

BURMA, AFTER THE CONQUEST,

VIEWS IN ITS POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND COMMERCIAL
ASPECTS,

FROM

MANDALAY.

BY

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PREFACE.

HAVING written this brief volume on "Burma After the Conquest," the idea occurs to me that the chief excuse for the book, is to be found in the circumstance that it fulfils, by accident, or fate, though not of set purpose, the office which the Provost Marshal's camera accomplished in placing on record the effect of the bullets on the dacoits executed at Mandalay. It brings into a focus the hopes and fears, the actions and the passions, in play during the interregnum in Burma, between the deposition of King Theebaw and the advent of Lord Dufferin, to pronounce the decree fixing the future of the country.

The consternation of the Burmese, stunned and terror-stricken ; the activity and resolution of the British officials, masters of the present, and looking forward with confidence to the future ; the British soldier, discontented at having triumphed too easily, without any fighting worthy

of his thews and sinews; the Buddhist hierophant dreaming of spiritual peace, and unheeding the splashes of blood on the cactus beside him; Theebaw's crown—a fool's cap steeped in blood—lying in the mud, no one caring to pick it up; Burmese princesses pensioned off by the victor, and going into exile to find there security for their lives, which were in hourly peril in their Capital; the Anglo-Burman praying for annexation, as the greatest boon Heaven could give to the two Burmas; the Chinaman preferring his claims to Bhamo, with its jewel mines, and its india-rubber trees; the French diplomatist, disconcerted and soured by an unlooked-for humiliation—the fruit of his own miscalculations: all these deserved to be photographed as they appeared during an important instant of time, which can never be recalled. The camera may not have worked without blurs; but the object of the photographer was to get an exact record of things as they were. No attempt has been made to alter their aspect, or to shade or brighten the picture in accordance with any preconceived view.

As I have just mentioned the Burmese princesses, and their pensions, I may add here that the scale mentioned in the text has been revised

and moderately enhanced. On the arrival of these interesting exiles at Rangoon, Mr. Symes, who carried on the administration of Lower Burma with conspicuous energy in a time of considerable anxiety, during the absence of Mr. Bernard, provided a house for them, and took measures for their protection and comfort.

When I went to Burma I had not made up my mind on the burning question of annexation. It seemed to me to be a matter which could not be decided upon abstract principles. When in Burma, the considerations which presented themselves seemed to justify Lord Salisbury's opinion, that in dealing with the future of Burma the minimum of innovation would promise the best results. The necessity of putting an end to the foreign entanglements in which King Theebaw's intrigues had threatened to involve Burma, compelled the British Government to incorporate Burma in the dominions of Her Majesty. There has been a general agreement that this step was legitimate and advisable. With respect to the form which should be given to the administration of the country thus brought within the system of the Empire, there was some reason for hesitation. It was in the mind of