

✓ \**Notes on the Tribes of the Eastern Frontier, No. I.—By J. H. O'DONEL, Esq., Revenue Surveyor of Arracan.*

(Communicated by A. GROTE, Esq.)

The Survey of the northern portion of the Akyab district and the remaining portion of the frontier bordering on Chittagong was finished in March last. A high range of hills, called Modooting, Mraneedong and Yandong forms a natural boundary between the two districts. Opposite Tulukmee the altitude is about 2,500 feet, farther north the altitude increases to 5,000 feet at Yandong. To the eastward of this boundary range the Koladyne river flows at a distance of 10 to 16 miles. From Tulukmee northwards and within 12 miles along the banks of the river, there are 6 villages on the right bank and four on the left bank: no other villages are met with higher up for 60 miles, the intermediate country being totally uninhabited. The Loosai Kookes reside on the west of the boundary range. The independent Shendocs occupy the tract of country to the east of the Koladyne river, from the mouth of the Sulla Kheong northwards. Further north, to the 23rd parallel of north latitude, the country is occupied by the independent tribes of Muneepoor, Arracan and Ava; there is no recognised frontier in that direction and it will be necessary to fix a frontier line after the survey towards the Yeomadoung range is finished.

In 1851 Captain Tickell proceeded as far as Tulukmee and tried to induce the Khoomee Chiefs to come in. From his published Journal, it appears that 4 or 5 subordinate chiefs attended, but the heads of the most powerful clans made excuses. It was not however till the last cold season that the first attempt was made to explore the country on the Upper Koladyne, occupied by fierce wild tribes, who have for years committed periodical aggressions on the inhabitants of the lower hills and lowland border villages both in the Akyab and Chittagong districts. In April and May 1859, several dacoities were committed on the Myo river and within the northern lowland circles on the Koladyne; many persons were killed, and their wives and children carried away as slaves and sold. In Dec. 1859 a dacoity was committed 5 miles from my camp at Ralla. The coolies were so alarmed, that a few days after, most of them deserted.

\* Extract from a letter to the Commissioner of Arracan.

The Koladyne circle includes within its limits an area of 2,652 square miles. The population consists of Kheongthas, Mroos, Khoomees and Shendoos, all distinguished from the people of the plains by peculiar usages. The Kheongthas live in 9 villages, intermixed with the Khoomees far apart from each other: they number 713 souls. Of these, 189 are cultivators who pay 5 Rs. each annually, 1 Rupee land rent and 4 Rupees capitation tax. The Mroos occupy 12 villages on the Mee Kheong all within 8 miles of Koladyne Thannah; they number 839 souls; of these 136 are cultivators who pay 3 Rupees each annually. Both Kheongthas and Mroos are in general quiet, inoffensive people, similar to the Joomeea Mughs. Tulukmee is a Kheongtha village with thirty houses; during the day the people live on land, but at night they occupy large substantial floating huts moved into the middle of the stream, being afraid of the secret and sudden attacks made by their wild neighbours.

The Khoomees, the largest and most important of the hill tribes in Arracan, occupy the country on both banks of the Koladyne river, from the thannah to the mouth of the Sulla Kheong. Their chief occupation apparently is agricultural industry and they manufacture cloths, spears and gunpowder. All or nearly all practise dacoity. They do not acknowledge the authority of any Rajah or paramount chief, and although they respect and obey their own village chiefs and heads of clans, each chieftain is in some measure under the control of the confederate chiefs. They are divided into 27 clans, who occupy 104 villages, and the estimated number of inhabitants is about 12,000 souls, over whom our authority has never been practically established. The spear and shield are sometimes used, but all adult males are armed with muskets kept clean and ready for use. The most powerful clans, Khoongchoo, Khoong, Anoo, and Yeasing are called Shendoos, they reside on the higher ranges distant from the river, and pay no revenue; those living towards Tulukmee speak a different language from the southern Khoomees. The Keok collects annually about 608 Rs. as land rent, &c., from the Khoomees. The total amount annually collected from Kheongthas, Mroos, and Khoomees is 2,165 Rupees. The independent Shendoos, called Poehs by the Muneepoorees, occupy the lofty and distant ranges on the eastern bank of the Koladyne, northwards from the mouth of the Sulla Kheong. They are held in great dread both by the Khoomees and other hill people living lower

down. They speak a different language, understood only by a few of the nearest Khoomees with whom they barter cloths and other articles. Several Shendoos were slain in an attempt to levy black mail, and within the last 2 years there has been little or no intercourse between them. Being at feud with each other, no accurate information could be obtained of the population or the precise limits of the Shendoo country.

My best endeavours have been directed to carry out the instructions contained in your letter No. 348 of the 12th October, 1859. I was always of opinion that without kindness and conciliatory measures, there was not the slightest chance of my being able to complete the duties entrusted to me in a satisfactory manner. I availed myself of every opportunity to reconcile the people of one village with another with whom they are at feud. Rangkreegree and Kaffa, village chiefs of the same clan, are the only two Khoomees now at feud with each other; this is a blood-feud, and it is not likely it will ever be adjusted till both become better men. There are no other internal feuds among the different clans of Khoomees. For the first two months of my stay in the hills, my proceedings were viewed with apprehensive jealousy by the chiefs Mounghine, chief of the clan Yeasing who had committed dacoities near the thannah a few years ago, at first objected to my parties surveying near his village, but some months after, finding that all the most influential chiefs had paid their respects to me, he offered no further resistance.

You are well aware that the Khoomees have always avoided any intercourse with the local authorities. Military expeditions had failed in effectually putting down their inroads, for the troops seldom penetrated beyond a short distance from the thannah, the country being most difficult of access. Before the troops reached the villages to be attacked, the robbers received timely notice, and deserted their villages, taking away their families with them. There are no paths, and the hills being covered with lofty forest, no guides would venture to assist in making a search for fear of their lives. We knew nothing definitely of the most distant clans who are separated by language, manners, prejudices of race, and a most difficult hilly country, from the neighbouring population. One of the leading points therefore, to which my attention was directed, was to induce the chiefs to meet me, so as to ascertain from them, how they propose that the system of dacoity and

marauding, which they all practise to a great extent, might be put down. I found it at first most difficult to induce the most powerful chiefs to meet me, and to remove the general dread and distrust that prevailed. At the first conference, to quiet their fears, I fully explained that my intentions were peaceable, and that my object was to survey and make a map of the country. I also explained to them that dacoity would in future be promptly and severely punished, and asked them how they proposed to put a stop to the same, appealing to the oldest chiefs, who seemed to possess considerable influence over the others. Many of them indignantly denied that they were robber chiefs; others were noisy, and put their hands to their sides, to feel they had daggers to defend themselves in case of treachery. After urging all the arguments I could think of, I broke up the conference, advising them to reconsider the subject more at leisure, and to let me know the result hereafter. Some weeks after, Thambway, a chief of one of the largest clans, offered to serve as Frontier Police Sirdar. Considering that our Police stationed at the thannah, is perfectly useless in preventing dacoities or apprehending offenders, unless supported by a large Military force, I brought the subject to your notice, and recommended the chief for employment. The chief object in the plundering expeditions is to obtain slaves. The village attacked is surrounded at night, and generally set on fire, or a volley of muskets is fired into it. The inhabitants, as they leave their burning houses, are seized, the males are speared, and the women and children carried away into slavery. In the distribution of plunder and slaves, they are guided by their own recognised rules. The leader of the expedition receives a double share, the petty leaders a share each, and their followers generally the plunder secured by each individual. Adult males are difficult to manage, and are invariably killed. The captive women and children are employed as domestic servants, and considered valuable property: 200 Rupees is generally demanded as ransom for each captive. During the period of my stay in the Hills, for 4 months, with one exception, the most perfect harmony prevailed between my party and the surrounding chiefs of banditti. For several months previous, the Police had attempted to recover several captives and were unsuccessful; when I was about leaving Tulukmee, at the earnest intercession of their relatives, I obtained all the 12 captives, valued at 2,400 Rupees, through the clan influence of the chiefs, four of whom were, on my re-

commendation, rewarded for their good services. I trust the manner in which I have carried out your instructions to restore confidence amongst the lowland people, whose lives and property were exposed to attack, will meet with your approval.

The work of the current season will include the unfinished portion of the district, from the Bay of Bengal and Lemroo river on the west, to the Yeomadoung range of Hills on the Ava frontier. The Keoks of the two frontier circles, Tandan and Lemroo, have informed me, that in addition to the wild Khengs, there are several villages of Burmese dacoits, (living within their circles paying no revenue, and saying they are subjects of Ava,) who, it is likely, will oppose my proceedings on the frontier.

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\**Notes on the Tribes of the Eastern Frontier, No. II.*—By J. H. O'DONEL, Esq., *Revenue Surveyor of Arrakan.*

(Communicated by A. GROTE, Esq.)

The Eastern portion of the district from the Yeomadoung to the Lemroo river is mountainous and hilly. The lowlands are situated chiefly on the west of the Lemroo river, and on the east of the same river there is a narrow belt of lowland, 50 miles in length, and from 1 to 4 miles in breadth. The hill tribes living on our eastern frontier are Khyens, Mrookhyens, and Koos.

KHYENS.—The Khyens differ from the Burmese in dress, language and habits: they occupy both banks of the Lemroo river from the Wah Kheong to the Khee Kheong and the low hills west of the Jegaendong range visible from the plains, the valley of the Taroce Kheong and the low hills and plains within the Tandan, Gnacharain, Prwanrhay and Dainboong circles. They are a quiet inoffensive people and number 3,304 souls who pay land revenue and capitation tax to the amount of Rs. 3,883. Several Khyens have settled down as permanent lowland cultivators, where they have been driven to the necessity of cultivating the fields, to avoid the violence and periodical aggressions of the neighbouring wild people; those living on the west of the Lemroo river, consider that broad river as a sufficient protection. The males frequently go almost naked, having a rag fastened by a string in front

\* Extract from a letter to the Commissioner of Arrakan.

of the lower part of the body: occasionally they wear a chang as a cloak to cover the body. The dress of the females consists of a dark blue cotton gown, fastened at the neck and descending to the knees. The faces of the women are all tattooed, and it gives them a singularly hideous appearance: the tattooing commences with a circle in the forehead and a straight line bisects it, extending to the nose: curved lines are made along each cheek, converging towards the chin, where they end in a circle: the outer line forms a curious edging as if the face was covered with a mask. Figures of animals are sometimes tattooed as ornaments; these marks and figures are made by pressing sharp points into the flesh, and filling the punctures with a liquid, prepared from the juice of a tree found in the forests. The operation is so painful, that young girls of 8 or 10 years are obliged to be tied down, their faces remain swollen for a fortnight afterwards. From 5 to 30 Rs. is generally paid for disfiguring the faces of young females.

**MROO KHYENS.**—The most northern village, occupied by the Mroo Khyens paying revenue, is Sikcharoa, situated 14 miles north of the junction of the Saeng Kheong with the Lemroo river. The Mroo Khyens occupy the valleys of the Wah Kheong, Saeng Kheong, Mau Kheong and that part of the valley of the Lemroo between Peng Kheong and Saeng Kheong. They number 4,020 souls, of whom 37 cultivators pay an annual revenue of Rs. 111. This small revenue is chiefly derived from the sale of bamboos, which are floated down in rafts of 10,000 or more, and sold in the plains at 1 Rupee the hundred. The village of Anoongroa is a refuge for deformed, maimed, and all sick persons labouring under palsy, ulcers, leprosy and other incurable diseases. Some who recover, cultivate for themselves, but in general they are supported by their relatives, who consider them outcasts: they are not allowed to beg, and would on no account receive shelter in any other villages.

The inhabitants of Hytweegree and the villages on the heights near the Mau Kheong pass,\* situated several miles within our frontier, would not render me any assistance or receive presents, being afraid of the barbarous and cruel punishments inflicted by the Burmese. A Burmese official resides at Loong-shai-mroo, 2 days' journey on the Ava side of the boundary range. He collects annually from each of these villages, one male or female slave valued from 50 to 100 Rs. and

\* Kangto, Thonoo, Atareepoong, Okreepoong.

a chang or covering from each house, valued at 1 Rupee. Although they pay readily whatever is demanded from them by the Burmese, they do not hesitate to levy black mail from the few travellers who attempt to pass by this route over the Yeomadoung at Koocelandong, (5924 feet high,) to purchase cattle from Burmah proper. They did not however offer any opposition to the survey parties employed in this direction. The high central ridge of the Yeomadoung is a distinct natural boundary, and there is no doubt that the villages named above are situated within the limits of the Akyab district.

Koos.—The Koos occupy the mountainous country near the sources of the Lemroo river and its principal feeder the Peng Kheong, within the 22nd parallel of north latitude, westward of the Yeomadoung range; they have never paid any revenue and it is only after entering the hills for 8 or 10 days, that the first villages of these wild people are met with. The approximate number of houses is 2897, and allowing 5 persons for each house, the number of inhabitants may be estimated at about 14,485. Those living on the Peng Kheong have intercourse with the neighbouring Khoomees of the Koladyne circle, from whom they differ but little in their habits. On occasions of rejoicing, the latter amuse themselves by dancing round a bull or gayal tied down to a stake. As they dance round and round the animal is slowly despatched by numberless spear wounds, aimed at every part of its body. Bamboo cups are applied to the wounds; men, women and children drink the blood. Beyond vague information that the Koos exceeded the Khoomees in their barbarous practices, by torturing human creatures in the same manner, nothing was known of them. Revenge may occasionally be gratified in this cruel manner, but the practice is not common, nor could I obtain any information on the subject. The Koos living on the Lemroo river are perfectly wild and at feud with each other. Interpreters and guides from the nearest Mroo Khyen villages could not be obtained; they would not accept of presents, stating that it was as much as their lives were worth, to attempt proceeding higher up the river. Three attempts were however made to proceed a few miles beyond Khopatong hill station; twice the Khyen coolies deserted, and the third time they resolutely refused to proceed, and said they would again desert, if another attempt was made. The direction of the Hill stations was changed more to the westward, and the triangulation was carried on along the heights bordering on the Peng

Kheong. The Koos being unacquainted with the use of salt, their food is extremely insipid and the smallness of their appetite was noticed. Their chief food is Indian corn. Like the Khyens and Mroo Khyens, they wear but little clothing. Canes slit in two and painted red are wrapped round the stomach about 20 times, as a protection from poisonous arrow wounds. Muskets are common amongst the Koos of the Peng Kheong. Spears, bows and arrows, manufactured by themselves, are the other weapons used.

The Khyens made no complaints about any of their villages being attacked by Hill robbers or of any of their number being carried away as slaves. Cattles are, however, frequently stolen.

The only route by which the Hills can be entered, is the bed of the Lemroo river, which, in the upper part of its course, is a mountain torrent, and admits only of canoes of the smallest size. There is a waterfall 4 miles above the village of Goonguen or Lemroo, and after the first day's journey, falls and rapids are met with almost at every mile and sometimes oftener. The principal feeders of the Lemroo are the Peng Kheong, Saeng Kheong, Wap Kheong, Mau Kheong and Saroe Kheong. Canoes are used on these streams for short distances from their junctions with the main stream.

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*Notes on the Tribes of the Eastern Frontier, No. III.—By H. J.*

REYNOLDS, *Esq.*

(Communicated by A. GROTE, *Esq.*)

I have alluded in my 8th para.\* to the existence of several Kookie villages near the boundary line. I was told that there are 18 such villages, and I have myself visited 7 of them, all of which are within the British territory. As these hills have perhaps never before been traversed by an Officer of Government, a few remarks respecting these hill people may not be out of place. I have above spoken of them as Kookies; but the name is not properly applicable to these people, who are an entirely different race from the Kookies of the Chittagong jungles. The name by which they are commonly known is "Tipperahs." In physiognomy some of them are like the Muri-poores, but the greater part bear more resemblance to the Khasiah

\* In a foregoing portion of the letter from which the above is extracted.

tribes, having strongly marked Calmuck, or Mongolian features, with flat faces and thick lips. Those whom I saw were not in general shorter in stature than Bengalis, and were far more muscular and strongly made. I was struck, with the fair complexions of many of them, scarcely darker than a swarthy European. The villages which I visited contained perhaps from 100 to 200 inhabitants each, and each house is raised on bamboo piles 4 or 5 feet from the ground. This is done, as I was told, partly as a protection against wild beasts, and partly to keep the houses out of the reach of floods after a heavy rain; (I may remark, that though I heard a good deal of wild animals being numerous upon these hills, yet I saw none whatever; indeed the hills appeared to be remarkably bare of life, even birds being very scarce.) The "Tipperahs" understand and speak Bengali, the better class of them correctly enough and the lower class imperfectly: but they conversed with each other in a dialect of their own, which none of my party understood. They appear to maintain no caste restrictions, and eat any kind of food; even taking with perfect readiness some which I offered them. They keep pigs, fowls and pigeons, but they do not seem to have any bullocks, nor did I see any ploughs in their villages. They cultivate cotton and rice upon patches of the hills which they clear of jungle. They pay no rent, I was informed, for the lands they occupy; but they pay a nuzzer of one rupee to the Rajah of Tipperah upon every occasion of a marriage among them.

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