call the people of the Dihang valley 'Abor,' the people between that watershed and the Subansiri 'Galong,' and the tribes living between the Subansiri and the 'Borheli'¹¹ 'Dafla.' Their northern neighbours are the Boris and Membas. The Minyongs (who are Abor), the Boris and the Karkas (who are Galong) meet in the Siyom valley.

The Abors living on the left or east bank of the Dihang up to the Dibang are called Bor Abors, or "Great" Abors, and are said to be the origin of the whole tribe, especially of the Pasi and the Meyong Abors. Those occupying the right bank of the Dihang are called Pasi-Meyong. The real habitat of the Abors is the lofty mountain ranges, from 8,000 to 12,000 feet high, between Assam and Tibet, whence their super-abundant population, for the want of room and land, have overflowed into the valley of Assam through the gorge of the Dihang, and spread east and west to the lower ranges of hills on the outskirts of the plains. The Abors are agriculturists who keep 'mithan' and other cattle. Though their villages are reported to be open and undefended, their sites are chosen on inaccessible spots. The Abors arm them-

selves with bows, poisoned arrows, and cross bows, and are said to be good shots. They also carry spears, heavy short swords, and long knives.

The Abors claimed an absolute overlordship on the Plain Miris and an inalienable right to all the fish and gold in the Dihang river, while the Hill Miris acquired an acknowledged right of Posa¹² on the people inhabiting the cultivated tracts of Bordoloni, Sisi and Demaji. "They (the Abors) are in a manner insolent and rude beyond all other tribes of this frontier."¹³ There is little doubt that the Abors, all Miri clans and the Daflas are one great tribe, quite different from their neighbours on their east and west namely the Bhutias and the Mishmis, but bearing a strong resemblance to the Nagas. The Abors extend northwards upto the frontier of Tibet, with which land they trade and communicate. Large numbers of trade marts are scattered along the Indo-Tibetan border. Trade routes between the Yamne and the Subansiri may be summarised as follows: North of Latitude 28°15' trade flows into the country from the north; below this there is a zone into which trade percolates both north and south; further below goods are either purchased directly from the Kayah's¹⁴ shops scattered along the Assam frontier or are brought in on the strong tide of trade that, coming south from Tibet through the Mishmi country, sweeps along the lower Abor hills to the Subansiri. As most Abors wear dark red woollen coats and other articles of clothing and ornaments obtained from Tibet these distinguish them from the Mishmis, whom they otherwise very much resemble in appearance, dress, manners, and customs.

Beyond the Abors eastward live the various tribes of Mishmis. It may be said on a rough estimate that all the hills bordering the north-east corner of Assam are inhabited by these hillmen. From the Dibang to the Digaru river in the hills to the north of Sadiya, are to be found the Chulikata Mishmis, the most dangerous of all the Mishmi clans, who derive their epithet—Chulikata (meaning "Cropped hair")—from their fashion of cutting the hair square cross the fore-

head. From the Digaru westward and on both sides of the Brahmaputra, reaching the Tibetan frontier on the north and the Nemlang river on the south, live various other Mishmi tribes.—the Tain, the Mezho and the Maro clans. “The Mishmis to the west of the Du river, an affluent of the Brahmaputra above Brahmakund, trade with the British possessions, and are in the habit of constant intercourse with us”.¹⁵ These are the Tain or the Digaru tribe¹⁶. The tribes which live to the north-east of the Du and trade with Tibet are the Mezho Mishmis. The Maro are found to the south of the Brahmaputra in scattered settlements mixed up with Khamti and Singhpo villages. The men of the interior and higher ranges are of good physique, and some of them are very fair, with a strong Mongolian cast of features. All Mishmis, men and women, are habitual smokers, and they smoke bamboo pipes very similar to those of the Lhota Nagas. Like most hill tribes they are very dirty in habits. Slavery is not an institution with them, nor do they lay claim to ‘Posa’, and so there is little difficulty in dealing with them, as compared with the Abors.

The Digarus unlike the Chulikatas wear their hair very long and tied in a knot on the top of their heads, and most of them wear caps, made of the skins of martens, hill-foxes, etc, and also a kind of waistcoat made from the skin of the ‘takin’, an animal resembling a cross between domestic cattle and a goat, and found only on high snowy ranges. They are wilder looking than the Chulikatas, and are supposed to inhabit the highest ranges just below the snowline. The furthest tribes that visit Sadiya take a month or more in making the journey. That the Digarus have direct or indirect intercourse with Chinese provinces is evident from the Chinese coins, metal tobacco-pipes and other Chinese goods they possess. Like the Chulikatas they too are averse to allowing strangers to pass through their territory. The Mishmis cultivate Mishmi ‘teeta’ and take it to Tibet, where it is said to be in great demand. They likewise take musk-deer pods, dyed cloths and skins of tigers, bears, deer, leopards, otters, etc.,

and these together with the Mishmi teeta, they barter for Sikra 'daos',* cattle, guns, pistols, powder and caps¹⁷. Towards the close of the 19th century the Abors ousted the Mishmis from certain areas between the Sisseri and the Dibang, and established settlements at Bomjur.

To the north of Sadiya and to the south-east of the Mishmis live the Khamtis who were originally from Bor Khamti, the mountainous region interposing between Assam and the valley of Irrawaddy. They are of Shan descent and follow Buddhism¹⁸. After the cessation of hostilities between the Khamtis and the British Indian Government in 1843 many of them were settled above Sadiya as a buffer between the Assamese and the Mishmis. A small force of 24 Khamti volunteers was formerly employed for the protection of the villages around Sadiya. They used to receive a small pay from the government yearly, and were supplied with arms and ammunition. In 1886 they were disbanded by the Chief Commissioner and pensioned off as their service was no longer required. The Phakials, who are chiefly settled on the Buri Dihing, are almost indistinguishable in dress, manners and language from the Khamtis. They are thought to be a separate batch of immigrants from the Shan country.¹⁹

The Singhpos are racially identical with the Kakus or Kachins of Burma. Originally they were all one people but afterwards they were split up into two main divisions—the Eastern and the Western—called the Kakus and Ts' Sans. The most important clan of the Ts' San group is the Ga King, called Ka Kyungs in Burma. The Kaku division is found chiefly in the trans-Namkin country, while the Ts' San division on this side of the Nam Kin, in the Hukong valley and between the Irrawaddy and the Kandywen.²⁰ The Singhpos are divided into 12 principal tribes of which the one called Beesa, whose chieftain resides at the village of that name at the gorge of the Patkai pass, appears to be the head. They maintain a constant communication with their kinsmen

* 'dao' means a kind of broad sword usually with a wooden handle.

occupying the hills on the southern side of the Patkai Pass as far as the Hukong valley.

During the Moamariah rebellion in the reign of Gourinath Singh (1780-94) the Singhpos drove away the Khamtis from the lands below the Patkai hills and settled themselves on the Tengapani river, east of Sadiya, and on the Upper Buri Dihing in Namrup. According to W. Robinson²¹ the Singhpos are the most powerful and most numerous tribe bordering on the Assam valley. On the north they are bounded by the Lohit, on the east by the Langtang range, which separates them from the Bor-Khamtis, on the south by the Patkai range which divides them from the Burmese Singhpos, from whom they have descended, and on the west by an imaginary line drawn south from Sadiya to the Patkai.

The Duantias, or Singhpo-Assamese half-breeds, are the offspring of the intercourse between the Singhpo captors and their Assamese slaves. These peaceful people are chiefly settled along the Buri Dihing. Their chiefs, like the Mishmi and Abor chiefs, exchange presents annually with the Political Officer at Sadiya. They pay no revenue except where settled within the Inner Line.

The Singhpos paid tribute to none—neither to Burma nor to China, thus forming a neutral ground between British India and China. Their tracts, specially those towards the south and the south-west, and those in the further west of Sadiya, are extremely rich in precious metals, and the amber mines of Hukong, only a few days' march from the Indian frontier, are famous. Serpentine, jade, salt and other valuable minerals, as well as precious stones, are found in these areas in a considerable quantity. The Chinese come a long way towards our frontier for trading purposes. The extreme point of British India's further line was at about 70 miles east of Sadiya, and ten miles further east, Chinese influence was supposed to commence. The system of slavery was an important institution in the Singhpo society.

To the south-west of the Singhpos are scattered the various Naga²² tribes over the hills, in between 93° and 97°

longitudes and extending from the Buri Dihing river and Singhpo country of Lakhimpur in the east to the Kopili river in Nowgong in the west, and to the confines of Manipur and Cachar in the south. "The hills rise in successive and parallel ranges from the plains to the Burmese watershed, and the rivers naturally flowing between them take the same north-east or south-west direction, breaking out through the ranges to empty themselves after crossing the plain into the Brahmaputra, the only exception of any note being the southern branch of the Dikhu, which drains a long valley between high ranges of hills as yet unsurveyed and runs directly northwards."²³ The toughest and most warlike of all the tribes of the north-east frontier, the Nagas are widely known even today as head-hunters. These tribes differ from each other in many ways, chiefly in their mutually unintelligible dialects. The Patkai Nagas inhabit the northern slopes of the Patkai mountains and the Sibsagar Nagas have their habitat in the low hills to the south of Sibsagar District. Across the Doyang westward is the territory of the Angami Naga tribe. Other important branches of the Nagas are the Kacha Nagas, the Lhota Nagas, the Semas, the Hatigorias, the Rengmas, the Lengta Nagas, and so on. From the Dikhu to the Tirap the Naga tribes known as Namsangia, Joboka, Tablangia, Assiringia, etc., are called 'eastern Nagas' or trans-Dikhu Nagas. Behind them are other Naga tribes of whom the Government had little knowledge in the second half of the nineteenth century, except that some of them used to come down to work on the tea gardens in the winter. Further east, as far as the Patkai, there are sundry Naga tribes who are in subjection to the Singhpos, and seem to be harmless. The characteristic feature of the Nagas was their inter-tribal feuds and fights. All Nagas were head-hunters, their women being the chief incentive to this pursuit as girls would not favour men who had not taken heads or been in raids.²⁴

West of the Angami territories and surrounded by Nowgong District on the north, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills on the west, and Cachar on the south stand the North Cachar

Hills inhabited by six different hill tribes—Hill Cacharis, Hozai Cacharis, Mikirs, Aroong Nagas, Old Kukis and New Kukis.

Bordering upon the plains of Nowgong district, and actually within the bounds of that District, are two hill tracts, one inhabited by the Mikirs and the other by Rengma Nagas. The Mikir Hills extend from the Jamuna to the Dhansiri and are separated from the Naga hills by low, undulating hillocks and valleys. In 1838, the total number of Mikirs was probably twenty thousand. They sacrifice to the sun, the moon, rivers, large stones and trees in order to avert sickness or procure good harvests. Polygamy is unknown to them and they are not given to any sort of crime. They burn their dead and afterwards bury the ashes. They are much addicted to drinking home-made spirits.

Proceeding westward from the Naga Hills we come across the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The Khasis and Jaintas belong to the same tribal community. They are amiable and jolly, peaceful and social. Their society is matriarchal. Though the Jaintas had a Raja of their own, the Khasis developed some sort of a confederation of small oligarchical republics, subject to no common superior, yet of which each member was amenable, in some degree or other, to the control of the confederates.

West of the Khasi Hills stand the Garo Hills inhabited by the Garos.²⁵ In the south of the Garo hills lies the Myensingh District of Bengal and to its north stretches the Goalpara District of Assam.

The south-east corner of Assam is the abode of the Lushai or Kuki tribes sandwiched between Tripura state and Burma. The Kukis reside not only in the Lushai Hills but also in south-western Manipur and the eastern part of Tripura. Originally of savage nature and marauding spirit they indulged in incessant raids into Cachar and Sylhet.

Besides these tribes some other tribes will have to be dealt with casually from time to time. These are the Tipperahs inhabiting the hills of (Hill) Tripura, the tribes of

the Chittagong Hill tracts, the Shindus and the Sooties on the border-land between the Lushai country and the Burmese territory.

Much credit goes to the Christian missionaries who have civilised most of these tribes by their heroic efforts. But while the general rule is that missionaries are followed by the armies and administrators, in case of these hills the reverse is true.

II

Most of the hill tribes on the North-East frontier of India live either inside or on the borders of the State of Assam, and it will not be unfair to say that in pursuing the course of history of these tribes during British rule one should keep a constant watch on the political development of Assam. For studying the political relations between the British Indian Government and the hill tribes of Assam during 1858-1900 a brief survey of the history of Assam since 1774 with special reference to its hill tribes will, perhaps, be of some help. The Jaintas were the first hill people of the North-East frontier to come into direct contact with the British when their territory was overrun by the latter in 1774, but it was not permanently annexed by them. Cachar came into contact with the Bengal Government during the closing years of the 18th century and Arakan after its absorption in the Burmese Empire in 1784.

The first direct intervention by the British in the territory of the Ahoms²⁶ was the result of the Ahom King Gaurinath Singh's fervent appeal to the British Government to help him in putting down the Moamaria²⁷ rebels and expelling the lawless robbers who had entered Assam from Bengal. Consequently, Lord Cornwallis sent Captain Welsh in 1792 as the leader of an expedition to set the things right in Assam. Welsh performed his task ably, but before long he was recalled by Sir John Shore whose aim was to follow the path of non-interference. As a result Assam was again relegated to chaos and internecine wars.

Taking advantage of the weakness of the central authority in Assam the Burmese conquered the land in 1819. As the dominions of the British and the Burmese now came to be contiguous there readily appeared causes for the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-'26). By the Treaty of Yandabo (February 24, 1826) the Burmese renounced all claims upon Assam and her dependencies and the border states of Cachar and Jaintia. David Scott was appointed Agent to the Governor-General over the whole of Assam except the Sadiya and Mattak districts. However, in 1832 Upper Assam except Sadiya and Mattak was made over to the Ahom prince, Purandar Singh, who was set up as a vassal king. In 1833, David Scott became the Commissioner of Assam. In 1838 Purandar Singh's territory was taken over by the British, and Assam as a whole became a 'non-regulated' Province of the Indian Empire. Mattak and Sadiya were annexed to British India in 1842. Cachar had been placed under the rule of its old king ; but as he died without any heir, it was annexed in 1832. Likewise, Jaintia, which was kept under the rule of a vassal king for some years, was annexed in 1835, and Manipur was restored to its ruling dynasty.

The Province of Assam was created in 1874 with a view to relieving the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal of a part of his huge administrative responsibility. The head of the newly created province was given the title of 'Chief Commissioner'. In 1905, Lord Curzon combined the eastern district of Bengal with Assam and constituted a new province under the name of Eastern Bengal and Assam, but this was reversed in 1912 and Assam was restored to its former territorial position. In 1921, in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919, Assam was given the status of a Governor's province.

III

Before we start with the history of British relations with these hill men since 1858 let us take stock of their relationship up till that memorable year. When in 1826 by the

Treaty of Yandabo (February 24, 1826) the King of Burma renounced all claims upon, and agreed to abstain from all future interference with Assam and its dependencies and the neighbouring states of Cachar and Jaintia, the British Indian Government filled the vacuum created by this Burmese renunciation. Consequent upon the British conquest of Assam the British rulers now stepped into the shoes of the Ahoms and inherited from the latter a legacy of hostile relationship with many a hill tribe on the new borders.

Along the southern frontier of Bhutan there are eighteen mountain passes, called Bhutan *duars*, leading from the hills and intersecting the *terai*.—eleven on the frontier of Bengal (including Goalpara and Cooch Behar), and seven on that of Assam. By means of these passes the Bhutia highlanders held their sway over this border and established their *de facto* right on this whole belt of border territory. Each of the eighteen passes was under the authority of a 'Jongpen' (local Bhutanese magistrate) who had the customary right of administering a portion of tract lying below the pass and bearing its name. As a result of incessant outrages committed by the Bhutias on the British subjects, the more important of which took place in 1828 and 1836, the British Government attached all of the Assam Duars²⁸ in 1841 as the only means of securing peace in this part of the frontier, a sum of ten thousand rupees being thereafter annually paid to the Bhutan Government as compensation. But though the situation improved in this part of the frontier belt, outrages never ceased in the Bengal Section of the Duars.²⁹

To the east of the Buriguma Duar lies the Kuriapara Duar* formerly held by the extra—Bhutan Bhutias in more or less direct subjugation to Tibet. This Duar was the main channel of trade between Tibet and Assam. Between 1830 and 1840 these Bhutias gave much trouble to the British, and consequently the British Government attached the Duar. In 1844, their chiefs³⁰ formally renounced their claims to this

*vide Map No. 1

Duar in return for an annual payment of five thousand rupees. Eastward of the Kuriapara Duar lie the Char Duar (or the four passes) on the borders of which live the Rooprai Ganw and the Sher Ganw Bhutias who paid allegiance to none. The Char Duar Bhutias annually collected a tribute from the plains. In 1826, by a mutual agreement the authorities of Darrang District assumed the right of direct collection and of payment to the Bhutias as a compensation. As a result of an outrage committed by some Bhutias in 1839, this annual payment was reduced to one thousand seven hundred and forty rupees.

The Hazarikhawa Akas collected an annual 'Posa' from the plains bordering upon their hills. But the inconvenience of permitting a horde of savages to descend annually upon the cultivated lands for the purpose of collecting petty dues from each household was felt by the British Government to be unbearable. Quarrels and outrages were the natural concomitants of such a custom, and consequently the Assam Government invited these hillmen to surrender their right of direct collection for an annual lump payment in its stead. The claims of the Hazarikhawas were settled at a yearly payment of Rs. 175/-. The Kapachors under their leader, the Taghi Raja, gave much trouble to the Government. In 1835, they burnt an Assam Light Infantry outpost at Bali-para, killing 17 persons. When in 1841 the Government was contemplating an expedition against the Taghi Raja, the latter suddenly surrendered. The Raja was afterwards released on an oath taken by him to stop his wild outrages, and a small stipend was granted to him. Through his influence the other Aka chiefs also entered into agreements with the Government and accepted stipends.

In 1835, the Daflas of Char Duar, probably under the instigation of the Taghi Raja, made a raid upon the plains, and as a punishment they were forbidden to enter the plains to collect their 'posa'. In November following, a few months after the Taghi Raja's Balipara raid, they attacked that place and abducted some British subjects. Consequently, an ex-

petition was sent against them and they were punished. Many of the Dafla tribes north of Char Duar and Nao Duar³¹ made terms with the Government according to which they renounced their right of posa in exchange of an annual stipend. Till 1852, these people were a source of constant anxiety, but from 1852 they settled down quietly, and many of them devoted their attention to agriculture. About Rs. 41,320 was paid annually to the Daflas of Char Duar and Nao Duar.

The Abors³² were at first friendly with the British Government. During the British hostilities with the Khamtis and Mishmis the Abors actually helped the Government. Though they had once carried off to the hills some Beeah fishermen³³ who refused to pay them any conciliatory offering, up till 1847 they maintained their friendly attitude towards the Government. But when in 1848, Captain Vetch went to the Hills with a small party of troops to demand the release of a number of Cachari gold-washers, carried off by the Abors, he was treacherously attacked. In retaliation Vetch burnt their village. Though open hostilities did not break out till then, the Abors continued their sporadic depredations on the gold-washers.³⁴

Hostilities with the Mishmis started from a simple incident. In 1854, a French Missionary, M. Krick, and his friend M. Bourri crossed the Mishmi country into Tibet, but in the following year during their journey back they were murdered by the Mishmis. A small expedition under Lieutenant Eden, after forced marches for eight days in succession, captured the offending chief and his village. But, in spite of this, the following years witnessed frequent raids. In January and October 1857, the Mishmis sacked a village and an outlying homestead respectively, and in November massacred the women and children of a village belonging to the Khamti Chief, Choukeng Gohain, on the flimsy ground that some of their tribe had died of cholera when visiting

the Gohain.* The Khamti villages were consequently armed, and soon afterwards they drove back a body of Chulikatas whom they detected stealing down upon their settlements.

As the Government deprived the Khamtis of their jurisdiction over the local Assamese and set free their slaves, they suspected the Government of a design to tax them in the near future and lower their status to that of an Assamese ryot. Although they, shortly afterwards, assisted the Government's operations against the Singhpos, they were actually simmering with discontent. This discontent burst into a treacherous attack on the British garrison at Sadiya in January 1839, during which Col. White, the Political Agent, was killed and eighty others were either massacred or wounded. A punitive expedition was at once sent against those who sought refuge amongst the Mishmis. But they were defeated in a series of attacks, and by December, 1843³⁶ the last of the rebels made his submission. Some of the rebels were transplanted to the western part of the district, and others were settled above the town of Sadiya in order to form a screen between the Mishmis and the Assamese.

The British policy of emancipating the slaves held by the hill tribes, residing within the jurisdiction of the Assam Government, led to a series of Singhpo risings, the last of which took place in 1843. All the Singhpos living either on Indian or Burmese borderland, and a certain number of Shans and Burmese joined in these. The risings were promptly put down, and the Singhpos submitted. Captain Jenkins, the Agent of the Governor-General, in his final report observed that the main cause of the Singhpo rebellion was the loss of their slaves.³⁶ But still the institution of slavery could not in any way be countenanced. A school was started at Saikwah for educating these tribesmen into the habits of civilisation. The Singhpos in later periods gave no trouble and they proved to be of great help to the Government in

*Choukeng Gohain. The term 'Gohain' means 'preceptor' in Assamese. Here it means 'chief'.

restraining and keeping in order the Nagas of the Patkai Hills.⁸⁷ Like some other tribes of the frontier they also settled down to agriculture.

The Chittagong Frontier tribes, Tipperahs, Mikirs and Sooties created no trouble for the Government up till 1858. The Garos started their raids in 1857 and repeated them up till 1859. The hilly tract inhabited by the various Naga tribes had never been subjugated by the Ahoms, and it was no part of the British policy up till 1858 to absorb it. The principle of punishing these raiders was adopted as a policy in 1835.⁸⁸

The Angami Nagas were hostile from the beginning. Between the years 1835 and 1851, ten punitive expeditions were despatched into the Naga Hills. The expedition of 1851 severely punished the offending hillmen. It was then decided to try the combined effect of non-interference in their internal quarrels, of encouraging commercial relations when they behaved well, and of shutting them out from the neighbouring markets when they did any mischief.⁸⁹ But the hopes of the Government were belied by the twenty-two raids by the Nagas in the year following, in which 178 persons were either killed, wounded or abducted. In 1854, an officer was posted at Asalu and a line of frontier outposts was established, but they proved of little use, and raids continued to be of frequent occurrence. Especially after the withdrawal of the armed detachment from Dimapur in 1856, the Nagas ran riot, and one outrage after another was committed.

Like the Nagas, the hillmen living in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills caused trouble from the beginning of British rule in Assam. In 1827, David Scott⁴⁰ planned the construction of a road through the Khasi Hills, joining the Assam Valley with the Surma Valley. For that he met the local Khasi Chiefs and took their consent. But in 1829 the Khasis, alarmed by the foolish boast of a peon, who in a personal and private quarrel, taunted them with the threat of subjugation and taxation as soon as the road should be completed, made a sudden attack on a small party killing two British officers and their followers.⁴¹ Troops were rushed into

the area and the hillmen were punished. The Chiefs, called Siems, were allowed to retain a large measure of independence, but they had to submit to the supervising control of the Political Agent who was thenceforward stationed in the hills and who dealt with all serious cases of a criminal nature. They also agreed to the construction of such roads, bridges and road-side bungalows as might be needed by the Government.

In 1832, the Raja of Gobha, who was a tributary Chief under the ruler of Jaintia, seized four British subjects and immolated three of them at the shrine of the goddess Kali.⁴² As the culprits were not surrendered British troops under Captain Lister overran the Jaintia Hills, and annexed the Jaintia Pargana and Gobha to the British territory. As the Raja of Jaintia professed his unwillingness to retain his territory in the hills this was placed under the Political Officer of the Khasi Hills, the Raja being pensioned off. Like the Siems,⁴³ the Syntengs⁴⁴ also were neither taxed nor interfered with in their internal affairs, only heinous offences were henceforth to be tried by the Political Agent or his Assistant.

The Lushais committed their first raid in 1849 and the punitive expedition that followed was so successful that they gave no further trouble until 1858.

IV

Since the famous Queen's Proclamation of November 1, 1858, the British Government in India adopted a political 'Laissez faire' policy towards the Native States. The same policy was also followed with regard to the hill tribes of Assam. As the Government's north-western frontier policy was very much influenced by the fear of a Russian advance in Afghanistan, in the north-eastern frontier of India too, the fear of Burmese aggression persisted in the minds of the Government for many years after the British conquest of Assam. But despite the Government's peaceful attitude to the hill tribes of Assam and the North-East Frontier, open clashes could not be staved off for long, and in the long run

the Government's policy of non-interference had to be replaced by a 'forward' policy. Though the immense publicity given to the Afghan wars and the great concern felt over the North-West Frontier eclipsed the important problems of its north-eastern counterpart, the excellent work, political and military, performed by the officers and men in this frontier can hardly be over-estimated.

FOOTNOTES

1 G. Dunbar's "Other Men's Lives", London 1938, pp. 230-231.

2 E. Gait's 'A history of Assam', Calcutta 1926, Introduction to First Edition, p. 25, and the Census of India, 1891, Assam, Vol. 1 Report, pp. 221-290.

3 L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and the North-East Frontier", London 1914, p. 91.

4 Asiatic Society's Journal, Vol. XXXVII, Calcutta 1868, p. 194.

5 "Our ancestors, they say, lived in Partabgor on the banks of the Giladhari river, north of Bishnath, but were driven out from thence by Krishna and Boloram".—C. H. Hessemeyer's "The Hill tribes of the northern frontier of Assam", J.A.S.B., Vol. XXXVII. Nos. 1-4, 1868, pp. 192-202.

6 Maj. C. R. Macgregor's "Notes on Akas and Akaland"—Proceedings of the A.S.B., 1884, p. 198.

7 Also spelt as joom. "The hill tribes generally cultivate on the jhum system, i.e., they burn down part of the forest, the ashes of which make a valuable manure, and then dibble in various kinds of seeds all mixed together. After one or two years, cultivation becomes impossible on account of the choking weeds that spring up; the villagers then move on to a new clearance and the deserted fields remain unfit for cultivation until after the lapse of some years, fresh forest growth has killed out the weeds".—E. Gait's "A History of Assam", Calcutta 1926, p. 345.

8 Maxwell's Report, For. Dept., Ext. A Progs., October, 1894, Nos. 41-116.

9 According to G. W. Dun the Daflas call themselves Nyising, and assert that they are descended from Nyia, the son of Abotani, whose father was Dhangi, the sun, by his wife Chinne, the daughter of Chatachi, the earth. Nyia has a number of sons, and the children of the latter were the founders of the existing clans like Bod, Nirik, Tan, Noling, Sakpha, Phering, Opurtak, Rapo, Pai, Opurta, Namta, Chana, Opur Tabung, etc.—V. Elwin's "India's North-East Frontier in the 19th Century", Bombay 1959, pp. 185-188.

- 10 V. Elwin's "India's North East Frontier in the 19th Century", Bombay 1959, p. 161.
- 11 Also spelt Bharali
- 12 Posa was to most of the hill tribes bordering on the plains an uncertain, undefined exaction, depending in amount upon the capacity of the savage hordes who might descend to levy it. (Revenue Proceedings, 11th August 1834, No. 5).
- 13 Judicial Prog., November 1863, No. 166.
- 14 Up-country merchants doing business in Assam are called "Kayah" by the local people.
- 15 Vol. XXII of the published Selections from the Bengal Records and Vol. XVII of the Bengal Asiatic Societies Researches.
- 16 Also called Eastern Mishmis.—G. W. Beresford's "Notes on the North-Eastern Frontier of Assam", Shillong 1881, p. 28f.
- 17 J. F. Needham's "Report on the Bebejiya Mishmi Expedition", 1899-1900, p. 15f.
- 18 Pemberton's "Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India", Calcutta 1835, p. 70.
- 19 Aitchison's "Treaties, Engagements and Sanads", Calcutta 1909, Vol. 2, p. 240.
- 20 C. H. Lepper's "Notes on the Singpho and Kampti Country, North-Eastern Frontier": Progs. of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1882, p. 64.
- 21 W. Robinson's "A Descriptive Account of Assam", London 1841, p. 373 ff.
- 22 The word 'Naga' "seems to be derived, as suggested by Holcombe and Peal, from 'nok' which means "folk" in some of the tribal dialects".—E. Gait's "A History of Assam", Calcutta 1926, p. 314.
- "The name by which they are now usually known, namely, Naga, has nothing whatever to do with snakes as something, but is a corruption of the word 'Naga'—Naked."—Shakespeare's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and the North-East Frontier", London 1914, p. 194.
- 23 Narrative Report of W. F. Badgley, in General Report on the Topographical Surveys of India, 1874-5, Shillong 1876, pp. 50 ff.
- 24 L. W. Shakespeare's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma and the North-East Frontier", London 1914, pp. 198-199.
- 25 The Garos call themselves "ackik" (hill men), or "mande" (Men) with implied contempt for the "Ajongs" and the "Roris" meaning the plains men "who can do nothing", the helpless victims of their bloody raids. (Pianazzi's "In Garo land", Calcutta 1935, p. 2).
- 26 "Assam is commonly supposed to be derived from 'A-Sam-a', the 'peerless', the 'unequaled', and Ahom is said to be equivalent to Assam" (A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the

Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal", Calcutta 1884, p. 2.)

The Ahoms are Shans, who according to M. Terrien de la Couperie, are the outcome of an intermingling of Mons, Negritos and Chinese.

27 "The MOAMARIAHS of Muttuck (in Luckimpore), or Moram, or Morah tribes, were originally a rude tribe who settled before the Ahom invasion on the Upper Debroo, in the district of Moram. They professed themselves sectaries of the Vishna-Vishnu caste". (Political Prog. No. 89, 6th October 1839).

28 The Assam Duars were:—

Five in Kamrup — Bijni, Chappakhamar, Chappaguri, Banska & Ghankolla

Two in Darrang — Buriguma & Kalling.

29 The Bengal Duars were: Daling Kote, Zumer Kote, Chamurchi, Suckee, Buxa, Bhulka, Bara, Goomar, Kupo, Cherrung, and Bagh.

30 Called the "Sath Rajas" (Seven Princes).

31 'Char Duar' means four passes and 'Nao Duar' means nine passes.

32 They called themselves "Padam".—A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal", Calcutta 1884, p. 33.

33 They are Hindu gold-washers and fishermen who had, perhaps, themselves originally been driven from the hills by the Abor-Miri advance—A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal", Calcutta 1884, p. 36.

34 Political Proceedings, 24th March 1848, Nos. 199-201.

35 Political Prog., dated 26th December 1839, No. 67.

36 Political Prog., 9th March, 1844, No. 142.

37 The Patkai range is in between Burma and Assam.

38 Political Prog., 24th Nov. 1835, Nos. 32 & 33.

39 Pol. Progs., 7th July, 1849, Nos. 30 & 31.

40 The then Governor-General's Agent for Assam.

41 R. B. Pemberton's "Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India", Calcutta 1835,—Account of the Khasi Hills, Subsections 2 & 3 of Sec. 2.

42 Ibid.

43 This native title of the Khasi chiefs was first officially recognised in 1867. Pol. Prog., March 1867. No. 14.

44 The Jaintas were known as Sytengs, also spelt as Sinteng.

CHAPTER II

THE SOUTH-WESTERN TRIBES

(A) *The Khasis and Jaintas :*

During the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, false reports of the fall of the British Indian power caused some excitement amongst the Khasi Chiefs, and the ex-Raja of Jaintia began to intrigue with some of them with a view to recovering his lost possessions. The Government did not deem the arrest of the ex-Raja opportune, for that would have invested the matter with undue importance, but they confined his movements within the bounds of Sylhet town. In November 1857, when the three companies of the 34th Native Infantry Battalion, stationed at Chittagong, mutinied and marched through the south of Cachar for Manipur, they were repeatedly attacked, both by the regular troops and by Kuki Scouts, who received a reward for each mutineer whom they killed, and of the whole number that left Chittagong only a few escaped death or capture.

Though the Government was not in favour of interfering with the affairs of independent hill tribes it was not averse to consolidating its authority in the already conquered hill tracts. In 1858, Mr. Allen, of the Board of Revenue, proposed that the Syntengs should contribute something to the general revenue in acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Government. He further pointed out that a light and judicious taxation would help the preservation of tranquillity and good order in the Jaintia Hills, and referred as an example to the Hos of Singbhum District. The proposal was considered for two years and in 1860 a house-tax was imposed on the Syntengs. The immediate result of this measure was a popular revolt; but a large British Force put it down before it could make any headway. Measures were at once taken for the improvement of the administration. The Civil Officer

posted at Cherra was empowered to remove the Dolois (village headman having executive as well as judicial powers) for misconduct, and it was obligatory for them to report all criminal offences to the Police, while at the same time, the powers of these village headmen were increased. The Police were, however, forbidden to interfere unnecessarily in village affairs.

Unfortunately, at this juncture, when the necessities of Imperial Finance imposed an income-tax throughout British India, it was decided that the Jaintia Hills too should be included in this scheme of taxation. The house-tax would be retained and in addition to that the income tax was to be introduced only in those parts of the hills where taxes had been previously levied, i.e., in the Jaintia territory and those other villages near the Station of Cherapunji which belonged to the British Government. "It seems to have been the belief at Calcutta that, practically, the tax would be inoperative in the hills"¹. The whole of the Khasi Hills escaped it, but 310 persons in the Jaintia Hills were required to pay this new tax which amounted to an aggregate of Rs. 1,259. The highest rate levied, and that only in one case, was Rs. 9 ; one person paid Rs. 5, twenty-seven paid Rs. 4½ each ; and the rest were taxed the minimum amount, i.e., Rs. 4 per annum. The tax for 1860-61 was paid without a murmur, but the discontent it engendered, following closely upon the levy of the house-tax, coupled with rumours of further imposts on 'pan' (betel) and of a trade tax created the atmosphere for another rebellion. Though an order against the use of arms by the tribesmen, which was rigidly executed, fanned the flames of the discontent, the highhandedness of the police was, in fact, the immediate cause of the Jaintia rebellion of 1862. There is evidence that the Police had made themselves very offensive at Jowai by imposing restrictions on the burning of the dead near the Station building and by interfering with some religious ceremonies. Also the small number of troops then available gave an opportunity which had been wanting in 1860. Maj. Rowlatt spoke of the establishment of a

Christian Mission as one of the causes of the revolt, while Gen. Showers mentioned the taking away of the shields of the chiefs as another.²

With the outbreak of the revolt on January 20, 1862, the Jowai Police Station was burnt to the ground and all show of British authority was swept away. Two regiments of Sikhs and an Elephant Battery under the command of Brig-General Showers were moved into the hills in order to crush the revolt, but the Syntengs, though armed only with bows and arrows, put up a stiff resistance. Their chief defence, like that of most tribes on this frontier, consisted of a series of stockades, one behind the other, and the paths leading to their villages were thickly planted with panjis, or little bamboo spikes, stuck into the ground. At the end of four months the rebellion appeared to be losing ground, but it soon gathered strength and burst in greater fury, and it was not until November 1863 when every glen and jungle had been searched by the troops and police, that the last of the rebel leaders surrendered and the pacification of the Jaintia Hills was made a reality. Peace was not disturbed afterwards.

Sir Cecil Beadon, who reorganised the Jaintia Hill Administration, laid down the following policy for implementation:

A main principle to be adopted in dealing with these people when they have been made to understand and feel the power of the Government and have submitted to its authority is not to leave them in their old state, but while adopting a simple plan of Government suitable to their present condition and circumstances, and interfering as little as possible with existing institutions, to extend our intercourse with them, and endeavour to introduce among them civilisation and orders.³

A British Officer with full power of supervision was posted accordingly in the Jaintia Hills. The house-tax was retained, but everything possible was done to make the Syntengs contented with the British administration. The village Dolois were to be chosen by the people, subject to the Civil Officer's

approval, and to hold office during their good behaviour. With other village officers they were to form Panchayats⁴ by whom specified civil and criminal powers were to be exercised, subject to the revision of the British Officer in important cases. The Dolois and Sirdars⁵ were made responsible for the police duties within their respective jurisdictions, and the Regular Police were only to assist their Police in repressing disturbances or supporting the authority of the Dolois. Education was to be liberally encouraged, the Welsh Mission, already established in the Hills, being made an agent of its extension. Moreover, the European Officer stationed at Jowai was required to qualify in the Khasi language and to visit every village in his jurisdiction at least once a year. The hills were to be opened up by eight roads, aggregating 218 miles in length.

The income-tax had been virtually withdrawn by a subsequent Act repealing it on all incomes below Rs. 500 a year. A complete and detailed land settlement was carried out in Jaintia some years afterwards with due care to avoid over-assessment. The ordinary plough-lands in the Jaintia Pargana known as 'raj-hali' lands were assessed at a revenue of ten annas per bigha of 1600 square yards, payable on or before the 30th June every year.⁶ The District Officer of the Khasi Hills moved his headquarters from Cherrapunji to Shillong, a better place than the former, in 1864.

In 1859, it was decided to require the execution of an agreement on each occasion of the election of a new chief, and, in return, to confer upon him a Sanad confirming his election. In 1867, a general form was prescribed for such Agreements the terms of which were afterwards modified in 1875. In November 1875, it was decided that the terms, on which the succession of a Khasi Chief was recognised by the British Government, should take the shape of a Sanad conferred upon the Chief, instead of an agreement taken from him. In October 1877, the terms of the Sanad were finally settled, and the form was in use in the following years.⁷

(B) *The Garos:*

Between May 1857 and October 1859 nine raids were made by the Garos on Goalpara, and twenty persons killed. The offer of rewards, closing of 'hats' (Village marts) and summons to chiefs were of no use in getting the surrender of the offenders. In 1859, the Commissioner of Assam reported that Garo raids were on the increase, and the policy of closing the 'hats' against the Garos had proved a failure. He strongly recommended a return to the old policy of sending punitive expeditions into the hills for chastising the offenders and urged the reappointment of a Garo Serbarakar (native official entrusted with the maintenance of law and order among the hillmen).⁸ A small expedition was sent into the hills and though it did not succeed in arresting the offenders, its advance was said to have had a good effect. Though the Government approved of the reappointment of the Serbarakar, no steps were taken to put it into effect and no definite policy was laid down for the future. Fresh raids in Mymensingh followed immediately, and at last it was decided to send a strong expedition into the hills in the winter season of 1860-1861 to reopen communications with the highland Garos and to increase the establishment of the Serbarakar.

The expedition of 1861 under Capt. Morton and Lt. Chambers made from both Mymensingh and Goalpara, was successful in punishing almost all the offending villages, in realising revenue from many of the dependent chiefs who had withheld it for years and in obtaining the submission of those independent chiefs who were disposed to be friendly. The offenders in the Mymensingh raids were arrested. In his report on this expedition the Commissioner again urged the appointment of a special officer in the Hills and the construction of two roads, one round the base of the Garo Hills and the other right across them. Thereupon the Secretary of State for India sent the following Political Despatch to the Government of India :

But however necessary it may be to teach the inhabi-

tants of these wild districts that they are not inaccessible to the power of Government, it is very clear that we cannot hope to reclaim them from their savage habits or to introduce amongst them a higher state of civilization by the mere display of military strength. These objects can only be effected by peaceful means and by gradually increasing our intercourse with them and I have therefore read with regret the statement of Colonel Jenkins that "although the Garros have been nearly a century under our jurisdiction, it is not on record that we have ever had a single officer who could converse with them in their own language."

This unfavourable state of things will not I trust be of longer continuance and I shall be glad to learn that the proposed annual visits of the Principal Assistant Commissioner, of which I fully approve, and of which a report should from time to time be submitted, have established the desired influence with the Chiefs. Should this not be the case it will be for you to consider whether the permanent location in this territory of a special and carefully selected officer will not be necessary.

I shall await with interest the decision of the Public Works Department as to the expediency of opening the two roads recommended by Captain Hopkinson. Should the funds necessary for the purpose be available, it should not be forgotten that independently of the importance of lending every possible aid to the cultivation of cotton in a District favourable to its growth there is nothing which will tend more to the general improvement and civilization of the country than the increase of its commerce.⁹

The Garos were at this time grouped under three classes :

(1) Zemindary Garos (those living within the acknowledged boundaries of the big Zemindaries and treated by the Government under Regulation X of 1822),

(2) Tributary Garos (those acknowledging the supremacy of the Government and paying a small yearly tribute),

(3) Bemulwa or Independent Garos over whom the Government exercised no control. The collections made from the Garos of the first two classes were realised through the Laskar or village headman.

The raids by which the British Indian frontier had been harassed were as often as not the work of the so-called

tributary Garos, and the lack of any adequate Police machinery made the adoption of some means of arresting the raiders necessary. So it was decided to appoint Zimmdars,¹⁰ who might be sometimes Laskars also, for villages and groups of villages, who for an annual stipend would be responsible for the arrest of offenders in their respective jurisdictions and should be vested with powers similar to those of the Dolois in the Jaintia Hills. The Garo chiefs in an open meeting agreed to abide by this decision. This arrangement did not, however, extend to the Mymesingh side of the Hills. The Zemindars in possession of the Mymensingh side of the marches were expected to check the Garo incursions themselves, but it was soon realized by the Government that their tyranny and undue exactions were the main cause of the Garo raids.

Early in 1866, a group of Independent Garos made a murderous raid on the plains of Mymensingh. A punitive expedition was at once sent to chastise the marauders and the offending villages were burnt. On enquiry it was found that the main cause of the raid had been an attempt on the part of the Raja of Susung, a Mymensingh Zemindar, to levy rents in the Hills. To do away with such provocations given by the Mymensingh Zemindars the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal proposed to the Government of India in April 1866 that a special officer should be appointed to take charge of the Garo Hills.¹¹ Accordingly, a forward policy was adopted in the Garo Hills. Lt. Williamson was posted at Tura, and similar arrangements were made for roads, buildings and police as in the Naga Hills. The offices of Laskar and Zimmdar were amalgamated and a rough judicial system was inaugurated under Lt. Williamson's control. The experiment proved to be immensely successful. As the presence of a strong body of armed police relieved the Headmen from the dread of retaliatory feuds, they became more energetic in the discharge of duties. Raids ceased, and numerous independent villages voluntarily agreed to pay tribute.

At the outset the policy of the Government was not to coerce any neutral, independent clan into subjugation, but all voluntary submission was accepted. The history of the administration henceforward was one of steady extension of the British rule over the independent clans. In order to implement this it became necessary to prevent the interference of the landlords of the plains and this was done by passing Act XXII in 1869 replacing the regulation of 1822. To give an extract from the Bengal Report of 1870-71:

This Act replaced regulation X of 1822, defined the Garo Hills "as bounded on the south by the district of Mymensing, as defined by the revenue survey"; removed this territory from the control of the civil and criminal courts and Regulations and Acts: empowered the Lieutenant Governor to prevent the collection therein by Zemindars and others of cesses, etc, on any pretence whatever; and authorised him to make such compensation to these Zemindars as he might deem proper. It also provides that in case of boundary disputes the matter should be decided by such officers as the Lieutenant Governor might appoint, whose decision should be final.

The special Civil Commissioner in charge of the Hills took in his own hands the collection of the rents claimed by the Zemindars from the Garo villages, and abolished the duties levied by them on the hill produce. For the latter they were paid compensation, the Government recouping itself by means of a special house-tax in the Garo villages. In 1869, the Garo hills were formed into a separate district with headquarters at Tura.

The Zemindars of Susung and Sherpore appealed to the Secretary of State to disallow Act XXII of 1869 as considerable parts beyond the survey boundary formed part of their permanently settled estates, but the appeal was turned down.¹²

In 1872, some of the remote villages of independent Garos raided the protected Garo village of Damukchiqui and attacked a party of surveyors. Consequently, a strong expedition divided into three columns was sent into the hills.

The offending villages were brought under subjugation without much difficulty. Pianazzi mentions an interesting incident:

One of the last portions of the interior to submit was Rongreng. Rumour had reached those independent chiefs that Government soldiers had hollow spears that spat fire at a great distance; and Gwal, the bravest of them, who acted as a sort of commander-in-chief, was impressed by the news. He saw that a means of quenching those firing missiles must be found, and his fertile imagination was not long in hitting upon a good one. While chiefs and warriors were down-heartedly commenting upon the unwelcome news, he was busy heating up his spear and thrusting it, red hot, into a banana stem... Sure enough the iron was cooling: hurrah!

Every Garo warrior was directed to bind large pieces of succulent banana trunks in two moist layers over his bamboo shield; and wild joy of the discovery swept fear away from the assembled tribes men.....It was very early morning. The Sepoys had come up and were quietly camping in a clearing in the jungle some way from Rongreng village and the Garos planned to take them by surprise. In high spirits and full of confidence in their new shields, two-edged swords and spears in readiness, they stealthily crawled through the thick jungle and soon were near the camp.....A wild yell, a rush...but before they could reach the clearing, the roar of a volley stopped them. Deafened and disconcerted by the noise, they halted and wavered. A second volley; groans near them; there on the ground prostrate on their banana shields lay Gwal and two of their bravest. Confidence melted away, fear of the mysterious fire-spitting spears again filled them, and shouting, scampering, throwing down their weapons they gave up their fight.¹³

The usual kind of a small house-tax was imposed upon the villages, and the Garos were engaged in opening out paths across the hills in several directions which they would be required to maintain thereafter. Revenue was also derived, though in a lesser degree, from fisheries, forest produce and elephants. The total revenue was about Rs. 1,52,000 a year from an area of 3140 square miles with 138,274 souls. Laskars were appointed in the newly acquired tracts and made responsible for their management on the system already

in force in the dependent villages. The armed police was raised to a strength of 300 men. Money was granted to complete the roads across the hills and no effort was spared to establish markets and develop trade. Liberal assistance was promised for educational purposes. Thus peaceful administration was set up throughout the district.

Some officers like G. N. Barlow were, however, sceptical about the results of this expedition. Mr. Barlow, who was at that time the officiating Commissioner of the Cooch Behar Division, observed :

The fruit of Captain Williamson's labour in the hills at the present unfavourable season has not been anything very startling. He destroyed two strong stockades constructed by the disaffected Garos upon the Tura range and visited the hostile villages of Kukwagiri, Bowigiri, and Darrangiri, where such punishment as it was in his power to inflict was meted out to the villagers... In my opinion the net profit of the whole affair has been the demonstration to the Garos that we can and will enter into operations against them, even in the rains, if necessary—a point in respect to which they appear to have entertained doubts.¹⁴

By a Regulation passed as I of 1876, power was taken to prevent the entry into the hills for trading purposes of unlicensed persons and to control the acquisition of land within the Hill District. Regulation I of 1879 gave legal effect to the boundary between the Garo hills and the Goalpara district, and the Regulation II of 1880 enabled the Chief Commissioner of Assam to cancel the operation of any law in force in the Hills and in any other uncivilised frontier district.¹⁵

After the close of the expedition the Deputy Commissioners of the Garo Hills and the Khasi Hills laid down a boundary line between their districts which were afterwards connected by a good hill road. In 1881-82, some disturbances occurred among the Garos in the neighbourhood of Randupara. The immediate cause of the outbreak was the demand for labour to open out a new road from Tura to Bangalkhata. The

jungle clearing necessary for the construction of the road was done ungrudgingly, but when the earthwork was taken in hand, the inhabitants of about twenty villages round about Randupara, who had never been used to contribute labour for public works, combined to make a strike against the official demand for labourers, and threatened to punish any other village contributing such labour. A police force immediately brought the recalcitrant people under control without bloodshed.

As the Garo Hills like the Khasi Hills were surrounded by British territories on all sides the Government could easily and profitably change its earlier policy of non-interference into that of annexation of new tracts and subjugation of the independent clans. Over and above the consideration of bringing the marauding raids to an end the Government had business motives also behind its policy of annexing the whole of the Garo Hills. This is evident from the following extract taken from the Bengal Report for 1872-73:

There is much reason to believe that the country is rich in many natural products. Its cotton trade has always been considerable...and the Lieutenant Governor hopes that instead of our having to burn large quantities of cotton in punishment of outrage, as was unhappily necessary in a few instances, we may find here a new source of supply to Manchester. The Deputy Commissioner is now doing what he can, by the introduction of improved seed and by encouraging trade, to develop this cultivation. The timber of the hills is also expected to prove valuable, and, while preserving all reasonable jungle rights of the Garos, Government may expect a fair return from judicious forest operations. Wild elephants are said to be very numerous, and probably Khedda¹⁶ operations would prove profitable at an early date.

But unfortunately, even long after the annexation of these hills the mineral resources were not explored and cotton cultivation could not be improved.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 A. Mackenzie's "Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal", Calcutta 1869, p. 28.
- 2 Buckland, Vol. I, pp. 182-3.
- 3 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc....". Calcutta 1884, p. 242.
- 4 Meaning a body of local administrators working jointly as an assembly. Proceedings were to be *viva voce* as far as possible.
- 5 The Dolois and Sirdars are also local administrators with some executive powers.
- 6 The Chief Commissioner of Assam's letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, No. 3436, dated 11th August, 1886, and also Baden Powell's 'Land Systems of British India' (Vol. III) Oxford 1892, p. 456. According to the Census of India (1901) Report' the Khasi and Jaintia Hills—with an area of 6,027 square miles and a population of 202, 250—yielded a revenue of about Rs. 87,000, derived from house-tax, rent on mines and quarries, and royalty on forest produce and elephants.
- 7 C. U. Aitchison's "A collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads", Calcutta 1909, Vol. II, p. 163.
- 8 Judicial Progs., 22nd March, 1860, Nos. 30-39.
- 9 For. Deptt. Pol. Despatch, Dec. 9. 1861, No. 133.
- 10 Meaning custodians.
- 11 Judicial Progs., April 1866, Nos. 48-61.
Ibid., August 1866, Nos. 63-74,
December Nos. 20-28
- 12 The Bengal Report of 1870-71.
- 13 A. Pianazzi's "In the Garoland", Calcutta 1935, pp. 4-5.
- 14 Barlow's letter—No. 172—to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Judicial Department, 23rd July 1872. Foreign Deptt. Pol. A., Sept. 1872, Prog. No. 277.
- 15 Progs. of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Foreign Department, Shillong, April 1882, pp. 1-4.
- 16 Meaning trap for capturing wild elephants.

CHAPTER III

THE ABORS

The Abors inhabit a strategic area hemmed in on the north by the unexplored Tibetan terrains. In January 1858 occurred the first important Abor outrage when the Beeah village of Sengajan had been massacred by the Abors belonging to the Kebang clan of Bor Meyongs. An attempt was made unsuccessfully to chastise the offenders. Being emboldened further the Kebang people took up a more forward position threatening the plains below. Consequently, an expedition of a somewhat imposing nature was sent to Kebang. But it failed due to the Deputy Commissioner's relying too much on the imaginary friendliness of the intermediate tribes and the military Commander's failure to start the assault before arranging a secure and regular flow of supplies. The next Abor expedition (1859) which was organised on a far bigger scale, succeeded in defeating the Abors at Pashi and Kingkong. As a result the Pashi Abors along with their neighbouring clans changed their attitude of hostility into that of friendship with the British. But the Meyongs, however, continued to remain hostile, and towards the close of 1861 they again cut up a Beeah village, 15 miles off from Dibrugarh¹.

In the long run the question of defending Assam from the Abor raids was taken in hand and discussed in right earnest. After much deliberation it was concluded that the road along the frontier to Pobahmukh was to be opened and maintained ; and a scheme was laid before the Government of India for retaining by means of troops, forts and roads, effective military command over all the Abor marches. The Abors in less than no time made overtures for a general reconciliation. Following a conference between the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur District and the representatives

of the Meyongs at Laleemukh in November 1862, an agreement was concluded according to which money stipends to the Chiefs would be replaced by payments in articles which could be distributed among their people as a whole.² Many other Abor Communities gave their assent to such an agreement. The Kebangs also entered into a similar arrangement with the Government in 1863. Afterwards, in 1866, the powerful and influential Bor Abors came to terms.

In 1876-77, the Abors showed a hostile attitude towards the Government following the advance of a Trigonometrical Survey Party into the hills whereupon the operations of the Survey party were discontinued. In 1881, the Bor Abors crossed into the Mishmi country and practically took under their control one of the trade routes into the interior, which necessitated a strong outpost of 300 rifles being located at Nizamghat. The Assam Report for 1881-82 contains an account of an outrage, committed by Borkheng, the Chief of Pado, upon two Miris and one sepoy, which had not been properly explained up till the close of the year under review.

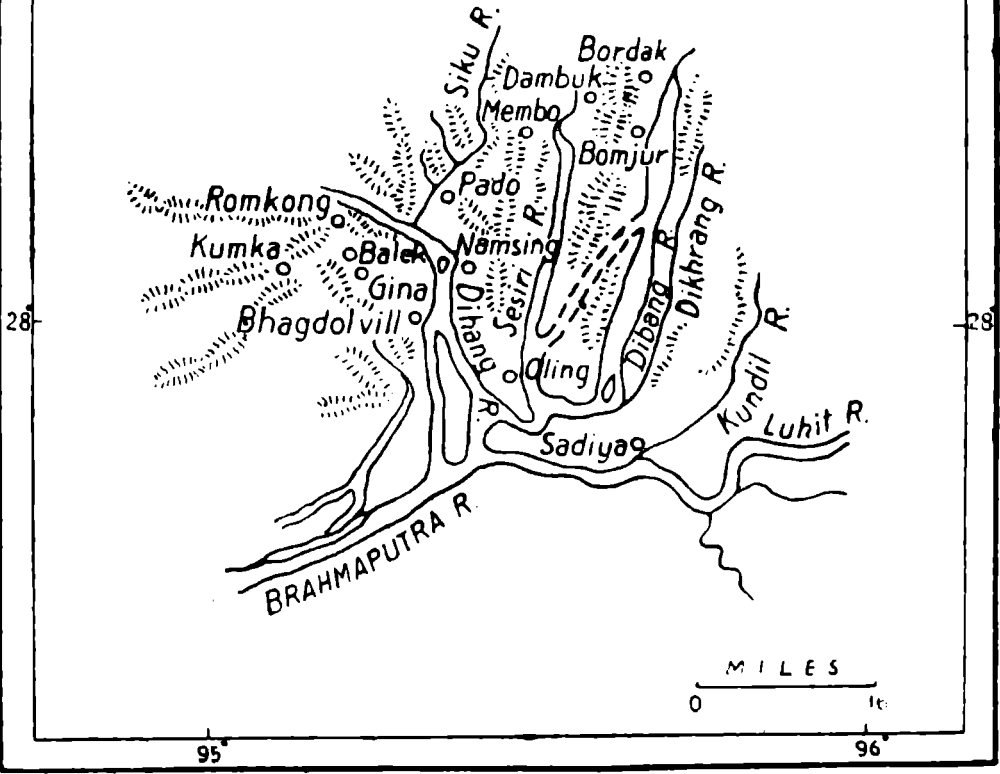
“There is reason to believe that the Miris form very unsatisfactory agents between the local authorities and the Abors. It would be of great advantage to secure some Abor lads to educate as interpreters”³. On several occasions in the past the Miri interpreters had wilfully misconstrued the words exchanged between the Government officials and the Abors with the single purpose of keeping alive the hostilities between the two parties. Sir Alexander Mackenzie has observed :

It is to be regretted that the effect of direct and unofficial intercourse with these Abor clans in their own villages has not been more thoroughly tried. They are not unamenable to kindly treatment, for in 1855-56 the Reverend Mr. Higgs, a worthy clergyman of Debroogarh, obtained a considerable influence over them...He also settled some Abor immigrants near Debroogarh. It would perhaps be now a desirable thing to procure and educate some Padam youths who might hereafter become missionaries of civilisation and of higher things to their uncouth brethren in the hills.⁴

In 1882, an Assistant Political Officer was appointed at Sadiya, and consequently the duties of the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, of maintaining relations with the frontier tribes of the adjacent area were lightened. Mr. Needham was appointed as the first Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya. His position in relation to the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur had been that of a special adviser on all political questions arising on his frontier. Between December 1885 and January 1886, Mr. Needham accompanied by Captain E. H. Molesworth made a journey to Rima and back by the route of the Brahmaputra. This enterprise furnished a valuable contribution to geography especially in regard to the identity of the Sanpo and the Dihang and the Government's knowledge of the Mishmis. In 1888, Mr. Needham was sent to explore the country between Makum in the Lakhimpur District and the Hukong Valley. But the expedition failed owing to the want of sufficient carriage, dependence upon local porters and suppliers, and the sudden change of plans.

After 1887, troubles occurred due to the violation of the Inner Line. On the 14th April, 1887 Iyalu, a woman of the Abor tribe, living in the Sisi mouza in a settlement of Abors containing three or four families, complained that some hill Abors had carried off four girls and some articles of domestic use. According to her the Abors had been aided in this raid by Tangu, a 'gam' of an Abor village on the Dhol river within British territory. Subsequently, the captives and some of the property were recovered, but the raiders could not be induced to come down.⁵ On an enquiry the Chief Commissioner, Assam, learnt from the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, that the Abor settlements within British territory were not located in accordance with the orders contained in Judicial Department, Circular No. 28 C. T., dated the 13th March 1874. The latter regretted the lapse and promised to see to it "that no members of hill tribes should be located anywhere near the hills from which they originally issued, but I anticipate some difficulty in the case of settlements of

THE ABOR LAND



long standing".⁶ In July 1887, a Miri named Mukme who had crossed the Inner Line without a pass from the Government was detained by the Abors. But subsequently he escaped. Mukme, however, committed an offence against British laws by crossing the Inner Line without a pass; and in this act he was not singular.

In 1889, four Miris were decoyed across the frontier and murdered by the Abors. Enquiries showed that the object of the Abors was to obtain *posa* from the Miris. For this a fine of twenty bison was imposed on the raiders, and the frontier was blockaded pending payment, which was made in less than a year. From the beginning of the year 1893 the Abors of all clans became hostile and attacked several police parties, and the culmination of their hostility was reached when one of the Miri villages within British jurisdiction was raided by the Pashi and Meyong Abors, and some persons were carried off. The usual negotiations for the restoration of the captives were of no avail; and as the behaviour of the Abors, their insolence, and disregard of Garston's treaty⁷, were affecting the other tribes, notably the Mishmis, a fifth expedition was organised against them in which 400 Military Police from Dibrugarh, 100 rifles of the 44th Goorkha Rifles and 1500 coolies for transport were sent into the hills. Meanwhile three military police sepoy of the Bomjur outpost were murdered on the 27th November by the Abors. All the three men had been killed with *daos* and the corpses were found lying in one spot. They were probably surprised by a party lying in ambush, and cut down before they had time to use their rifles. The rifles and kurkis were stolen⁸.

The expedition started in January 1894 under the command of Captain Maxwell. The Political Officer, Mr. Needham, who accompanied the column, directed the political side of the expedition and also controlled in a large measure its general management, which, as was only to be expected, produced disagreement and some friction with his military counterpart. Bomjur was taken without opposition. Dambuk

was found stockaded, but after some fight, it was also captured. The Abors retreated in the interior hills whereupon the villages of Mimasipu and Silluk were destroyed. Next, an advance against the large village of Damroh, stated to be four long marches further into the hills, was decided upon. Bordak was made the base for the operation against Damroh. The sick were despatched to Bomjur, the starting point of the expedition. The Political Officer, relying too much on local information, and against the wish of Captain Maxwell, left a small guard at Bordak⁹ in charge of the ration stores. After nearly a month's delay the rations were collected and the troops advanced, leaving 17 rifles and 44 coolies at Bordak with the instructions that the rations would be sent on by Abor coolies. Thus began the ill-fated march. Dukku, two marches on, was reached without mishap, and next day only six miles were made owing to the difficult nature of the country, and a reconnoitering party up the Yamne gorge was fired upon. The next march covered only two miles, and more difficulties were experienced owing to the desertion of the Abor coolies. The invading column was now in straits, being far longer on the road than had been anticipated and with no supplies reaching them from the base. An attempt was made to storm Damroh with a flying column. But this failed, as the advance was greatly delayed by having to turn the enemy out of a great stone "shoot" arranged far up on the hill side. Consequently, the whole force had to turn back, with no rations supplied from Bordak, and en route the Abors opposed the retreat at Silli and Dukku.

Bordak was reached, only to be found completely gutted, dead bodies strewn in the camp and the stores mostly destroyed. It was learnt from the single soul who escaped the Bordak massacre that the enemy had come into the camp in the guise of carriers who were always expected, and that while loads were being distributed to them they suddenly fell upon the small guard, cutting down all right and left. The Political Officer now proposed to leave the country at

once, but Captain Maxwell persuaded him to stay long enough to punish the neighbouring villages of Padu and Membu which were thought to be concerned in the massacre. Eventually, both the villages were burnt down with but little opposition, and the force withdrew to Sadiya by the end of March, 1893.

The object of this expedition can only be said to have been half accomplished at a very considerable loss to the Government, that is 49 killed and 45 wounded. The 'Posa' or annual monetary stipend was stopped immediately, the rebuilding of Bomjur was prohibited and a blockade was established. The Government of India, however, declined to sanction any further action against Damroh, including the imposition of a fine, which, as they pointed out, would render the despatch of an expedition almost obligatory if the fines were not paid¹⁰. The leaders of this expedition came under the scathing criticism of the Government of India, and it was observed that an expedition which consisted of military people should never be placed under the control of a political officer.

In his Military Note Lieutenant-General H. Brakenbury, the Military Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, said that the original request of the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Government of India was for permission to punish the three villages of Bomjur, Dambuk and Silluk ; and on that understanding Lord Lansdowne sanctioned an expedition of 500 rifles. But very soon the Chief Commissioner extended his authority to punishing "villages concerned in outrage and any villages which may offer resistance to force¹¹." He also did not inform the Government of India of this new design. His serious fault according to the General was that when Mr. Needham pressed early in February for leave to march upon Damroh, in the heart of the Abor country, the Chief Commissioner sanctioned it without consulting either the General Officer Commanding in Assam or the Government of India. Moreover, having given this sanction on the 9th February, the Chief Commissioner

maintained absolute silence on the subject to the Government of India. For this, Mr. Brackenbury held that the Chief Commissioner should be censured. In the second place, Mr. Needham relied too much on the words of the treacherous people of the area. In the third place, Captain Maxwell committed a great folly by surrendering the command of the expedition to the civil officer, Mr. Needham. The Military Member observed :

But when, as in this case, a military expedition, more than 500 strong including 100 infantry and 2 guns of the regular army, is despatched across the frontier it should be treated as a military expedition, and I trust no such expedition will ever again be placed under the command of an officer who by virtue of his civil position considers himself in command of a "civil expedition", and abdicates his function as military commander in favour of the Political Officer accompanying the expedition¹².

For the massacre at Bordak, the General considered both Mr. Needham and Captain Maxwell responsible. The Government of India observed :

When the Government of India sanction an expedition for a definite and limited object, it is not open to the Chief Commissioner to extend the operations without authority from the Government¹³.

The sequel however, was somewhat satisfactory to the Assam Administration when Her Majesty's Secretary of State opined that the censure passed upon Mr. Ward by the Government of India went beyond what the occasion called for¹⁴. The Secretary of State, Mr. Fowler, took the view that while Mr. Ward was justly censurable for not keeping the Government of India informed of events, he was not censurable for sanctioning the advance on Damroh. Damroh was implicated and if the advance had been successful, probably the question of responsibility would never have been raised. He was afraid that if the censure were maintained, it would tend to make officers shirk responsibility in future. He held Captain Maxwell, and not Mr. Needham, responsible for the Bordak massacre.

The Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur informed the Chief Commissioner of Assam on 20th August, 1898, that 6 Bor Abors or Padams from Silluk had commenced jooming (cultivating in their own fashion) at a spot called Sibiyamukh, about 3 or 4 miles from the Inner Line near Sisseri. The Chief Commissioner ordered that they should at once be ordered back to the hills, and in the event of their disobedience, Mr. Needham should be directed to expel them and destroy their village and crops. Their houses were consequently demolished as they refused to move away into the hills. A blockade of the Abor Frontier was resorted to which lasted till 1900, when a general submission was made by the tribesmen. As with the Abors treachery is one of the chief tactics of war the Government had to suffer barbarity in their hands on several occasions afterwards, especially in 1911¹⁵.

FOOTNOTES

1 Judl. Progs., Jan. 1862, nos. 305-308.

2 In 1877, these dues in kind were commuted to money payments aggregating Rs. 3,312 a year. (C. U. Aitchison's "Treaties, etc.," Calcutta 1909, p. 237).

3 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.," Calcutta 1884, p. 45.

4 Judicial Progs., 21st February, 1856, No. 123.

5 Foreign Progs., 1-4, June, 1887.

6 The letter of the Officiating D. C., Lakhimpur, to the Chief Commissioner of Assam (Foreign Prog., No. 7, August 1887, pp. 6-9).

7 Col. Garston was the Commander of a punitive force against the Abors in 1862. According to the treaty the Abors agreed to respect the border on consideration of a "*quid pro quo*." The Abors henceforward became the recipients of "Posa" consisting of iron hoes, salt, rum, opium, and tobacco.

8 Foreign Deptt. External A Progs., April 1894, No. 84.

9 vide Map No. 2

10 The blockade of the Passi Abors was raised in 1896, but that of the Bor Abors was continued till 1900.—C. U. Aitchison's "Treaties, etc.," Calcutta 1909, p. 238.

- 11 For. Deptt., Ext. A Progs., October 1894, Nos. 96-151.
- 12 For. Deptt., Ext. A Progs., October 1894, nos. 96-151
- 13 Govt. of India Letter No. 214-E, dated 25th Jan. 1895.
- 14 Assam Secretariat For. A. Prog. August 1896 nos. 1-5.
- 15 This refers to the treacherous murder of Williamson, Political Officer of Sadiya, Gregorson and their party committed by the Abors.

CHAPTER IV

THE LUSHAI, KUKI AND THE ALLIED TRIBES

In spite of some differences existing between the Lushais and the Kukis they can safely be described as allied tribes belonging to the same group. Again, among the Kukis themselves there are several more or less different tribes, e.g., the Chasads, the Sooties, the Howlongs etc.¹ The Kukis, in fact, come under the jurisdiction of several states. The Lushai Hills of Assam, a part of north-eastern Tripura, a part of Southern Manipur, eastern ranges of Chittagong and a part of Western Burma are inhabited by these tribes who carried on depredation for many years indiscriminately on all the neighbouring tribes and territories. Mr. McCabe, I.C.S., who was for sometime Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills, in his famous report on the outbreak among the Eastern Lushais in March, 1892, has classified the Lushais geographically. According to him the word 'Lushai' is a compound word, consisting of two component words: Lu (meaning 'head') and Shai (meaning 'to cut'), the full meaning of which is the "Head-cutter". Both Manipur and Tripura played an important role in the British relations with the Kukis.

In between 1855 and 1861, several Kuki embassies requested the Cachar authorities to help their chiefs against their neighbouring invading clans, but in vain.² In 1859, in consequence of some attacks made by the Kuki tribes upon the Manipuris, a quantity of ammunition worth Rs. 2,500 was given to the ruler of Manipur by the Government. For many years after the accession of Chandrakirtee Singh, Manipur was disturbed by insurrections led by Debendra Singh, Kanhai Singh, Gokul Singh and other members of royal blood coveting the throne of Manipur. Not a few of the raids of the Lushais and other hill-tribes on Manipur

and the nearby British areas were instigated by these disaffected princes. In 1861, Vonpial, Chief of Mullah, sent an embassy to the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar asking aid against Lalpitary, a chief of the western Kukis, and against the Pois of the South. But assistance was, as usual, declined.

As here we will often come across the Lushais inhabiting a part of the Chittagong Hill Tracts it will be proper to say a few words about them. To the east and southeast of Chittagong district, stretches the Chittagong Hill Tracts, bounded on the south and south-east by Arakan, on the north-west by the river Fenni which divides it from (Hill) Tripura, on the west by the swamps and plains of Chittagong, and on the east by the wild and unexplored highlands of North Burma. Capt. Lewin has divided the inhabitants of these tracts into two classes: (1) the Khyoungtha of Arakanese origin, immigrants from the south and by religion Buddhist, and (2) the Toungtha of mixed origin dwelling chiefly in the outer hills as savages. The former lived together in village communities under a Raja or Headman, through whom they paid revenue either to the Government directly or to some tribal chief. Distinct as to language and race from the ordinary Khyoungtha are the Chakma, branches of which tribe are known as Doingnak and Toungiynyas whose origin and early history are disputed. The Toungthas, who cultivate the higher hills in preference to the river bottoms and lower ranges, have been divided by Capt. Lewin into three groups: (1) those who paid tribute to the Government and were subject to the latter's control, e.g., the Tipperahs or Mrungs, the Kumi or Kweymi, the Mrus and the Khyins, (b) those who paid no revenue to the Government, but were subject to the latter's political influence, i.e., the Bunjogis, and the Pankhos, and (c) the independent tribes of Lushais or Kukis and Shindus or Lakheyr. The Lushais inhabiting the hills to the north-east have again been subdivided into three big branches: the Howlongs, the Syloo, and Rutton Poiya's³ clan. The Shindus are a formida-

ble people living to the north-east and east of the Blue Mountain.

The country is almost unexplored, and very little is known of it except that it is a tract of most intricate hill ranges and impenetrable cane-brakes lying between Manipur and Cachar on the north, and the Arrakan Hill Tracts on the south, and between the Chindwin river on the east, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Hill Tipperah on the west. On the edges of this tract on all sides the hills are low, covered with dense forest and trackless jungle, the only paths being for the most part the beds of torrents. The people form a mingling of clans, speaking . . . dialects of the same language, who are known to us by various name—Kookis, Lushais, Pois, Shindus, Chins, etc Almost every village has its own Chief, who generally, however, owes some sort of allegiance to the most powerful chief of the group of villages to which he belongs . . . Nothing does more to establish a chief and bring him followers and influence than success in raids upon weaker chiefs, upon the villages of Manipur, Hill Tipperah, and upper Burma, or upon our villages and outposts and tea gardens . . . In addition to the constant changes in the relative position of individual chiefs, a general movement would seem to take place from time to time amongst these people, apparently as if swarms were thrown off from the more crowded villages in the higher central hills, such swarms forming new communities all round the outer fringe of the tract, and in doing so driving before them the villages which had previously inhabited this fringe. The inhabitants of them are compelled, in consequence of the pressure, to take refuge in our territory or in Tipperah or Manipur, where they are often followed, themselves killed or taken captive and their villages plundered by the new-comers. This seems to have been the origin of what is called the great Kooki rising of 1849, and 1850, as it certainly was of the great series of raids in 1860-61 Of one thing I am absolutely convinced.⁴

In consequence of a number of outrages⁵ committed by the hill tribes on the British subjects of the Chittagong district the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal proposed in 1859 that the whole country east of the cultivated plains of Chittagong should be removed from the operation of the General Regulations and an Officer, to be called the Superintendent of the Joom Tract, should be appointed.

As any plan of direct administration would be very expensive he wanted that the administration should be left wholly to the hill chiefs, the only object of the newly proposed measures being to prevent such raids, as the Commissioner of the Chittagong Division complained of, and to do so, through the chiefs. Act XXII of 1860 was passed accordingly which enabled the Government to adopt in the hills administrative measures suited to their conditions.

Before, however, the appointment of a hill Superintendent was actually made, there took place a series of Kuki raids in 1860; the Kukis, after sweeping down the course of the Fenny, burst into the plains of Tipperah at Chagulneyah, burnt or plundered 15 villages, killed 185 British subjects and carried off about a hundred as captives. Though troops and police were immediately sent to the spot, the raiders could not be intercepted. It was ascertained that the main instigators of this invasion were four Hill Tripura refugees of royal blood, who being driven away by the Raja of Tripura had lived for some time among the Kukis, and who took advantage of the ill-feeling caused by an attack made by the Raja's subjects on some Duptung Kukis to incite a rising that unfortunately became diverted to British territory. Some of the Raja's own subjects also being exasperated by his constant exactions had invited the Kukis to ravage his territories.⁶ The raiders were believed to be the followers of Rutton Poiya.

In July, 1860, a Superintendent was appointed to take charge of the Hill Tracts, and in January next year, a large body of troops under the command of Capt. Raban marched against Rutton Poiya's village. On their approach to the Kuki villages, the Kukis adopted scorched earth tactics and then fled to the jungles. A good deal of damage was done to them in various ways, but beyond proving to the savages that their fastnesses were not inaccessible, nothing tangible could be effected. During this expedition a large body of Kukis made a daring raid upon three villages and a rich mart near Udaipur in Tripura.⁷ The raiders then turned eastwards,

and on their journey back they burnt several Chakma villages belonging to Kalindi Rani and attacked the Kurkurea Police Out-post of the Government from which they were, however, beaten off. According to the Government order Capt. Graham, the Hill Superintendent, had a meeting with the Raja of Tripura and made the latter undertake (1) the establishment of five frontier posts of twenty men each, connected by roads, (2) the establishment of a stockade of 150 men on the Fenny connected with the posts by a road, (3) the appointment of six drill sergeants for his men and (4) the admittance of a topographical survey. The Superintendent was asked to exclude from the markets of the plains all hostile tribes. Such exclusion would be severely felt as these marts were the chief outlet for the production of the hills, where the savages bartered their hill cotton and coarse cloth for rice, salt, hardware, gun powder, and match-locks⁸.

Thus the northern frontier of the Hill Tracts was thought to be secure ; but in March the Kukis attacked the Poang Raja's villages to the south. The Poang Raja, to whom the defence of this part of the frontier had for many years been entrusted, was called upon to strengthen his outposts. But anything he did in response was inadequate and during the whole year the frontier was in such a state of panic that large tracts of country were deserted by the Joom cultivators.

At length in September Rutton Poiya came in and surrendered. Advantage was taken of his overtures to open friendly intercourse with the Syloo and Howlong tribes living beyond his jurisdiction. Scarcity was pressing them close and they had no other alternative but to seek supplies from the plains of Chittagong. But the outturn of a good harvest again made them insolent, and in September 1862, they sent a message that though they had no intention of attacking Europeans, they had every right to cut up other peoples, such as Bengalees, Chakmas, Tipperahs and Maghs, and the British had no right to interfere.

Sylhet and Cachar seem to have been tolerably free from raids upto the beginning of 1862. In January 1862, three Kuki outrages were reported from Sylhet. On the 22nd January, the villages of Ramdulal's Bari, Rammohun's Bari and Chundraipara under the Rajnugger Police Station, Sylhet, were plundered and a large number of the villagers killed or carried off.⁹ About the same time the village Lungaibaree also had been destroyed and a party of men was attacked about half a mile east of Kolingat. The Chundraipara group was shown to be in British territory, while the other two localities in Tripura. A suspicious circumstance was that the people of Chundraipara were emigrants from Tripura who had settled on the estate of a Zemindar with whom the Raja of Tripura had a standing feud ; on the other hand, though the Raja's own villages had suffered, he had not made any enquiry into the affair. It was found out that the raiders were dependents of a Chief named Murchoilo who was a trusted subject of the Raja. The Government could not ascertain who was the guilty party and, as such, ordered the establishment of a strong post of armed police on the Sylhet frontier, and at the same time asked the Raja of Tripura to organise such a police force in those places as would prevent any repetition of such aggressions.

In April 1863, four women who had been carried away from Chundraipara made their escape to Cachar and gave out the names of the raiding chiefs as Murchoilo, Lookpilal (Sukpilal), Rungbhoom and Lal Hoolien. The Sylhet authorities urged the sending of an expedition against them, but as Sukpilal had ever since 1849 maintained friendly relations with the Cachar authorities, sending in frequent deputations with presents, the Lieutenant Governor, before attempting force, directed the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to induce Sukpilal to release the captives and to undertake the protection of the frontier by restraining his own people from committing raids and by refusing countenance to other chiefs in any like attempt. An annual money payment for this service

was offered to him and to other chiefs on the Sonai and the Tipai. The Government proposed this moderate step, lest a hostile expedition might bring down the Kukis on the neighbouring tea gardens which were then spreading fast in the Hills. Negotiations were started with Sukpial in 1864 with the result that in 1866 he returned only four boys and informed the authorities that as many of the captives were married to Lushais, they were unwilling to return.

On the Chittagong frontier Captain Graham in accordance with Sir C. Beadon's policy of conciliation proceeded to Rutton Poiya's village, and that Chief along with nine other leading chiefs of the Lenchew Range entered into a binding engagement to maintain peace. The agreement signed by Rutton Poiya and others ran:

The Kookies engage to take measures for preventing any parties from amongst their clansmen from molesting residents in the British territory, or trading in, cultivating, or travelling in the hills.....In the event of the Kookies having any grievance, or in case of any dispute arising between them and the British Subjects, the Kookies will refrain from taking the law into their own hands, but they will in all cases appeal to the Superintendent and abide by his decision. That annually, about the time of full moon of the month of January, a meeting of the chiefs and the Superintendent shall be held at Kassalong, at which the chiefs shall receive such presents in money or kind as may be determined by Government in return for which the Kookies agree to prevent all marauding in the hills and plains, and to use every effort to capture offenders and maintain peace.¹⁰

Soon, the Howlongs and Syloos too sent the message that they would maintain peace in their areas and meet the Superintendent at Kassalong in January. According to the agreement of 1863, the chiefs met with the Superintendent in 1863, 1864 and 1865. In January 1866, the Shindus attacked a Mrung village within the Poang's jurisdiction, and for want of arms the Poang's guards could not resist the invaders¹¹. The Lieutenant Governor took prompt action. Arms were supplied, and a force of 130

extra police with officers was sanctioned to take up the new Government outposts to be established to the south.

In 1866, the Howlongs committed a raid close to Khokheong, where the Poang should have had a guard but had not, in which three villages were cut up and eighty captives taken. Two other minor raids were reported at the same time from Kwasakhung and the Kaptai valley. As a result, the Poang was relieved entirely of the duty of protecting the frontier, his posts being taken over by the Government Police. Thus gradually the Government realised the necessity of substituting Government Police for guards supplied by the Chiefs for the defence of the frontier. In November, Rutton Poiya warned that the Howlongs had planned another raid, and steps were immediately taken to defend the frontier by setting up new posts. The Howlongs perhaps came to know of this defensive measure and made no raid. The Kassalong annual meeting of 1867 was not satisfactory, and the early part of the year was much disturbed by raids and rumours of raids made by the Howlongs. In one case Rutton Poiya succeeded in inducing a band of Howlongs to refrain from attacking the British territory and for this he was rewarded. The Howlongs, however, diverted their attack to Tripura, but there they were beaten off.

In November, 1862, the Lushais attacked certain Naga villages belonging to Manipur. Towards the close of the year a village near Adumpore had been attacked by Kukis. Captain Stewart collected the information that when Gnoo-Shailon had married Sukpial's sister on that occasion the Adumpore Raid was committed. They did not know that the village belonged to the Government and wanted to make up the price of the bride. Among the Lushais it was customary that the bridegroom should pay a sum of money to the bride's father. About this time Sukpial attacked some villages of Tripura. Almost simultaneously, a large party of Manipuris under Kanhai Singh, a refugee prince of Manipur, assembled near the eastern frontier of Cachar to

invade Manipur, while the Lushais were threatening the tea gardens in the south. On January 15, 1869, the Lushais burnt the tea garden of Loharbund in Cachar, attacked Monierkhal, and then marched for Manipur along with Kanhai Singh. Sukpial and Vompilal were supposed to be implicated in these raids. The Government of India wrote to His Grace the Duke of Argyll, K. T., Secretary of State for India, on 12th February, 1869 :

We have not yet been informed of the real origin of these disturbances, but it is not unlikely that they are in some measures connected with the movements of Kunhye Sing, one of the Munniporee Princes, who is opposed to the present Raja of Munnipur, and has gone into outlawry.....¹².

The Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, lost no time in giving protection to other outlying gardens. An expedition was sent in 1869 to punish the raiders. The expedition was divided into three columns. Practically nothing tangible was achieved by the eastern column except that Major Stephenson received the voluntary submission of the villages of Vompilal after that Chief's death. The Central column under General Nuthall had to retreat being beaten by heavy and incessant rains. The western column had an engagement with the Lushais who were beaten off, but had to come back in consequence of shortage of supplies. The Lieutenant Governor proposed another expedition in the cold weather of 1869-70, but the Government of India did not approve of it. The jungly and wild nature of the country, the unfavourable climate rendering active operations impossible except in winter, and the lapse of time since the outrages were the reasons which deterred the Government from sending another expedition.¹³ The Government of India, moreover, declared itself averse on principle to move bodies of troops for the purpose of reprisals in any part of the extended frontier. It suggested the appointment of a well-qualified officer in charge of any difficult tract of country which the ordinary authorities were unable to supervise, who should have the entire control of the British relations with the tribes

in subordination to the Commissioner. This officer should have means at his disposal to resist sudden attacks, and should encourage the villagers to resist aggression. He should confer with and take engagements from the tribal chiefs, demand a nominal tribute, require them to refer quarrels to him, and so place the Government's relations with them on an improved footing. Meanwhile the frontier posts should be strengthened and patrols established. At the same time Lord Mayo, the Governor General of India, proposed the posting of a Political Agent in Tripura also.

While the above suggestions were under consideration, representatives of some leading Lushai chiefs came to Cachar to meet the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Edgar, for the purpose of improving their mutual relations. With these men Mr. Edgar toured the Lushai country in 1869-70 interviewing a large number of chiefs. A great deal of information was obtained regarding the chiefs and their territories. In concurrence with Edgar's recommendations the following measures were sanctioned:

As the location of a British Officer among the Lushais would be most detestable to the tribes, exciting their jealousy and destroying their confidence in the good intentions of the Government, it was decided that the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar or one of his subordinates should annually visit the Lushai country, see as many of the chiefs separately as possible, use his influence for the adjustment of quarrels, and give small presents to the chiefs, especially rewarding any chiefs who had behaved particularly well.¹⁴ The grant of Sunuds¹⁵ to the chiefs, specifying the conditions on which they would be left in the undisturbed possession of their lands, the levy of tolls by the chiefs on people going up to trade with the Lushais (eventually it was hoped that the tribes would be induced to frequent periodical fairs within the British territory), the settlement, if possible, of the villages along the frontier between the Government posts and the sites of the Lushai villages, the appointment of a

political Agent in Tripura (for, sometimes British territory was attacked by the hill chiefs in retaliation for wrongs done to them by the people subordinate to Tripura), and the opening out of two paths, one from Monierkhal to Bongkong and the other from the Dwarbund road to the Rengto Range, —were also approved.

But the result of Mr. Edgar's negotiations was not satisfactory for while he was actually in Sukpial's village, the Lushais perpetrated extensive raids in Cachar and Sylhet. The tea gardens of Ainerkhal, Kutcherra, Monierkhal, Darmiakhal, Nugdigram, Jhaluacherra and Alexandrapur were attacked one after another and in the last mentioned garden the manager, Mr. Winchester, was killed and his daughter Mary taken away. Similar raids were reported from Hill Tripura and Manipur.¹⁶

Matters were worse on the Chittagong frontier. In January 1869, an attack was made by a large body of strange hill men on the police outpost of Chima, killing 7, injuring 2 and carrying off some along with a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition. In February, a similar attack was made on the Mrung village of Khijaparah by hill men, possibly from Arakan. An attack was also made by the Howlongs on the village of Lahak. In 1869-70, there were further raids on villages in the Koladyne valley and on a Magh village near Chima, and in 1870-71 on a village about half-way between the Chima and the Pyndoo police outposts. The range of these raids was soon extended to some tea gardens and villages in Cachar, Sylhet, Tripura and Manipur; at the same time the Lushais were at feud with the Kamhows or Sektis (or Sooties), living to the south of Manipur. Early in 1871, a British village near Soobolong, in the Chittagong hill tracts, was plundered and the three sons of Lol Khan, who was formerly a subject of Rutton Poiya, were carried off by the latter's men. Consequently, Rutton Poiya was fined and ordered to return the plunder. Rutton Poiya agreed to all these and his relations remained friendly with

the British. But his alliance with the Government created enemies among his neighbouring tribes, and as such he applied for a guard to be posted in his village. A guard of 40 men under one Sub-Inspector of Police was accordingly posted there for several weeks, the responsibility of housing and provisioning them being assured by the Chief¹⁷.

In 1870, the Government of India ordered the adoption of the same policy on the Chittagong side that it had approved for Cachar¹⁸—the policy of laying down a fixed limit for the Government's regular jurisdiction, and dealing with the tribes beyond by friendly visits of Government officials while maintaining strong posts to repel aggression. In 1871-72, there was only one attempt at a raid,—the Shindus attacking the frontier post of Pyndoo, but being beaten off. A stockaded post was established on the Cheepoom range overlooking the Lushai country. The defence of the whole of the Chittagong frontier was strengthened. A small detachment of troops and a detachment of police from Calcutta were sent to guard the most important positions, 300 muskets were distributed to trustworthy and influential men among the British subjects on the border for the purpose of self-defence, and the number of the police force in the district was increased. "The policy unanimously recommended by the local officers was that raids should be met by condign punishment, in the shape of a military occupation of the raider's villages during as long a period as possible, the seizure of their crops and stored grain, and the forced submission of their chiefs; after that, by the steady endeavour of the frontier officers to influence them and promote trade ; and finally, by a system of frontier posts combined with a line of road running north and south from the Cachar frontier to that of Chittagong"¹⁹.

In the cold season of 1871, a military expedition consisting of two columns, the right or Chittagong column under General Brownlow, C. B., and the left or Cachar column under General Bouchier, was sent into the Lushai country

for its pacification. From the very beginning it had been realised that success depended more on the efficiency of the transport than on any other contingency. As coolies could not be obtained from Bengal, recruitment was made in the Upper Provinces and Darjeeling Hills. To the left column were assigned 2,764 coolies and to the other 2,791. The Cachar column consisted of half a battery of artillery, one company of Sappers, 500 hundred men each of the 22nd Punjabi Native Infantry, 42nd Assam Light Infantry and 44th Assam Light Infantry, a Coolie Corps together with 178 elephants and 1,200 coolies for commisariat purposes. The Chittagong column also was of the same strength but mainly composed of Gurkhas. A survey party accompanied each of these columns, and in the short season available they made a topographical Survey of 6,500 square miles of new and difficult country and filled the gap which had hitherto separated the survey of Chittagong from that of Cachar. The operations of both the columns were immensely successful and most of the Lushai Chiefs were reduced to submission. Mary Winchester was given up, fines imposed were paid, hostages accompanied the force on its return, and guarantees were given of free passage to the country in future for Government Agents. The terms made after the expedition of 1871-72 were that:—

- (1) Government agents should have free access to Lalbura's villages ;
- (2) the guns taken at Monierkhal and Nugdigram should be surrendered, and
- (3) a fine of two elephant tusks, one set of war-gongs, one necklace, ten goats, ten pigs, fifty fowls, and 20 maunds husked rice should be paid.²⁰ The Lushais were impressed with the fact that their villages were no longer inaccessible to the British.

In this expedition a Manipuri contingent also participated, and previous to the withdrawal of the Manipuri troops from the Lushai country several of the chiefs entered into an

engagement with Manipur for the maintenance of peace in future. Leaving for further consideration the policy to be followed in future towards the Lushais, the Bengal Government contented itself on the close of the expedition with the establishment of a line of strong outposts along the whole southern frontier of Cachar and Sylhet. Most of the recommendations of the survey parties accompanying the expedition were approved of by the Government of India. The Lungai river, running between the Jampai and the Hachick ranges, was taken as the eastern boundary of Tripura up to its source at Betlingsib. The boundary line then ran across the watershed to Dolujuri, and thence along the recognised Tripura border by Surduing to the Fenny. The boundary was laid and notified accordingly.

The Lushais gave no serious trouble since the expedition of 1871. Some of the chiefs visited the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar during 1873-74, and some of them sent down their mauntries (ministers) or agents with small presents. Large number of Lushais came down in December 1874 to purchase cattle in North Cachar. Three bazars were established in the Lushai country and were supplied by native traders from Cachar. They were located on the three principal streams flowing out of that country—at Changsil, Sonaibazar and Tipaimukh. But their growth was checked by the exactions of the chiefs, and subsequently, they fell off seriously owing to the failure of the supply of rubber brought in by the hillmen. During the cold weather of 1874-75, many Lushais came down to cut rubber on both banks of the Barak, and when they were forbidden to cut more, they disappeared. In January, 1875, Sukpilal's agent reported a great scarcity of rice in that Chief's territory. Supplies were sent up immediately, and native dealers were induced to despatch more. It was brought to the notice of the Government in 1875-76, that there appeared a gradual advance of the Lushais northwards, because they were being closely pressed on the south and east by the Sektis and other tribes.²¹ Actually, the southern tribes were pushing northwards and the eastern

clans were moving westwards. Such tribal movements, one tribe driving the other, are an important feature in the history of these frontier tracts, and they bring to mind the great drifts of Central Asian hordes destroying the old principalities and creating new ones.

As elsewhere, the population shifts in these frontier tracts were caused by scarcity of food as well as prospect of provisions in British territories. The Chief Commissioner of Assam forbade altogether the settlement of parties of these border tribes within British boundaries, except after permission duly asked and obtained and on sites specifically assigned to them for the purpose. For the rest the policy of sending one of the Cachar officers to visit the tribal chiefs in a friendly way from time to time continued to be followed.²² The frontier posts were carefully maintained, and the military branch of the Police throughout the province was gradually placed on a sound footing.

But all was not well with Manipur. Though after the expedition of 1872 the Lushai raids into British territory entirely ceased, with regard to Manipur it was not so. In October, 1872, the Government of India asked the Political Agent in Manipur to refer to its previous letter written on 30th June, 1870, as showing the general policy to be pursued by Manipur towards the Lushais and Kukis. The letter contained:

You will impress on the Raja, in the most emphatic manner possible, that while he should take all necessary measures for the protection of his frontier, no unprovoked aggression on his part can be permitted, and that he must take effective steps to make his subject Cookies understand this, and to punish rigorously any disobedience of these instructions.²³

Manipur sent deputation to the Lushai country in 1877 with a view to negotiate peace with the tribal chiefs, and some success was attained. The Chief Commissioner of Assam objected to this and refused to give the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar permission to act as a medium in such negotiations till the Maharaja of Manipur stated

plainly the terms he desired to make with the Lushais. He felt assured that no negotiations would have any lasting effect, so long the Maharaja failed to protect his country by the force of arms. The Government of India vindicated the Chief Commissioner's policy and requested the Maharaja not to send such deputations the effect of which might complicate his relations with the tribes on the British frontier and also torpedo the Anglo-Lushai relations.

In 1874-75, there was an unsuccessful attempt at a raid by Shindus on the Chittagong frontier. In 1880, the frontier police established a line of patrols from the border of Tripura to Arakan. The Raja of Tripura at last organised out-posts to protect the frontier line of his territory, and altogether defence arrangements seemed to be satisfactory.

Before we proceed further with the history of the Lushais something should be said in details about the Sooties to whom a passing reference has already been made. The Sootie or Kamhow tribe lies to the south of Manipur and east of the Toorool or Manipur river, that is, between the country inhabited by the Lushais proper and the territory of the Raja of Kube, a tributary of Burma. They were a constant source of trouble to the Manipuris, and had at times made the southern part of Manipur uninhabitable. Col. Johnstone thought the cause of this constant raiding as that the Sooties were being driven forward by the Shindus, a powerful confederacy living to the south-east of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Lushais held the Sooties in great dread, and were falling back before them. The Sooties were well supplied with fire arms and ammunition procured from Burma. Though the Sooties had no direct dealings with the British Government, in between 1857 and 1871 they made seven raids into Manipur. During the Lushai expedition of 1871 the Sooties agreed to help the Maharaja. But in spite of the Maharaja's instructions to them not to attack the Lushais, they engaged a Lushai tribe, killed some, carried off a large number of the rest, and sent the heads of the four men killed to Manipur.

At the close of the expedition these Sooties under their Chief Kokatung, while carrying away 957 captives from two Lushai villages, were intercepted by the Manipur troops and treacherously captured. General Bouchier stigmatised this as an act of treachery, though it had been admitted that Kokatung had committed a raid on a Manipuri village in 1871 in retaliation of which the Manipur contingent took resort to foul play.

In April 1872, a Sootie deputation came to Manipur for negotiating Kokatung's release. But they were informed that no proposal of any kind could be entertained while a single Manipuri subject remained in their hands, and that, if the captives were not released, the Maharaja would punish the Sooties. Kokatung died shortly afterwards in the Manipur jail. In August 1872, the Maharaja pressed the Political Agent to obtain the sanction of the Government for the supply of four mountain guns with elephant gear complete, to be used in an expedition against the Sooties. But the Government declined. The mediation of Col. Mowbray Thomson, who was then officiating as Political Agent in Manipur, effected a reconciliation between Manipur and the Sooties, and gradually many captives were exchanged. Through Col. Thomson's good offices the tribe swore allegiance to Manipur, Kokatung's son was released, and the skull and bones of his dead father were made over to them in March 1873. Peace was established. But some captives still remained under both sides yet to be exchanged.

Though in November 1872, Col. Thomson, the officiating Political Agent, after his examination of Pemberton's map and the Treaty of 1834 (by which the Kubo valley was ceded to Burma by Manipur) came to the conclusion that the country inhabited by the Sooties clearly belonged to Burma and that, if threatened or injured by the Sooties, the Manipuris should refer their grievances to the Burmese Government through the Government of India, the Imperial records prove that the Burmese Government did not exercise any control over the Sooties to the south of the Manipur boun-

dary, and as such the whole tribe was practically independent and unaffected by the Treaty of 1834. Moreover, the Sooties not only raided into Manipur, but also into Burma. In the Administration Report for 1872-73 Dr. Brown said that the frontier Burmese authorities generally repudiated the idea of their being under Burmese control. He also observed that for all practical purposes this tribe should be considered as independent, and liable to punishment from either power it raided upon.

In 1874, when the Sooties attacked the Manipur villages of Kumsol and Mukoong the Maharaja of Manipur decided to send an expedition and the Government of India too approved of it. The expedition, 2,400 strong, started on February 19, and came back on 14th April, 1875. According to the Manipur authorities the expedition had few light engagements with the Sooties as a result of which the latter surrendered. Dr. Brown, however, in referring to this expedition in his Administration Report for 1874-75 stated that from past experience he was led to doubt the correctness of the Manipuri version and made independent enquiry regarding the achievements of the expedition. He learnt from some members of that expeditionary force that not a single shot was fired on the Sootie village of Mombee, each party seeming to be afraid of the other, and remarked that the Sooties would not be deterred from committing further raids on Manipur from any fear of Manipur troops. But the fact that on their journey back the expedition had been accompanied by a Sootie delegation, and that in May 1875, seven captives were returned to Manipur by the Sooties in exchange for the remaining five Sootie prisoners in Manipur jail prove beyond doubt that the expedition attained some amount of success. The Manipurians thus proved their superiority to all the hill tribes around them.

Though for the time being peace was maintained the Sootie raids were frequent from 1876 to 1878, and many were killed on both sides. The Manipur diaries show that the

Sootie raids were without provocation. But the Political Agent in Manipur in May 1877, referring to an attack on a Manipuri village by the Sooties, of whom twenty-two were killed, said that the origin of the raid was an attack made by the Kukis of Manipur on peaceful Sooties the previous month.

In 1878, the Maharaja of Manipur was again anxious to subdue the Sooties, but he required British help in arms and ammunition, and the Lushais also offered their assistance against the Sooties, their deadly enemies. But the British Government was always anxious to avoid any engagement with the hill tribes on the frontier and always dissuaded friendly states like Manipur from attacking any hill tribe without provocation, for a chaos in the hill area might make all the hill tribes restless.³⁴

There took place many border raids across the Manipur-Burma boundary line in the second half of the nineteenth century. Though Dr. Brown observed in 1868 that disputes between the Manipuris and the Burmese were mostly caused by mutual cattle and pony lifting, there is ample evidence to prove that most of these beyond-the-boundary raids were occasioned by the border tribes' ignorance of the boundary limits. For instance, in 1869, a village named Mokoo, inhabited by the Burmese, but situated on the Manipur side of the boundary, was raided by an armed party of the Burmese, and the wife and five children of a person named Wonkow were abducted. The Political Agent of Manipur took up the matter with the Burmese Government and the family was eventually restored. The Chief Commissioner of British Burma said that the Burmese who committed the raid were ignorant of the fact that the persons abducted were the subjects of Manipur. In a letter dated 21st January, 1871, Dr. Brown informed the Woon of Gendat that the inhabitants of the village of Nat-Tseng-nga, in Manipur territory, fifty in number, had been forcibly carried off by the Burmese and their village destroyed. He asked the Woon to hold an enquiry. The Woon replied that the village in question

belonged to Burma, and that the villagers had left of their own accord. He also added that two other villages, Mokoo and Mamweeloong, situated on the border, were also within the Burmese territory. This led to General Nuthall's visit to the Manipur-Burma frontier in 1871 and Col. Thomson's visit in the next year. But no modification to the boundary line, fixed by the Treaty of 1834, was agreed to by the Burmese Government. Thereupon the boundary question was dropped.

In July 1872, a Burmese deputation from Mandalay came to Manipur with a letter from the Woon Shindan Myngee and requested the Political Agent at Imphal to settle certain matters of dispute between Manipur and Burma. The request was gladly complied with and almost all the disputes were settled satisfactorily.²⁵

On December 14, 1877, took place an important Burmese raid in which about 100 Shans, who were Burmese subjects of the Kubo Valley, attacked the Kongal Thana, a Manipur outpost on the Nummeah, burnt the guard-house and killed eight Manipuris. Before any information regarding this raid had reached the British Resident at Mandalay a letter was received from him forwarding a complaint from the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that a body of Manipuri Khyins had made three raids on the Burmese Khyin village of Nampee in 1874-75, and 1877. While as a reply the Maharaja of Manipur denied all knowledge of any attacks made on Nampee, and Col. Johnstone regarded the Burmese case as a putup one and as a set-off against the charge preferred by Manipur against Burma, the Burmese Government in their reply proposed to make an investigation into the Kongal Thana raid and punish the offenders. But in actuality, the Burmese authorities had no intention either to investigate or to punish their men. Delaying tactics were adopted and they offered a reparation of Rs. 900/- which Col. Johnstone refused to accept. No settlement could be arrived at and the Government of India wrote to the Resident at Mandalay :

I am, therefore, to request that you will place the case in this light before the Mandalay Ministry, and that

you will move them to issue orders to the frontier authorities for the early payment of such increased indemnity as, under the circumstances of the case, may seem to be reasonable.²⁶

The Chasad Kuki tribe created much trouble since the year 1878 prior to which no reference to them can be traced in any Government record. According to Col. Johnstone, the Chasads had originally lived in Manipur territory, but afterwards took up their abode on the borders of the Kubo Valley in the territory which though belonging to Manipur was often claimed by the Burmese. He has described them as "one of the numerous Kookie tribes that are gradually pushing towards the north-east from the country South of the Valley"²⁷. In October 1878, the Chasads committed a series of outrages on the Tankhool Nagas, who were Manipur subjects, and carried off many victims as slaves. There were evidences to prove that the Raja of Sumjok, who was tributary to Burma, instigated those outrages. Consequently, a Manipuri contingent was sent to the border and the Chasads were driven from Manipur to Kubo.

Quarrels between Eastern²⁸ and Western Lushais were reported in 1877. Lempong, Sukpilal's son, and Laljeeka attacked the Syloo village of Pugrying, plundered it and carried away some villagers as slaves. Fighting also broke out between Khalkom and the Eastern Lushais under Poiboi over the possession of a joom land. In 1875-76, Tantow, a petty eastern Chief, having been robbed by Poiboi, came and settled near Tipaimookh. But the Chief Commissioner of Assam having objected to it he returned to the Lushai country. Soon afterwards, twenty-two families of Tantow's village migrated into British territory seeking British protection on the ground that to them the oppression of Poiboi and Lalhai was intolerable. These immigrants were settled in the Kuki village of Akhai Punji, on the west bank of the Barak, opposite to the mouth of the Jhiri. In the Joom land dispute between the Eastern and the Western Lushais Sukpilal and other Western Chiefs sent a deputation to the Deputy

Commissioner of Cachar in July 1877, asking for British help against the eastern chiefs. Their request was of course declined. It was explained to them that the British Government would not assist either side, and they should make peace with the other party.

In January 1878, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, being informed that both the Eastern and the Western Lushais were desirous of mediation on the part of the British Government, directed that they should be advised to make peace, and that a safe meeting-place in Cachar should be offered to them. When the ministers and representatives of the Lushai chiefs arrived, it was realised that both parties would be glad to make peace with each other, were it not that each party was unwilling to incur the shame of making the first advance. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar advised them to make simultaneous advances, and told them to say that the advances were made by his advice. Perhaps, in order to avoid the undesirable task of proposing the peace first, all the prospective peacemakers went away about the 8th of March, 1879.

In July 1879, the Lushais of Senong Punji presented an elephant tusk to the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, and represented that they were suffering from scarcity of food. With the approval of the Chief Commissioner of Assam 35 maunds of paddy were purchased from the market by the Government and sent up to relieve the distress. In October 1879, a party of Lushais, who could not be identified, plundered the Bazar of Changsil which was under Sukpial's protection. The Chief Commissioner demanded compensation from Sukpial and the Bazar was closed. After long consultations Sukpial's ministers agreed that their Chief would pay a fine of Rs. 1000/-, and remit bazar dues to the same amount, on the condition that the Changsil bazar should be reopened²⁹. In 1880 a party of Lushais who had come down to collect rubber fell in with some wood-cutters in a forest reserve inside the Inner Line and demanded rent from them. A protest note being sent to Sukpial the offenders were duly

punished. Sukpilal also informed the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar that the latter was at a liberty to punish any Lushais who interfered with British subjects inside the British Indian territory. Soon afterwards, at the request of that chief, who was seriously ill, Rai Hari Charan Sarma Bahadur, Special Extra-Assistant Commissioner, was sent to pay a visit to Sukpilal. During this time owing to the oppression of Khalkam, Sukpilal's son, several families subject to Sukpilal sought refuge in Cachar and were settled at a distance from the border.

In February 1880, information had been received of a Chasad raid on the Manipuri village of Chingsao, in which 45 persons were slain and 3 people were carried off into slavery. After enquiry Col. Johnstone learnt that the Sumjok Raja was responsible for this raid as he himself instigated the raiders and supplied them with guns. Consequently, a force of 1,000 men was sent to chastise the Chasads. But nothing could be done to that effect as the Chasads managed to leave their village in a body under the pretence of negotiation. Though friendly letters were exchanged between Manipur and Burma, nothing was done by the Burmese Government towards restoring the captives or punishing the offending Chasads who were residing in Burmese territory. In Col. Johnstone's opinion, this was due rather to the corruption of the Burmese frontier officials than to the unwillingness on the part of the Court of Mandalay to come to a settlement.

In 1880, the Sooties also committed a number of atrocities on the Manipur frontier, but at the same time a considerable number of them migrated to Manipur and took to cultivation as subjects of Manipur. Mr. Elliott, who was put in charge of the Political Agency in Manipur in 1879-'80, proposed to open out a cart-road from Manipur to Kohima as the volume of trade was increasing between the two places. In the neighbourhood of Chattik there was a deserted village site known as Chowhoom Khoonao. In November 1880, clashes occurred between the Manipuris and the Sumjok Kukis, and

the latter were driven out of this village. During the same time two Manipuri villages on the south, Koontuk Khoonao and Kussoong, were plundered by another party of Kukis from the Sumjok territory. The raiders were, however, intercepted on their return by a Manipuri force from the Khangbom thana, who recovered some of the booty and captured two Kukis. The Manipur posts were strongly reinforced, and no further aggression followed from the Sumjok side.

In order to stop the Manipur-Burma border clashes once for all the Chief Commissioner became keen on the demarcation of a well-defined boundary line between Manipur and Burma in this ill-fated area. Mr. Elliott also thought that as Manipur, a protected state, was prohibited from seeking forcible remedies in the shape of reprisals, it was only to the interference of the British Government that she could look either for satisfaction or for protection. A Commission headed by Col. Johnstone was sent to survey the frontier with a view to lay down a definite boundary to replace the Pemberton line. The Pemberton line was actually an imaginary line drawn northwards from the Kubo valley (only along the western face of the Kubo valley the Manipur-Burma boundary was defined by natural landmarks). North of the valley the country at the time of laying down the boundary, i. e. in 1834, was totally uninhabited, and the boundary line running through it was never actually demarcated. Since 1834, however, the Tangkhul Nagas from the west, and the Kukis, partly subject to the Rajah of Sumjok, a tributary Chief of Burma, and partly dwelling in Manipur territory, from the south, had been gradually pushing up into this formerly unoccupied tract. The doubtfulness of the boundary line and the standing hostility between the Kukis and the Nagas had resulted in a series of outrages.

During Col. Johnstone's survey work the Burmese did not co-operate satisfactorily. The Commission, however, laid down a boundary which agreed as nearly as possible with the terms of the Treaty, while it gave a fair and clear-cut

frontier line. The boundary line thus fixed follows the base of the eastern slopes of the Malain Range, crosses the River Namia a few hundred yards south of Kongal thana, then turns east to the Talain river, follows that river upwards to its source, and next proceeds downwards along the Napanga river to where it passes through a gorge in the Kusom range, wherefrom it runs northward along the crest line of that range. The points where the boundary intersects the Namia and touches the Talain were marked with border pillars, and a road was cut connecting these two points. This boundary was not accepted by the Burmese Government till the Kubo valley became a British possession, but its settlement produced good results; for though the Burmese did not accept it officially, they practically acknowledged it. Some of the Chasad villages situated on a formerly disputed border land moved westwards and settled down peacefully as subjects of Manipur and thus removed the possibility of dispute as to whether they belonged to Burma or to Manipur.

After laying down the boundary line, when on 6th January 1883. Johnstone's party left Kongal on its journey back, a message was sent to the Choomyangs and other Kukis who had so long given trouble, informing them that they were definitely within Manipur territory and that they must either submit or clear out within 42 days at the end of which they would be treated as rebels and attacked if they dared to give any trouble. Eventually, they submitted and became peaceful subjects of Manipur.

The hostilities between the Eastern and the Central Lushais became incessant and fierce in 1882. The most important of these took place on 3rd May, 1882, when a band of Paiti Kukis belonging to Pumlana, son of Rawsama Raja, a Paiti Chief under the Maharaja of Manipur, who resided at Tangthil Tilah, attacked the Khatarkhai Punji³⁰ with guns and set fire to the houses. In this raid twenty-five villagers had been killed, seven wounded, and fourteen taken away captive ; Rs. 700 worth of property had been

looted, and 11 huts had been destroyed by fire. As the incident took place not far from Tipaimukh bazar the neighbouring Chiefs like Lalhai, Tantham, Banruma, Poiboi and Lengkam, were asked by the Head Constable in Charge of Tipaimukh out-post to send adequate guard for the protection of the bazar. They were also cautioned to avoid any retaliatory measure against the raiders without the permission of the British Government. The Chiefs promised a guard of ten men for the bazar and agreed that if Government would undertake to settle the matter they would accept their decision.

The cause of this raid was an old feud between the Baipai (Waiphai) Kukis and Lalbura. The Paiti Kukis took up the cause of the Baipai sufferers and made this raid. There was also reason to believe that the Manipuri Senapati³¹ had some complicity in this. It is not to be wondered at that the Lushai chiefs felt sure that it was the Senapati who had instigated the attack. J. N. Wight had, however, been able to obtain one piece of accurate information :

In May 1881, one Songpan, of the Baipai (Waiphai) Kuki tribe, was leaving Lushai country for Manipur along with nine families ; they said they had relations at Mairang (Manipur territory). They were overtaken by Lalbura, whom however they propitiated by giving a few presents. They were then allowed to continue their journey. Four days later, however, they were surrounded and attacked ; all their property was looted, and nine of them were killed. This happened at a place called Chibu. The survivors escaped into Manipur, and complained to the Political Agent. The survivors declared that they recognised Lalbura's adherents amongst their assailants, and they vowed in the presence of the Political Agent that they would take revenge on Lalbura's people. It was feared, therefore, that this vengeance would come sooner or later. It has come at last. It is true that the recent attack was made chiefly by Paite Kukis, but amongst them were some of the survivors of the Chibu massacre. In 1881, some of them came to Silchar and asked permission of the Deputy Commissioner to pass through Cachar and proceed to Lushai country, where they had vowed to wreak vengeance on Lalbura. Permission was

of course refused, and the men ordered back to Manipur. Two of these men were known to the Rai Bahadur, and he tells me that he saw and identified the two at Tipai Bazar with the Senapati³².

The offenders were duly punished by the Manipur authorities. In the wake of the Lushai famine of 1882, caused by the depredation of rats, the three principal Lushai Chiefs,—Poiboi, Khalkam and Lushai,—met and agreed to a cessation of their mutual hostilities, and sent men to Cachar to obtain supplies of food. According to J. Knox Wight, Esq., C.S., officiating Deputy Commissioner of Cachar :

After certain intervals of time the bamboo plants swell considerably, and a sort of seed is formed within them resembling the ordinary paddy seed. The existence of such a rich supply attracts rats in swarms, and as these animals are naturally very prolific, abundance of food causes a still greater number to appear, which of course increases in a geometrical proportion. The rats then spread and consume everything that is eatable, sparing neither paddy crops, Kachu (arum), nor even cotton seeds.....³³

Many Lushai families came down to Cachar and showed their anxiety to earn a livelihood, either by selling bamboos and forest produce, by labour or by begging. Many were employed by the Forest Officer in clearing forest boundaries, and many others by managers of some tea gardens in cutting down the jungle on their gardens. Many Kukis migrated to Manipur also. Traders were encouraged by the Government to send up rice to the two chief marts of Tipaimukh in the east and Changsil in the west. Government store-houses were opened at Tipaimukh and Guturmukh from which loans were issued to the distressed chiefs and to persons for whom the chiefs guaranteed that they were unable to buy from the traders. Rai Hari Charan Bahadur and Mr. Place, Assistant Commissioner of Hailakandi, toured in the famine-stricken areas. Much friendliness was shown to Mr. Place, who was asked to visit the villages, an invitation seldom extended to an Englishman, whose visit

was believed to be generally followed by cholera. After the famine many hillmen returned to their hills to cultivate their Joom lands, but still more than a thousand immigrants remained in Cachar. Government measures during the Lushai famine were really praiseworthy, and the Lushais appreciated them with gratitude.

On February 3, 1888, Lieutenant Stewart, in charge of a Survey party, along with two British soldiers and one sepoy were attacked at a place only 18 miles from Rangamati, within the border of the Chittagong Division, and killed by a party of Shindus. Again, on 15th February, the Shindus attacked the village of Roazo Prenkhyn Mro in the Chima Valley, killing six, injuring two and carrying off twenty-three persons. As a result Mr. D. R. Lyall, the Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, strongly urged that a punitive expedition should be sent to punish the offending tribe. He observed, "The feeling of insecurity caused by these raids is reacting most injuriously on our revenues.....we are bound to protect the men living within our declared boundary, and not to avenge them would be a breach of faith."³⁴ Lyall was aware that the Government "are quite powerless in preventing such raids, and would be equally so if we had ten times our present force. In the kind of jungle which covers the hills a band of savages can always slip by unobserved, and the effect of our police guards is almost entirely moral. Their existence in fact serves to continue the remembrance of more severe lessons, such as the expedition of 1872-73, and they should also be able to cut off the retreat of raiders if we had a system of telegraphs, but the main safeguard against the recurrence of raids must always be the fear of punishment. A certain show of force is necessary to maintain this fear....."³⁵

The Bengal Government fully endorsed Lyall's proposals. In a note to the Government of India Mr. Edgar, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, observed:

Any plan for dealing with these hillmen should be worked in concert by the Governments of Bengal, Assam

and Burma. No mistake can be greater than for each of these Governments to deal separately with the villagers adjoining its own frontier without reference to those in the vicinity of the other two Governments, or in the centre of the tract, because the effect of this would be merely to divert attacks from one portion of the frontier to another, while doing nothing to remedy the real source of the evil which I take to be belief of the inhabitants of the higher central hills in the inaccessibility of their country and their safety from danger of punishment. It would be very easy to put an end to all this if the Governments of all surrounding country were to unite in a steady continuous attempt to open up this unknown tract, and to make its inhabitants feel that they were surrounded on all sides by a single Government, with a single aim and a single method of working.⁸⁶

The Chief Commissioner of Assam fully supported the Bengal Government's proposal, but the Supreme Government opined that their position in the Chindwin districts of Burma was not yet sufficiently consolidated to allow them of a "full and permanent development of the objects which a joint expedition from Chittagong and Burma might be expected to secure"⁸⁷ and consequently the proposal for an expedition was negatived much to the chagrin of Lyall. But the conduct of the tribes-men soon vindicated the line of argument so long held by the Bengal Government. On the 13th December 1888, the sons of the Lushai Chief Vuta raided Pakuma Rani's village, within British territory, killing the Rani and her 21 men and carrying off 13 persons as captives. The policy which was being followed since 1872 owed its acceptance to the fact that the Lushai Hills formed a real frontier, having beyond them Upper Burma, and that the occupation of these hills would have brought the Government into immediate proximity to the tribes then imperfectly controlled by the Burmese. But after the incorporation of Upper Burma with British India the Lushai Hills came to be surrounded on all sides by the settled districts of the British and by petty States under British hegemony. Hence the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal suggested that as a matter of policy to be followed in future the whole tract should be brought

under the control of a single officer, and as an immediate measure a punitive expedition should enter the Hills. The Government of India approved of this and troops entered the Lushai country in January 1889. The captives were rescued and the offending chiefs were arrested. Military outpost was established at Lungleh, in the South, and in a durbar of Chiefs the Southern Howlongs gave undertakings of loyalty.

On January 8, 1889, occurred another serious incident. A party of about 600 men led by Lengpunga and Zarok, sons of Sukpilal, descended on a valley on the Chittagong Frontier, burnt 24 villages, killed 101 persons and carried off 91 captives. It resulted in the despatch of the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90. The general plan was that a Chittagong Column should move via Lungley to Haka, meeting a Burma Column coming from Gangaw via Yokwa, and a Column from the former force to go north to 'punish the raiders on the Chengri Valley and Pakuma Rani. The Governments of Bengal, Burma and Assam took part in this expedition which was a complete success. Apart from the rescue of the Chengri Valley captives, military outposts were set up at Aijal and Changsil, while in the south, Fort Tregear was established and Fort Lungleh was improved. Political Officers were posted both at Aijal and Lungleh. Not only was communication between Bengal and Burma established and the offending tribes, e.g. the Shindus, fittingly dealt with, but all principal tribes inhabiting the tract were subjugated and British supremacy was established in the Hills by setting up military posts at strategic points. Before long the Chima Valley-raiders—five villages in all—surrendered out of fear.

The Lushais now seemed to be docile and pacified when, without any warning or any provocation, those near Aijal rose in a body under the leadership of the Raja of Khalkam, a western Lushai Chief, in September 1890, and murdered Captain Browne, the Political Officer, and Lt. Swinton. The cause of this rising can be ascertained from the statement of Khalkam Raja, a powerful Lushai Chief, made before

Mr. McCabe, Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, on 23rd November, 1890. It appears that Khalkam as well as other Lushai Chiefs did not like the idea of paying any revenue to the British Government. Moreover, it was surmised that the Lushais would not even be allowed liberty to hunt in their jungles³⁸. In less than two months the outbreak was ruthlessly suppressed, and the ringleaders were arrested and deported. Exemplary punishment was meted out to Lenkhunga's men who had killed Capt. Browne and Lt. Swinton. The expedition led by R. B. McCabe, the Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills, reduced all the recalcitrant Western Lushai chiefs, though Khalkam, Khama, Tolera and Lenkhunga had put up a stiff resistance, and inflicted an enormous damage on the tribe in the loss of large quantities of grain, household goods and cattles, etc. A stockade was erected at Sonai Bazar and a promenade was undertaken in the Eastern Lushai country with a view to establishing close contact with the Chiefs, and informing the tribes that they were now under British control, and hence they would have to pay revenue. Meanwhile in February, 1891 and unprovoked attack was made upon Mr. Murray, the Assistant Political Officer at Lungleh, near Fort Tregar. Consequently Captain Shakespear was appointed Superintendent of the South Lushai Hills with a force of military police under one S. P. and four A. S. Ps³⁹.

Towards the close of the year 1891 trouble was reported in the southern extremity of the Lushai Hills District. Consequently, a punitive expedition was sent under the command of Mr. R. S. Hutchinson, Assistant Superintendent of Police, South Lushai Hills District, against Vantura and Thonglien, the leaders of the rebels. The expedition took place in December 1891, and was successful in realising fines and tributes from the villages called Dopura, Shemuna Vantura, Dokola and Saiha, and in maintaining peace.

In 1892 took place a serious type of insurrection among the Eastern Lushais and the party of Mr. McCabe, Political

Officer, was attacked at the village of Lalbura. The cause of this insurrection lay in the demand of the Political Officer for house-taxes and coolies from the Lushai Chiefs. Lalbura was the leader of the uprising and he even planned to engulf the western part of the hills as well by imploring and sometimes threatening the western chiefs to join in the outbreak. But the western chiefs were wise enough to anticipate the consequences of such a rebellion and kept themselves aloof. On the 4th of April a party of Lushais from Maite, Poiboi and Lalbura raided Boruncherra Tea Estate in the Hailakandi Subdivision of Cachar district, their object being to divert attention from the Eastern Lushai country. In this raid 45 persons were killed and 13 carried off into captivity. The rising was suppressed with the help of the military police, and the villages of Lalruya, Poiboi and Lalhai were captured after much resistance. Tankama and Vanpunga shared similar fate. During this time a band of Kukis under the leadership of Toki raided the Swemi Naga village of Manipur in which 50 persons were killed. Consequently, an expedition was sent against the raiders and twelve Kuki villages were punished⁴⁰.

The Government now keenly felt the need of combining the administration of the South Lushai Hills with its northern counterpart under a single authority. The Secretary to the Government of India wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Assam on 13th May, 1893, that the transfer of the South Lushai Hills to Assam should be effected as early as possible. The parties concerned were all agreed that on both political and financial grounds the transfer of the South Lushai Hills to Assam was eminently desirable as it might effect an annual saving of 2 lakhs of rupees. The Chief Commissioner had been at first opposed to this idea on the chief ground that the transference of the Southern part of the Hills to the Assam Administration would impose extra burden and responsibility on the shoulders of the latter.

In 1894-95 it came to light that the Chief of Falam within

Burma was receiving tribute from Kairuma and some other Chiefs of the Lushai Hills, and the Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, forbade the Lushais to pay any such tribute to the Chief of Falam in future. In 1895 Kairuma showed disobedience and thus caused anxiety. Three columns were sent against him in the cold season of 1895-96. Kairuma was reduced to submission and many guns were seized by the troops. The Lushai country was so thoroughly explored and pacified that there remained no unexplored "Hinterland" as still existing in the Naga Hills to give trouble in future. The Government was also considering Lyall's proposal for opening up communication between Calcutta and Mandalay. Lyall observed :

Mandalay is only some 250 miles as the crow flies from Chittagong, and Chittagong will be within 20 to 22 hours journey from Calcutta when the railway is made. If, then, a feasible line for a cart road or a railway can be discovered from Chittagong to Mandalay, the land route to Upper Burma will enable the surplus population of Bengal, who refuse to cross the sea, to spread into Upper Burma, benefiting both provinces. The trade of Upper Burma will also gain much by the possibility of easy communication between Calcutta and Mandalay⁴¹.

By 1896 the Calcutta-Chittagong railway was completed.

On the first of April, 1898, the southern part of the Hills, which was up till then administered by the Bengal Government, was amalgamated with the northern tracts, and the whole of the Lushai Hills was placed under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. The opportunity was taken, in the same proclamation of April 1, 1898, to transfer the tract known as Rutton Poiya's village, in the hill tracts of Chittagong, to Assam and to include it in the united Lushai Hills⁴². This united hill district was then put in charge of a single officer, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills⁴³. The internal management of the villages was left to their Chiefs subject to the general control of the Superintendent and his Assistants, in whom the administration of civil and criminal justice was vested.

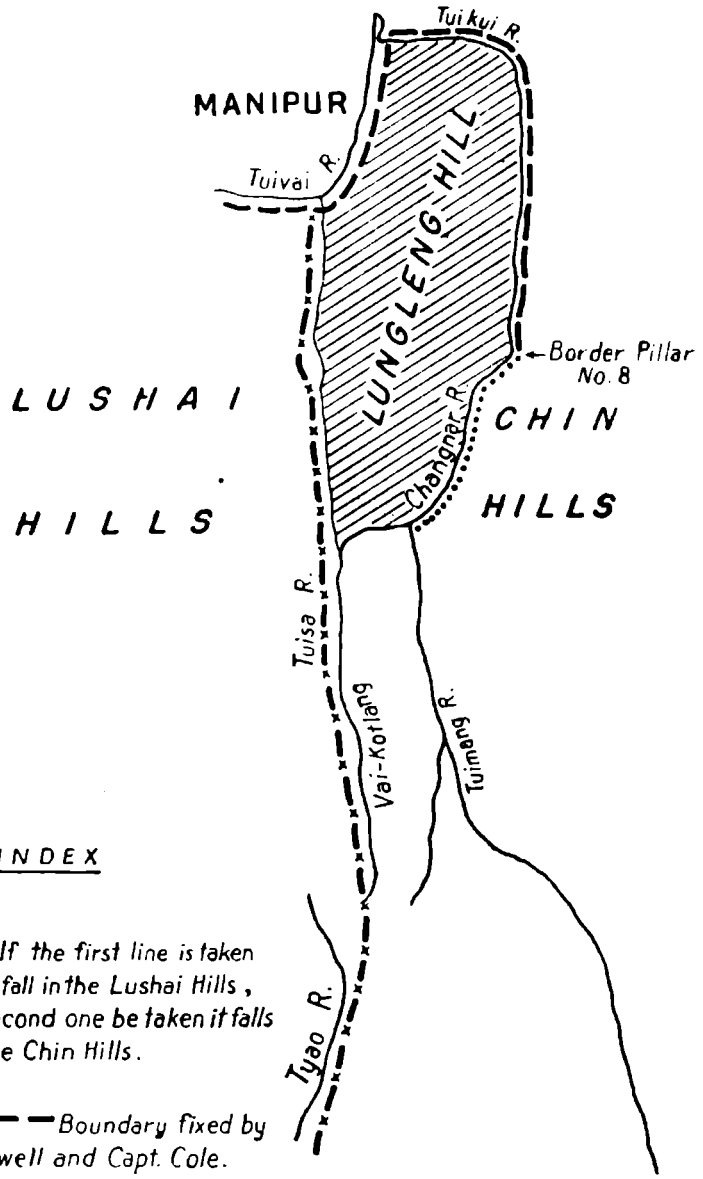
During this time reports were received that there was a regular traffic in guns between the Lushai Hills on the one hand and the Chin Hills on the other, and the result was the sporadic outbursts of disloyalty among the Lushais, as in the case of Kairuma's rising of 1895. The Government of India, therefore, decided upon the disarmament of the Lushais and the adoption of a procedure for the licensing of guns. As a result, operations were undertaken throughout the Lushai Hills to confiscate all unlicensed guns, and they were amply successful⁴⁴. Gradually the Lushais adopted habits and ways of civilisation. Christian missionaries, especially Messrs. Savidge and Lorrain, started their work of conversion and civilisation. Schools were opened and churches were erected in Lushai villages, and in course of time the Lushais came to be regarded as one of the most loyal tribes on the frontier. An important event of the year 1898-99 was the beginning of Shakespear's 'Land Settlement' under which each Chief was given a certain area of country within which he and his people could move about as they liked. It has been of the greatest benefit to the people themselves as well as to subsequent administrators.

Five Chin families came across the Tyao into Lushai Hills and settled on a land belonging to Thinshuma, a Chief in the Lungleh Subdivision. They were fined Rs. 20/- each family and were asked to go away after gathering their harvest. As the houses were still found on the site two months after their harvest had been collected, they were burnt down.⁴⁵ In 1900, the boundary between the Chin Hills and the Lushai Hills was fixed by Col. Maxwell and Captain Cole.⁴⁶

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Col. Lister's Report of 1853.
- 2 Judicial Progs., 12th April, 1855, Nos. 95-101.
 Ibid., 5th July, " Nos. 244-247.
 Ibid., Feb. 1861, Nos. 189-220.

BOUNDARY BETWEEN CHIN HILLS & LUSHAI HILLS



INDEX



If the first line is taken this will fall in the Lushai Hills, if the second one be taken it falls within the Chin Hills.

----- Boundary fixed by Col. Maxwell and Capt. Cole.

..... The boundary line proposed first, but not recommended.

- x - x - The second proposed boundary line recommended.

- 3 Also spelt as Poeca.
- 4 Assam Secretariat, Pol. & Judl., A., For Progs., August, 1890, Nos. 1-46.
- 5 "A private quarrel with a neighbouring clan, a scarcity of woman and domestic servants, and the consequent necessity of procuring a requisite number of captives to supply the wants of the tribe, the simple desire of plunder, or of obtaining heads to grace the obsequies of some departed chieftain, were the principal causes of these raids."—Buckland, vol. I, p. 180.
- 6 Mr. J. D. Gordon's report and Judicial Progs., Nov. 1860, nos. 245-47.
- 7 Judicial Progs., February 1861, nos. 119-24.
 Ibid., March, 1861 nos. 113-14.
 Ibid., November, 1861 nos. 9-11.
 Ibid., November, 1861 nos. 252.
- 8 Buckland, vol. I, pp. 181-2.
- 9 Judicial Progs., April 1862, nos. 432-435.
- 10 Judicial Progs., July 1863, nos. 152-53.
- 11 Judicial Progs., April 1866, nos. 24-26.
- 12 Letter no. 51 of 1869, Political 'A' Progs, Feb. 1869, nos. 72-105.
- 13 Lord Mayo, the Viceroy, expressed the strongest objection to any more military expeditions against the Lushais. Judicial Progs., November 1869, nos. 289-308.
- 14 Judicial Progs., March 1870, nos. 83-84.
 Ibid., April, 1870 nos. 38, 66-68.
 Ibid., May, 1870 nos. 216-219, 246-247, 279-82
 Ibid., July, 1870 nos. 117-118.
- 15 meaning charters.
- 16 C. U. Aitchison's "Treaties, etc.", Calcutta 1909, p. 272.
- 17 Judicial Progs., September, 1870, nos. 190-191.
- 18 Ibid., December, 1870, no. 172.
- 19 Buckland, vol. I, pp. 461-62.
- 20 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.," p. 314.
- 21 Assam Progs., June 1876.
- 22 Letter no. 54 of 1873, For. Progs., Pol. A., nos. 10-51.
- 23 Political Progs. (India), July 1870, no. 275.
- 24 Govt. of India in Foreign Dept. Letter, no. 216p., dated 30th January, 1873.
- 25 Political Progs. (India), August 1872, nos. 313-15.
- 26 Letter No. 1584, E. P., dated 11th June, 1879, Political Progs., June 1875.
- 27 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.", Calcutta 1884, p. 203.

28 The term 'Eastern Lushais' has been applied by Mr. McCabe, I. C. S., to the tribes living east of the Sonai River and within the jurisdiction of the Assam administration.

29 Sukpial ultimately paid it before his death in 1880.

30 meaning hamlet.

31 Tikendrajit, a Manipuri prince of royal blood, was generally known as 'Manipuri Senapati'.

32 J. Knox Wight's letter No. 800J., dated Silchar, the 29th May 1882, Foreign Progs., June 1882.

33 Foreign Progs., 88-91, Pol. A, Aug. 1882, Foreign Dept., p. 3.

34 Lyall's Letter dated the 4th March, 1888, Bengal Secretariat, Pol. A, June 1891, nos. 1-139, File L/20., 1889.

35 Ibid.

36 Assam Secretariat, Political and Judicial, A., Foreign Progs., August, 1890, nos. 1-46.

37 Assam Secretariat, Political and Judicial, A. For. Progs., August 1890, nos. 1-46.

38 For. Dept., Ext. A. Prog., January 1891, No. 123.

39 Aitchison's "Treaties, etc.", Calcutta 1909, p. 275.

40 For. Progs., Dec. 1893, Nos. 37-62.

41 Bengal Government's letter No. 1049-P., Bengal Secretariat, Pol., A, April 1891, nos. 1-13.

42 Aitchison's "Treaties. etc.," Calcutta 1909, p. 276.

43 According to the census of India 1901, the area of the Lushai Hills was 7,227 sq. miles and its population numbered 82,434.

44 For. Dept., Ext. A. Prog., Nov. 1900, No. 1.

45 Foreign Progs., Sept. 1899, 1-4,

46 Vide Map No. 3.

CHAPTER V

THE NAGAS

The Shibsagar Nagas inhabiting the low hills to the south of the Sibsagar district used to maintain a constant intercourse with the plains through a number of Duars (passes) to each of which was attached a Kotoki or clan representative to serve as the go-between between the Government and the tribe ordinarily using that Duar. The Kotokis were paid a remission of the poll tax, and under the British Indian revenue system received a remission of their land equal to the amount of the old remission of poll-tax. Later on, some of them also started managing the khats¹ held by different Naga chiefs on the plains; and they, being generally Assamese, in most instances appropriated those lands altogether. In April 1861, the Duars were closed to the Naga traders by the order of the Commissioner of Assam, in consequence of the murder of one Tonoo Cachari in the Gelaki Duar, used by the Namsang and neighbouring Nagas. In February following, the Nangota Abor Nagas surrendered five of their men as responsible for the murder, when the Boree Nagas of Tabloong, Jaktoong, Kamsang and Namsang, being hard hit by the closure of the Duars, threatened to attack the former.² In 1862, the guard-post and village of Borpathar were attacked, and one sepoy and fifteen villagers were carried off as slaves. But the Government simply connived at it. In March 1863, a murder was committed in Mouza Oboipore of Sibsagar by the Banfera Nagas, and at the close of the same month the guard-house in Gelaki Duar was burnt down by raiders belonging to some of the Abor tribes. But as the actual raiders could not be detected no action was taken against any tribe. Being alarmed by the suspicious movements of some Naga trading parties about Sibsagar, strict orders were issued by the

Government for disarming temporarily all Nagas who passed the police outposts.

From the very beginning, the local officers of the Government had proposed to take a direct part in the management of the Naga Hills, but their proposals were turned down. The Directors would have preferred the plan of settling between the British Indian villages and the Naga Hills Kuki colonies and other courageous tribes as a buffer—a plan of which some trial had already been made without any desired result. They had suggested the recruitment of the Angamis in the frontier military police, but this was also tried without much success. These hillmen could not be induced to remain long under military discipline, and of the 37 Angami recruits the average tenure of service proved to be only eight months. The policy of non-interference had, at last, to be abandoned, and the Commissioner of Assam was constrained to report:

It is not creditable to our Government that such atrocities should recur annually with unvarying certainty, and that we should be powerless alike to protect our subjects or to punish the aggressors. It is quite certain that our relations with the Nagas could not possibly be on a worse footing than they are now. The non-interference policy is excellent in theory, but Government will probably be inclined to think that it must be abandoned.³

In 1862, Sir Cecil Beadon, the new Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, directed that an officer Subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner of Nowgong should be placed in immediate communication with the Nagas. The chiefs of the borders were to be informed that the Government looked to them to be responsible for the good behaviour of their villages, and annual stipends for this police duty would be paid to them so long as they performed it well. Written agreements were to be taken to this effect and annual presents interchanged. The officer to be appointed to this duty was further directed to decide any disputes voluntarily referred to him, but not to interfere in internal affairs, at any rate for the present.⁴ Some delay occurred in translating this

policy into actual practice, due to changes among the local officials and the successive representations of conflicting views. Further raids in March and April 1866 compelled the Government to face the problem immediately and settle it once for all. The Commissioner, possibly because he saw no alternative between absolute annexation and absolute non-interference, proposed to abandon the whole of the Naga Hills to its fate, or at least to close the Duars to all Naga trade.⁵ But the Lieutenant-Governor insisted on a full trial being given to his policy enunciated in 1862, remarking that if his policy had been carried out in the spirit in which it was conceived, there was every reason to suppose that these outrages would not have occurred. The proposal to recede before those wild tribes and fall back from their neighbourhood whenever they chose to annoy the Government could not be entertained by the Lieutenant-Governor for a moment. The practical effect of such a measure would be that in the course of a few years Assam would be divided amongst the Bhutias, Abors, Nagas, Garos, Mishmis, and other wild tribes. In reply to this the Commissioner, Col. Hopkinson, made a new plan with regard to the Nagas. He proposed to depute a British Officer to proceed with a force and effect a permanent lodgement in the country at a point most convenient for keeping open communication and procuring supplies. The officer would then invite the Naga Chiefs to submit themselves to the Government. The Chiefs who would agree to submit would have to pay an annual tribute as a token of submission, and in return would receive Government aid and protection, whereas those who would refuse to submit would be told that the Government would leave them to themselves so long as they kept the peace towards the British subjects and the submitting Chiefs. The Lieutenant-Governor endorsed the proposal, and in his letter to the Government of India he showed his strong inclination to "re-assert our authority over them," (the Angami Nagas) "and brighten them under a system of administration suited to their circumstances, and gradually

reclaim them from habits of lawlessness to those of order and civilisation."⁶

But the Supreme Government did not approve of a gradual occupation of the Naga Hills as the Commissioner of Assam contemplated, and the Government of Bengal desired, but merely provided for the establishment of a strong central station in the Hills, the officer in charge of which was to endeavour to maintain conciliatory intercourse with the Nagas. The reason behind this was the Supreme Government's unwillingness to incur heavy expenses by adopting a policy of annexation and administration.⁷ Accordingly, Lieutenant Gregory was ordered to occupy the central position of Samugudting. A road was opened from Dimapur to Samugudting. Large discretionary powers were given to this officer for proceeding summarily against villages concerned in any gross outrage, and a rough system of judicial procedure was laid down. The Manipuris were forbidden to make any retaliatory expedition into the Naga Hills. Measures to redress any outrages committed by the Nagas in Manipur were to be adopted in concert with the Officer in charge of Samugudting. But this would not debar the Manipuris from following up and punishing any marauding party they might find within their own territory. All Angamis going to visit the plains of Assam were to be issued with passes by the Officer at Samugudting where they were to leave their spears before setting out for the plains. All these were done with a view to rendering the repetition of the past experiences impossible, for in the past, Manipuri reprisals on the Nagas led to Naga raids in British territory also.

Meanwhile, in January 1866, the Nagas of Razepepah village cut up a Mikir village in North Cachar. As a result, in March, Lieutenant Gregory burnt the offending village. In June, the Razepepah men again made a raid and massacred 26 Mikirs of Sergmcha. At the end of the rainy season Gregory levelled Razepepah to the ground, declared its lands desolate for ever, and transplanted its people, on their making complete submission, amongst other communities.

The occupation of Samugudting was followed by the opening of a School and a dispensary, the extension of trade and construction of roads linking up the hills with the plains. A plan was also sanctioned of receiving at Samugudting residuary delegates from the tribes who were allowed small stipends for acting as interpreters and messengers to their respective clans. The Naga raids upon British territory ceased for a time, but the Government gradually became aware of the inter-tribal warfare prevailing in the Hills. Fresh complications cropped up with reference to the Manipur boundary and the interference of that state in certain areas of the hills. The boundary laid down in 1842 between Manipur and the Angami country was reasserted by the Government in 1867, but it was little respected by Manipur. Since the Government officers were prohibited from directly controlling the independent Nagas within the limits of the Hills District, the assertion of such a boundary line merely prevented Manipur from making retaliatory raids on what was nominally British territory, while the Nagas had no scruples in violating that of Manipur. This furnished a standing excuse for Manipuri reprisals against the Nagas.

After much correspondence the boundary line between Manipur and the Angamis was settled in 1872. The line of 1842⁸ was maintained in all essential points so far as it was clearly identified.⁹ A few villages on the dividing ridge of the water-pent over which Manipur had acquired supremacy, were demarcated as belonging to that state, and from the termination of the line of 1842, at a point called the Telizo Peak, eastward the water-shed of the main line of hills, which divide the affluents of the Brahmaputra from those of the Irrawaddy as far as the Patkai Pass, was declared to be the limit of Manipur on its northern frontier. The Naga Hills District was advanced to march with the boundary of Manipur as thus determined. The Kuki colonies on the Langting were brought within the limits of the Naga Hills District,—a measure rendered necessary by their having commenced a course of active hostilities against certain

Naga villages. Though subsequently Manipur objected to this boundary, the objections were overruled. The northern boundary of Manipur eastward of Telizo, however, was not settled until 1878 when a line was finally laid down and accepted by that state.

Meanwhile, in 1867, the Nagas attacked the Gelaki guard-house on the border of Sibsagar district and killed some constables. One Officer thought that the prohibition to carry spears to the plains had something to do with the raid, while another was convinced that the tea-planters' encroachments on the hills were unsettling the frontier tribes. Still a third Officer opined that the Government Survey operations had excited their suspicion. The Duars were, however, closed to trade, the outposts strengthened, and the neglected stockades hastily repaired. These measures proved to be successful. The Tabloong, Namsang, and other Nagas, who were now carrying on a most profitable traffic with the tea gardens, arrested two of the raiders and handed them over to the Government. The arrested persons belonged to the Yungia Abor Nagas, a remote clan in the upper ranges, who actuated by a love of plunder and a craving for human heads, led a stealthy raiding party through the trackless jungles to the plains below, and had attacked the police station under the notion that it was a settlement of ryots—a mistake not very creditable to the discipline of the out-post.¹⁰

The rapid extension of tea cultivation along this frontier and the employment of hill men in plantation works sometimes gave rise to petty quarrels with the Nagas. In 1869, the Changnoi Nagas were charged with forcibly carrying off three labourers from a tea-planter's garden on the pretence that they were their runaway slaves. They, however, denied this charge and informed the Deputy Commissioner that the men had left the garden as they did not receive their wages. The Nagas were warned not to take the law into their own hands, and the tea-planters were advised to avoid engaging hillmen.¹¹ In 1870, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga

Hills District visited 20 out of 32 Rengami Naga villages and appointed Mouzadars, elected by the villagers, who were in future to be responsible for the revenue. The Rengamis had always been well affected, and they were of some use as a buffer against the Lhota Nagas behind them. Early in 1871, a quarrel between a planter and some Changnoi Nagas in Lakhimpur led to serious apprehension of raids. Soon afterwards, a massacre of Borlangia Nagas perpetrated by Kamsingias within two miles of a tea garden showed that measures of defining the limits of Naga Territory towards the plains could no longer be deferred. Also, the traffic in rubber, brought down by the hillmen, for which there was a great demand in the plains, led to quarrels and disturbances. The opening out of tea gardens beyond the border-line at times involved the Government in troublesome disputes with the frontier tribes in their vicinity. So, in 1872-'73, the statutes 32 and 33 Vic., Cap. 3, which give power of summary legislation for backward tracts to the Executive Government were extended to Assam. The first use of this power of Summary legislation given by the Act was to pass a regulation for the frontier districts. This regulation drawn up by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and approved by the Governor General-in-Council in 1873 gave power to the Lieutenant-Governor to prescribe a line, to be called "the inner line", in each or any of the districts affected, beyond which no British subject of certain classes or foreign residents could pass without a licence. Rules were laid down regarding trade, the possession of land beyond this line, and other matters, which gave the executive government an effective control. The regulation also provided for the preservation of elephants, and authorised the Government to lay down rules for their capture.

As it was not always convenient to define the actual boundary of the British possessions the Inner Line did not indicate the territorial frontier, but only the limits of the administered area, nor did it in any way decide the sovereignty of the territory beyond. The Inner Line was in course of

time drawn along the northern, eastern and south-eastern borders of the Brahmaputra valley. Planters were not allowed to acquire land beyond this Line, either from the Government or from any local chief or tribe. Laws passed under the Statute 32 and 33 Vic., Cap. 3, are called Regulations to distinguish them from the Acts, or laws passed in the usual manner after discussion in the legislature¹². Under the provisions of the Inner Line Regulation a boundary line was laid down between British territory and the independent Naga land in 1873, compensation being paid to the Nagas for the area occupied by those tea-gardens which lay beyond the Inner Line. With the tribal disputes of the Nagas beyond the Inner Line the Government refused to interfere thenceforward, save so far as the good offices of the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar might serve to bring about peace.

Captain Butler, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, whose title was in 1872 changed to that of Political Agent, had for sometime past been urging upon the Government the adoption of a bolder policy with reference to the Nagas. Colonel Hopkinson also supported Butler. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir George Campbell, after much deliberation, came to the conclusion that the only satisfactory plan of dealing with the Naga tribes was to bring about gradually the establishment of political control and influence over them without any assertion of governmental supremacy. He suggested that this control should extend to the introduction of a sort of political police over the tribes. The Government would no longer refuse to arbitrate between hostile clans or to enforce its awards. The Political Agent was to be removed to a more central site and authorised to maintain peace in the Hills by exercising his influence and, when required, by the show of force¹³. To give effect to this policy extensive explorations and clear definition of boundary lines and local limits were deemed necessary. The Supreme Government approved of these plans and also expressed satisfaction at the success of the system of receiving

residential delegates from amongst the Nagas¹⁴. It also reiterated its policy of moderation and non-aggressive approach towards the Nagas¹⁵. The weaker villages very soon began to show a desire to live under Government protection, and although inter-tribal raids continued, no hostility to the Government people was reported.

The availability of a sufficient number of fire arms and ammunition to the Nagas was to a great extent responsible for the ceaseless inter-tribal clashes. Most of these arms and ammunition were procured secretly and illegally from Manipur and the Cachar border.

The Report of Memaram, Inspector, Naga Hills Police Force, reveals that the man, who prepared cartridges for the Raja of Manipur, used to keep half of these for the Raja and sold the other half to the Nagas. Sometimes, he sold loose gunpowder, filled in canisters. The sepoy of Manipur also sold caps and cartridges to the Nagas. Guns were purchased by the Nagas from Manipur or from the "Baparies" (traders) at Barkhola Bazar in Cachar secretly at night. With a view to avoid detection when bringing these guns home, the Nagas detached the barrel from the stock, and placed the barrel in bamboo tubes, and the stock they wrapped up in cloth and plantain leaves and put them in their baskets, and they brought them home. The "Baparies" of Manipur and those bordering on the Cachar Hills were alleged to have sold arms and ammunition to the neighbouring Nagas. Inspector Memaram also believed that the villages of Tokoymah, Merhemah, and Jakhamah had some secret alliance with the Raja of Manipur, and the latter had given three guns to each of these villages. Moreover, the Naga informers informed Memaram that the Raja of Manipur promised to supply guns to them also if they "became the Raja's children" (subjects)¹⁶.

In February 1874, the Naga Hills was made over to the charge of the newly-appointed Chief Commissioner of Assam. The Secretary of State for India approved of

Sir George Campbell's views and on 25th February, 1874, wrote to the Government of India :

I approve the deputation of an officer to Sebsaugor for the purpose of settling the boundary of that district, as proposed in paragraph 2 of your letter of the 20th July 1873.....A firm policy, similar to that proposed by Sir George Campbell, is of course essential to success,..... The utmost care should of course be exercised in selecting officers for a duty so especially needing judgment and conciliatory demeanour as that assigned to your representatives among these tribes.¹⁷

It was the local officers who actually took the initiative of extending British control over the Naga Hills, sometimes in contravention of the standing orders of the Government, and the Government willy nilly followed that lead and had to give their reluctant approval to the *fait accompli*. The action of some local officers put the Government in such a position wherefrom there was no falling back. How gradually village after village came under the protection of the Government Johnstone has left a fine account in his memoirs :

The people in the hills know that we objected to the system of raiding, and could not understand why, such being the case, we did not put it down, and ascribed our not doing so to weakness, wherein they were right, and inability wherein they were wrong. The less powerful villages could at any time have been glad of our protection, and one of the most powerful—Mozuma, was anxious to become subject to us. Offers of submission had been made once or twice, but no one liked to take the responsibility of going against the policy and orders of the Government.....towards the end of March 1874, a deputation came to me from the villages of Mezeffina begging for protection against Mozuma, with whom they had a feud, and from whom for some reason or other they daily expected an attack. They offered to become British subjects and pay revenue in return for protection. I considered the matter carefully, and before I had given my decision, crowds of old people, and women carrying their children came in asking me to save their lives. I at once decided to grant their request, and promised them what they asked, on condition that they paid up a year's tribute in advance. This they at once did, and I immediately sent a messenger to proclaim to Mozuma that the people of

Mezeffina were British subjects, and to threaten them or any one else with dire vengeance if they dared to lay hands on them. I did not underrate the grave responsibility that I incurred in going against the policy of Government, but I felt it was utterly impossible that I, as their representative, could quietly stand by, and see a savage massacre perpetrated, within sight of our station of Samagudting.¹⁸

This local official thus forced the hands of the Government to the extension of British rule over the Naga territories. The Governor-General in Council wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Assam :

If you are of opinion that these villages are worth protecting in the interests of our territory, that they can be conveniently and substantially protected, and that they are within easy range of your power to control, then Captain Johnstone's proceedings need not be disallowed. But if you think, after taking account of the localities and state of affairs, that the cost and consequence of this extension of our protectorate has been miscalculated, and that no adequate advantage is to be gained, in that case you will possibly be obliged to take steps to withdraw from an embarrassing and perhaps untenable position. And I am to say distinctly that the Government of India desire neither to accept fealty nor to take revenue from the independent villages, and would rather not extend their protecting obligations unless you are satisfied and can report that it is now necessary to uphold what has been already done.¹⁹

Captain Johnstone after taking a third Naga village into protection, ignoring the policy of non-interference laid down by the Government of India, reported to the Chief Commissioner of Assam that in his opinion the action taken by the submitting villages was the beginning of a general voluntary submission on the part of the Nagas. The Chief Commissioner, Colonel Keatinge, in March 1875, reopened the question of policy and advocated a gradual and systematic survey of the hills, not merely for the purpose of exploration, but as a continuation of the political occupation of the hills. Thus he vindicated the stand taken by Captain Johnstone. In July, he recommended the transfer of the headquarters of the Naga Hills from Samagudting to Wokha. In November,

he reported that the number of Naga villages paying revenue to the Government was increasing. He sanctioned the acceptance of revenue from villages within the reach of Samugudting, and not from the powerful and turbulent villages to the east such as Sepemah and Mozemah. The Government of India approved of this, with a caution to the local officers about going too far.²⁰

Johnstone strongly urged "the advisability of establishing a regular system of education, including religious instruction, under a competent clergyman of the Church of England. I pointed out that the Nagas had no religion."²¹ But the Government threw cold water on his humanitarian and missionary zeal.

Survey operations for demarcating the boundaries of the Naga Hills led to fresh troubles. In December 1872 Major Godwin Austen had demarcated the boundary line of Manipur on the north up to the Telizo Peak instead of the Patkai Pass as was originally planned, and a large unknown area was brought under survey. In 1874, in their fresh explorations Captain Butler and Captain Badgeley discovered that the Lanier was an affluent of the Irrawaddy, and the Kopamedza range the actual watershed. Two thousand miles of new territory was surveyed by them in spite of two hostile engagements with the Nagas who had been driven off with some loss. Towards the close of 1874 two survey parties, one under Captain Badgeley and Lieutenant Holcombe starting from Jaipur and working in a south-westerly direction, and the other under Captain Butler and Lieutenant Woodthorpe heading towards the north-east from their head-quarter station, set out to discover the source of the river Dikhu. While Captain Butler had a military force of 70 men with him, Lieutenant Holcombe had a contingent of 40 only, besides police.

From the start of the operations the Nagas behaved in a hostile way. On the 3rd January, 1875, Butler's party reached Wokha, a large village on the western slope of the

Wokha Peak and met with a hostile and dangerous demonstration which followed the murder of a coolie on Butler's side. Butler lost no time in attacking the village and killing 20 Nagas without any loss to his side. The village was almost destroyed before he marched out of it to continue his survey. A large tract of country was mapped out when he received orders to close his operations and avenge Lieutenant Holcombe's murder. Early in 1875, Lieutenant Holcombe, Assistant Commissioner of Jaipur, and Captain Badgeley, and their survey parties were treacherously attacked at Ninu. Holcombe and eighty other persons were killed, and Captain Badgeley along with 50 other men were injured. In March 1875, the offending villages were destroyed and the heads of the murdered men on the Government side and almost all the arms and plunder taken by the Nagas recovered. In December following, Captain Butler too was killed by the Lhota Nagas of Pangti near Wokha, while he was leading his Survey party through the hills. Lieutenant Woodthrope promptly burnt the offending village and completed the Survey. In 1876, a small force escorting a Survey party through the hills burnt Ninu for the second time as it refused to surrender some of the culprits of the 1875 massacre. Although the weaker villages after these clashes continued to seek Government protection, the stronger villages held aloof.

In August 1876, the Chief Commissioner of Assam again referred to the continued aggression of the Angamis upon the Nagas living under Manipur and to their endless internecine feuds. Of course, they did not dare to touch the Kukis. From 1874 to August 1876, 6 villages had been plundered, nine wholly or partially destroyed, and 334 persons killed, chiefly by the Nagas of Konemah and Mozemah. The Chief Commissioner, considering all these, proposed to send an expedition against the raiders. But the Government of India was not ready to send any expedition till Lieutenant-Colonel Johnstone, who had just then been appointed Agent in Manipur, took control of the local politics and conferred

with Mr. Carnegy, the Political Officer. On the other hand, the Secretary of State was opposed to any unnecessary delay in putting down the aggressive Nagas²³. As a result, the Chief Commissioner was authorised to adopt necessary measures "for preventing future raids and exacting reparation for past outrages"²³. Meantime, raids were frequent amongst the Nagas themselves, and at last, in February 1877, the Mozemah people attacked the Cachari village of Gumaigaju, killed six, injured two and carried off two guns. The cause was an old feud which had started thirty years back. In 1877, the Amgamis attacked a Kacha Naga village too, and as the offending village refused to surrender the culprits, it was subsequently burnt by the punitive expedition of 1877-'78.

In June 1877, the Governor-General-in-Council came forward to support the Chief Commissioner of Assam and reported to the Secretary of State that the British Government was bound to acquire effective control and influence over a large section of the hills. The Secretary of State, as a result, abandoned the policy of non-interference²⁴. Mackenzie has observed :

The policy of the Government to the tribes on its North-East Frontier has, I again assert, been throughout in its main features a policy of conciliation, and not a policy of repression or devastation. It was, indeed, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, for many years far too conciliatory to be either strong or altogether successful.....With the establishment of the Chief Commissionership of Assam and the immediate subordination of the Assam administration to the Supreme Government, the views of the local officers began to carry greater weight, and the advocates of a forward policy obtained a more favourable hearing: until, in 1877, both the Government of India and the Secretary of State came finally and resolutely to the determination to advance the headquarters of the Political Officer in the Naga Hills to a central and dominating position in the midst of the warring Angami clans—and to do away absolutely and for ever with the state of tribal anarchy that disgraced the so-called Hills District, and formed a standing menace to the peace of Cachar, Sebsaugor and Nowgong²⁵.

Expeditions were sent into the hills in 1877-78. After a fight Mozemah was burnt to the ground and its villagers were driven away into the hills and jungles. After a few other encounters the Nagas were compelled to submit and agree to the following :

(1) that they should pay a fine of Rs. 50.

(2) that they should restore the arms and outfit of three constables who had been waylaid and also the contents of a plundered mail bag, and

(3) that they should surrender four of their own fire arms. Pardon was extended to Konemah and Jotsomah as their Chiefs submitted unconditionally. An ample punishment had already been inflicted on the Mozemah people by the destruction of their houses and food stuffs, and in the privations they had undergone²⁰.

Sir S. C. Bayley, the Chief Commissioner, proposed to shift the headquarters of the Naga Hills to Kohima, commanding, as it did, the principal Angami villages and the Manipur frontier. Sixteen Naga villages had already come under British protection of which thirteen paid a revenue of Rs. 1,032. It was calculated that the revenue income from all the 16 Naga villages could eventually be raised to a sum of Rs. 26,000, and 450 armed constables would be required to maintain law and order. In July 1878, the Government of India accepted the Chief Commissioner's plans. In 1879-'80, road construction was taken in hand in right earnest to open out the Naga country, and the clans began to come from all sides seeking British protection. Many petty internecine feuds were settled by British Officers, and fines were imposed on the offending tribes for violating British territory or tribal villages in contravention of the Officers' Orders.

Peace was again disturbed in April 1879, when a policeman, while escorting a mail runner through the hills, was shot by a Naga desirous of robbing the guard of his rifle. In October, Mr. Damant, the Political officer, set out for

Jotsomah, Konemah and Mozemah to find out what disposition they were in before starting for the Hatigorias. Meeting with no hostility at Jotsomah he started for Konemah despite the warnings given by a Jotsomah interpreter. Arriving at the foot of the hill, on the peak of which stood the strongly *stockaded* village of Konemah, Damant with half of his escort advanced up the steep path leading to the peak. The path was sandwiched between a precipice on one side and a high wall, which was lined by the youngmen of the village, on the other. The gate of the village was closed and when Damant stood before it he was shot dead, and his escort was dispersed by the firing of a volley. The Konemah men then swarmed down, and along with the Jotsomah people they killed 35 and wounded 19 out of 85 police and military escorts of Damant. Damant's party thereupon retreated to Kohima. Being emboldened the Nagas then besieged Kohima for eleven days and attacked it without causing any serious damage. Colonel Johnstone, Political Agent in Manipur, was sent urgent message for help. He reached in time with 2000 Manipuri troops, lent to him by the Maharaja, 30 men of the 34th N. I. and a small detachment of Cachari Frontier Police. Colonel Johnstone writes in his memoirs that the garrison at Kohima being wearied out entered into negotiations, and agreed to surrender the stockade, if allowed a free passage to Samugutting. "This fatal arrangement would have been carried into effect within an hour or two had not my letter arrived assuring them of help."²⁷ The garrison was relieved and the stockade saved. Battalions also arrived from Dibrugarh and Goalundo. General Nation was heading towards Kohima with 1000 men and two mountain guns. Johnstone was ordered not to be engaged in any offensive against the Nagas till the date of his arrival, expected to be the 9th November. "Konoma was," writes Colonel Johnstone, "still unfortified, and a few days would have sufficed to capture it, and place the Naga Hills at our feet. As it was, the delay, not till November 9th, but November 22nd, owing to defective transport arrangements,

gave the enemy time to recover, and when we tardily appeared before Konoma, we found a scientifically defended fortress, whose capture cost us many valuable lives.”⁹⁸

A punitive expedition was at once organised, and Brigadier-General Nation took the field himself with a force consisting of the 44th S. L. I. under Colonel Nuttall, C. B., a detachment of the 43rd A. L. I. under Major Evans, and two mountain guns under Lieutenant Mansel, R. A. On 22nd November, Konemah was attacked, the assault lasting the whole day. At night-fall only the lower part of the village was captured after the severest fighting ever known in these hills. At night the enemies evacuated their upper defences, and the next day the Government forces occupied it, losing in their assault two British Officers, the Subadar-Major of the 44th S. L. I. killed, two British and two native officers wounded, and 44 of the other ranks killed or wounded. Of the thirteen hostile villages Piphima, Merrama, Sachima, Sephama and Puchama were destroyed after a few engagements. Next, Konemah was razed to the ground, Jotsomah was captured and a portion of it was burnt.

Late in January 1880, a party of Konemah men made a very daring raid on the Baladhan Tea Garden, killing the garden Manager, Mr. Blyth, and sixteen coolies. After plundering and burning the garden settlement they returned by a long round-about forest through which they had come. In February and March, 1880, the Nagas, being encamped in the Chakka Fort on the crest of the Burrail range, maintained a guerilla warfare. The troops besieged the fort and tried to cut off their supplies. Being pressed hard the Chakka fort surrendered on 27th March. All villages which took part against the Government were punished by fines in grain and cash and a certain amount of unpaid physical labour. The Nagas had to surrender without compensation their fire arms. The revolting villages which actually fought against the Government were demolished, and in some cases the offenders were removed from their fortified and inaccessible crest to an

easily accessible position. Konemah suffered, in addition, the confiscation of its terraced cultivation and the transplantation of its people among other clans. From all villages promise was taken that they would pay revenue in the shape of one maund rice and a rupee per house, provide a certain amount of manual labour annually for Government purposes, and appoint a headman who should be responsible for good order and the execution of the orders of the Government. Subsequently, the Chief Commissioner became sympathetic with these ill-fated people and modified these terms in the following way: (1) Permission was given to the dispossessed villages or Khels to re-occupy their old cultivation, and (2) the terms of the revenue assessment were revised in the direction of leniency.²⁹

The Nagas suffered much, being reduced to homeless wanderers, and living in improvised huts in jungles infested with ferocious beasts. This resulted in unprecedented sickness and mortality among them, and a severe strain upon the resources of those who had had to supply them with foodstuffs. In 1881, they were allowed to set up their Khels in sites selected by the Political Officer. The general rate of revenue assessment was reduced to the level of the usual one levied on other hill tribes of Assam, that is, rupees two per house. The new rates were gladly accepted, and were paid punctually and spontaneously.

Thus the local officers and men had to struggle hard and suffer heavy losses for bringing the sturdy Nagas under control. Colonel Johnstone has observed:

It was the misfortune of those engaged in the Naga Hills expedition, that they were overshadowed, and their gallant deeds almost ignored, by the Afgan war then in progress. Some of the English papers imagined that the operations in the Naga Hills were included in it, and the Government of India, which has only eyes for the North-West Frontier, showed little desire to recognise the hard work, and good service rendered on its eastern border, amidst difficulties far greater than those which beset our troops in Afganistan.³⁰

The American Baptist Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Clark, did a great service to the tribes as well as to the Government in the way of civilising the head-hunters. He had settled in a village named Molongkong, south of Amguri, and by 1880 his labours were bearing fruit in leading to the settlement of the traditional blood feuds, and a desire among the villagers who had come under his influence to live peacefully with their neighbours. The local trade with the Nagas was fast developing and even the distant Lhota Nagas were found visiting the Government-controlled markets and showing a desire for maintaining commercial intercourse with the plains.

It was found that the Kuki and Kutcha Nagas of North Cachar had been carrying on trade with the Angamis, and the Kukis who had originally been settled as a screen to protect the North Cachar villages had latterly been getting out of hand altogether. So, the whole country from the Burreil on the south to Nowgong on the north was placed under the Naga Hills District. The Political Officer's jurisdiction was fixed eastward by a line drawn from the Manipur frontier through the Kopamedza Hill along the Munnoo ridge, and thence northward by the Doyeng, from the junction of the Sijoo and Zuloo rivers to the Wokha and Golaghat Road. Thus, the land of the Lhotas, but not that of the Sema and Hatigoria Nagas, was included within the jurisdiction of this officer. The Naga Hills District's boundaries were definitely laid down in 1882 as follows :

On the south and north they became identical with those laid down in 1875, with the exception of the portion between the Doyeng and the north-east corner of the district, which had been left unsettled ; on the west they were the same as had been determined 7 years ago, with the modification that a triangular land inhabited by the Kukis and Cacharis, and bounded on the south by the Langting and Langreng rivers, on the north-east by the Lumding, and on the north-west by the Doyeng, was transferred from the Naga Hills to North Cachar ; on the east the frontier now followed generally the course of the Doyeng to where the river abandons its northward direction and flows south-west, thence the line was drawn

to the Sibsagar border in such a way as to include all the villages of the Lhota Nagas and exclude all those of the Hatigorias.³¹

Thus the process of penetrating into the Naga Hills was gradual, dictated originally and primarily by the necessity of protecting the settled districts, Nowgong and Sibsagar, from raiding Nagas, and agreed upon at each step with great reluctance by the Supreme Government. Military promenades through turbulent villages led to the establishment of outposts. Asalu had been the first of such outposts, and in 1866 Samugudting was chosen as a more suitable place for a permanent footing from which Nowgong could be protected against Western Angami raids. Then the Government in 1878 moved to Kohima in the centre of the Western Angami country in order to command both the Eastern Angami country and the Manipur frontier, and simultaneously to Wokha in order to dominate the Lhotas to the east of the Dikhu and to protect it from raids from the north and east. At last in 1881, it was decided that the Naga Hills should constitute a British district.

Though the necessity of protecting the borders of Nowgong and Sibsagar against raiding Nagas which in the past required the Government to penetrate into the hills little by little, ceased with the formation of the Naga Hills district in 1881, the process of penetration continued. It was impossible to fix the boundary of the area of British control and to hold that the Government should be totally indifferent to the happenings beyond that line. Trans-frontier Nagas still raided the administered villages, the latter were often involved in disputes with the former; head-hunting and massacres were still there just across the British Indian border. Under these circumstances, local officers clamoured for a forward policy, the Chief Commissioner sometimes supported them, and the Government of India was almost always reluctant. But the frontier moved forward, and what Lord Cranbrook, the Secretary of State said in 1878 "the continuance in the immediate proximity of settled

districts of a system of internecine warfare conducted principally against women and children cannot be tolerated ² held good for many more years.

Since the occupation of Kohima and Wokha in 1878 the general policy seemed to have been one of consolidating British rule around these two outposts. Mr. C. A. Elliott, Chief Commissioner of Assam, prepared a memorandum on the administration of the Naga Hills district in March 1881. He observed :

(1) That the system of forced labour, levied in a very unequal way and causing great dissatisfaction, should be set right at once, (2) the carrying of arms, including the traditional spears, by the Nagas should be discouraged, the village defences should be removed, and (3) the terrace-cultivation should gradually replace 'jhum' cultivation³³.

He also advocated a scheme for the allocation of outposts in the district for bringing home to the people that they were under the British Raj.

Towards the close of the year 1881, the Tangsa Nagas murdered a Christian Naga of Nowgong. The Revd. E. W. Clark, an American missionary in the Naga Hills, wrote to the authorities that either the Tangsa Nagas should be punished or else the Nowgong people supplied with fire-arms. But to Col. A. E. Cambell, Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, this was only one of many cases constantly occurring in the hills. There was another complaint from this same village, Nowgong, against the Boritangi village for having killed one of their headmen ; and the Banfera Nagas complained that the Bormuthuns had killed three of their tribe. C. J. Lyall, Esq., C. I. E., Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar :

that the Chief Commissioner cannot sanction any such measures as Mr. Clark proposes. The policy hitherto pursued towards these people has been to abstain from interference in their internal feuds and the fact that Mr. Clark has been permitted to settle in their midst,

and that some of them have embraced christianity, makes no difference in the principles which should govern our intercourse with them. If you are able, by exercise of moral influence, to appease discord among them, so much the better ; but to employ force would embark us on a policy the results of which could not be foreseen, and which would certainly lead to much expenditure and loss of life.

There is not the same objection to Mr. Clark's proposal that the Christian Nagas of Nowgong should be allowed to purchase four or five guns and a sufficiency of ammunition for their protection against wild beasts and human enemies ; and you are authorised to permit the purchase by them of these weapons, with enough powder, lead, and caps to last for a year, on Mr. Clark giving you a written guarantee that they will be used only for defensive purposes, and that he accepts the responsibility for the Nagas adhering to the conditions imposed⁸⁴.

An inter-tribal dispute at Kigwemah, in which one person was killed, was settled by demolishing the defensive works and the house of the murderer and compelling the guilty Khel to work off a fine of Rs. 200 contributed to the Public Works Department. A police guard was posted at the offending village and kept till the murderer was hunted down. As a Sema village named Philimi raided the Lhota Naga hamlet of Chingaki, killing two, an expedition was sent against it. The village was captured and its residents were kept out of it for two days. When Mr. McCabe threatened to burn down the village, the principal offender was surrendered. The culprit thereupon was sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment. This proved that prompt and ready action, backed by sufficient force, was adequate to draw respect to law and order, and the barbarous expedient of burning villages, which put hardship on the guilty and the innocent alike, was not absolutely essential.

On December 1, 1883, the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar reported that two Nagas of Molong had been murdered on their return from trading in the plains, near the Jhanzi, by men of Selachu, who had an old feud with

Molong. The murderers were abetted in their act by the Nagas of Bura Haimung, who bore a grudge against the settlers in the half-Christianised village of Molong. The culprits were ordered to come down and answer for their misdeed, but they refused to come on various pretexts. The Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar recommended closure of paths to Selachu. But Mr. Elliott, the Chief Commissioner, was doubtful of the result of this measure, because of the season of the year, when communication would soon cease, and also because of the distance of Selachu from the plains, which indicated that its people were not very dependent on trade or employment there. He, therefore, directed Mr. McCabe, Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, to send messengers to inform Selachu that if they persisted in their refusal they would surely be punished. Meanwhile, a force was collected and marched to the frontier. Being afraid the Chiefs of Bura Haimung and those of Selachu started negotiation with the authorities and finally on 28th February, 1884, the Selachu Chiefs made complete submission. "The Deputy Commissioner condemned them to pay a fine of Rs. 150/- which they did on the 8th March, having left hostages in his hands during the interval. The money was paid partly in rupees, partly in small coin, and 12 rupees in copper showing that the sum was levied from many houses, and no doubt the fine was severely felt³⁵. Thus ended a difficult problem on the Sibsagar frontier, which at one time threatened to become serious enough to call for military intervention.

In May, 1884, two Nagas, residents of Kois, a Lhota Naga village situated in the Wokha Sub-division of the Naga Hills, crossed the Doyang river, which was then the eastern boundary of the Naga Hills district, for trade. On arriving at the Hatigoria village of Mungatung, a distance of only 12 miles north-east from Kois, and about 6 miles beyond the Doyang, they attacked two Hatigorias who were accompanying them out of a desire for head-hunting, and in the fight that ensued one Hatigoria and a Lhota lost their lives. The

murdered Lhota, Tingpamo by name, was the nephew of the Raja of Lakhuti, the leading Lhota village in the district. So, the Raja wanted to take revenge unless the murderers were punished by the Government. The case had been construed in such a way by the Lhotas that it appeared to the Government that the Hatigorias of Mungatung were the real offenders.

An interpreter sent to Mungatung to demand the surrender of the murderers, returned with the news that the headmen of Mungatung admitted the murder, but refused to give up the offenders, though they were willing to pay a fine. The Chief Commissioner of Assam felt that as the scene of the murder was not too far from the frontier the crime should not go unpunished³⁶. Consequently, a punitive force, consisting of R. B. McCabe, Deputy Commissioner, the leader of the expedition, Mr. Brodrick, the Sub-divisional officer of Wokha, Dr. S. Borah, civil surgeon, Lieutenant Ternan, 100 sepoy and non-commissioned officers, and two Jamadars (junior commissioned officers), was sent to punish the offending village of Mungatung.

On the 30th July, the expedition left Wokha with two hundred rounds of ammunition per man and ten days' rations. The forces reached Sanigoan, at a distance of 20 miles, crossing the Doyang by the cane suspension-bridge. This was a most trying march. The day was very hot, and the steep ascent of 2,500 feet to the camp at the end of a hard journey proved fatiguing to both officers and men. The force reached Lakhuti by noon on the 31st July and camped there till next morning. There Mr. McCabe interrogated the Lhota lad Seretung, who had succeeded in escaping when his companion was killed. What Seretung, a strongly built lad of about 17, stated before McCabe proved false later on. He simply accused the Hatigorias of the murder and declared his innocence.

On the 2nd August, the force entered Mungatung and found the village completely deserted, and all property of any value removed from the houses.

Dubashas (interpreters) were sent forward to inform some Hatigorias who were lurking in the jungle adjacent to the village that they had better come in and meet Mr. McCabe, as no harm was intended.

On the morning of the 4th August one of the alleged murderers was brought in. He was an old man, named Tochang, and was at once identified by Seretung of Lakhuti as one of the Mungatung men who had killed Tingpamo. On examination Tochang made a statement which proved to be substantially true: He and Yemtang, a young man of about 25, of Mungatung had proceeded to Okotso to trade. There they met Tingpamo and Seretung, the two Lhota lads. And all of them set out for Mungatung for trade. After they had proceeded about a mile, Tochang and Yemtang were attacked by the accompanying Lhotas, and in the fight that ensued Tingpamo and Yemtang lost their lives.

The headmen of Burodubia, Alibar, Khenza, Hatigoria villages, came in with fowls, goats, etc., and expressed their readiness to build camps and supply coolies if Mr. McCabe visited them. On the 5th August, accompanied by Mr. Brodrick and Dr. Borah and an escort of thirty men, McCabe visited Nankam. McCabe says, "Nankam is splendidly situated on the top of a long sloping ridge. The village contains about seven hundred houses, and in no other part of the Naga Hills have I seen such a large crowd of men, women, and children. The number could not have been less than 3,000, and they had a healthy flourishing appearance. The women were tattooed on the legs, and were well dressed, with a blue cloth around the shoulder and a white cloth as a sari. They had large brass-earrings worn on the top of the ear, which at a distance gave them the appearance of having horns. The men wore the common Sema painted cloths, with the same designs as those of the Lozema men; in fact, I would describe these Hatigorias as semi-civilised Semas. They are inveterate smokers, and have a keen appreciation of English tobacco."³⁷

He had a long palaver with the headmen, who said that, although they paid no revenue, they considered themselves as much the Maharani's (Queen of England's) children as the Lhotas were. One remark struck him very much to the point; they said:

When we cut up any Lhotas they complain to you, and we are punished; but when the Lhotas take our heads, we have no one to whom we can complain. We cannot go to Wokha through the Lhota country, and have to suffer without redress.³⁸

McCabe told them that they might inform the subdivisional officer, Jorhat, of their grievance, without passing through the Lhota land.

The party returned to Mungatung by noon and found that the women and children were coming in from the Jungle. There were 409 houses, exclusive of granaries. The crops in the ground were Ahu Dhan (Summer Rice), job's tears, indigo, and a little Indian corn. Seretung agreed as to the exact position of the parties at the time of the conflict, fully confirming Tochang's statement and admitting that he had earlier spoken falsely. At Okotso, Tanjamo was arrested, and he admitted that he had cut off dead Yemtang's head. The Lakhuti Raja who was now called up, admitted that he had known all along the facts of the case. In extenuation of his fault he said:

We pay revenue and Mungatung does not. I thought that the death of a Hatiguria did not matter, but that you were bound to avenge the death of one of my men.³⁹

McCabe had him placed in custody, and released Tochang as he was completely exonerated.

Thus the expeditionary force occupied the village without opposition and succeeded in arresting all the culprits. One of the main offenders, Seretung, was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment, and Tanjamo to six months'. The Lhota villages of Lakhuti and Okotso were fined Rs. 500 and Rs. 100 respectively for the false statements they had made with respect to the murder. The report of R. B.

McCabe, Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, on the punitive expedition against the Hatigoria village of Mungatung throws a flood of light on the case besides giving fresh details about the independent Hatigorias. McCabe proved his mettle by ferreting out the truth from a heap of falsehood piled up by the wily head-hunters.⁴⁰

In June 1884, Mr. McCabe raised the question of policy in his letter to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.⁴¹ He observed that of the two possible policies—(1) non-interference with the trans-frontier tribes and (2) annexation—he supported the latter, executed gradually. His own policy was four-pronged: (1) to insist on strict obedience within his own jurisdiction, (2) to punish villages within his jurisdiction for raids made against trans-frontier villages, (3) to punish trans-frontier villages for attacks on cis-frontier villages, and (4) as far as possible to mediate in disputes between neighbouring villages across the frontier. The Chief Commissioner, Sir Charles Elliott, in his letter No. 1263, dated the 22nd August, 1884, addressed to the Government of India, referred to the recent increase of Naga raids and to the failure of the policy that had been followed for the last thirty years. He reviewed the policy associated during 1840-'44 with the name of Captain Bordie,⁴² the then Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar, and wanted to revert to some extent to it. But the Government of India did not approve of the proposal for a comprehensive promenade, and in its stead preferred to adhere to the existing policy, i.e., (a) that infraction of the British border and ill-treatment of British subjects beyond it should be punished, but (b) inter-tribal feuds and murders committed outside the border should be disregarded. They were opposed to doing anything that might entail new commitments i.e., extension of responsibility, expeditions, and a wide increase in the area of administration. The Governor-General, however, approved of the arrangement under which the political control over the Nagas extended to the east of the Lhota country as far as the Jhanzi river, or any other point, and wanted that interference

with inter-tribal quarrels should, as a rule, be limited to cases involving (1) outrages on British subjects, (2) violation of the Inner Line, and (3) danger to the interests of people dwelling inside the British territory by reason of the proximity of disturbances outside, such disturbances, for instances, as would be likely to intimidate coolies employed upon tea estates or cultivators. These observations (Mr. Grant's letter No. 2789-E., dated the 20th October 1884) were quoted as a "locus classicus" of policy for many years afterwards, and according to Sir William Morris they sanctioned, if they did not actually initiate, the policy of political control areas beyond the Naga Hills Frontier.

In implementing the Government of India's instructions the Chief Commissioner asked the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills to undertake two expeditions (a) to some Eastern Angami villages along the Manipur border to the east of Kohima and outside the existing boundary of the Naga Hills district, and (b) to some Ao villages east of Wokha, and directed the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar to make a similar visit to the Konyak villages to the east of his boundary. Hence expeditions were sent in January 1885, and everywhere the tribes offered a friendly reception. Both Mr. McCabe of the Naga Hills and Colonel Clarke of Sibsagar, the leaders of their respective expeditions, agreed that an outpost should be set up in the heart of the Ao country and the Konyak villages visited by Col. Clarke should be incorporated within the Naga Hills district. But Mr. W. E. Ward, the then officiating Chief Commissioner, did not fully support the above proposals on the ground that they would go considerably beyond the policy sanctioned by the Government of India. He, in his turn proposed the extension of the area of political control to the whole of the Ao country starting from west of the Dikhu where it cuts the present Mokokchung Subdivision from north to south, together with the Sema villages to the east of Wokha. About the mode of control to be exercised in this area Mr. Ward proposed that the Deputy Commissioner, to whom might

thereafter be given the political control of the new tract or of any portion thereof, would march once annually with a Frontier Police force through the particular tract assigned to him, and, in the course of his march, would enquire into all cases of murder committed within the past year, and punish the offending village. All punishments should, in the first instance, be by fine ; if the fine be not immediately paid, its equivalent in grain or cattle should be seized ; and if no grain or cattle be found, the village should be debarred from all trade and intercourse with the plains until the fine be realised. In no case should the offending village be destroyed as a punishment, in no case other than murder should the Deputy Commissioner interfere to settle inter-tribal disputes by making, or attempting to enforce any award, and in no case should he interfere in disputes between tribes residing within and the tribes residing outside the area of control, even though such disputes might have resulted in murder either without or within such area.

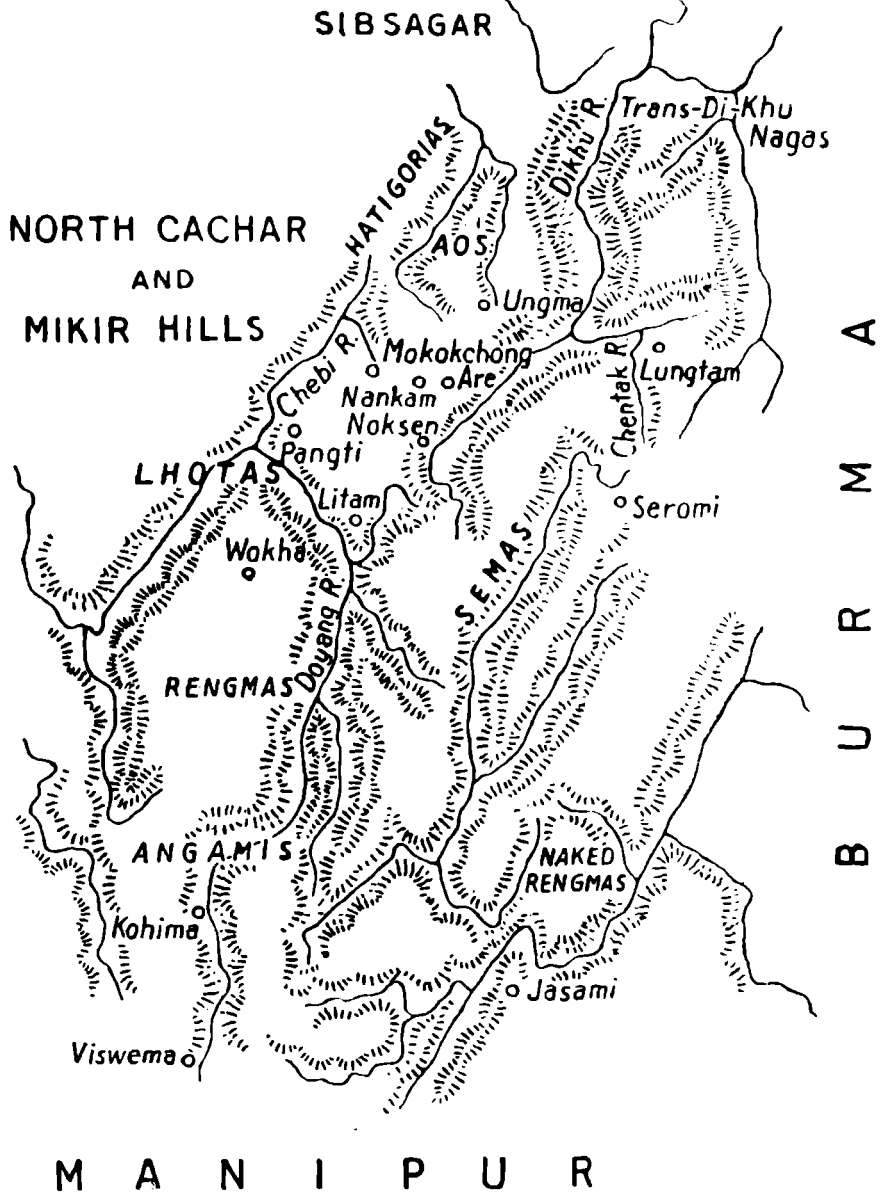
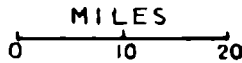
The Government of India approved of the above proposals, but desired that more discretion should be given to local officers. For instance, burning a village was to be allowed as a last resort. This was "practically a step towards the amalgamation of a considerable tract of trans-frontier country with the British districts."⁴³

In October 1884, two British Angami Nagas of Khonoma were murdered and robbed by the Manipur Nagas of Muram. The Maharaja in spite of repeated requests did not punish the murderers sufficiently though the Chief Commissioner of Assam had insisted upon an appropriate punishment.⁴⁴ Afterwards the British Government did not press the point further as they required the help of the Maharaja in the Kubo valley expedition. The Chief Commissioner of Assam wrote to the Secretary to the Government of India on 14th April, 1886, of the Manipur Maharaja's good services to the Government in the Kubo valley expedition under Colonel Johnstone's leadership. He was so impressed by the Maharaja's behaviour

during this expedition that he proposed to restore the valley to Manipur as a reward.⁴⁵

In the first week of February, 1886, news reached the Angami village of Khonoma that three men belonging to that village had been murdered while trading in Manipur. Two dead bodies covered with spear wounds and the head of a third were subsequently discovered near the border of Manipur. The exact site of the murder could not be ascertained, but, according to report, the corpses were found by men of Razami on the border between that village and Shipvomi. Naturally, the Khonoma men became furious and declared that money payment as compensation would not be again accepted (they pointed out that they had reluctantly accepted the compensation in money in the Muram murder case of 1884), and decided to take revenge. Not long afterwards, on 13th February, 1886, a large number of Khonoma men, collecting aid from some 15 neighbouring villages, crossed into Manipur 1,500 strong, and destroyed Shipvomi. Shipvomi was completely burnt down, thirteen persons belonging to Shipvomi, Gariphomi, and Neruhabama were killed, two persons taken captive and large quantities of loot seized. On receipt of information of this raid, Mr. Davis, who was then in charge of Kohima, set out with a force of Frontier Police to intercept the raiders returning from Manipur, and for some days he occupied the main passes in the neighbourhood of Kidma. Consequently, a large number of the marauders were arrested, chiefly inhabitants of Keswema, Phasema, Kigwema, Jotsama, Mezoma, and Khonoma, laden with arms and loot. The Frontier Police were also employed along the Kohima-Khonoma road; and although large numbers of the raiders were seen returning, it was impossible to effect their arrest in the jungle due to darkness of the night. It was evident that Khonoma was the chief offender, and it was the fear of violence from it as well as the prospect of loot that induced many to take part in the attack. As the ringleaders of the raid failed to appear before the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, the latter sent

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a force of 50 Frontier Police to Khonoma to arrest the main culprits, disarm the community and prevent the assemblage of armed men.⁴⁶

The culprits were arrested and on 20th May, 1886, the officiating Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills sentenced three of the ringleaders to rigorous imprisonment for seven years, 24 prisoners to rigorous imprisonment for 2 years, and imposed a fine of Rs. 1,670 on Khonoma. The leading villages which took part in the raid were also fined, i. e., Vishwema Rs. 1,845, Mima Rs. 805, Kedima Rs. 700, Kegwema Rs. 1,000, Jakama Rs. 890, and Kekrima Rs. 1,650.⁴⁷

When Colonel Clarke had visited the Ao country in January 1885, he was informed of a recent affray in which a party of Merangkhang men, while seeking to gain admittance to Dekahaimong with some wounded comrades, had been set upon by the warriors of the latter village, and five of them speared. Both parties, however, promised Colonel Clarke that they would not renew the feud, unless they were attacked. To this promise the people of Merangkhang remained faithful for a little more than a year; but on the 4th April 1886, they put into execution a deliberately conceived plan of vengeance against Dekahaimong, attacking the village in the night, killing five persons and wounding others, and finally burning the village completely to the ground. On the same day some traders of Dekahaimong, while returning from the plains, were ambushed near Amguri in the Sibsagar District; one man was killed, and another wounded. When the fugitives from Dekahaimong returned and attempted to rebuild their houses, they were again attacked by Merangkhang, and the houses a second time burned to the ground. The alarm now extended to the neighbouring villages along the northern side of the Jhanzi valley, and as Merangkhang refused to obey a summons to send its headmen into Wokha, a punitive expedition became necessary. Mr. Greer, the leader of the expedition, occupied Merangkhang without opposition, and after vainly endeavour-

ing to induce the villagers, who had deserted Merangkhang, to submit, burnt it and confiscated the standing crops belonging to that hamlet. He also took away the rights of its inhabitants to fish in the Jhanzi river. While the punitive force started on its journey back, seven men were surrendered, viz., four who were said to have been the ringleaders in the attack on Deka Haimong, and three who were concerned in the murder of the trader near Amguri.

The Ao country was notorious for its extensive slavery. When Mr. Greer made a proposal for the prohibition of slavery throughout the Ao country, the Chief Commissioner pointed out:

This is an object for which the influence of the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills may be properly exercised, provided that it be not necessary to employ force for the purpose. But at the same time I am to say that it was not intended that the domestic institutions of this tribe should be interfered with when they were brought under political control of any greater degree than is absolutely necessary for the purpose of preventing quarrels and disturbances among them on our borders.⁴⁸

He did not support "Mr. Greer's proposal that persons who disobey his order for the release of their slaves should be punished. But the murder of the offspring of female slaves should be put a stop to, as far as possible, and punished wherever detected".⁴⁹

In December 1886, Zulhami, a village lying within the political control area, and the village of Chipokitami⁵⁰, just outside the political control area, were raided by Mezamis. In the former village one and in the latter village two men were killed. An appeal for protection had also been received from another protected village, Phiuma, four women of which had been killed in the winter of 1885-86, and a fresh attack being apprehended, a deputation from Phiuma came to Kohima in February 1887 to ask for assistance. The next village to Chipokitami, Tirehephima, had had, during the course of five years, no less than 54 persons massacred by the Mezamis⁵¹. The Chief of Sakhai took the leading

part in these raids. Sakhai's raids had not been confined to villages under British protection. Some eastern Angami villages a mile or two outside the political control area, had suffered much more severely⁵⁸.

Consequent upon these, in March-April, 1887, a punitive expedition marched against the Mezami Nagas and also through the Sema country. Lieutenant Macintyre, Commandant of the Naga Hills Frontier Police, was the leader of this expedition, which consisted of 40 rifles of the 42nd Gurkha Light Infantry under the command of Lieutenant Robin, and of 80 rifles of the Frontier Police with two native officers. The offending villages paid fines without opposition, and the Chief of Sakhai was detained at Kohima for a period of two months. Thus the aggressions of the Mezamis were finally put an end to, the Government's knowledge about the Semas increased, and a solid basis was laid for the establishment of British influence in the future.

It was reported to the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills in May 1887 that two Nunkum men were murdered by Semas of Sanchang or Nungtang. Further murders of Nunkum people by the trans-frontier Lhota village of Are were reported on 5th June. Consequently an expedition was sent against Are and Nungtang. Labongo, the Lhota Naga, was sentenced to 15 years' transportation for the murder of the boy Imrungtumba and some guilty villagers were fined. The Deputy Commissioner's proposal "for the inclusion within the ordinary administrative district boundary of the triangular tract containing the four Lhota villages of Are, Are Yanthamo, Okotso and Pangti, the Ao villages of Nankum and Mungatung, and the three Sema villages of Hangrung, Nangtang, and Phinking, and for the establishment of a police post at Nankum....." were not immediately accepted by the Chief Commissioner (Mr. Ward)⁵⁸.

Some Naga settlers at Dilih near Jaipur within the Inner Line were carried away by Namsangia Nagas in March 1888. One of them named Nakho was killed afterwards. The

Namsang Chiefs were fined Rs. 1,000 and 15 guns and the Namsangias were debarred from coming to the plains till the end of October. The Chief Commissioner thought this punishment to be light, but he reluctantly approved of it⁶⁴.

Though there was comparative peace in the Naga Hills District for some time, the trans-Dikhu Nagas caused much trouble. In June, 1888, they raided the Ao villages of Mongsemdi and Lungkung. The raiders who took active part in this attack belonged to the Mazung tribe inhabiting the villages of Noksen, Litam, Lungra, Yarr, Champiyatong, Lakstang, Sontak, Langtam and Mazung-Jami. It should be mentioned here that the trans-Dikhu villages adjacent to the British border had previously begged to be taken over by the Government, so that the raids suffered by them at the hands of their savage neighbours would come to an end. But the Government did not accede to that request.

The Assam Government on 14th November, 1888, sought for the Government of India's opinion on their two proposals—(a) a punitive expedition across the Dikhu, and (b) the annexation of the Ao country; and the Government of India sanctioned an expedition which was led by A. Porteous, officiating Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, in the cold months of 1888-'89. It consisted of 130 rifles from the Naga Hills Frontier Police Battalion under Lieutenant D. F. Macintyre, 70 rifles from the Lakhimpur Battalion under Lieutenant R. H. Maxwell, Mr. Davis, assistant commissioner, and Mr. Muspratt, Sub-Divisional Officer, Wokha, besides its leader. After nine marches from Kohima the detachment under Mr. Porteous reached Mongsemdi on the 30th December, 1888. A full supply of stores for the expedition had already been collected and stored in the stockade. Lieutenant Maxwell's detachment, joined by Mr. Davis at Molongting, arrived at Mongsemdi the day after.

On December 31, Porteous visited Susu the headmen of which named Noksen, Litam, Lungra, Yarr, Champi-Yatong, Lakstang, Sontak, Langtam, and Mazung-Jami as concerned

in the June raids. All these villages except Lungra, Lakstang, and Mazung-Jami were at once identifiable on the map.* Mazung-Jami was made the objective of the expedition and the path from Mongsemdi to the Dikhu was explored.

The plan decided on was a simultaneous advance from two sides on Noksen which had to be first visited for getting at the other Mazung villages behind. To carry out this plan Lieutenant Macintyre and Mr. Porteous with a detachment of 100 men marched through Susu and Lungra, while Lieutenant Maxwell and Mr. Davis proceeded with the other detachment by the direct route. Each column required for stores, ammunition, baggage, etc., about 95 coolies and although tents were left behind, and baggage cut down to the lowest point, it was not found possible to reduce this number further. Six days' supply of rice and ten days' supply of all other rations were taken with each detachment for the sepoys. No special supplies were taken for the coolies, as experience in such short expeditions had taught that even in a deserted village ample supplies of pig's flesh and rice were usually forthcoming.

Lungra, 3,600 feet high containing about 100 houses, was taken by complete surprise after a march of about 14 miles from Susu. Food was found cooking in many of the houses, and pigs and fowls tied up ready to be carried off were lying about in all directions. The Force camped in the highest part of the village, pulling down a few houses as a protection against sudden attack or in case of fire. Having ascertained nothing definitely as to the complicity of Lungra, Mr. Porteous marched to Noksen along an extremely steep path. When within a mile or two of Noksen, the village was found ablaze from one end to the other. The path was panjied, and cross-bows were concealed at the side of the path and set so as to discharge an arrow when an apparently harmless branch or trailing creeper was brushed aside. The villages of Noksen and Litam were set ablaze by the Nagas themselves in

* Vide Map No. IV.

pursuance of their 'scorched earth' plan. Probably, the simultaneous advance from two sides disconcerted them, but their preparations for resistance were of no small proportion.

Before an advance was made a flanking party was sent by Lieutenant Maxwell to search out the jungle above and clear the enemy out. From Noksen Porteous went to the village of Yampi with an escort of forty rifles. According to Porteous, like

every third or fourth village across the Dikhu, Yampi boasts of a language or dialect of its own. That its inhabitants are a distinct tribe appears from a very extraordinary custom which I have not seen mentioned of any other Nagas. This is the placing in lofty trees surrounding the village, as memorial of marriages made, of huge devices constructed of white wood or bamboo resembling nothing so much as gigantic butterflies or hawks, hovering with outspread wings over the forest.⁵⁵

From Noksen the Force descended 2,300 feet to a stream flowing westwards into the Dikhu, whence they rose through open fields of job's tears for 2,600 feet to the village of Yanu, which was implicated in the raids. When about 1,000 feet below it, they were greeted with a tremendous yell by a big crowd of armed men collected on a low hill in the front. The Force continued their march without firing, and the Nagas instead of resisting dispersed quickly; and immediately afterwards a cloud of smoke and the rattle of exploding bamboos proclaimed the fiery sacrifice of another village. After halting a few minutes at Yanu the Force marched towards Sontak, a long, densely-packed village. Then about a mile from the village, a few Nagas shouted from a distance an invitation to come to their village. Half a mile further on, the scouts suddenly, on turning an angle in the road, came in sight of a breast-work of stones and logs, built across the path, at the crest of a low rise, some 250 yards in front. The breast-work was lined with Nagas armed with cross-bows, spears, and shields. As Porteous was going to start negotiations arrows began to drop round the advanced guard. He at once ordered Macintyre to open fire. The advance guard was formed up across the path, and started firing. Forty

rifles fired continuously for four minutes without entirely checking the arrow fire. But when a few Mazungs were shot down and the Police charged up the hill with a cheer, the enemy fled. A deep and wide ditch, thickly studded with panjis, detained the force for about ten minutes, and in the meantime the village was burnt by the Nagas themselves. No one was hit on the Government side, and on that of the enemy, although two or three were wounded, only one man was killed. The force reached the site of the village at a height of 5,700 feet at 3.30 P. M. and found a fine village completely gutted. The heaps of burning grain continued to smoulder for two days. Porteous observed:

Only over-weening confidence in their ability to resist us can account for the policy of the Mazungs in not saving their grain by removal, and only the issue of orders from some common centre can explain the unanimity with which all their villages up to their capital were one after the other devoted to the flames⁵⁶.

On 11th January, the force started for the small village of Kute, situated on the Tzela-Yangnu watershed. While they crossed the Chenak river, which flows between Langtam and Sontak, Kute was set on fire. As not a single house of Kute escaped the conflagration, the troops housed themselves inside stacks of thatching-grass. Kute, at a height of 6,850', was the highest village of which Porteous had any knowledge in these hills. With the thermometer at close upon the freezing point and a piercing wind blowing, the night was bitterly cold. On the following morning the troops resumed their march towards Mazung-Jami. As they crossed the first of the three streams which traversed the valley, the dry grass jungle along the path leading up to a flat-topped ridge was set on fire. But no harm was done, and by clearing the slope above them on their right the troops prevented the chance of a sudden attack. On emerging on the top of the plateau armed Nagas were seen moving in the half-burnt jungle to their right a little higher up the ridge, and Lieutenant Maxwell with 30 rifles promptly cleared the flank.

killing three of the enemies who now raised long shouts as they retreated. Mazung-Jami was barely a mile away across a ravine. To prevent further useless bloodshed by showing the Mazungs how hopeless it was for them to combat with men armed with rifles, a few rounds were fired at a range of over 1,000 yards across the ravine at these groups. Some of the bullets fell sufficiently near to cause them to disperse, and the Nagas never afterwards came near for a close-quarter battle.

Half a mile from the village Porteous tried to negotiate with the enemy by holding up green boughs, the traditional Naga flag of truce. Their reply was that once blood had been shed, they could not think of treating for peace. The force entered the village at half-past two. It was deserted, and the inhabitants were seen retreating across the further valley and up towards a small hamlet on the slopes of the high range behind. Excepting the cattle and mithan, no other property had been removed. The granaries were full, and the poultry were found in plenty. Neither the village was burnt, nor the path was defended. On examination the village was found divided into four Khels (groups), each strongly fortified against its neighbours by a well-panjied ditch. Each Khel contained about 150 houses "the internal defences indicated a divided community, and divided counsels may partly explain the poor show of resistance made"⁵⁷.

Mazung-Jami, a long, narrow village covering about one and a half miles, looked like a single street with rows of houses on either side. The camp was set up on a low knoll commanding almost the whole of the lowest Khel and securing a good water supply. On January 13, towards evening, when three sepoys, with no arms, were fetching water, three Mazungs, armed each with two spears, suddenly came out of the Jungle, and hit two sepoys, killing one.

As a punishment for this outrage, the upper Khel was burnt. Immediately after, the Mazungs responded by firing

the lowest Khel in the hope that the fire would extend to the British camp. The coolies at once pulled down a number of houses, thus creating a gap sufficient to put the camp out of danger. To prevent further alarms, the rest of the village excepting the 50 houses forming the camp was completely destroyed. On 14th January, two detachments were sent in different directions to scourge the neighbourhood. A few parties of armed Nagas were encountered and beaten off by each detachment without any loss. That day the Nagas burnt down the village of Khojak. In the evening one of the armed Mazungs seen lurking in the jungle near the water-supply was shot dead by the sepoy who, with the object of preventing any attempt at a repetition of the outrage of the previous day, had been concealed since early morning close to the path leading to the water. During their march back the villages of Yarr and Langtam were burnt by the Force. The expedition was twelve days across the Dikhu in independent Naga territory, and the total expenditure was about Rs. 1,500. That it had not been barren of results was proved by the subsequent facts that Davis was well received in the village of Langmisa, and messengers sent by him¹ to Noksen and Litam returned bringing presents of fowls from the village headmen with assurances that they would not raid any more and would even pay revenue if demanded.

Porteous has made some general observations about the Mazungs :

I should say their physique is good for Nagas and superior to that of the Aos and Lhotas, while from the stand made at Sontak they seem not to be wanting in pluck as estimated by the Naga standard.....I should be inclined to differ from Mr. McCabe's opinion.....that they have any affinity to the Semas. The connection between them and the Aos seems, on the contrary, to be a near one, as might be expected from their geographical positionAlthough absolutely cut off from all communication with the plains, I should place the Mazungs decidedly higher in the scale of civilisation than the Semas, and hardly below the Aos. Some specimens of pottery picked up, including drinking vessels with

handles rudely ornamented with a simple pattern, were superior to anything of the kind that I have seen amongst other Nagas.⁵⁸

The trans-Dikhu Sema village of Seromi became aggressive since Porteous' Sema tour of April 1887. In order to punish Seromi Porteous left Mongsemdi on the 21st January, 1889, and reached it on the 25th, passing through the Ao villages of Ungma and Langsa. The villages received Porteous and his detachment well, and Seromi paid a fine of ten cattle for having taken ten Langsa heads. Porteous completed his tour by visiting the villages of Chesami and Limitsami. All these trans-Dikhu villages were ordered to stop head-hunting.

Though the Government forces burnt down the offending villages after a few engagements, the aims of the expedition, i.e. the capture of the offenders and the infliction of punishment on them, could not be achieved, for the raiders in most cases had burnt their own houses and fled away to far-off valleys and hills. But the expedition succeeded in instilling in the trans-Dikhu Nagas fear and respect for the British power. As a result, these Nagas subsequently behaved well.

In 1889, the Ao country was incorporated within the British jurisdiction with the full concurrence of the people, who had claimed protection against the onslaughts of the more warlike tribes from across the Dikhu. The Government of India observed:

It is not intended that the system of political control should be generally and definitely abandoned but in this particular part of the country, where the people are themselves willing to pay revenue in return for protection, there is no sufficient reason why their wishes should not be acceded to.⁵⁹

Decision was taken to impose a house-tax of Rs. 2 per house on the inhabitants of the incorporated tract which should "pay its own expenses". The group of Sema villages west of the Teshi was annexed, Mokokchung was selected as the new headquarters of the Subdivision, and on the question of slavery prevalent among the Aos the Chief

Commissioner asked the Deputy Commissioner to refuse to admit it as a justification for ill treating or restraining the liberty of any person whatsoever, and to punish the practice of killing the offspring of female slaves as murder. The local officers showed a tendency to extend their control to the trans-Dikhu tribes, and to repress the inhuman system of head-hunting and of raids and counter-raids prevailing among them, but the higher authorities declared against any further extension of the Government responsibilities in that direction.⁶⁰ The Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills was, however, authorised to exercise political control over the Eastern Angamis and Semas beyond the south-eastern boundary of his district by means of an annual tour, in course of which he was to enquire into and settle the inter-tribal disputes. Gradually all the outlying outposts were connected with the headquarters at Kohima by good, well-graded bridle paths which were extended into several directions into the Sema Hills with comfortable rest houses at all stages. A broad metalled cart road was constructed, connecting Dimapur on the railway with Kohima, 47 miles of distance, and then continuing through the hills for 88 miles further to Manipur.

Towards the close of the year 1890 disturbances were reported on the Sibsagar frontier. The Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar, informed the Chief Commissioner, Assam, on 18.12.1890 of a raid on Bor Mathon Nagas. Again an attack was made by Langsang Nagas on Changnoi village on the Sibsagar frontier in the same month.

The Chief Commissioner observed that interference on Government's part was not called for.⁶¹ But in the same month Davis had to punish two Sema villages—Seromi and Ghovishe's village—outside the area of political control to the east of Wokha,—the first with a fine and the second by burning,—for minor raids. He proposed for the extension to the east of the area of political control, so as to include the Tizu and the Tital valleys ; but the higher authorities were opposed to it.

In 1890, the Naga Hills revenue paying district extended from the Henema outpost in the south, close to the North Cachar Hills, to the Tamlu outpost in the north at the corner where the Dikhu turns to emerge into the plains, a length of some 250 miles. The Dikhu is the natural border line, which further south becomes the line of the Tizu and Lanier rivers, east of which the country is "unadministered", the wild tribes being left to themselves.

In 1891, at the time of the Manipur rebellion, it was found that the rebel court of that state was instigating Khonoma to join the rebels, so a Sikh regiment was brought to Golaghat to over-awe the Khonoma people, and the result was salutary. Taking advantage of the disturbances in Manipur the Nagas committed several outrages on British subjects on the Manipur-Kohima line in 1891. "These people had been killed by the Nagas, who, as soon as the disaster⁶⁹ at Manipur of 24th March became known intercepted and killed all travellers on the road, as well as fugitives from Manipur". Consequently, guards of 60 and 50 men were placed at Maram and Makhel respectively, and the strength of the Kairong and Maitipham outposts was increased by 15 men each.

On 28th April, 1892, certain Banfera Nagas murdered a Lakrang Chang Naga on the Sibsagar frontier within the Inner Line of this district⁶⁹. The Chief Commissioner advised the Deputy Commissioner, Sibsagar, to try the murderers on a charge of murder, or culpable homicide not amounting to murder, having regard to section 2 of the Indian Penal Code. Again, a murder of two Jaktung Chang Nagas committed by two Failung Chang Nagas was reported to the Chief Commissioner of Assam on 3rd December, 1892.

As a result of these sporadic Naga raids the Chief Commissioner of Assam at last decided upon the disarming of all hill tribes on their entering British territory. He asked the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar to issue orders

to thanas (Police stations) and outposts, requiring hill tribes to deposit their arms when entering British territory⁶⁴. Afterwards it was found desirable to extend the Government control northwards to the Ao and Lengta Naga country still further in order to put a stop to the petty raids into the plains below. In 1892-93 Longsa paid revenue for the first time, and in 1893-94 British hold over the eastern Angamis immediately east of the Sidzu was tightened and Chajubama was taken in as a revenue-paying village.

A raid committed on Shawpu near the Burma outpost of Homalin in the Chindwin district by the Tangkhul Nagas of Somra⁶⁵ in March 1895, on the borders of the Upper Chindwin District, raised the question of the definition of the boundary between Manipur and Burma, and between Manipur and independent wild tribes in the direction of that frontier. The old policy was reiterated that no interference in the tract (lying between the Upper Chindwin District and Manipur) beyond the administrative borders of Burma and Manipur should be encouraged or permitted, provided the tribes occupying that tract refrained from raids within the administered area.

The Kubo valley was for many years a source of contention between the King of Burma and the Raja of Manipur ; as fortune smiled on either country the valley came into its possession. At the commencement of the Burma war of 1824, the valley was in the hands of the Burmese, but was taken possession of during the course of the war by the Raja of Manipur, who was an ally of the British Government. In the treaty of Yandabo of 1826, no mention was made of the Kubo valley, which, after the war, remained in possession of Manipur, and from that time formed a continual source of contention between the King of Burma and the Raja of Manipur. In 1828, Captain Grant and Lt. Pemberton were appointed Commissioners to meet the Burmese authorities and settle the boundary, and the final boundary agreement was signed on 9. 1. 1834. But now after a lapse of sixty-two

years this boundary had to be revised a result of incessant tribal raids into Manipur on the Manipur-Burma frontier. According to the instructions of the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner of Burma and with the approval of the Chief Commissioner, Assam, the boundary between Burma (Kubo Valley) and Manipur, from Kongal Thana to Tinzin river, was demarcated as follows in 1896 by a new body of Commissioners, Col. Maxwell & Capt. Macnabb:

Commencing on the right bank of the Numia river from the more westerly pillar fixed by the demarcation of 1882, and a few hundred yards south of the Kongal Thana village, where the salt well is situated, the boundary runs in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 1 on the Tuilut stream; thence south to pillar No. 2 at the foot of the hills close to the Aukongtui stream; thence in a south-easterly direction for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to pillar No. 3, erected at the foot of the hills; thence in a southerly direction to pillar No. 4, placed on a hill called Angkuning or Hmantoung; thence in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 5, situated on the westerly neck of the hill called Sokooching or Tawlaw, and at the foot of which the Numia river flows; thence in the same direction to pillar No. 6, which is placed on a small hill called Choro-ching, jutting out from the main range into the valley; thence also in the same direction to pillar No. 7, situated on the left bank of the Manglang or Ham-alay river; near where, it debouches into the plains. Pillar No. 8 is placed on the opposite bank of the river; thence the boundary runs in the same direction to pillar No. 9, erected on a small hill; thence in a westerly direction to pillar No. 10, erected on the left bank of the Taret or Nam-ta-leik river, at the point where it leaves the hills; thence south to pillar No. 11, which now occupies the site of the old Manipur thana of the same name; thence in the same direction to pillar No. 12, placed on the left bank of the Tuiyang or Namtisan stream, a short distance below the same village; thence in a south-easterly direction to pillar No. 13, erected at the foot of the Nwaysaing hill, about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile south of the Tuiyang or Namtisan stream; and thence south-west to pillar No. 14; erected on a slope of the hill a little west of the Lan-ma-daw or royal road and a little north of the point where the footpath to the Naga village of Lamlong joins it; thence following the same direction to pillar No. 15 on the left bank of the Waksu or Whestu stream, where the road to

the Naga village of Lamlong crosses it ; thence in a south-easterly direction to pillar No. 16, erected on the right bank of the same to pillar No. 17, situated on a hill $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the north-east of the village of Mondong or Kuntoung, and near where the royal road crossed it ; the same spur lower down ; thence in a westerly direction to pillar No. 18, placed on the right bank of the Namjet or Namma-ling stream, which is the river flowing past Kondong or Kung-toung village, and about 120 yards above its junction with the Anjumpha stream ; this pillar is on the side of the road leading to the Naga village of Koatha or Kwata, and at the point where it crosses the aforesaid stream ; thence south to pillar No. 19, erected on a hill with a very rocky surface to the south-east of Laiching peak, and about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the royal road, at a point a few hundred yards south of the place where it crosses the Kway-payin-pok stream ; thence in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 20 which is placed on the right bank of the Laiching or Nampallaw stream, a short distance below the village of More and at the point where a foot-path to the said village crossed it ; thence in the same straight line to pillar No. 21 ; situated on the main road between More thana and Tammu ; thence to pillar No. 22, erected on the left bank of the Lokehao, or Chounggyi river, where it debouches from the hills ; then the boundary follows the stream to pillar No. 23, placed high up on its right bank and about a mile up stream from pillar No. 22 ; thence almost due south to pillar No. 24, placed at the junctions of the Mong-mong or Chouchnyi-noung and Pale-Sikang or Pya-thay-kyouk streams ; thence in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 25, erected on the neck of the hill which form the southern source of the Pale-Sikang or Pya-thay-kyouk, and the northern source of Tuinam or Nam-pa-loung streams, and on the side of the road leading to the abandoned thana of Hmankin ; thence south to pillar No. 26, village of Changtheng or Chinywa, and about 2 miles west of Pantha, thence in the same direction to pillar No. 27, erected on the side of another road leading to the Changtheng or Chiyawa, Naga village, and on the left bank of a small stream called Tabasay. This road is also used by the inhabitants of the Shan village of Kamaik to bring minor forest-produce from the hills ; thence in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 28, placed on the left bank of the Tuiyoung or Na-ay-young stream, where it leaves the hills ; thence up the stream for a distance of 1 mile to pillar No. 29, situated on the same bank ; thence in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 30 ; thence in a

south-easterly direction to pillar No. 31, which is in the same straight line as the boundary from pillars 27-28; thence in a south-westerly direction to pillar No. 32, placed on the right bank of the Tuirim or Na-in-ka stream, at the point where the road to the Naga village of Kengyoi or Chinywa crosses it; thence in the same direction to pillar No. 33, situated on the left bank of the Tuiwang or Sunlay river, and at the point where it enters the hills; thence due south to pillar No. 34, erected on the left bank of the Auktaung stream, at the point where it leaves the hills on the said bank; thence up the stream to pillar No. 35, placed on the right bank, and about 200 yards above where a disused aqueduct for taking water to the fields of the Auktaung village is connected with it; thence in a southerly direction to pillar No. 36, erected at the junction of the two roads, used by the inhabitants of Maloo and Tinzin villages to bring minor forest-produce from the hills, and at a point, a short distance south of where the said road crossed the Sek-kay stream; thence in the same direction to pillar No. 37 situated at the foot of the Nattoung hill, on a stream which rises from its north face; thence the boundary runs up the stream to its source where pillar No. 38 is erected; thence the boundary follows the stream which flows from the south face of the abovementioned hill to its junction with an aqueduct for taking water to the rice-fields of Tinzin village; thence up the aqueduct to its connection with the Tuisa or Tinzin river, which river forms the boundary between Manipur and the Chin Hills, as demarcated by the Commission of 1894.⁶⁶

At the end of November 1896, thirty men of Somra Khulel,⁶⁷ a Tangkhul Naga village of about 150 houses situated in independent territory, two days' march beyond the Manipur frontier, raided the Tangkhul Naga village of Shorafungbi, lying within the north-east corner of Manipur, killing one man and three women. Consequently, an expedition was sent against the offenders in February 1897. The offending village along with large supplies of concealed grain and property were destroyed owing to its refusal to surrender the raiders as demanded by the Political Agent of Manipur, who led the expedition.

In 1899, some thefts were committed on the Sibsagar frontier by the Nagas. Consequently, Captain A. E. Woods,

the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills, toured through the Naga villages of Bortablung (Wanching), Jakhung, Chingtak, Bor Gaon, Lakma and Kongan in March, 1900. He did not inflict any punishment on any of the villages, as the charges against them were vague. But the tour was not in vain. Capt. Woods wrote to the Chief Commissioner :

It is probable that my tour will have a good effect, although it would be too sanguine to expect that the petty thefts will altogether cease. These villages have been too long unvisited ; in fact, I believe, most of them have never been visited since Mr. Holcombe was murdered, and it is possible that the Nagas imagined that their villages were more or less inaccessible. There would seem to be some grounds for this idea when no steps were taken to realise fines that were levied on villages.....

With regard to the policy to be adopted in dealing with these Nagas, I would suggest that they should be treated in the same way as we treat Nagas in the political control area in this district.

There are only a few paths from the hills to the plains, and it is well known what villages use these paths. In the event of a continuance of these thefts from the plains and failure to fix the guilt on to any particular village or villages, in my opinion it would be advisable to fine all villages using the path in the vicinity of the theft, but the fines must be realised ; otherwise it is better not to fine at all.

I was well received in all the villages, but for some time to come, when visiting the inner range villages, I think it would be advisable to be accompanied by a fairly strong escort.

Holcombe's murder and the cutting up of most of his escort is still fresh in the memory of the Nagas, and as most of these villages have not been visited since the murder, it is just possible that the Nagas might be tempted to try it on again some days.

I heard that there were a number of guns in these villages, a good many imported from the plains, and some manufactured locally from stolen pipes, etc. Of course I did not see any guns, but it is probable that there are a certain number, as I have heard that planters often give guns to Nagas who have worked well for them.

Every precaution ought to be taken to prevent more guns getting into the hills. Not that the guns can do much harm, but undoubtedly the possession of them gives the Naga a very much over-rated opinion of himself and his power, and consequently might have cause to regret. A few guns being in a village will practically give the village complete immunity from attacks from other, and even larger villages, who possess no arms.

There is no doubt that garden coolies, etc., have a great dread of Nagas ; so I think my march through the plains will have a good effect and show them that the hills are not inaccessible⁶⁸.

Though the Chief Commissioner was happy with Captain Wood's march through these villages, he nevertheless, could not but disapprove of his promenade through the Trans-Dikhu Naga villages lying beyond the political control area of the Naga Hills. On the 8th February, 1900, Capt. Woods and his party were encamped at the village of Yachumi which was far outside the area of his political control, and were there involved in a serious collision with the men of that village, which resulted in his firing on them at close quarters and killing several, and afterwards burning the village containing about 500 houses. The Chief Commissioner took exception to it. His Secretary wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills :

The general policy has been frequently laid down of discouraging interference beyond the Dikhu, except when aggressions are committed on the people on our side ; and while the Chief Commissioner has no intention of laying down any hard-and-fast rules to which it would probably be found impossible to adhere in practice, he is convinced that it is desirable to conform to the established policy, and that tours such as you have recently undertaken beyond the political control area involved the risk of collision, such as actually occurred at Yachumi, and are likely to lead to the gradual extension of the area under direct administration in the Naga Hills and to political and financial responsibilities of a serious nature. The tendency no doubt is in this direction, but the Chief Commissioner has no wish to precipitate matters. The area of the Sema country under political control is sufficiently well defined with a natural boundary,

though it is not marked on the maps, as it ought to be. This area is within your jurisdiction, but the Tizur and Tita and Yangnu valley which you have recently traversed lie beyond it, and it is to prevent excursions being undertaken by the Naga Hills authorities into these independent tracts without previous sanction that the present orders are issued⁶⁹.

The general belief that the Nagas had no courage to fight the British forces in the open, the night surprises and the village defences being their only strength, and treacherous-dealing being their stratagem, was proved to be wrong by the Yachumi collision. General Mcgregor cited several instances when he had seen them come out in the open under military fire and carry off their wounded. At Yachumi the tribesmen attacked the troops about noon in the open, and did not yield until forty-five of them were killed⁷⁰.

Capt. Wood's remark, in his report, that there were many unlicensed guns in the Naga villages led the Chief Commissioner to make an attempt to disarm the Nagas. In 1899, he directed the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills to collect licensed guns from the Nagas in lieu of revenue. This was intended to execute fully the policy of disarmament in the Naga Hills in a novel way. As the Deputy Commissioner raised certain objections to accepting licensed guns in lieu of revenue, the Chief Commissioner only reiterated his own view. His Secretary wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills:

He* is also aware of the difficulty in the Naga Hills of prescribing a maximum number of guns for any one village, and agree with your suggestion that the limit should be fixed at one gun for every fifteen houses and that there should be no maximum limit in regard to any one village. The rule not to grant a new license, except for special service for special reasons, should be strictly adhered to. It was laid down in the Resolution that whenever the gun, for which a license has been granted, becomes unserviceable or whenever the holder of a license dies, the licenses should not be renewed in the ordinary course; and that when they are renewed, the special

* The Chief Commissioner.

reason for doing so should be placed on record. This imposes no hard-and-fast prohibition against the renewal of licenses in such cases, but leaves a discretion which must be carefully and strictly exercised. It is intended that in every instance a special enquiry should be made, and that the license should not be renewed unless you find that there are special and sufficient reasons for doing so. There does not seem to Mr. Cotton to be much force in your objection to the prohibition of the practice of carrying spears on Government road ; the suggestion was made to him by Mr. Davis and the Chief Commissioner hopes that you will be able to give effect to it⁷¹.

The Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills in Para 12 of his Annual General Administrative Report for the year 1899-1900 demanded that Seromi, a large Sema Naga village, should be included in the area of his political control, by taking the eastern, instead of the western, source of the Dikhu as the boundary line from the watershed. The Chief Commissioner approved of it and wrote for the approval of the India Government. The India Government accepted it⁷².

Though in course of time the Nagas came to be civilised and gave up head-hunting, their turbulence and spirit of independence still persisted in them. Unfortunately, the British Government did not take enough measures for the cultural conquest of the half-civilised Nagas. Also, the undefined limit of control between the Assam Administration and the Burma Administration in the independent Naga area on the Indo-Burmese border served to provide a good shelter for the Nagas who chose to remain untamed and hostile for the future.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Khats mean lands granted to the hill chiefs.
- 2 Judl. Progs. May 1863, nos. 391-395.
- 3 Pol. Progs., April 1861, nos. 4-5.
- 4 Judl. Progs., June 1865, nos. 9-11.
- 5 Judl. Progs., June 1866, nos. 133-34.
- 6 Judl. Progs., June 1866, nos. 133-34.

7 Judl. Progs., June 186, nos. 113-114.

8 The 1842 boundary line was thus demarcated: Commencing from the upper part of the Jeerie River, the western frontier of Manipur, the line of boundary formed (1) by the Dootinghur Mountain, or that range of hills in which the Mookroo River takes its rise, east on to the Barak River; (2) by the Barak River upto where it is joined by the Tayphani River, which flows along the eastern line of the Popolongmai Hill; (3) by the Tayphani River upto its source on the Burrail range of Mountains; and (4) by the summit or water-pent of the Burrail range on to the source of the Mow River flowing north from that point towards Assam, was the best boundary between Manipur and the Angami country.

9 Assam Progs., Feb., March, July, & Aug., 1875.

10 Judl. Progs., April 1863, nos. 274-276. Feb. 1870, nos. 110-111.

11 Judl. Progs., March 1871, nos. 273-274.

12 E. Gait's "A History of Assam", Calcutta 1926, p. 335.

13 Judl. Progs., June 1866, nos. 113-114.

14 The plan of receiving residentiary delegates from the different Naga clans to represent their respective communities at Samoogodting had been sanctioned by the Bengal Government and was subsequently confirmed by the Government of India in November 1870. On receipt of the annual report of the system for 1871 the Government of India sanctioned its further trial.

15 The Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, conveyed his decision that "no change in policy was required at present; that the object of the appointment of the British Officer in the Naga Hills was chiefly to check raids on British territories; and that beyond the exertion of his influence as opportunity might offer, it was not desirable that he should interfere directly in inter-tribal feuds.....

As regards the unexplored country to the east of the Naga Hills District, he (D. C. of Naga Hills Dist.) should confine his action to frequent and friendly intercourse with the Chiefs, the distribution of presents, and friendly advice for the settlement of disputes. He should of course report to the Commissioner of Assam all that goes on among these tribes so far as he can ascertain". (Letter No. 243 p., dated Fort William, 26th January, 1872. Foreign Department, Pol.—A., Progs., 79-118, March 1872)

16 Foreign Deptt. Political Progs., January 1873, no. 528.

17 Foreign Department Pol.—A. Progs., April 1874, no. 77.

18 J. Johnstone's "My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills", London 1896, pp. 39-40.

19 Pol. Progs., India, July 1874, no. 146.

20 Pol. Progs. (India), Dec. 1875, no. 70.

21 Pol. Progs. (India), Dec. 1875, no. 70.

- 22 Assam Progs., Dec. 1876.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Pol. Progs., (India), Aug. 1877, nos. 120-132.
- 25 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.", Calcutta 1884, pp. 371-72.
- 26 Assam Progs., October 1878.
- 27 J. Johnstone's "My experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills", London 1896, p. 159.
- 28 Ibid, p. 163.
- 29 Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.", Calcutta 1884, p. 131.
- 30 J. Johnstone's "My experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills", London 1896, p. 181.
- 31 Assam Progs., Nov. 1882.
- 32 Assam Secretariat Files no. 137-J. of 1881 and no. 104-J of 1882.
- 33 Assam Secretariat, Foreign, B, February 1883, nos. 12-13.
- 34 For. Progs., January 1882, pp. 1-2.
- 35 Foreign Progs., May 1884, letter No. 42.
- 36 Foreign Progs., October 1884, no. 15.
- 37 For. Progs., October 1884, no. 27.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Foreign Progs., October 1884, no. 37.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Assam Secretariat, Judicial Department, File No. 149-J of 1884.
- 42 The main feature of his Policy was to undertake military incursions into the Naga Hills in course of which he took engagements from the Chiefs to give up their feuds and to refer all their disputes to the British Government.
- 43 Govt. of India Letter No. 246-E, dated the 3rd February 1886, Assam Secretariat, File 212-J of 1886.
- 44 Foreign Progs., no. 1-12, pp. 1-3, September. 1885.
- 45 Foreign Progs., no. 2, April 1886, pp. 1-2.
- 46 Foreign Progs., August 1886, pp. 18-19.
- 47 Foreign Progs., August 1886, no. 8, pp. 23.
- 48 Foreign Progs., Sept, 1886, no. 1, pp. 1-2.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Chipokitami, a small village outside the boundary, but affiliated to villages within it, lost 22 men, women, and children killed in a single raid in November 1885. The aid of the Deputy Commissioner at Kohima was on this occasion invoked, but, the village being beyond the protected area, no assistance was given. (For. Prog., October 1887, no. 4.)
- 51 Foreign Progs., October 1887, no. 4.

- 52 Foreign Progs., Sept, 1886, no. 1, pp. 1-2.
- 53 Foreign Progs., nos. 10-11, October, 1887. pp. 1-35.
- 54 Foreign Progs., nos. 5-13, May 1888, pp. 8-18.
- 55 For. Dept. Ext. A., Prog., May 1889, no. 210.
- 56 For. Dept. Ext. A. Prog., May 1889, no. 210.
- 57 For. Dept., Ext. A. Prog., May 1889, no. 210.
- 58 For. Deptt. Ext. A. Progs., May 1889, no. 210.
- 59 Govt. of India's Letter No. 2463-E dated the 24th December, 1888, Assam Secretariat 1889, File No. 544-J.
- 60 E. Gait's "A History of Assam", Calcutta 1926, p. 315.
- 61 Foreign Progs., 9-11, pp. 5-6, January, 1891.
- 62 This refers to the Manipur rebellion of 1891, preceded by two other insurrections by the Manipuri rebels at the death of Maharaja Chandrakirti Singh on 20th May 1886. The first one headed by Bara Chanba and his brother Megaim Singh was dispersed by Maharaja Sura Chandra Singh. The second rising headed by Jogendra Singh in September, 1887, was foiled by a British force under Lt. Row (Foreign Prog., 16, October, 1887).
- 63 The Banfera Naga Raja was fined Rs. 500 for shielding the murderer of the Lakrang Chang Naga. (Foreign Progs., 41-44, July, 1892).
- 64 Foreign Progs, 23-40, pp. 11-18, July, 1892.
- 65 But the Burma Administration wrote that the Leya Nagas near Laungba were the offenders. (Foreign Progs., 9-20, pp. 13-26, September 1895).
- 66 For. Progs., August 1896, Letter No. 36, pp. 32-34.
- 67 The independent Somra Tract, situated in the hills north of the Kabaw Valley, between the Tizu and the Nampanga rivers and covering some 800 square miles, is inhabited by Thado Kukis and Tangkhul Nags. Both the Tangkhuls and the Kukis were in the habit of making occasional raids into the Naga Hills, Manipur and Burma, and from time to time expeditions were sent to exact reparation. This village of Somra Khulel, also known as Leya, was implicated in certain raids in Burma territory three years ago, and was visited and burnt by Mr. Porter, a Burma Official, in March 1894.
- 68 Foreign Prog., April 1900, Letter No. 15.
- 69 For. Prog., April 1900, no. 5.
- 70 L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, etc.", London 1914, pp. 235-6.
- 71 For. Progs., June 1899, no. 42 (Para 2).
- 72 Foreign Progs., October, 1900, nos. 46-50.

CHAPTER VI

THE MISHMIS

The Mishmis inhabit a very strategic position on the north-east frontier, between the Dibang and the Brahmakund, pressed on the east by China and on the south-west by Burma. In 1861 and 1866, they attacked a village on the Kundil, belonging to Choukeng Gohain, the Khamti Chief. But though the raiders were beaten off with some loss, they had been successful in doing some damage to the defenders. The frequency of the Chulikata raids compelled the local authorities to enquire whether an extension of Khamti colonies along the border of Sadiya would form a bulwark against Mishmi raids. Further supply of arms was accordingly promised, and a monthly payment of a rupee per head was offered to the Khamtis who accepted arms and agreed to settle in between the British territory and the Mishmi land. The plan was executed with much success and the frontier militia composed of the Khamtis proved useful. A strong Khamti colony was set up in a position towards the Dikrang, and since then the Chulikatas ceased to raid into the British territory.¹

In March 1868, Kalood, a Chulikata Chief, told the Deputy Commissioner at Lakhimpur that he was at a feud with the Tains and other neighbours, and offered to settle under British protection in the valleys of Dikrang, Kundil and Diphoo. He was, consequently, granted sites for settlement at Habba in the Kundil valley, where Kalood undertook to bring down two families of his clan. In February 1872, the Chulikata Mishmis visited the Sadiya fair in large numbers bringing India-rubber, wax and hides for sale. They behaved well during their stay at Sadiya ; but on their return journey they murdered a worn-out Naga slave of theirs whom they could neither sell at the fair nor thought to be worth

taking back. Enquiries led to the information that an extensive slave-trade was prevalent amongst the hill tribes, in which the Singhpos too were understood to have taken an active part.

During the winter of 1878-'79 some Bebejiya Mishmis committed two small raids in the plains, killing in one instance two Assamese of Potia Pathar village, and in the second, murdering two Khamtis and carrying off four others, who were detected as cutting rubber in the jungles twenty miles off Sadiya. The reason alleged for the first raid was an old feud dating from 1865 when, according to the Mishmis, some of their clan had been killed by the British subjects, in the second case it was stated that the Khamtis had killed some of their tribe on a previous occasion. But as the Deputy Commissioner thought these pleas as a camouflage for their simple intent to plunder, the raiders were pursued by the Frontier Police, who recovered the corpses of the victims at Jerindamukh but could not overtake the murderers. Fighting between the Digarus and the Tibetans in the interior hills was reported during the cold season of 1879-'80.²

The advance of the British frontier outposts to Nizamghat and Bishemnagar, and the opening out of a patrol path between them were thought to be useful in putting a stop to the marauding tribal raids in future and affording greater facilities for chastising the offenders promptly. In 1880, Kalodoi, one of the leading Chulikata Chieftains, formally professed allegiance to the Government at the Sadiya fair. But stray outrages of the Bebejiya Mishmis continued through the years. The murder of an Assamese of the Dikrang village by some Mishmis led to the closure of Sadiya against the latter in 1884.

In December 1885, J. F. Needham, the Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya, journeyed from Sadiya to the Zayal Valley (in Eastern Tibet) which is separated from Assam by the Mishmi territory. The length of his route, passing along the north bank of the Brahmaputra and always keeping close

to this river all the way, was estimated to be 187 miles from Sadiya to Rima. Crossing the frontier Needham advanced twenty-six miles into Tibetan territory, but as near the village of Rima he was met by a demonstration of force he chose to retrace his steps to Sadiya.³

In 1887, Ganko and Malsoson, two Bebejiya Mishmis, avenged the death of a Bebejia woman named Yougmey who had been married to a Chulikata, and was subsequently murdered either by her husband Sika or by his cousin Miti, by killing two Digaru Mishmis named Marasha and Alukan, who were residing beyond the Inner Line near Habapani. The proposal for the re-occupation of Nizamghat as a display of force, as proposed by Needham, was not accepted by the Chief Commissioner, Assam, as it would involve much expense and trouble. Needham, Asstt. Political Officer of Sadiya, proposed that all the near relations of the murderers should be forbidden to come to the plains. The Chief Commissioner approved of it.⁴

Regarding the Dikrang murder of 1884, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam informed the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, on 9th April, 1888:

Mr. Fitzpatrick, after discussing the matter with the Deputy-Commissioner and the Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya during his recent tour, ascertained that there was little hope, owing to the constitution of Mishmi Society, of the pressure of the blockade resulting in the surrender of the murderers by the tribe, who recognised no common authority, and are unaccustomed to combine. He, therefore, as the best means of closing the incident (which had already caused the exclusion of the Chulikatas from the plains for more than three years), authorised the Assistant Political Officer to announce that the blockade would be raised if the Mishmis paid a fine of Rs. 2,000 as a penalty for their failing to surrender the culprits. The Deputy-Commissioner now reports that these terms have been complied with, and the fine paid. The blockade against the Mishmis has accordingly been raised, and the Chief Commissioner does not propose to take any further action to apprehend the persons, guilty of the murder

at Dikrang, who, according to the most credible reports, live far within the hills. Should, however, the persons named venture within our jurisdiction, they will, of course, be seized and put on trial.⁵

Then again, in early 1889, one Nanji Mishmi was murdered by Atenga and Asimban Mishmis near Nizamghat as a result of an old grudge. The murderers subsequently took shelter in British territory. Their extradition was refused by the authorities, but the offenders were however sent back to their hills.⁶ In 1893, the Mishmis murdered three sepoy of the Military Police, who were on patrol near Bomjur outpost, with impunity. The Chulikatas were implicated in the Abor outbreak of 1893, and as a punishment a blockade against them was set up and maintained up till 1897. More emboldened than before, the Bebejiyas, in May 1899, made a treacherous attack on an outlying Khamti hut at Mitaigaon, sixteen miles to the north-east of Sadiya and very near the administrative border, in which three persons were killed, a few wounded, and four children and three guns carried off. The only reason assigned for this outrage was that the father of the raiders had been killed by the Khamtis many years ago.

Consequently, an expedition was sent into the country of the Bebejiyas. The offending villages were burnt, the captives and one gun were recovered, and 2 Mishmis were captured but the actual raiders could not be contacted as they had fled into the distant hills on the approach of the troops. "For these returns we have sacrificed the lives of 34 unhappy coolies; have expended a total sum of about Rs. 16,000...."⁷ One of the raiders named Chen Chen, was subsequently given up, and was tried and executed at Sadiya. A reward of Rs. 100/- to the Miris who captured Chen Chen was sanctioned by the Government of India. Five Chulikata Mishmis who acted as guides and interpreters during the expedition, and the Chulikata Chief Grambon, who afforded a great assistance to the force, and consequently incurred the displeasure of the Bebejiyas, were each presented with a muzzle-loading Government gun, and Grambon was further rewarded

with a sum of Rs. 200/- by the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

The forces which had been collected for this expedition were so disproportionately large as judged by the smallness of the task assigned to them and the results obtained were so negligible that their organisers had to come under the fire of Lord Curzon's bitter criticism. In 1895, a suggestion of Needham, the political officer, to march through the country with an escort of 60 Military police had been rejected. In 1899, an expedition was recommended, to consist of 400 fighting men and a half company of Madras Sappers. But at the suggestion of the Commander-in-chief the Force was increased to 4 companies infantry, 200 police and $\frac{1}{2}$ company sappers. Thereupon Lord Curzon noted:

I would ask the Military authorities to restrict the scale as much as possible, since the whole affair is very petty.....^a

But this went unheeded. Soon the military authorities decided upon sending two guns with 16 Gurkhas, and further agreed, in response to a joint request from Mr. Cotton and General Macgregor, to add 94 more Military Police and one Indian Officer. Moreover, the half company of Sappers had now grown to a strength of 90 with a great deal of dynamite, gun-cotton and wire rope. On December 20, 1899, however, Colonel Molesworth, realising the folly of taking with him so disproportionately large a force, reduced it by 25 per cent. As the pass leading into the Mishmi country was found to be too severe an obstacle for the force, then 600 in number, a further reduction took place. And at last, the expedition crossed the path on December 28 with only 300 souls. Thirty coolies perished of cold and exposure as a result of the long delay in sending up a superfluous body of men to the foot of the pass. Afterwards, the guns were also left behind and the force was further reduced, and only 127 rifles eventually went through the country. Lord Curzon observed:

It has not been found possible to add very largely to

our scientific knowledge of the North-Eastern Frontier and (i) that a serious miscalculation of the strength required for the expedition in the first place was made by the military advisers of the Government of India ; (ii) that, when the expedition had been sanctioned, the force was increased.....to wholly unreasonable and unnecessary dimensions.....(4) that, much greater care will require to be exercised in the future, both in the authorisation and in the composition and equipment of these petty frontier expeditions.....to cap the whole story, the Bebejyas.....who "had hitherto been described as a fierce race of cannibals, a very savage, blood-thirsty and dangerous race", and whose homes and villages, acting upon this hypothesis, the expedition unsparingly destroyed and burned, were discovered by the Political Officer to be a petty community of only 3,000 to 4,000 souls.....who are described by him as "on the whole a well behaved and inoffensive tribe, very desirous of being on friendly terms with us."⁹

FOOTNOTES

1 Pol. Progs., Feb. 1866, Nos. 11-15.

2 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.", Calcutta 1884, p. 52.

3 Royal Geographical Society Supplementary Papers, Vol. II, London 1887-1889, pp. 487-555.

4 Foreign Progs., May 1888, Nos. 14-16.

5 Foreign Progs., July 1888, Nos. 8-9, p. 78.

6 Foreign Progs. April 1889, Nos. 11-15, pp. 6-9.

7 For. Deptt. Ext. A. Progs., October 1900, Nos. 43-70.

8 For. Deptt. Ext. A. Progs., October 1900, Nos. 43-70.

9 For. Deptt. Ext. A. Progs., October 1900, Nos. 43-70.

CHAPTER VII

THE DAFLAS

Since a line of military outposts was set up along the base of the frontier hills inhabited by the Daflas, the tribe became peaceful. But in 1870 two raids were made by the Daflas living in the hills on some villages of Naoduar, in the district of Darrang, inhabited by men of their own tribe.¹ But these were due to local feuds, and hardly of any importance. There were further Dafla raids in 1872-'73 on some plain Daflas who were believed to have caused sickness in the hills.² Consequently, the Government set up an economic blockade against the offending villages. But as this proved ineffectual a military expedition was sent into the hills in the cold season of 1874-'75. The troops succeeded in recovering the captives taken by the Daflas, and in punishing the offenders. A considerable number of Tagin Daflas soon afterwards settled in the plains of Darrang and Lakhimpur. In 1883, Col. Woodthorpe, R. E., who was sent to survey a part of the land, met with a favourable reception.

Peace was, however, disturbed in 1887. On the night of the 31st October, some hill Daflas attacked Tarang Dafla's 'Chang' (settlement or colony) near the Harmati tea estate beyond, but near, the Inner Line. Ten persons and their property were carried away to the hills. One of the escaped prisoners subsequently reported the murder of Tarang, his brother Talang, and their mother Maguni.

Tarang's Chang was on the Dikrang river, south of the Harmati tea estate. Tarang, some years ago, had a quarrel with his hill people in the hills, and was driven away. He then settled down with members of his family on the Dikrang. The feud between Tarang and the hill people still continued, one party retaliating on the other as occasion offered, so late as June 1886. Mr. Kennedy, a Frontier Officer, in an inter-

view with Tarang on 8th October, 1887, was told by the latter that he would remain where he was and would not settle inside the Inner Line. Kennedy saw three Abor prisoners in Tarang's Chang, and he apprehended that the Abors would "raid them before long to pay them out for taking their prisoners."³ Kennedy was in favour of sending a small expedition into the hills for punishing the offending village ; but the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur did not support him. The Deputy Commissioner wrote :

If we once took ourselves the duty of avenging all outrages made on refugees from the hills who elected to settle outside our recognised boundary, we should have numerous cases in our hands. As a rule, people from the hills leave their own villages in consequences of some tribal quarrel or a feud, and if they choose to come to us, they must be prepared to settle where we wish to locate them, and they must not attempt to retaliate or continue the quarrel with the hillmen. They must be our subjects in every respect, and pay us any revenue we demand. Tarang and his people did nothing of the sort. So late as 8th October Tarang declared his independence as a resident beyond the Inner Line, and consequently not a British subject. He brought the raid on himself by his own action, and persisted in remaining where he was in spite of Mr. Kennedy's warning.⁴

The Chief Commissioner supported him.

In January 1888, a Dafla named Kaphang was murdered by three other Daflas. The murdered man and the supposed murderers were residents in one of the settled mauzas inside the Inner Line. There was some cause of jealousy between Taliya, one of the murderers, and the deceased Kaphang regarding a woman. This apparently led to the murder. The discarded lover, Taliya, with two others named Taram and Tamor, took Kaphang some 10 miles beyond the Inner Line and there murdered him. It was not clear if the murdered had been enticed into the hills or forcibly carried away across the Inner Line. Mr. Driberg, the D. C. of Lakhimpur, argued :

If the deceased Kaphang went voluntarily across the Inner line into the hills, he did so with the full knowledge

that he was acting against our laws and orders ; on the other hand, if he was forcibly taken away, he is in no way responsible, and the conduct of the murderers is the more reprehensible, and their action shows deliberate intention to commit the murder. It may, however, be that the men went up together for trading and hunting purposes, and then quarreled afterwards, and Kaphang was thereupon murdered.⁵

But he was not prepared to sanction the deputation of a small police force across the Inner Line to a village five miles away, as there was little possibility of the capture of the murderer ; for hearing that a guard was advancing he would surely move elsewhere. The Chief Commissioner approved of Driberg's order forbidding pursuit of the accused into the hills, especially as it was practically certain that such a pursuit would be utterly fruitless.⁶

In January 1891, the Chiring and Haseng Daflas kidnapped two parties of plain Daflas. In both cases the plain Daflas had entered the hills without passes to cut rubber. Through negotiations all the captives were recovered.

Though in the cases mentioned above the Government showed their disinclination to interfere in the outrages beyond the Inner Line, they, however, tried to exert their influence for settling the disputes of the independent tribes near the Inner Line. In January 1896, a raid was committed by the Panibotia Miris on the Apa Tanang Daflas⁷ beyond the Lakhimpur Inner Line in which 4 of the Apa Tanangs were carried off as captives. Consequently, the payment of all posa to the villages concerned were stopped till the captives were returned and the matter settled. Mr. French, S.D.O., North Lakhimpur, wrote:

The occurrence took place beyond the Inner Line, so we are not bound to take any notice of it at all ; but in this case I think it would be desirable for us to use our influence to get the matter amicably settled.

The Apa Tanangs live several days' march from our territory, but for some years past parties of them have come down to the plains and worked for Mr. Crowe (Manager of Kadam Tea Estate) during the cold weather,

I think these visits should be encouraged as tending to establish friendly relations between us and them. But if the Apa Tanangs get to loggerheads with the Miris, the visits will cease, as the former will not run the risk of passing through the Miri country. The Miri Cnang which is said to have committed the raid draws posa from us ; and I expect them down shortly. I propose telling them that they must hold a salis⁸ with the Apa Tanangs and come to an agreement about the return of the captives and till they do this, I would keep back the posa of one or two headmen⁹.

In the middle of 1896, the Apa Tanangs again attracted the attention of the Government when they raided into British territory below their hills, killing two persons and carrying off three. As a result, a small punitive force was sent against them in the cold weather of 1896-97. The force was not opposed by the tribe during its march towards the principal village ; the offenders were punished and the captives were rescued.¹⁰

In August 1896, the Hill Daflas captured certain runaway coolies of the Dikrai tea garden in Darrang. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang sent one Kandura Dafla, settled in the plains, along with three Kotokis for contacting the offending Daflas. The contact revealed "the Daflas, with whom the kidnapped people are, willing to restore their captives to British territory, provided that two of their runaway people who were slaves, and who absconded about February last to settle in British territory, be restored to the gam, or chief, to whom they belong. With regard to these two refugee Daflas, I remember that an application was made to me, somewhere about March last, when I was up in the Behali or Helem direction, for permission to take back two slaves who had deserted from the hills and settled at Gomiri near Helem. I...negativated the request, informing the applicant that Daflas who chose to come down to settle within British territory were permitted to do so under certain prescribed conditions as to locality and good behaviour, and that I was not prepared to interfere with the personal

liberty of such settlers, by allowing them to be taken back to the hills against their will and inclination. And there the matter then dropped".¹¹ As the coolies were not carried off from British territory by the Daflas in the course of a raid, but as they voluntarily wandered into the Dafla hills, and were only then caught and detained, so, Maxwell, Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, favoured a barter. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang referred the case for the decision of the Chief Commissioner. The latter negatived the proposal for barter. He wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang :

No question of barter of Dafla slaves for British subjects now detained in the Dafla Hills can be listened to in this case, and the two Dafla slaves who have taken refuge in British territory can on no account be returned to the Daflas in exchange for the runaway coolies. The Dafla slaves are not kept by us against their will, as evidently is the case with the runaway coolies, and in this lies the material difference between the two cases. The Dafla slaves, according to the British constitution, become free men as soon as they touch British soil ; they can return to their country whenever they wish to do so, but they cannot be restored by the British Government to captivity¹².

The Chief Commissioner, Mr. Cotton, advised the Deputy Commissioner to put indirect pressure on the Daflas until the runaway coolies were restored. The posa of all the hill Daflas frequenting the Darrang district was to be suspended and the gams were to be informed that it would not be paid until the captives were given back. If the captives were not restored a blockade would be established against them. Besides, a compensation of Rs. 50 would be paid by the Bishnath Tea Company, in whose service the coolies had been employed, on their restoration to the Company. Consequently, a blockade was established and the payment of posa was withheld, and gradually, the prisoners were set free. Early in 1900 the remaining two coolies were restored. This case shows how the British Government upheld their responsibility of protecting settlers inside the Inner Line, even though they might have originally come from the independent areas.

In March 1899, a party of Miripathar Daflas of the Darrang frontier kidnapped three Assamese who were in the service of Mr. Chisholm, a tea planter and elephant-mahaldar,¹³ and took away three guns. Subsequently the kidnapped persons were restored but not the guns. In July 1900, some Nepalese rubber-tappers, who had been the agents of the Kayas, were captured and detained by the Daflas as the Kaya¹⁴ of the Borgola¹⁵ refused to pay them their dues,—Rs. 3,500 (i. e. Rs. 2,000 salami¹⁶ and Rs. 1,500 as poll-tax on 300 Nepali cutters at the rate of Rs. 5 per head). The Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, wrote to the Chief Commissioner, Assam, on 8th May 1899:

There can be no doubt that some arrangement was entered into between the two parties, but what the arrangement was, and how far it has been carried out, the Kayas have declined to say, and they have not produced any, I have reason to suppose, have deliberately kept out of the way, the persons whom they employed as their agents in the matter¹⁷

As the Daflas laid their grievances before the Deputy Commissioner, the latter made the Kayas deposit Rs. 2500 with him. The Deputy Commissioner ordered for the payment of Rs. 1,500 as the poll-tax to the Daflas and promised to pay the salami if sufficient evidence in support of the claim to salami could be brought forth. He deducted Rs. 150 as a fine, as it was necessary to impress upon the minds of the hill men that they could not abduct British subjects with impunity. The kidnapped persons were restored subsequently through the good offices of Kandura gam, a Dafla, to whom Rs. 100/- was paid as a reward. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang proposed to punish the offenders, but the Chief Commissioner of Assam did not approve of it.¹⁸

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Political Progs., January 1870, Nos. 1-2.
- 2 Administration Report, 1872-73.
- 3 Kennedy's Diary dated 8th October, 1887.
- 4 Foreign Prog., March 1888, no. 15, paras 2-5.

5 Foreign Prog., April 1888, Letter No. 17, paras 2 & 5.

6 Foreign Progs., April, 1888, 17-18, pp. 9-12.

7 The Apa Tanangs, an off-shoot of the Daffas, live at the back of the range of hills which forms the northern boundary of the North Lakhimpur Sub-division. They occupy the valley of the Kali river and were unknown to the authorities till the eighties of the nineteenth century.

8 An arbitrating assembly.

9 For. Progs. Extl. A., March 1896, Nos. 51-55.

10 For. Prog., Nov. 1897, No. 88.

11 Letter of the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, to the Government of Assam dated 13th January, 1898.

12 Foreign Prog., February 1898, no. 17, paras 3-4.

13 Men who were given the right to capture elephants from reserve forests against the payment of some revenue to the Government.

14 The Marwari traders in Assam are called Kaya.

15 Big ware-house.

16 Monetary present of a sum of rupees.

17 For. Prog., May 1899, no. 24, p. 21.

18 For. Prog., July 1900, nos. 48-55.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BHUTIAS

The annexation of the Assam Duars by the British Indian Government in 1841 added 1,000 square miles of territory to Assam and established peace on this part of the frontier. But the Bhutia outrages, in which some local officials of the Bhutanese Government were the instigators, along the Bengal Duars were recurrent. When the Bhutias paid no heed to the warnings given by the Indian Government, the latter attached the estate of Falakata in 1860 and became prepared for annexing the Bengal Duars also. But before annexing them the Government for the last time tried for reconciliation and sent an envoy, Mr. Eden, to Bhutan to explain to the Bhutanese Court the reasons for the attachment of the estate of Falakata, to demand the surrender of all captives taken from British territory, and to negotiate some satisfactory arrangements for the better conduct in future of the Indo-Bhutanese relations. Eden wrote:

The aggressions committed from the Bengal Duars on our territory and on Cooch Behar, and patiently borne by us, have been unparalleled in the history of nations. For thirty years scarcely a year has passed without the occurrence of several outrages any one of which would have fully justified the adoption of a policy of reprisal or retaliation¹.

Eden's mission was a failure as the Bhutanese Government had no intention to co-operate with him. He met with insult at the Royal Court and purchased his safe return by signing under protest a preposterous treaty, which was disavowed by the Government of India soon after the latter's return. Eden made three alternative suggestions: (1) the permanent annexation of the whole country, (2) the temporary occupation of the country, to be followed by withdrawal after destroying all the forts and impressing the people with

British might, or (3) the permanent annexation of the Duars, and the occupation of the hill forts commanding them. The Government of India, however, preferred milder measures. They were determined to annex Ambari Falakata permanently, withhold all future payment of the Assam subsidy, and secure the release of all British and Cooch Behar captives, failing which the whole of the Duars would be annexed. Time was given to the Bhutanese Government to comply with these, while preparations were made for sending a punitive expedition. On November 12, 1864, the British Government declared its intention to annex permanently the Bengal Duars along with so much of the hill territory, including the forts of Dalingkote, Passaka and Dewangiri, as might be necessary to command the passes.

Consequently war with Bhutan followed from 1864 to 1866. The Bhutanese forces were said to be 10,000 men, armed with matchlocks, bows and arrows, and heavy short swords. Their matchlocks, though clumsy, were effective at 400 yard, while in one instance at Dewangiri an Indian soldier was shot at a distance of 800 yards by one of these weapons. But the bow was their favourite weapon with which they had plenty of practice and very expert. Courageous as they were, they acted well on the defence and efficiently at field works. The command of the British troops was given to Brigadier-General Malcaster, to operate on the right, and Brigadier-General Dunsford, C. B., to operate on the left. Upon the annexation of the Bengal and Assam Duars by the Government of India, the troops were withdrawn in February 1865. But soon afterwards the Bhutanese attacked the Duars, and Brigadier-General Tombs and Brigadier-General Fraser Tytler were sent to chastise them. The Bhutanese could not face artillery and were defeated.

According to the Treaty of Sinchula, November 11, 1865, that followed the war, the British Government formally annexed all of the Bengal Duars^a, agreed to pay annually to

the Bhutan Government a sum of Rs. 25,000 in which the previous grant of Rs. 10,000 on account of the Assam Duars was merged ; the Bhutanese Government agreed to surrender all British subjects of Sikkim and Cooch Behar detained in Bhutan against their will, to the mutual extradition of criminals, to the maintenance of free trade, to British arbitration in all disputes between Bhutan on the one hand and Cooch Behar and Sikkim on the other. By this treaty known as the Ten-Article Treaty of Rawa Pani, the Bhutanese also agreed to deliver up the two guns which had fallen into their hands, and to return the agreement which they had extorted from Eden, with an apology for their ill treatment with him. The country thus ceded to India comprised the Athara Duars (Eighteen passes), a narrow strip of territory averaging about 22 miles in width and 250 miles in length, lying at the foot of the hills³. The eastern Duars, lying east of the Sankos river, were incorporated within Assam. Payment of the allowance to the Bhutan Government was temporarily withheld in 1868, on account of the Bhutan Government having stopped inter-communication between Bhutan and Buxa.

In 1874, as a result of some dacoities committed by the Bhutias in North Kamrup, a deduction was made from the stipulated sum of the annual payment granted to the Bhutanese Government. The treaty thus provided the British Government with an effective means of dealing with local border outrages as well as state aggression from the side of Bhutan. The boundary line between the British Indian territory and Bhutan from river Monas on the west to the Deosham on the east (where the territory of independent Bhutan ends) was laid down in 1872-73⁴. But soon it was found that the Bhutias had again taken possession of Dewangiri and were making revenue collections from the traders there. As a result, these sums collected by the Bhutanese at Dewangiri were deducted from the next annual payment to the Bhutanese Government, and a warning was given that encroachments upon British territory would be seriously dealt with in future.

Late in 1876, a civil war broke out in Bhutan during which two rebels leaders, the Poonakha Jongpen and Paro Penlow, took shelter in British territory, where they along with their followers were provided with subsistence by the Indian Government, their extradition, demanded by the Bhutanese Government, being refused. In spite of the regular payment of the annual grant made to the Government of Bhutan the Bhutanese living on the border misbehaved with the British traders and villagers of North Kamrup. As a result the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup and the Chief Commissioner of Assam made local efforts to come to a settlement with the Bhutan Government provided the latter agreed to pay compensation for the losses incurred by the British subjects. But no satisfactory solution of the problem could be arrived at. Thereupon, the Government of Assam moved the Indian Government to come to their rescue and suggested that a sum of Rs. 3,000 should be deducted from the next subsidy payable to the Bhutan Government as compensation to be paid to the injured villages. But the Government of India negatived this suggestion on the ground that for the past several years, especially during the period of the Sikkim expedition⁵, the attitude of Bhutan had been friendly. As a result of some Bhutia raids on North Kamrup in 1891, the Bengal Govt. wrote to the Bhutanese authorities for redress. It was pointed out that if no redress was given, one or more police outposts would be established on the Assam-Bhutan border, the cost of which would be deducted by the Bengal Government from the subsidy payable to the Bhutan Government. This was subsequently adopted as a matter of policy with regard to Bhutan. As no redress was given for the outrages of 1891, the Bengal Government deducted some money from the Bhutan subsidy of 1892 on account of the Kokolabari outpost. The Deb Raja of Bhutan requested the Government of India for the refund of the sum deducted, but the request was not complied with. The proposal for exacting compensation from the Bhutan Government was dropped. Gradually, the Bhutanese

outrages on the British side of the border completely stopped⁶.

It is important to note that the British Government in the seventies of the last century grew aware of the Chinese influence in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. During the interview between the Deb Raja and Mr. Pemberton in 1874 it was revealed that though Bhutan was in no way tributary to China, yet an annual exchange of presents took place between the two countries. In 1876-77, when the Deb Raja informed the Tibetan Government that the British had asked him to construct a good road through Bhutan, Chinese and Tibetan Officials were sent to Bhutan to support him in refusing to do anything of the sort. During the Bhutanese revolt of 1885 Chinese and Tibetan officials came to Bhutan to settle the dispute at the request of the defeated Deb. These officials summoned the Maharaja of Sikkim to attend their conference. The British Charge-de-Affaires at Peking informed the Government of India that China would support the ex-Deb with troops ; in consequence of this the subsidy to the Bhutan Government was withheld till the dispute between the opposing Debs was finally settled⁷. During the hostilities between British India and Tibet in 1888-'89 Bhutan did not give any assistance to the Tibetans. The Tibetans had asked for aid, but the Tongsa Penlop refused it. In 1890, the Emperor of China appointed the Tongsa Penlop and the Paro Penlop as Chieftain and Sub-Chieftain⁸. In 1891, the Chinese Amban had visited the Paro Penlop at Paro and left with him a golden letter with the seal of the Emperor of China for the Tongsa Penlop. Thus there was a contest between China and Britain for the extension of the sphere of influence over Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim, and ultimately the British Government was victorious.

Before closing this chapter a few words need be said about the commercial relations between Assam on the one hand and its northern neighbours—Bhutan and Tibet—on the other. Before 1826 there had been a considerable trade

between this country and Tibet carried on by some hill tribes of Assam. The British conquest of Assam affected this trade adversely. From time to time British officers in Assam tried to revive that trade. Lieutenant Rutherford opened a trade fair at Udalguri in the district of Darrang in 1833, with a view to attracting traders from Tibet and the neighboring hills. It was also realised that improvement of the commercial intercourse required the cessation of incidents such as that of 1852 when the Government of Assam nearly came to blows with a Tibetan force over the allegiance of the petty hill Chief of Gelong⁹.

The period from 1861 to 1886 witnessed a great commercial agitation for the opening of Tibet. The arguments of men like Campbell¹⁰, Hooker¹¹, Gawler¹², Hodgson¹³, Eden¹⁴, Cooper¹⁵, Baber¹⁶, Hosie¹⁷, and Desgodins¹⁸ culminated in the Colman Macaulay Mission of 1885-86. The possibility of finding out a direct route between Assam and Tibet was discussed from time to time in the last century. T. T. Cooper tried to enter Tibet by this route in 1869. Needham and Molesworth argued in favour of using the Brahmaputra Valley as the great high road to Tibet. Though more annual fairs came into existence in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the most important of which was that at Darranga¹⁹, and considerable trading activities were revived, the hope that it would develop into the great trans-Himalayan commerce was not fulfilled. The almost impenetrable Assam Himalaya, inhabited by virile, warlike tribes, does not offer an easy route for commerce. There never was a route through it comparable with that through Nepal or Sikkim, and it possessed no hill station like Darjeeling to focus British attention on its potentialities.

The trade between Assam, and Bhutan and Tawang,²⁰ a strip of hill territory adjacent to Bhutan, in 1885-'86 accounted for about 1/6th of the total import trade and about 1/8th of the total export trade of Assam. The following index

gives a picture of the transactions between Assam and Bhutan-Tawang during 1877-78:²¹

<i>Imports to Assam</i>			<i>Exports to Bhutan-Tawang</i>		
Blankets	...	Rs. 75,630	Silks	...	Rs. 32,809
Ponies	...	.. 16,492	Cottons	...	.. 19,616
Gold	...	.. 15,320	Rice	...	.. 8,171
Wax 10,794	Brass, Copper, etc.	..	4,809
Salt 9,355			
Raw rubber, etc.	..	19,743			
<hr/>			<hr/>		
Total=		Rs. 1,47,334	Total=		Rs. 65,405
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FOOTNOTES

1 J. C. White's "Sikkim and Bhutan", London 1909, p. 272.

2 The Duars, lying on the north of Cooch Behar and Bengal, number eleven in all.

3 J. C. White's "Sikkim and Bhutan", London 1909, p. 280.

4 The boundary line between the Tawang Bhutias and Assam was also laid down from the Deosham river on the west to the Rowta river on the east and the line demarcating the land of the Char Duar Bhutias was laid down from the Rowta river on the west to the Ghabroo on the east.

5 In 1887, the Tibetans made an "inexplicable invasion" into the British protectorate of Sikkim, but were driven out the next year by General Graham. The Bhutanese remained friendly with the British during these border troubles. "The provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, relating to the Sikkim-Tibet boundary and some commercial facilities, made more definite in 1893, were coldly received by the Tibetans". (Foreign Deptt. Extl. A. Progs., Dec. 1893, no. 70).

6 For. Dept., External A Prog., Dec. 1893, No. 55.

7 J. C. White's "Sikkim and Bhutan", London 1909, p. 287.

8 Peking Gazette, August 22, 1890.

9 History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma and North-Eastern Frontier,—L. W. Shakespear (London 1914), p. 94.

10 Dr. A. Campbell was appointed Superintendent of Darjeeling in 1839.

11 Dr. J. Hooker, a noted naturalist, came to explore in the Himalayas in the forties of the last century.

- 12 Lt. Col. Gawler was the leader of the Sikkim Expedition of 1861.
- 13 B. H. Hodgson was the British Resident at Katmandu.
- 14 Ashley Eden was the Political Officer attached to the Sikkim Expedition.
- 15 T. T. Cooper was a distinguished explorer.
- 16 E. C. Baber was a British Consular Officer at Chungking.
- 17 A. Hosie succeeded Baber at Chungking.
- 18 Father Desgodins was a French Missionary who tried to enter Tibet from Ladak, Nepal, and Sikkim in the 1850s.
- 19 I visited this fair twice—in 1954 and in 1956—and found hundreds of Bhutias and Tibetans trading with plains people in various kinds of commodities.
- 20 “Under Towang is included that trade, both local and trans-frontier, carried on by hill tribes to the east of Towang like the Abors and the Mishmis”.—“Britain and Chinese Central Asia”,—A. Lamb (London 1960) p. 354.
- 21 Report on the Trade between Assam and Adjoining Foreign Countries, 1877-78, Shillong, 1878.

CHAPTER IX

THE AKAS AND THE MINOR TRIBES

The Akas:

The Akas were never happy with the yearly allowance of Rs. 668 granted to them by the Government, and they continued their efforts to increase the amount of the allowance. In 1872-73 the frontier line was laid down along the base of the Akas and other neighbouring tribes living west of them. The Deputy Commissioner of Darrang who was entrusted with the work of boundary demarcation reported that the Akas and other neighbouring hill men did not oppose the demarcation; rather they came down in large numbers to trade and graze cattle in the plains below. The tribes attached a great importance to this privilege of grazing their cattle in British territory, and Sir G. Campbell was of opinion that, if granted as a privilege and not allowed as a right, it afforded a valuable means of securing the good behaviour of these hillmen.¹

In 1879, the Government, as a friendly gesture, made a grant of 49 acres of grazing land in the plains to the Akas and they seemed to be gratified. But the Kapachor Akas refused at first to recognise the boundary line between the Bharali and the Khari Dikari rivers, and put forward fantastic claims. Their Chief, Medhi, eventually yielded, and in 1874-'75 the line was demarcated. In March 1878, Medhi's people created some trouble during their annual visit to the plains, and three of them were whipped for theft by the administrative authorities. It was in the winter of 1883-'84 that the first important Aka raid took place. The raid was caused mainly by some local misunderstanding between the Government and the tribesmen over the latter's right to the forest reserves. When a grant of land was made to the Hazarikhawa Akas in 1873 a similar grant was made also to the Kapachors—who, however were not satisfied with their grant. In 1875, the Kapachors

demanded more land, but this was refused by the Government. The tribe was also simmering with discontent as they felt to be deprived of their ancient right of tapping the rubber trees at pleasure as a result of the extension of the forest reserves of the Government. They had further been prevented from catching elephants within the reserves, and threatened by the forest officers with the loss of their passes to the plains which ran through a Government forest. While the situation was like this the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang sent the Mouzadar (revenue officer) of Balipara, Lakhidar by name, to the Aka villages to collect for the Calcutta Exhibition some agricultural specimens and other implements of the Akas, and to persuade a few of their tribe to come down to the British territory to pose for modelling.

Lakhidar along with a party of his men went to the village of Medhi, one of the most influential Aka chiefs. According to the Aka version, with which the evidence of one of the Mouzadar's party tallies, Lakhidar told Akas that he had been sent by the Government to take a 'Raja and a Rani with all their ornaments' down to Calcutta, and for that he would pay. The Akas felt insulted at such a nonsensical demand and put the Mouzadar and his servant under detention. In the meantime, Medhi's brother Chandi, at the head of a party of Akas, about a hundred in number, raided on Balipara on November, 10, 1883, abducted the Forest Ranger and the Forest Clerk, and took away two guns and some money. They pillaged none of the shops, except one opium dealer whose house was ransacked. 'Never' wrote the local officer, 'was a raid conducted so peaceably'.² When the restoration of the captives was demanded, they sent down four very insolent letters written in Bengali, dictated to the captive Forest Ranger, making claims for miles of land and forest on the plains and a lakh of rupees as compensation, informing at the same time the death of the Mouzadar from fever.

On December 17, 1883, a punitive expedition was sent against the Akas. The Akas had on the 10th December

declared to a messenger that they would return the captives within twelve days ; but instead of this, they treacherously attacked an advance camp on the night of 23rd December, killing one sepoy and wounding seven. As a result, when the troops made a dash to the Tengapani they found it strongly held by the Akas. On the 8th January, 1884, Medhi's strongly stockaded village was stormed. The Akas, though very adept in the use of poisoned arrows, could not stand the artillery fire and fled. A few days afterwards the captives were surrendered along with the two muskets and bayonets taken in the Balipara raid plus the two Snider rifles which had been lost by the Government people at Maj Bhoroli.

The Akas were told that if they would come in and submit absolutely, agreeing to pay a fine, their villages would not be destroyed, but their 'posa' might probably be kept in suspense for a year or two. As the Akas could not be induced to meet the leaders of the expedition and as they promised to see the authorities at Tezpur, the expedition returned. A blockade of the frontier followed ; but it was not until 1888 that the Chiefs tendered their formal submission.³ According to the Annual Administration Report for 1887-'88, the compass taken was restored, the value of the property looted paid, and written agreements in the terms prescribed by Sir Charles Elliott executed, by which the chiefs swore to abide. The blockade against the tribes was consequently raised, "but they will not get posa for two years, and only then if they have conducted themselves well". The Chief Commissioner, however, held that the political success of the expedition would have been more complete if the force had remained longer in the hills and if more time had been allowed for the chiefs to come in. Sir Alexander Mackenzie has observed :

I cannot, however, for my part lay aside the doubt whether under any circumstances, save to avenge serious and widespread massacre, an expedition into the unexplored and almost impracticable fastness of these sub-

Himalayan tribes is a wise or necessary measure. We might possibly effect all our objects by shutting the offending tribe and its neighbours for some distance on either side out from the plains' markets until submission was made. In that case we should probably see the neighbours turning upon the offenders and compelling them to do exactly what we want them to do. On the Sebsaugor frontier we have seen this result follow the adoption of the plan suggested.⁴

In 1896, a party of Akas stayed in the house of one Podu Miri near the Kadam Tea Estate, and treacherously killed the host and his son in their sleep at night, and carried away four captives. Consequently, in February 1897, an expeditionary force of 300 men was sent under the command of Captain G. Row who reached the Valley of Hong, rescued the captives, and punished the guilty by compelling the latter to release six prisoners whom they had carried off previously from a Dafia village. The apparent leniency of this punishment was due to the fact that the Akas had a genuine grievance against Podu.

On 25th April, 1900, a party of armed Akas entered the gola of Rai Meghraj Bahadur's agents at Balipara hat⁵ and refused to leave it until they were paid Rs. 3,600 on account of certain sums alleged to be due to them for rubber-tapping in their territory. Captain Cole, the officiating Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, reached Balipara with an armed force by a special train and succeeded in surrounding and capturing 10 armed Akas on the night of 26th April. After enquiring into the grievances of the Akas Capt. Cole inflicted a fine of Rs. 3000 on them for their misconduct, and as the amount was paid the ten men were released.

Regarding the rubber business, it was decided that the agreements between the Kayas and the Akas should be made in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner, Darrang, and all payments due to the tribesmen should also be made in his presence. The Chief Commissioner approved of this.⁶

THE MINOR TRIBES

(A) *The Mikirs*

In 1838, the Mikirs were brought under revenue assessment. Only once, in May 1863, the Mikirs behaved savagely when a party of them from a village on the confines of Jaintia attacked another Mikir village at Hurlook Parbat and killed some of the villagers. When pursued by the Assamese Police they showed fight and resisted capture. The cause of this raid lay in the oppression they suffered in the hands of a Mouzadar combined with the instigation of the Jaintia insurgents then in the field.⁷

(B) *North Cachar Hill Tribes*

All the different hill tribes,—Hill Cacharis, Hozai-Cacharis, Mikirs, Old Kukis, new Kukis, and Aroong Nagas, living in North Cachar paid to the Government either a house tax or a hoe-tax through their elected headmen or 'mouzadars'. In 1856-57 lands were assigned rent free for ten and afterwards for twenty-five years to the Kukis who would settle to the east of North Cachar beyond the Lengting river. The Government provided them with fire arms so that they would be able to form themselves into a buffer or screen between the less brave people of North Cachar and the Angami Nagas. This policy was remarkably successful. When the Naga Hills district was constituted, the North Cachar Sub-Division was broken up and distributed among the neighbouring districts. But it was re-established in 1880 and placed in charge of a police officer, who was stationed first at Gunjong and afterwards at Halflong. Liberal pensions were given to the surviving members of the family of Tularam Senapati who was the ex-ruler of this tract.⁸ In 1880, a Kuki militia, one hundred strong, was raised as a protection against Angami raids.

In 1881-'82, took place an important Cachari insurrection. A Cachari named Sambhudan,⁹ who first started his startling career as a performer of miraculous cures, claim-

ing divine inspiration, presently took the title of god (a "deo") and attracted many followers from the hills. He took up his abode at Maibong and lived on the forced exactions collected from the neighbours. At length one person sued him in the court of the S. D. O. accusing Sambhudan of assaulting him. As a result a police party under the command of Major Boyd set out to arrest him. In a skirmish several of Sambhudan's followers were killed and Major Boyd received a mortal wound. Sambhudan fled away and could not be arrested. As the language of the Hill Cacharis was unintelligible to the police and as these hill people were famed for clannishness and for their readiness to support each other, the police were helpless in following up the offenders. As the Kuki Militia gave no information beforehand of the possibility of a Cachari trouble, and as they were found useless in hunting down the fugitives or collecting evidence against them, it was disbanded by the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

FOOTNOTES

1 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.," Calcutta 1884, pp. 24-25.

2 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.," Calcutta 1884, p. 368.

3 Maxwell's Report.—For. Dept., Ext. A. Progs., October 1884, Nos. 41-116.

4 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.," Calcutta 1884, pp. 368-9. The policy was later on confirmed by Lord Curzon. (For. Deptt. Ext. A. Progs., October 1900, Nos. 43-70).

5 'Hat' means local market.

6 Foreign Progs., July 1900, Letter Nos. 40 and 44.

7 Judicial Progs., July 1863, Nos. 402-5.

8 E. Gait's "A History of Assam", Calcutta 1926, p. 311.

9 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations, etc.," Calcutta 1884, pp. 147-148.

CHAPTER X

EPILOGUE

The Frontier:

The two ex-Viceroy's of India, Lord Curzon and Lord Minto, have expressed the opinion that the centre of possible trouble on the Indian frontier has shifted from the north-west to the north-east. It is not only a case of an advance of Chinese soldiers, but of an influx of Chinese settlers, who are swarming in all along the frontier from Tibet to Yunnan and settling in the Shan states as well on the Mishmi borders. The British Government delayed too long in dealing with the north-eastern frontier.¹

The north-eastern boundary of Assam under the British regime did not possess the pre-requisites of a scientific frontier. Tribes like the Nagas, Khamtis, Singhpos and Lushais lived on both sides of the Indo-Burmese border, while the Bhutias, Akas, Daflas and Miris inhabited hills on either side of the northern boundary of Assam. So, no uniform ethnic line could be followed in laying down our north-eastern borders. Moreover, due to their frequent migrations some tribes always crossed the frontier either way. The Indo-Burmese border, though seemingly impenetrable due to its mountainous and jungly nature, has not been immune from foreign invasion. The Ahoms, who were originally Burmese Shans of the Hukong Valley, invaded Assam through the Patkai range in the thirteenth century, and the Burmese also followed the same route during their incursions into Assam in the early part of the last century. The tribal territories in our north-eastern borderland cover seven hundred miles of the Indian frontier. These tribal belts, from 70 to 100 miles in depth, are vulnerable to a determined incursion from the north or the north-east. If any strong power comes to occupy Burma

or Tibet it may mean a great threat to India's safety. As Afghanistan was turned into a friendly buffer between British India and Russia, similarly the British tried to turn Tibet into a buffer zone between India and China ; and the Himalayan territories of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were treated as British protectorates. In 1887, the British Government crossed swords with China and Tibet for maintaining supremacy in Sikkim. But as the frontier line along the unadministered belt of territory between Tibet and India was vague and undefined an advance from the other side could not be easily detected or checked. In 1910 the Chinese troops advanced into Khamti area on the north-eastern corner of India, soon afterwards, a Chinese force arrived at Rima in Tibet near the Mishmi border, and ordered a neighbouring Mishmi chief to cut the jungle and construct a track from Tibet to India. The Chinese in the early twentieth century have often declared their suzerain rights over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in addition to Tibet².

But in the last century the British were not afraid of imperial China as the latter was too weak, due to her internal troubles, to exert on India any significant political pressure that could be considered a menace. Hence, the British Government did not think seriously of demarcating the boundary between India and China along the snow-clad fastnesses of the Eastern Himalayas. Knotty complications in the future could, however, be avoided had the British Government laid down the frontier scientifically. As Hamilton suggested that advancing some distance further beyond the "outer line" the frontier could be laid down satisfactorily in the following way :

Beginning roughly at Tawang on the Tawang Chu in the Western Miri country, the suggested line of frontier would run in a north-eastern direction to latitude 29, which it would follow to longitude 96, whence it would proceed along the crests of the range of lofty snow mountains which has been mentioned and run from north-west to south-east to the ridge of the Lohit Valley, Proceeding to the Lohit River, and crossing it, the

direction of the line would continue to the Rima Valley, which it would traverse between Rima and Same, where boundary cairns could be established. From these pillars the frontier should follow a little east of north as far as the Namkin Range, whence it should travel along the watershed of the Irrawaddy by the crests of the Rirap Phasi range to a junction on the Burmese border with the line adopted by the Burmese Boundary Commission³.

Such a line offered a good ethnic and physical division between China on the north and British India's tribal possessions on the south.

Till Upper Burma was under the rule of its native ruler the British Government was afraid of the French menace on the eastern frontier of Assam, and hence they were reluctant to abandon their policy of '*laissez faire*' with regard to the hill tribes on that frontier. Many of the Indo-Burmese frontier troubles created by tribal raids were either engineered or abetted by frontier Burmese Officials or feudatory chiefs. But after the Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885) the French menace and the Burmese intrigues were eliminated, and the British Government could then follow a vigorous policy with regard to the hill tribes on the Assam-Burma border. Consequently some joint exploratory and punitive expeditions were sent by the Government of Assam and the government of Burma into the Indo-Burmese border hills and many tribes of this area gradually came under control. As both Burma and Assam were now under British rule the British Government did not think it necessary to lay down a definite boundary line through the unadministered hill territories on the Assam-Burma Border.

Problems and Policy:

As a result of the British conquest of Assam from the hands of the Burmese in 1826, the British territory in north-east India came to be surrounded by heterogenous hill tribes of warlike habits, and of irritable and insolent nature. As regards the hills within the acknowledged British boundary, administration was as successful as it had been elsewhere.

It is on the outer verge of the hill tracts that the Government came upon a disturbing element. "Tribes, over whom we can exercise no control, come surging up against our outposts from the unknown mountains of Burma and from valleys yet unsurveyed. Of the causes that press them forward we know nothing. New names crop up. A raid by savages of a strange fashion of hair tells us a tribal change has taken place across our frontier, and we have nothing for it but to strengthen our outposts, increase our patrols and watch to see what follows"⁴.

There was, of course, some amount of uncertainty about the tribal problem in Assam. Nobody knew when the green valleys of the north-eastern ranges would witness a treacherous murder or a daring raid which might start a series of repercussions in the tribal belts throwing the peace of the frontier to the four winds. There were occasions, e.g., Lakhidar's foolish behaviour with the Akas in 1883⁵, a peon's boastful and threatening words to the Khasis in 1829⁶, so on and so forth, when sheer misunderstanding caused attacks from the side of the unsophisticated hill people. In some cases chaos in the neighbouring territory and complicity of the local officials of the neighbouring states, for instance, the troubles created by the Burmese and the Bhutanese Officials near the border, caused quarrels between the British Indian Government and the tribes of this frontier. Then again, the tribal right to 'Posa' (revenue collection from the plains people on the border), forest wealth, and grazing lands within British territory created bad blood between the Government and the tribes. But the most important factor behind the tribal raids, especially in the case of the Lushais, Kukis and Shindhus, was the pressure of population from the east pushing the tribes westward. Perhaps the peculiar mode of cultivation, known as Jooming, prevalent among the tribes of this frontier had much to do with this population pressure. As the Joom system of cultivation required a far larger area for its crops than was under cultivation in any particular year, disputes arose between

clans leading to tribal migration and raids. This cycle-migration system caused by the Joom cultivation created many quarrels between the Zemi Nagas and the Kukis in later years,⁷ and after Kukis had been settled in the fallow lands near the Zemi Naga areas the latter protested to the Government, but the authorities thought that the Zemis were following a dog-in-manger policy.

Sometimes the tribes were enraged by Government orders affecting their age-old rights and beliefs, e.g., the right to headhunting among the Nagas, Garos and Kukis, slavery amongst the Nagas, Singhpos and Khamtis, and human sacrifice to propitiate the deities of the Jaintas. To check the custom of raiding on the occasion of the death of a chief was to change the cardinal doctrine of a religion, and tamper with the dearest feelings of a Garo's heart. The low-land villages had for generations supplied them with slaves and heads—the spoil of their bow and spear; for without these the souls of their heroes passed unhonoured away on the long journey to Mount Chikmung, “from which there is no return.”⁸ Similarly, the Lushais, as had been claimed in 1862, believed that though they were ready to honour the Europeans, they considered it their traditional right to cut up other tribes, such as Bengalees, Chakmas, Tipperahs, and Maghs, and the British had no right to interfere.⁹ The Nagas also failed to understand why the British Government would not allow them to indulge in heroic deeds of chopping human heads and thus earn undying glory and admiration from the fair sex.¹⁰

Old inter-tribal feuds were no less responsible for the raids committed by the trans-frontier clans on the cis-frontier tribals. Sometimes, the tribes were enraged to desperation by the introduction of new systems like revenue collection or requisition of forced labour by the Government. While revenue was necessary as a mark of allegiance on the part of the tribes and for defraying the expenses of the administration, forced labour was needed for making roads and for transport. The Government considered these as normal and

innocuous, but with the tribes, who were never used to it, these novel systems were insulting and unbearable. There were troubles in the Garo, Lushai, Naga and some other hills on that score. Then, the work of survey parties for the exploration of the new tracts very often than not roused the suspicion of the tribes and caused troubles. Arms traffic was also responsible for the unruly activities in certain hills of Assam.

It should be borne in mind that geographical factors contributed much to the toughness of the tribal problem in this region. The great height of the Aore Hills, the precipitous ridges in the Mishmi territory, and the dense jungles on the Assam-Burma border, infested with wild beasts, numberless leeches and poisonous insects, having rapid streams, unfordable in the rainy season, a stupendous rainfall and most unwholesome climatic conditions causing malarial fever always stood in the way of either exploration or expedition. About the insurmountable nature of the country Mr. E. C. Young, who undertook a journey from Yunnan to Assam across the Namkin and Patkai mountains writes :

We marched westwards through dense, gloomy, and uninhabited forest, where we followed the tracks of rhinoceros, elephant, buffalo, tiger, and other wild beasts, and where our only guides were the compass and the faint trail or "blaze" with which the trees were marked at intervals. It rained the whole time, and we were attacked by incredible quantities of leeches and poisonous insects.¹¹

H. L. Jenkins during his trip across the Patkai Range lost his path several times in the thick forest composed of very large trees and an impenetrably thick undergrowth of jungle.¹² Exploration of such tracts was extremely difficult, but still the British Government surveyed the Lushi Hills, the Garo Hills, the Khasi Hills, the Naga Hills, parts of the Abor-Mishmi land and some unadministered territories. Though attempts were made to construct roads in the outer hills not much progress could be attained in the period under our review on account of forbidding expenses.

The British Government adopted various measures for punishing the raiders. Besides sending expeditions, the policy of blockade i.e., closing the mountain passes against the offending tribe, more often than not, paid good dividends, and this was a bloodless and peaceful affair, entailing neither huge expense nor crafty strategy. But the failure of a blockade had to be followed by military action. The policy of disarmament was also adopted, for example, in the Lushai and Naga Hills, for curbing the incidence of tribal raids. But nothing could subdue the tribes until the British tribal policy was revised and changed.

Though for decades the local officers advocated a 'forward' policy with regard to the hill tribes of Assam, the Supreme Government was determined to remain "non-interventionist" on the ground that a policy of annexation might be financially harmful and politically premature, and that any political disturbance on this frontier might seriously affect the supply of labour to the tea estates causing great loss to the tea industry. But in course of time, this policy had to be changed as the tribal raids could not be stopped. The frontier outposts failing to check the onslaughts of the raiders, the British Government was compelled to post their officers in the interior of the hills for putting down the outrages, redressing grievances and securing the safety of the plains, and afterwards to annex the tribal territories and bring the tribes under its political control. When in the Angami country, the British Government wanted to follow a policy of absolute non-interference by withdrawing from all intimate relations with the incorrigible savages, such moderation was misunderstood by the latter. Sir Alexander Mackenzie has observed :

It failed as a policy signally failed. Fate seems determined to prove that there shall be no rest for the English in India till they stand forth as the governors or advisers of each tribe and people, in the land.¹³

With imperialist Disraeli coming to power in England the advocates of the 'Forward School' became hopeful. Lord Lytton, the new Governor General, urged the Secretary of

State to abandon the policy of non-interference with the hill tribes and to acquire an effective control over the hills for protecting the lives and properties of British subjects ; and the Secretary of State approved of this new approach. Consequently, political control was established on a larger section of the hills inside Assam and also across its borders.

By demarcating the boundary around the British territories in this part of British India and laying down the Inner Line the Government tried to limit its own jurisdiction as well as to protect the British subjects from marauding hillmen coming across the border.¹⁴ In 1884 the Government of India agreed to the establishment of 'political control' area in the Naga Hills beyond the administered territories. And in course of time some of the old political control areas were brought under direct rule, and beyond that new political control areas were created. Thus the policy of pushing forward, when unavoidable, gained ground. But in spite of the 'forward' policy the Government was always cautious in dealing with the unadministered tracts. When hard on the failure of the Mishmi expedition came the news of an attack on an Anglo-Chinese Frontier Commission by a party of Was, Curzon observed :

My whole object has been to do nothing on that frontier at all.....¹⁵

This attitude of non-interference with the independent tribes continued to be the main thread of tribal policy of the British Government on the Assam Frontier.

In May 1900, Frontier Regulations were laid down to this effect that for undertaking any tour beyond the area of political control on the north-east border the sanction of the Local Government must first be obtained in all cases, and where such tours are likely to involve complications of a nature that may render a punitive expedition necessary the tour is not to be permitted without the previous approval of the Government of India. These were confirmed in January, 1904.

It should be noted that the Tibetan policy of the British Government exerted some influence on the British policy towards the Tribes of the border hills of Assam. After the Treaty of Nanking the old policy of dealing with Tibet directly was given up, and, in its stead, the Government of India tried to foster relations with Tibet through the medium of China. This was considered necessary for maintaining the peace and stability of the Himalayan frontier between India and China by satisfying the latter and also for developing the trans-Himalayan trade. By recognising Chinese suzerainty over Tibet the British Government now got a free hand to deal with Bhutan and Sikkim effectively. Again, when the Russian advance in Central Asia seemed more threatening than before the British by the Tibeto-Burmese convention of 1886, recognised once more the Chinese rights in Tibet, thereby securing Chinese recognition to the British conquest of Upper Burma. But with regard to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim the British policy was definite and steady. In 1887, the British Government successfully fought against Sino-Tibetan intervention in Sikkim, and by the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890, the British control over the internal and external affairs of Sikkim was maintained.

In the last decade of the last century the Chinese Government seemed to block the development of the Indo-Tibetan commerce. Consequently, the British Government returned to the original policy of direct intercourse with Tibet. This is apparent from the negotiations of 1893-94 on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. Lord Curzon, who came to India as Viceroy in 1899, upheld this policy, and when the activities of the Russian agents, especially Dorjjeff, in Tibet appeared to be menacing he took direct action by sending the Younghusband Mission in 1903.

Against the background of these international rivalries and conflicts across the Indian border the British policy towards the hill tribes of Assam could not but on the whole be passive and conciliatory.

Results:

Let us now take a stock of the total effects that resulted from the political intercourse between the British Government and these frontier tribes. It is true that the inland tribal areas, for example, the Garo Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the North Cachar Hills, and the Mikir Hills, which were surrounded by the British territories easily submitted to the political control of the British Government, and in course of time outrages came to be the stories of the past. In case of the Lushais, Kukis and the Bhutias on the border, situation improved as law and order was established in the adjacent Burmese and Bhutanese territories by their respective Governments. Tribes like the Singhpos, Khamtis, Akas and Nagas became well-behaved coming in touch with the civilised plains and being influenced by the pacific attitude of the neighbouring clans.

But tribes like the Abors and the Daflas took much time in succumbing to the civilising influences of the Government or to its friendly approach in political relations because of the existence of their unexplored and impenetrable mountain fastnesses in which they could find shelter in emergencies and prefer to live, aloof from the din of civilization. The Abors continued to create troubles. In 1911, they grew mischievous and in March treacherously cut down Williamson, Political Officer posted at Sadiya, Gregorson and their party.¹⁶ Though a large punitive expedition sent to punish the offenders and explore the country was immensely successful, the Abors could not be reclaimed from their pristine savagery, nor could they be made friendly towards the British. Even as late as October 22, 1953, they massacred more than a hundred of a party of Indian military and civilian staff visiting the unadministered area on a goodwill mission.

All was not well on the Naga frontier also. The trans-Dikhu Nagas part of whose land falls in the unadministered and unexplored territory across the Burmese frontier did not keep peace for years to come. Their successful attack in

February, 1913, on a column of Military Police drew the serious attention of the Government.¹⁷ Though the trouble-shooters were amply chastised subsequently, the Nagas were not satisfied under an alien rule. As late as 1955 they have started a somewhat formidable struggle for succession from the Republic of India.

Though most of the hill tribes of Assam and the north-east frontier became civilised and loyal citizens of the state, the possibility of a show-down in the hills which stand on the meeting place of the administered and the unadministered areas could never be ruled out.

Administration :

In 1912, the administrative divisions were reorganised in Assam and a new system of administration on the frontier was introduced. Two new charges, afterwards known as the Sadiya and Balipara frontier tracts, were created and placed under the control of Political Officers. These charges consisted partly of the settled plains of the Lakhimpur and Darrang districts, in which the administration was practically the same as that existing in those districts, and partly of areas beyond the Inner Line inhabited by the border tribes, over whom only loose political control was exercised. The Sadiya Frontier tract extended on the north and east to the confines of Tibet and touched Burma on the south-east and south, whereas the Balipara tract included the important trade route from Udalguri into Tibet, which is the shortest way from India to Lhasa. As a result of this territorial reorganisation the relations between the hillmen and the plains people were considered to have greatly improved.

The Naga Hills¹⁸, the Lushai Hills, the Garo Hills, the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and the North Cachar and Mikir Hills formed five ordinary hill districts of the State, while the north-eastern border areas of Assam were put directly under the Government of India to be administered by the Governor of Assam. This north-eastern frontier land, known

as the North Eastern Frontier Agency, or NEFA in an abbreviated form, came to be divided into 6 zones: the Kameng Frontier Agency, Subansiri Frontier Agency, Siang Frontier Agency, Lohit Frontier Agency, Tirap Frontier Agency and Tuensung Frontier Agency.

The Kameng Agency included the Akas, the Subansiri Agency the Daflas and hill Miris, the Siang Agency the Abors, the Lohit Agency the Mishmis and Khamtis, the Tirap Agency the Singhpos, and the Tuensung Agency some of the Naga Clans.

Defence:

The tribesmen on the Assam frontier do not mass after the manner of the jirgahs of the Pathans of the 'north-west frontier'. The cohesion given by a militant religion, and the 'ghazi' fanaticism kindled by the 'mullahs' are absent here. No one tribe could be expected to rise *en masse*, though sometimes the restlessness of one tribe might prove contagious to others. To meet a common foe a certain number of villages might combine (for combination of many villages in the hill tracts of Assam was geographically almost impossible), but even then the defence of some carefully prepared position by the young men of the villages never culminated into co-ordinated offensive. The hillmen were accustomed to build up elaborate stockades with immense labour, and make occasional rushes with swords in hand through enemy columns or to half-hearted sniping with arrows. The selection of defensive positions and the siting of the works show admirable judgment, while the construction of long rows of rock shoots¹⁹ and the immense stockades and palisades for which the Abors in particular are famous is worthy of far more determined defenders. Panjis (short, sharp bambo stakes) and traps similar to the pits and bow-traps used for big games were also used for strengthening the defence. A shell-proof stockade wall, over 2000 yards long and 10 feet high, made of timber and stones, with a panji-strewn ditch in its front and belts of panjis as additional

obstacles would be captured with a great loss, were the position unturnable and the enemy a determined foe.

The military expeditions that were sent into the hills on the north-east frontier were designed not mainly to burn, slay or destroy, but to punish the offenders so as to prevent the repetition of the outrages. The native hillmen understand absolute victory or absolute defeat and nothing in between. They regarded the Government's policy of non-interference as lack of strength, and a strategical retreat as a defeat worthy to be pressed further. The tribal outrages, if connived at or tolerated by the Government, invited more of its kind, and if punished with moderate measures, were never to cease. But proper punishment of the raiders always accrued satisfactory results. The lesson has been learnt from the past experience that the punitive forces must not be too small, as in the case of Lt. Holcombe's Naga operations in 1875, or too big and unwieldy as in the Bebejiya Mishmi expedition of 1899, to operate quickly and efficiently, nor should they be put under the command of a Civil Officer if the expedition be of a military character, or be allowed to lose their energy and effectiveness through the divided counsel in leadership²⁰.

"Of all hill expeditions of modern times, at least on the eastern side of India, General Penn Synod's action in putting down the disorders in the Chin hills in 1889-'90, can be held up as an example of successful operations of that nature, when he overran the country with small columns, giving neither himself, his troops, nor the enemy, any rest until all opposition ceased. As to resolution and the lack of it, Lt. Eden's famous exploit in the Mishmi Hills in 1854 shows us what the former quality can effect ; while a different tale would have been told of Manipur in March, 1891, had that quality prevailed and the Military had been supreme. ...The expedition of 1911-12 (in Abor hills) too could have been brought to a successful and with a smaller number of men"²¹

An interesting comparison may be made in connection with the expenses of the purely military and semi-military

organisations during their respective expeditions. In 1889-'90, an expedition of 1,200 troops went into the Mishmi Hills and the results were disappointing even at a cost of Rs. 2,50,000, whereas at the same time a small punitive expedition, in the Patkai range, consisting of 5 officers and 100 rifles (Military Police) with 170 Coolies, completed its work successfully beyond the border in most difficult and unmapped country where opposition was actually met with on one occasion, at an extra cost of Rs. 1,766 only.²⁹

For maintaining law and order in the administered hill-tracts and protecting the British subjects from the raids of the tribes inhabiting the unadministered areas a Military Police Force was organised in Assam as early as 1830. It was at first merely an armed Civil Force known as the Cachar Levy, and was afterwards turned into a Frontier Police Force, which was in course of time distributed in posts along the foot of the hills from Cooch Behar to Sadiya ; thence crossing the Brahmaputra, the outposts ran along the foot of the Naga Hills up the Dhansiri valley, through the North Cachar Hills into Silchar, where they linked up again with the posts guarding the Lushai border. There were in those days as a reserve to the Frontier Police four Regular regiments stationed in Assam, the headquarters of two of them being at Shillong, of another at Dibrugarh, and of a fourth at Silchar. These again had their detachments about the country, the principal ones being at Gauhati, Tezpur, Golaghat, Jaipur, Sadiya in Upper Assam, and at Monierkhal, Alinagar, and Chargola in Cachar. Some of these were right on the border, and on the reorganisation of Assam's internal defence in 1880-'81, the Frontier Police were increased and given entire charge of the border posts, the Regulars being reduced to 3 regiments. Two years later, for the improvement of their efficiency the Frontier Police was broken up and reconstituted into battalions of Military Police to train whom regular army officers were borrowed for the posts of Commandants for a period of five years. Three full-strength battalions were formed, at first of mixed enlistments, later on taking as

many Gurkhas and Jaruas as possible, the latter being good soldiers, excelling in wood-craft, rafting, building, etc., and having like the Gurkhas little religious or caste prejudice.²³

But subsequently, the Military Police were rechristened as the Assam Rifles which is manned by all and sundry people, but officered by regular army officers, loaned by the Indian Army. For all purposes they are a purely infantry organisation with only this difference that their J. C. Os²⁴ and other ranks do not belong to the Indian Army. The Assam Rifles man the outposts in the NEFA²⁵ and guard the strategic positions on the North-Eastern Frontier. The Hill Districts are administered with the help of the Civil Police like other plains districts in Assam. Besides the Assam Rifles, the state of Assam at present is placed as an army zone under an independent Military Brigade with its headquarters at Shillong.

Though the Indian frontier system is adjudged by some as highly organised it is by no means perfect. A great improvement could be made upon the road and Railway systems. For instance, a bridge could be constructed over the Brahmaputra.²⁶ If roads suitable for mechanical transport are constructed the pursuit of raiding gangs become easy and trade and commerce develop, leading to the spread of civilisation among the barbaric tribes. Air-fields also should be built up in the border hills. For the sake of uniformity and efficiency the frontier defence should be reorganised and entrusted absolutely to the Army, and not to the police battalions like the Punjab Frontier Force on the western frontier or the Assam Rifles on the Eastern Frontier.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 A. Hamilton's "In Abor Jungles", London 1912, p. 233.
- 2 C. Bell's "Tibet-Past and Present", Oxford 1924, p. 101.
- 3 A. Hamilton's "In Abor Jungles", London 1912, pp. 235-6.

4 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East of Bengal", Calcutta 1884, p. 371.

5 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East of Bengal", Calcutta 1884, p. 368.

6 Ibid, p. 222.

7 U. G. Bower's "Naga Path", London 1950, p. 151.

8 A. Mackenzie's "History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East of Bengal", Calcutta 1884, p. 370.

9 Ibid, p. 346.

10 L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and the North-East Frontier", London 1914, p. 198.

11 Geographical Journal, London, Vol. XXX (1907), pp. 172-175.

12 Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta 1870, pp. 230-7.

13 A. Mackenzie's "Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of Bengal", Calcutta 1869, p. 69.

14 Government of India Notification, Foreign Dept., no. 631 P, dated 8th March, 1876.

15 Curzon's letter to the Secretary of State, February 22, 1900—Earl of Ronaldshay's "The Life of Lord Curzon", London 1928, Vol. II, p. 114.

16 L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma and the North-East Frontier", London, 1914, pp. 130-131.

17 Ibid, p. 195.

18 But very recently the Tuensung Frontier Agency has been merged with the Naga Hills to form a new state of the Union of India.

19 Stone shoots are platforms made of bamboos piled up with stones. These are built out over cliffs hanging above the path to be defended and held up by a cane-rope which is cut to let down an avalanche of stones on to the enemy below. Shoots are generally built in lines and the jungle is cleared to give the stones a free run; but they are not visible from below. This form of defence was a favourite tactic with the Abors and Mishmis.

—G. D.—S—Dunbar's "Notes on certain Hill Tribes of the Indo-Tibetan Border,—Memoirs of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. V, Calcutta, 1913-17.

20 Reference may be made to the Abor Expedition of 1894.

21 L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and the North-East Frontier", London 1914, pp. 130-131.

22 L. W. Shakespear's "History of Upper Assam, Upper Burma, and the North-East Frontier", London 1914, pp. 250-51.

23 Note by the C. C. on the military requirements of Assam, dated the 12th August, 1879.

24 Junior Commissioned Officers below the rank of Second Lieutenant.

25 North East Frontier Agency,—an administrative division of the north-east frontier directly administered by the Governor of Assam as a centrally administered area.

26 The Govt. of India has just started constructing a bridge over the Brahmaputra.

CHAPTER XI

POSTSCRIPT

HISTORY OF THE RELATIONS FROM 1901 TO THE PRESENT TIME

The Abors:

In the concluding paragraph of the third chapter I have made just a casual reference to Williamson's murder. Here I propose to give the background of the incident and also an account of the further developments in the Government's relation with the Abors.

Noel Williamson, who had been the Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya from 1906 to 1911, made an exploratory tour up the Lohit towards Rima in the cold season of 1907-1908. He went up to the village of Sati, 35 miles south of Rima, and turned back from that place as he was not permitted by the Government to enter Tibet. In 1906 two Saw Mill Companies complained to the Chief Commissioner of exactions by the Abors on the threat of stopping timber supplies from the foot of the Abor hills. In this connection the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam made certain proposals of a 'forward' nature to the Government of India in September 1907.¹ But the utmost to which the Government of India agreed was that Williamson should undertake a tour in the tract between the 'Inner' and 'Outer' lines with a view to ascertaining the actual affairs existing there. Consequently, Williamson in March 1908 made a tour through the Abor Hills without any escort.

In November-December 1908, he punished the Rangpung Nagas of Rashi for their raid on Wakpang in British territory when seven British subjects were killed.² In February 1909, Williamson being accompanied by Jackman and Lumsden went up to Kebang, but found no Tibetan influence there; in 1910 he toured almost as far as Rima, which was reported to

be occupied by the Chinese. In 1911 he penetrated into the Mishmi Hills as far as Walong³ and recommended that the Mishmis should be brought under British control before the Chinese could extend their influence any further towards the south.

The eventful career of this gallant border official was cut short when he, Gregorson, a tea garden doctor from Tinsukia, and 44 other persons were treacherously murdered at Kom-sing by the end of March 1911. The object of their journey was "to ascertain, if possible, the extent of Tibetan influence in the Abor country".⁴ It came to light that Kebang and Rotung committed the murders and that Babuk, Sissin and Pangi had accounted for some of the fugitives. Though the Governor General in Council was critical about Williamson's violation of well-known standing orders, prohibiting the crossing of the Outer Line without permission, a large expedition was organised under the command of Maj-General Bowers to "punish the Abors, and also to explore and survey this country, for owing to China's movements in Thibet and along with south-eastern borders of that country, a real interest was at last being awakened in this long stretch of unknown borderland".⁵

The expedition resulted in the punishment of all the hostile villages. The ringleaders of the massacre were tried and punished, and practically all the looted property was restored. The whole of the Yamne Valley was surveyed, the Shimang river was mapped, the course of the Siyom was roughly traced, and the identity of the Dihang with the Sanpo was at any rate practically established. "Although it was not possible to determine accurately the natural frontier between the Abor country and Tibet, a rough idea of its nature and position was obtained".⁶

Simultaneous with the despatch of the Abor expedition a Mishmi Mission had been sent to the Mishmi Hills and a Miri Mission to the Miri and Dafla country with the object of exploration and survey. The Mishmi Mission was divided

into two columns—the Dibang or Nizamghat Column and the Lohit Valley Column. The first one was to explore the Sisseri and Dibang Valleys and the Second one was to Survey the Lohit Valley. The Dibang Column visited thirty Mishmi Villages and found the tribes friendly. Though the general tendency of the people in the Lohit Valley was to favour British protection, it was reported that the Chinese had been making great efforts to win their friendship. The Miri Mission was entrusted with the exploration of the country between the Dihang and Bhutan “in order to obtain information which will enable a satisfactory frontier to be demarcated between India and Tibetan-Chinese territory”.⁷ This party met with opposition at Tali on February 14, 1912, when their camp was attacked. About 20 Miris were killed in the encounter and two of their villages burnt as a punishment.

While reviewing the results of the Abor Expedition, the Miri and Mishmi Missions the Chief Commissioner observed that neither the Abor Expedition nor the Miri Mission found any trace of the Chinese in the country they explored ;, only in the extreme north of the Abor Hills there were some signs of Tibetan influence. The position in the Mishmi country was different and was such as to warrant further survey and exploration⁸.

After the Abor Expedition the Government of India entered into a prolonged argumentation with the Secretary of State about the desirability of setting up some permanent police posts in the Abor and Mishmi country beyond the Inner Line⁹. The Secretary of State yielded at last and Military Police posts were set up at Walong, Minzang and near the mouth of the Delei river, and the posts which had been established at Balek, Pasighat and Kobo were retained. In 1912 the tribal country to the north of Assam was divided into three sections:—

- (a) the Central or Abor Section,
- (b) the Eastern Section consisting of the Mishmi Hills and the Bor Khamti country, and

- (c) the Western Section comprising the land between Tawang and Subansiri river (including the Eastern watershed of the river)¹⁰.

During the years 1917-18, the remaining few Abor and Singhpo villages and all Khamtis were brought under administration and assessed to poll-tax. In December 1928 the Raja of Po fled before the invading Tibetan army and was given asylum in Sadiya. The unrest in Po had started in 1927 when the inhabitants refused to pay taxes to Tibet. As troops were sent by Tibet to overawe Po the Raja fled to British territory. In 1931 he absconded from Sadiya and died from illness while crossing the hills. It was alleged that the Padam tribe had been responsible for his death, hence the Shimong group of villages attacked Komkar, which was allied to the Padams. In order to punish the villages which had attacked Komkar the Membas led by Tibetans subsequently visited Shimong and Karko villages and also sent a delegation to Damro. Such activity in areas under the loose political control of the Government could not but cause concern. In 1936-37, Calvert, the Political Officer, carried out a three weeks' tour in the unadministered territory of the Abor Hills and renewed friendly contact with the Minyong Abors of the Dihang, Shimong and Siyom Valleys. Some tribal disputes which had been hanging fire for years were settled.¹¹

In 1938, the formation of a "Control Area" to the north of Pasighat was sanctioned by the Government of India. The purpose of this was to take measures for the abolition of slavery in unadministered areas. (This Control Area was subsequently extended in 1941). In 1938, Godfrey, the Political Officer, reported about the annual incursion by Tibetan officials into the Memba and Abor villages south of the McMahon Line and realisation of taxes from the tribesmen who were claimed to be Tibetan subjects. As a result Williams, Asst. Political Officer at Pasighat, with an escort of 45 Assam Rifles visited this area in February-March, 1939, with a view to ascertaining the position as

regards Tibetan infiltration south of the McMahon Line. It revealed from this expedition that Tibetan influence extended some 70 miles south of the McMahon Line and that the big villages of Shimong and Karko had recently been paying tribute to Tibet. According to his recommendations outposts were established at Karko and Riga in March 1941. In 1940 Godfrey made an extensive tour up the Siyom Valley through the unadministered Galong country for settling a serious land dispute between the Minyong and Galong Abors. A boundary was fixed and peace assured. The Government of India extended the control area of the Political Officer, Sadiya Frontier Tract, up to the McMahon Line in the Siang Valley on May 20, 1941, in order to check the Tibetan influence.¹² They also agreed that if these incursions from the north of the McMahon Line did not cease it might be necessary at some future date to establish one or more additional outposts further up the Valley.

The Mishmis:

After the Bebejiya Expedition of 1900, the Mishmis were quiet till July 1905 when certain Bebejiyas committed a murderous outrage on two Chulikata Mishmis within British territory. The murder was committed in revenge for their punishment during the last Bebejiya expedition. Consequently a blockade of the Mishmis was resorted to in 1905.

I have already mentioned Williamson's exploratory tours in the Mishmi Hills in 1907-1910, and 1911. Williamson reported that the Chinese had set up flags at Menilkrai outside Tibetan territory, and the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam proposed to bring the Mishmis definitely under British control.¹³ Sometime afterwards when Captain Bailey travelled from China to Sadiya through Batang and Rima he noticed large Chinese forces in those places and pro-Chinese behaviour among the Miju.¹⁴ To counteract the Chinese infiltration a Mishmi Mission had been sent in the cold season of 1911-12 for the purpose of exploration and assuring the Mishmis that they were under the British.¹⁵

Again in 1912-13 the Dibang Survey and Exploration Expedition surveyed the entire country including the course of the Dibang. In 1914 an expedition under the charge of O'Callaghan, Asst. Political Officer at Sadiya, was sent to the Lohit Valley. A party of this visited Rima at the invitation of the Tibetan authorities, and cordial relations were established.¹⁶

In 1918 a sepoy was murdered at Nizamghat by the Mideren Mishmis of Elapoin, six days' march from Nizamghat, in revenge for the hanging of their co-villager Taji for his participation in the murderous outrage of 1905. As a result an expedition was sent in 1920. Punishment was inflicted and many outstanding disputes were settled.

In 1933-34, the British Museum Expedition under Captain Kingdom Ward visited the Lohit Valley and found the Mishmis to be friendly. In 1933 a 'promenade' was made in the Sisseri Valley to punish the unadministered Chulikata Mishmis guilty of an outrage on a village within British territory. In October 1934 a similar promenade was made up the Dibang to exact retribution for certain cases of murder and to settle disputes between tax paying and non-tax paying villages. Both these expeditions were successful. In 1937-38 Calvert, the Political Officer, made a tour in the Mishmi Hills as far as the unadministered Dou (Du) Valley and renewed contact with the Taroan and Miju Mishmis. In 1940, Godfrey, the Political Officer, visited Rima and established friendly relations with local officials and residents. He wrote, "Both the people at Rima and also traders from Kham and the country bordering on China are all very anxious that we complete the mule track as far as Rima".¹⁷

The Miris, Akas and Daflas:

A reference has already been made to the Miri Mission of 1911-12. Returning from the hills the Mission reported that Tibetan swords, bells, and beads were found in every village, but there was no Chinese influence. As in 1913

extensive touring was recommended to the Aka country, to the Dafla Hills and to Tawang, the "Aka Promenade" consisting of 1,032 of all ranks visited the Miji Akas of the Bichom valley, the Monba villages of But and Konia, the Dafla villages on the upper Bharali and Tawang in 1914.

The expedition met with friendly reception everywhere except at Riang where they were treacherously attacked by the Daflas. In the engagement that took place the Dafla casualties were about 16 or 17, and none at all on the British side. As regards Tawang, Captain Nevill, the leader of the expedition, observed that the chief Tibetan influence there was the monastery, the abbot and the principal officials of which were appointed from Lhasa¹⁸. Though Nevill recommended a 'forward' policy with regard to the regions he visited, nothing was done due to the exigencies of the First World War.

In May 1918 there was a raid on two plains Dafla villages made by the Mirpathar Daflas in which 59 persons were carried off. Nevill rescued the captives and exacted a suitable fine from the offending village. In 1919, the title of the Western Section of the North-East Frontier was changed into that of "Balipara Frontier Tract."

In 1926-27, Nevill punished Dafla village of Jorum for its raid on some plains Daflas, and visited the Apa Tanang country in course of his expedition. He observed in his Annual Administration Report for 1927-28 that everywhere he was requested by the tribes to plant a boundry post so that others could know that their area was under British control. He prophetically observed: "China has still its eyes on Tibet and on Lhasa, the pro-Chinese party is growing in influence and should China gain control of Tibet the Tawang country is particularly adopted for a secret and easy entrance into India¹⁹". As regards the emancipation of slaves amongst these tribes he favoured a slow and gradual process. "Sudden emancipation of slaves", he wrote, "would cause a complete dislocation of the existing social conditions. It

would bring ruin to the owners and in many cases would prove disastrous to the interest of the so-called slaves themselves".²⁰

A few words need be said about the position of Tawang. Tawang was described as British territory by the Simla Convention of 1914, but it was controlled by Tibet up till 1941, when an expedition was sent there under Captain Lightfoot "to explore facts than to issue orders and make decisions".²¹ Lightfoot found the Tibetan officials collecting taxes at Tawang and he, under the instruction of the Government of India, informed all concerned that Tawang "is by treaty Indian and not Tibetan territory". Up till 1941, the Government of India desisted from forcing the Tibetan officials out of Tawang. Besides this visit to Tawang minor expeditions were sent to the Miji Aka village of Nakhu and the Eastern Dafia village of Kabeng in 1938-39. The Miji Akas were warned not to raid and exact tribute from the Monbas of Dirangzong, and Kabeng was fined for its raid on villages close to the British frontier.

The treacherous behaviour of the Daffas is evidenced as recently as May 31, 1963, when some Daffas killed a party of 12 officers and other personnel of an outlying administrative centre at Chayantajo in the Kameng Division. The raid seems to have been caused by the policy of the abolition of slavery introduced by the Government.²²

The Lushai, Kuki, and the Allied Tribes :

In 1901-2, a new system of "Circle administration" was introduced in the Lushai Hills under which the whole district was divided into eighteen circles, and an 'Interpreter' was posted in each as an intermediary between the Sub-divisional Officer and the Chiefs. But soon the Interpreters utilised the new administrative measure for their selfish ends, and in 1906-7 there was trouble in the far south of the Lushai Hills. In December 1907, Major Cole and a force of 100 Military Police under Lt.-Col. Loch visited the troubled area and realised a fine of Rs. 500/- in the shape of 20 guns.

In 1910, the Aijal-Sairang Cart Road was completed. The boundary of the Lushai Hills district on the south of the Sherkor region was fixed according to the proposals of Loch as modified by Cole. But, again in 1917-1918 there was serious unrest in the unadministered area lying to the south, between the border of the Lushai Hills and Arakan Hill Tracts. Raids were made inside the British border and elsewhere. Colquhoun, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, visited the region with an escort of 50 rifles and exacted fines from several villages without any opposition. Conditions in the district were also affected by the disturbances which took place in the Chin Hills and Manipur. As a result troops were sent to the Manipur border as well as to Falam to maintain peace. In 1924-25, Parry, the then Superintendent, made a tour in the unadministered area south of the district and recommended its inclusion in the Lushai Hills district. This recommendation was accepted by the Government of Assam.

In 1931-2, the Zongling area which was hitherto under loose political control was incorporated in the Lushai Hills district, and certain adjoining areas were merged in the Chin Hills district of Burma. The Constitution Act of 1935 classified the Lushai Hills as an "excluded area".

In 1909-10, the Kukis living in the unadministered territory on the eastern boundary of Manipur made some raids in the Naga Hills as well as in Manipur. Consequently, an expedition was sent against the raiders. Next year a similar expedition was sent to the unadministered Somra tract. Both of these operations were successful. But in 1917 the Kukis broke into an open rebellion in Manipur and the adjoining areas as a protest against Government recruitment for the Labour Corps and ill-treatment of the Manipur authorities. The revolt was quelled in 1918-19²³.

The Nagas :

In 1903, Captain Howell, the D.C. of the Naga Hills, wrote about the outrages in the Tizu and Tita Valleys, and

advocated a forward policy. In the long run the Government of India agreed to the extension of the eastern boundary of the Naga Hills District.

In 1905, a second expedition was sent against the Mazungjami (the first was conducted by Porteous in 1889) guilty of the murder of two Sema coolies. The offending villages were burnt. Across the eastern border of the Naga Hills outrages still continued, and the Chief Commissioner wanted to extend the political control area in that direction. But the Government of India did not support him. In January 1906, however, 250 persons were butchered by the trans-frontier Nagas at the fords of the Dikhu. After some correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State it was decided in 1908 to extend the political control area beyond the eastern borders of the Naga Hills District, but not to include, as a rule, villages at a distance of more than twelve miles from the administrative border. The village of Kongan, east of the Dikhu, was also included in the district in 1908.

In February 1913, took place a daring attack of the trans-Dikhu Nagas of Chinglong and Chinkoi, just across the Dikhu, on a Military Police Column of some 200 rifles who were en route to punish the tribe for their outrage inside British frontier. The Column lost several Sepoys and many coolies. A stronger force was shortly sent up which went through those hills and exacted possibly the most complete amount of reparation and did it in a remarkably short time. A post was established at Wakching. At the close of these operations the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Archdale Earle, raised the question of the extension of the political control area to the south of the Tizu river. He stressed the futility of casual 'promenades' or isolated punitive expeditions, because the results were temporary. "The inhabitatants of a village which has been punished are for some time only too ready to obey orders.....there is another unfortunate, but usually unavoidable, result of such expeditions. When a village has

been reduced to a defenceless condition it only too frequently becomes an object of attack to its neighbours".⁹⁴ Sir Archdale, of course, advocated a gradual extension of British Control "until the whole of the country between Assam and Burma has been taken over".⁹⁵ But as the Great War of 1914-18 intervened his proposals were put in the cold storage.

Since the proposals of 1914 were submitted some important developments took place. The labour Corps which went from this frontier to France during the Great War was largely recruited from independent trans-frontier Nagas. It followed that the Government's relations with many independent villages became closer than before. Further, the Somra Tract had since been brought under the administration of the Government of Burma and the first real attempt to administer the hill tribes of Manipur had been made. Thus the proposed area of control came to be surrounded by administered areas. After overcoming much reluctance and hesitation the Government of India supported the proposals of the Assam Government in 1922. Hence with the approval of the Secretary of State Melomi and Primi were included in the Naga Hills District in 1922. In 1927, six villages on the east and south-east of Mokokchung were included within the administered area in order to simplify the boundary system and satisfy the inhabitants of those villages.

In 1926-27, the question of increase in the number of guns among Konyak villages came under scrutiny, and they were asked not to use guns in their inter-village wars. In 1939, the villagers were compelled to surrender three hundred guns. But the local authorities were asked, as before, to refrain from interfering in disputes between tribes residing within and those residing outside the area of control, even though murder had resulted.

In 1921, the Government disposed of a historical survival from Ahom times. The Ahom rulers used to make grant of lands called "Khats" in the plains to the Nagas for their service or allegiance. As the Nagas did not like to live in the

plains they appointed 'Katakis' who acted as their rent-collectors. These agents who were generally Assamese used to cheat the Nagas, and sometimes disputes arose. It was then decided that certain fixed amounts should be paid to the Naga owners, and the 'Khats' be administered by the Government.

During the Kuki Rebellion of 1917-1919, the Kabui Nagas suffered very badly at the hands of the Kukis, and the Government failed to protect them adequately. Sometime before 1927, a Kabui named Jadonang of the village Kambiron on the Cachar-Imphal bridle path professed a new faith and proclaimed a Kabui Naga Raj. He was supposed to have magical powers and the Kacha Nagas looked upon him as their 'Messiah'. People began to offer him tributes either out of fear or due to reverence. Jadonang asked them to pay him revenue next year (for the year 1931-32).

The unfortunate 'prophet' was arrested in Cachar and sentenced to death in Manipur on 13th June 1931 on a charge of murder. But his movement now gathered its strength around Gaidiliu, his chief disciple. Gradually the Naga Raj movement spread over a large area and 'Rani'²⁶ Gaidiliu eluded British grasp for a long time. In the early part of 1932 a reward was offered for information leading to her arrest. At last, in October 1932, the 'Rani' was captured at Pulomi in the Naga Hills by Captain Macdonald, Commandant of the Assam Rifles. She was tried and sentenced to transportation of life.²⁷

Lawlessness amongst Gaidiliu's followers still lingered, ceremonial dances and semi-religious celebrations continued to be held in disaffected Kacha Naga villages. At that time the Civil Disobedience Movement was going on in different parts of India, and rumour went that a king called Gandhi, described as a son of the famous Jadonang, was coming to rule after the collapse of the British Government in India.²⁸

In May 1934, another 'prophet' named Haido was arrested and Dikeo, a ringleader, was shot dead by the Assam Rifles in November 1940. Even after all these the agitation

never entirely died down, and there were fresh attempts to revive the Gaidiliu cult.

During 1936-39 several expeditions visited Pangsha and other villages outside the Control Area for their outrages within the Control Area. In 1938, Pangsha and certain neighbouring villages were brought within the Control Area. In November 1937, an expedition was sent to the unadministered villages of Nokhu, Sanglao and Pesu and all the slaves were freed.²⁹

By the Constitution Act of 1935 the Naga Hills District was declared to be an "Excluded Area". During the Second World War the Naga Hills became a theatre of Anglo-Japanese engagements. After India attained independence in 1947, freedom loving Nagas again demanded a Naga Raj and since 1955, a section of them have been carrying on a formidable struggle to that end, throwing the peace of the region to the four winds. The recent formation of a separate State comprising the Naga Hills and Tuensung region within the Indian Union has not been able to satisfy the 'hostile' Nagas.

Conclusion :

With the withdrawal of the British power from the Indian sub-continent and Burma the hill tribes in our north-eastern borderland have been flanked by three alien powers—China (Tibet included), Pakistan and Burma—(previously by China alone in case of the Mishmis and Abors only) with the result that the problems of our north-eastern frontier have become more complicated than before. Education, communication and medical science should now perform what military expeditions could not accomplish in the past. The hill people should quickly be integrated with the rest of the Indian population culturally and emotionally through civilising influences, for instigating hands may not be wanting among our unfriendly neighbours who can create troubles in our border hills at any opportune moment. Nevertheless, the Government should not hesitate to deal vigorously with the turbulent and marauding clans.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Eastern Bengal and Assam, Political, A, November 1907, Nos 1-40,
- 2 Eastern Bengal & Assam Secretariat, Political, A, March 1909, Nos. 27-39.
- 3 Ibid., June 1911, Nos. 85-88.
- 4 Assam Secretariat, Political, A, Sept. 1912, Nos. 1-2.
- 5 Shakespear, p. 121.
- 6 Reid, p. 231.
- 7 Eastern Bengal and & Assam Secretariat, Political, A, March 1912, Nos. 149-197.
- 8 Assam Secretariat, Political, A, Sept. 1912, Nos. 1-22,
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Assam Secretariat, Political, A, June 1912 Nos. 140-200.
- 11 Reid, pp. 260-262.
- 12 Reid, p. 263.
- 13 Reid, p. 217.
- 14 Eastern Bengal & Assam Secretariat, Pol., A, March 1912, Nos. 3-46.
- 15 Ibid., Nos. 47-148.
- 16 Assam Secretariat, Pol., A, June 1914, Nos. 5-13.
- 17 Reid, p. 265.
- 18 Reid p. 287.
- 19 Reid, p. 292-293.
- 20 Reid, p. 293.
- 21 Reid, p. 296.
- 22 Amrita Bazar Patrika, June 8, 1963.
- 23 Shakespear, History of the Assam Rifles, pp. 214-236.
- 24 Reid p. 150.
- 25 Reid p. 152.
- 26 Means queen.
- 27 The 'Joan of Arc' of the Kabuis was released from prison after 1947.
- 28 Reid, p. 173.
- 29 Reid, pp. 177-178.

APPENDIX I

THE FRONTIER TRACTS REGULATION, II OF 1880¹:

As the inhabitants of the hill tracts were not then suited for the elaborate legal rules laid down in the procedure codes and in several other enactments of the same class, and as they had to be governed in a simpler and more personal manner than those of the more civilised and longer-settled tribes, the Frontier Tracts Regulation was passed in 1880. The new Regulation provided that the operation of all unsuitable laws might be barred in all the hill districts, in the North Cachar Sub-Division, the Mikir Hills tract in Nowgong and the Dibrugarh frontier tract in Lakhimpur. By orders issued under this Regulation the tracts in question were excluded from the operation of the enactments relating to criminal procedure, (the Civil Procedure Code was never in force in any of the hill districts), stamps, Court-fees, registration and transfer of property ; and a simpler system of administering justice in civil and criminal matters was prescribed by rules framed under the Scheduled Districts Act. In these tracts the Head of the Local Government was to be the Chief appellate authority in Civil and Criminal matters, and the High Court would have no jurisdiction except in criminal cases against European British subjects ; the Deputy Commissioner would exercise the combined powers of Judge and District Magistrate, and the Assistant and the Extra-Assistant Commissioners, the powers of magistrates and munsifs ; petty cases, both civil and criminal were to be dealt with by village tribunals, presided over by village headmen elected by the people themselves, whose procedure was to be free from all legal technicalities. The Eastern Dwaras in Goalpara were to be administered in Civil matters in accordance with the rules under the Scheduled Districts Act, in lieu of the Civil Procedure Code which had not been in force there.²

FOOTNOTES

1 The passing of two Acts—the Scheduled Districts Act, XIV of 1874, and the Laws Local Extent Act XV of 1874—made it clear how and in what parts of British India different laws passed by the Government were to operate. The Laws Local Extent Act XV specified the laws which were in force in India generally, except in certain backward tracts, described as “Scheduled Districts”. The Scheduled Districts Act, XIV of 1874 authorised Government to declare by notification in the Gazette what laws were in force in such districts, and to extend to them any enactments in force elsewhere which it might seem desirable to bring into operation. The whole of Assam was classed as a “Scheduled district”. (Vide p. 333, Gait).

2 “The Civil Procedure Code never was in force in the hill districts”. p. 334, Gait.—“A History of Assam”, Calcutta 1926.

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