

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN BURMA, 1890-1892

Letters from Lieutenant J. K. Watson, K.R.R.C.

Edited by B. R. Pearn



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THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

Lieutenant J. K. Watson of the King's Royal Rifle Corps or, by its older designation, the 60th Rifles, accompanied the Fourth Battalion of his Regiment when in November 1890 it was posted from India to Burma. While in Burma Lieut. Watson wrote long letters to his family at home, describing his experiences, and some of these are here reproduced.

The Battalion went first to Mandalay, capital of the Burmese Kings from 1857 till the British annexation of Upper Burma in 1886, and stayed there till the end of the year. The unit was then divided into two detachments. The headquarters and half the strength went three hundred miles down the Irrawaddy River to Thayetmyo, which had been the British frontier post prior to the annexation and which was still an important military centre. The remainder was posted to Myingyan, headquarters of the Myingyan military District, 80 miles below Mandalay. Lieut. Watson went to Myingyan as Wing Adjutant.

Early in March, 1891, Lieut. Watson was sent to Bhamo, in the north of Burma, with two hundred men of his Battalion. He stayed there for two months, and during this time he took part in a minor military operation in the hill area on the west bank of the Irrawaddy below Bhamo.

At that time, British authority was still not firmly established in Upper Burma. After the annexation in 1886, much resistance was encountered, and an army of 35,000 men, drawn from the British and Indian Armies, had to be employed to deal with the situation; amongst the units engaged were the Battalions of the Burma Regiment, specially raised in India for the purpose. These Battalions, which Lieut. Watson refers to, were later converted into an armed constabulary known as the Burma Military Police. Amongst the most strenuous opponents of the new Government were the Kachins of the far north who from their hills habitually raided the more settled areas. A number of expeditions were sent against them, and it was in one of these that Lieut. Watson took part.

A small force was sent from Bhamo down the Irrawaddy 40 miles to Shwegu, and from there operated in two columns up the Kaukkwe and Mosit valleys into the hills on the right bank of the river. Lieut. Watson hoped to command one of these columns, but at the last moment a more senior

officer who had been delayed in India rejoined his company at Bhamo, and so Watson's hopes were disappointed; he did, however, accompany one of the columns and recorded his adventures in his letters. Unfortunately one of these, describing the early stages of the expedition, is missing. The extant letters nevertheless give a good picture of one of the numerous military operations which were undertaken in Burma in those days.

After their return from Bhamo, Lieut. Watson and his detachment stayed in Myingyan till the end of the year. Then he served with the forces operating in the Chin Hills.

The Chin Hills lie between the Irrawaddy and Chindwin valleys of Burma on the east and the Lushai Hills of Assam on the west. The area consists of forested ridges, rising to considerable heights and separated by deep valleys. In the early 1890's, the only means of communication in these Hills was by unmetalled paths, usable by pedestrians and pack-animals in the dry season and barely usable at all in the rains. This difficult terrain was inhabited by numerous tribal groups, known collectively in Burma as Chins, who had owed a vague allegiance to the Burmese Kings but who in practice had been uncontrolled. The Lushai Hills were also unsettled. This unadministered region in the middle of British territory in India and Burma was troublesome, and measures were needed to deter the inhabitants from their raids on the lowlands.

Military operations were undertaken in 1888-89, the northern area of the Chin Hills was more or less pacified, and a military centre was established there under the name of Fort White, called after General Sir George White who commanded the operations and who later gained renown as the defender of Ladysmith during the South African War. In 1889-90 further operations were carried out to the south, including the despatch of a column from the India side under Brigadier-General (later Major-General Sir Vincent) Tregear, which cut a track through the Lushai and Chin Hills as far as Haka, in the centre of the Chin area. Another column established a track from the Burma side to Haka, where a military and civil post was set up.

Peace was, however, far from assured. The Chins were not reconciled to British rule, and attacks on officials were liable to occur, sometimes with disastrous results for the British. Thus in December 1890 the people of Thetta, in the southern Chin Hills, attacked a column and killed a police officer; and in March 1891 a force under

Lieutenant Mocatta which was moving from Haka to Fort Tregear, a military post on the Lushai-Chin border, was attached by the Klang-Klang people. In each case a hasty reprisal was effected, but owing to the lateness of the season and the diversion of forces to deal with troubles in Manipur, the action taken was ineffective.

These incidents and the generally unsettled condition of most of the area led to the organization of an extensive operation for the dry weather season of 1890-91. Two columns, the Kamhow and the Nwengal Column, were to operate in the north; the Baungshe Column was to operate south of Haka; the Klang-Klang Column was to operate west of Haka; and the Tashon Column was to occupy Falam, the centre of the Tashons, one of the major Chin tribes, and to establish a post there. These columns were to 'show the flag' and also in some cases to impose retribution for previous resistance, generally by levying fines of guns with which the Chins seem to have been well supplied, most of them being old flint-lock muskets.

Lieut. Watson with a detachment of his Battalion was attached to the Baungshe Column. The force assembled at Pakokku, on the Irrawaddy south of Myingyan. Leaving there on December 3, 1891, it marched westwards across country to Pyinchaung, where it reached the valley of the Yaw river flowing south towards the Irrawaddy. From Pyinchaung the Column marched up the Yaw to Chaungu, and then westwards across the Pondaung hills to the valley of the Maw, or Myittha, which flows north to join the Chindwin at Kalewa. They followed the Maw valley northwards to Gangaw, and then struck west into the Chin Hills. On December 31, they occupied the village of Shurkhua and from there they made a circular tour to the south and west amongst the Baungshe people, after which the Column went to Haka, arriving there on January 31.

Lieut. Watson was then put in charge of several hundred porters, recruited from the Darjeeling area to carry supplies in the Chin Hills operations, and with nearly four hundred of these to look after he joined the Klang-Klang Column which marched westwards to deal with the Chins who had attacked Lieut. Mocatta's column a year previously. The Column left Haka on February 5 and marched almost to the Lushai border, reaching Haka again on March 4. Watson and his coolies were then attached to the Tashon Column, which left Haka on March 10 and reached Falam on the 13th; the town was occupied without difficulty. On the 20th the Column set out on a tour of the neighbouring country and

returned to Falam on April 1. After a further task of carrying stores from Haka to Falam, Lieut. Watson and his coolies set out from Haka on April 4 to return to Pakokku by the same route as had been taken on the outward journey in December. In the period between leaving Pakokku on December 3 and arriving there again on May 2, Lieut. Watson marched about 900 miles, mainly up and down steep hills, but without seeing a great deal of action.

He took his coolies by river from Pakokku to Mandalay, thence by rail to Rangoon, and so by sea to Calcutta where they were paid off. He then returned to his Wing Adjutancy at Myingyan until his Battalion left for home at the end of the year.

The letters shed a good deal of light on the activities of the military in Burma in the early 1890s as seen by a junior regimental officer. Lieut. Watson was a keen observer and a stern critic of military shortcomings; and even when allowance is made for the regimental officer's normal mistrust of the staff and the specialist services, it is evident from the letters that the management of movement and supply was thoroughly inefficient, and Lieut. Watson's pungent comments seem fully justified.

The operations which the letters describe are now almost forgotten, but they involved considerable numbers of men and the expenditure of much effort. They also involved much suffering for the participants, rarely from wounds but in the great majority of cases from sickness. On January 4, 1892, only six weeks after leaving Pakokku, Lieut. Watson recorded that of his 101 men of the K.R.R., only 53 were fit for duty: of the remainder 2 had died and the rest were incapacitated by dysentery or malaria.

In the reproduction of the letters, passages referring to personal matters have been omitted; and apart from the inclusion of a few extracts illustrative of conditions of life in Burma seventy years ago, the contents of the letters here given relate to military movements and operations. Place-names have been changed where necessary to conform with modern usages. All the letters were addressed to Lieut. Watson's father, Major-General J. N. Watson, with the exception of those of August 27, 1890 and September 13, 1890, and the second letter of April 7, 1892, which he sent to his sister. The letters are reproduced by permission of Mr. D. G. S. Winters, of Birney Hill, Boughton Aluph, Kent.

After leaving Burma, Lieutenant Watson served with his battalion in England and Gibraltar till 1894, when he was seconded to the Egyptian Army, with which most of his subsequent service was spent. He retired in 1922 with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; amongst his decorations were the D.S.O. (1896), the C.M.G. (1900), the C.V.O. (1912) and the C.B.E. (1919). He died at Camberley in 1942.

B. R. Pearn

Aylmerton, Norfolk, England
November 1966

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Urui on the Sutlej, August 27th, 1890

The Bn. goes to Burmah in November, tho' I don't know the exact date. There will probably be no expedition this winter, but there is to be one on a large scale next year by which time the Railway to the Theebawb Sawbwa territory will be completed--and in the ordinary course of events we shall take part in it. I hear this from Hussey-Walsh in the Cheshire Regt. which are quartered at Thayetmyo and Myingyan; we relieve them. The former place he writes is very damp--well wooded--good bungalows--good deal of society--handy to Rangoon which you can reach by river and rail in 18 hours. Poor polo ground and indifferent shooting--never very hot. Myingyan is right out in the jungle--excellent duck, goose, teal and snipe shooting there from November to Feb. and good quail shooting at this time of year--polo twice a week on a very fair ground--bungalows nothing but huts--intensely hot in about April, May and June. Not a tree in the place, and a long distance from Rangoon. They have a company of Mounted Inf (50) who are out in the jungle most of the year. Bar the heat I daresay Myingyan won't be at all an unpleasant quarter.

Camp near Sheenkal Pass, September 13th, 1890

We shall be on our way to Burmah soon after this reaches you--28th October is the day we leave Allahabad, and from what I can gather we shall spend most of the winter in Mandalay till relieved by the Duke of C's Light Infantry when half of us go to Thayetmyo (Hd. Qrts.) and half to Myingyan--at each place there's a company 50 strong of Mounted Infantry.

Fort Toungoo, November 5th, 1890

. . . We left Murdapur about 6 p.m. . . . We reached Calcutta at 5.30 the following morning (29th Oct.) and my company and one other had the job of unloading the train. It seems odd at a place like Calcutta, where troops are constantly being shipped to Burmah, they don't have some means of running the troop trains down to the ship. As things now stand, all the baggage has to be put onto bullock carts at the station and taken more than 3 miles to the Docks.

1.0 Hsipaw, in the Northern Shan States.

Well ours was rather a long hot job, but inspite of having had no breakfast the men worked thundering well and the last cart was started off by 11.30 a.m. There were a good many things smashed, amongst others a case of hock was stove in as it was chucked onto the waggon--the hock flowed out freely; and you wd have laughed to see the thirsty riflemen catching the drops. We had nearly 3 miles to march to the rest camp where we got some breakfast. . o . Next morning (30th) we were busy loading ship. . . .

Friday the 31st we paraded at 5 a.m. and marched down to the docks which were about a mile and a half from the Rest Camp. By 7 a.m. we were aboard and at 8 o'clock we sailed down the Hoogly. . . . I was fairly comfortable on board, sharing a cabin with Reggie Oxley, opening on to the waist of the ship on the port side; most of the other cabins were round the saloon. H.M.I.M.S. 'Canning' (Captain Hewett) is only 1200 tons and built to accommodate about 350 men--as we had close on 600 the men, poor devils, were crowded like sardines in a tin and the heat between decks was awful. . o . We had to anchor at the mouth of the Hoogly at dusk the first evening, the navigation there is difficult and not being in a hurry they prefer to do it by daylight. . o .

Tuesday the 4th we got into the Irrawaddy about 8 a.m. and alongside the Quay at Rangoon at 10.30 a.m. I had to disembark my Company at once and load baggage up to the time we started. The arrangements were execrable and didn't reflect much credit on the Madras Presidency.¹ They ought to have given us a clear day at Rangoon; as it was, the whole thing was a hustle--all the battalion on fatigue all day, and I must say the men worked thundering well. It was desperate hot and they hadn't much under their waistcoats. A good deal of the heavy baggage has been left behind.

Mandalay, November 6th, 1890, 4 p.m.

I've only a few minutes; the mail I find leaves here at 5 o'clock. We got here all right this morning. Burmah looks charming but from what we hear it's a pretty infernal place to be in.

1. Burma was at that time within the Madras Command.

Mandalay, November 13th, 1890

I must pick up the thread of my story from where I stopped abruptly last week. I think I had got as far as our hurried departure from Rangoon. Never did a staff make such a bad 'Bunderbhust'.^o They gave us six hours to unload the ship and load up the train. There were only 16 trucks full; not counting a great deal that was sent on to Thayetmyo and Myingyan by river, and altho' there's a siding that runs down to within a few yards of the ship they made no use of it; and everything had to be packed in bullock carts and taken at a snail's pace to the Railway Station 1 1/2 miles off. . . . We left Rangoon at 6.30 and 7.30 in two trains. I was in the first and we got to Toungoo about 8 o'clock next morning (5th Nov.). . . . Toungoo is an awfully picturesque place and impressed us a good deal. It's much more like one's idea of India before you see the country. Very dense tropical vegetation, huge palm trees and banana plants. Then all the houses are pretty wooden chalets, like large summerhouses, built on piles. It waso uncommonly hot there tho', and one was glad to get under the punkah. . . .

The first train left Toungoo at 5.30 in the afternoon and we reached Mandalay at 7 a.m. next morning. We had all the heavy baggage (except what had to be left behind at Rangoon) on our train, and as soon as we got in, my Company 'A' and 'C' started unloading and sending the baggage off to barracks. The men wanted their breakfasts and worked with a will, so that by half past ten we had sent the last cart load off, and 1/4 of an hour later we were up in our lines. We relieved the Border Regt. here and they were still in occupation of the barracks, so our men had no where to go, and had to pile arms and get into what little shade there was. Why on earth they didn't get the Borders into camp for a day, goodness knows, but the Madras staff seem famous for their extraordinary arrangements! The rest of that day was one of extreme discomfort. The fellows in the Border Regt. hadn't vacated their quarters, so there was nowhere for us to go, and it wasn't till 5 in the afternoon that we were able to get our things into the houses. . . . Mandalay is full of curious sights but I've not had time to look round properly yet. . . . a Mandalay is a very pretty place--the Shan Hills 3000 feet only 10 miles away. The Club is in one part of the palace--a magnificent building,

1. Arrangement.o

pagoda-like, all the interior covered with cut glass mirrors, golden and red pillars. The inhabitants all look as if they had stepped out of a scene in the Mikado--and the satins and silks of some of the natives are quite wonderful.

Mandalay, November 19th, 1890

This is such a pretty place and utterly unlike anything one sees in India. When we first got into Mandalay^b the majority of the inhabitants lived inside the walls, which form an exact square each side being a mile and a quarter in length, with a large gate in the centre of each side. The whole of the space within has been cleared of the native houses, and huts and barracks built on the old sites. The palace stands exactly in the centre of the square. . . . Outside the walls are all the native houses, shops and bazaars, and very quaint looking places they are. Our quarters are conveniently situated. . . . Everything's wood and there's hardly such a thing as a brick in the place.

Myingyan, Upper Burma, December 31st, 1890

We left Mandalay at 9 a.m. Sunday having marched down 4 1/2 miles to the shore. Got here at 10 on Monday. . . . I'll send you details of our trip down and of this place in my next. At first sight it's just about the most ghastly looking spot I've seen in Asia, but it no doubt will improve on acquaintance.

Myingyan, January 7th, 1891

We lead a real humdrum life here and one week is exactly like another. Sunday we go to church at 11. Such a funny building. Wooden framework and the rest all matting, worked chequerwise, roof of grass thatch. It looks exactly as if it had come out of a box of German toys. . . . There's no harmonium or instrument of any kind, so we have to get together a scratch choir and start the hymns as best we can. . . . Monday there's nothing particular laid down. Tuesday polo . . . a Wednesday is the 'great day' at the lawn

1. I.e., at the British occupation in November 1885.

tennis courts: that is to say, one of the three ladies of the station supply tea and cakes while the Myingyan world disport themselves on two very inferior mud courts. There's a small bamboo hut to serve as a pavilion and the enclosure fenced round with matting. There's hardly a tree in the place, this being in the dry zone and very different from the country round Mandalay or Thayetmyo which is well wooded and covered with tropical vegetation. Here it's miles and miles of sand, almost dead level, covered in parts with low scrub jungle, and cultivated round the villages. There's no club here; but one Peer Mahomed, a general dealer, has a room which he throws open to the public--a long ill lighted place, with a big table and a few papers; behind this is a billiard room and upstairs is his shop where you can get most things from sticking plaster to a side saddle, but everything as you always find in stores of the kind, very expensive and very indifferent. I don't patronise the so called club much, but generally get into a novel and a large chair in quarters for the hour between daylight and dinner. Thursday of course is a holiday and will generally be spent shooting. The quail ought to be in in a month; just now there's not much beyond a few duck and perhaps a goose to be got. Friday is polo, and Saturday cricket. That's our life here. We've got settled down pretty comfortably by now; and have made the mess rather snug. There's a nice little garden around it, full of sweet peas, mignonette, convolvulus, etc., and a good view over the Irrawaddy. One great pull of Myingyan is it's such a healthy spot. One feels the difference even in this short time; and you eat enormously and wake up in the mornings feeling really fit, which one never did at Mandalay.

The General (Brigadier General Graham, R.A.) leaves today for the Chin Hills. . . . No one seems quite clear as to the plan of campaign; but roughly speaking there are some 12,000 men, split up into two forces: one as a punitive expedition against the people who shot a police officer the other day,¹ the other to explore some new route. The last force is going where we've never been before and of course anything might turn up. A second Afghan war awaiting them for all one can tell--Graham's fond of a fight, they say, and if he can see his way to one there'll be one--would make him a K.C.B. you see! But the general opinion seems to be that nothing much would come of it.

1. See next letter.

Myingyan, January 11th, 1891

I see you've not quite got hold of the name of this place--MYINGYAN is the spelling, and Minjárn the pronunciation--the men of course call it Mangey Anne. . . . Bad news came three days ago from Harkar--up 70 miles from here up the Chin Win valley, in the Shan States. Young James, a Sapper, and a small party of Goorkhas had a bit of a fight with the Shans. As usual, our fellows couldn't get at them at all; James and 8 Goorkhas were killed.ó

Myingyan, January 25th, 1891

Just at present there are 3 separate expeditions on foot: 1) for the purpose of discovering a new route for a road,ó 2) to punish the people who shot Wetherell (Political) and James. R.E., 3) to punish the people in the Yaw valley. Of course there's always the chance of their meeting much more opposition than they expect. The Afghan War if you remember began in just the same way.

Myingyan, February 25th, 1891

Rumours of fighting are coming from the North, up beyond Bhamo near the Chinese frontier. 250 more men were sent up a fortnight ago; and last night we heard there had been a big fight and we had lost 60 men, mostly British. This is in all probability a complete 'sham' and no one

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1. Lieut. Watson's geography was at fault, Haka being in the Chin Hills and not in either the Chindwin valley or the Shan States. The conflict referred to was with Chins, not Shans. On December 21, 1890, Mr. C.H.P. Wetherell, Assistant Superintendent of Police, was killed during an expedition against the village of Thetta, in the southern Chin Hills. Two columns, one from Haka and the other from Gangaw, were sent against Thetta in January 1891, but Lieut. James, R.E., was killed during the operations. Casualties, besides Lieut. James, were 2 killed and 1 wounded.
 2. The new road was being developed between the Chin Hills and the Indian side of the border.

believes much in it.¹ However, up there you have to deal with men who are much the same stamp as the 'black flags' which gave the French so much trouble in the Tonquin War.²

On board 'Freebooter' en route from
Myingyan to Bhamo, March 3rd, 1891

Sunday 1st March we had church an hour earlier and in white clothing. It was getting a bit hot for 11 o'clock. Just as we were going into church we got the news that probably we should have to send up 200 rifles to garrison Bhamo, the place being unprotected owing to the troops going to this Wuntho business.³ This of course created some excitement, and Monday (yesterday) about 4 p.m. we got orders to send 100 men at once, and here we are. . . . This is only a tiny little paddle steamer, so small that you have to trim the ship, and keep telling men to shift to the other side. She only draws about 18 inches of water. There's a delicious breeze meeting us, which is very acceptable as the sun is pretty hot with only a single awning. The river is like a sheet of glass, low bare sandy banks, with an occasional village, pagoda, and clumps of palm trees, and all the time the monotonous voice of the lascar, who takes soundings all day with a pole.

-
1. Lieut. Watson's scepticism was justified. In January 1891 there was an outbreak of Kachin hostility in the Sinkan valley in Bhamo district, and an expedition was sent to deal with it; but there appears to have been no major engagement, and casualties were few.
 2. The French applied the term 'Black Flags' to rebels from China who took to baditry in northern Vietnam after the suppression of the T'ai P'ing rebellion in their own country, and to the Chinese troops who, called in by the Vietnamese Emperor to assist him, also took to banditry.
 3. The Sawbwa or hereditary chief of the Shan state of Wuntho, lying between the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers, resisted the imposition of British authority and in February 1891 attacked police and military posts; after the operations referred to by Lieut. Watson, he was deposed and his state was brought under direct administration.

Bhamo, Upper Burma, March 15th, 1891

We got to this place about four o'clock last Sunday afternoon, the 10th inst., and an hour afterwards were settled down in our new quarters; which, after the mat houses at Myingyan, are quite palatial. . . . No news of importance from the Wuntho district. . . . The Sawbwa has fled north. The popular opinion is that so far as fighting goes the business there is over.

Bhamo, Begun April 4th, 1891

At last I've a little to tell you in the way of news and I hope to be out in the jungles before this letter leaves here. It has been found necessary to send out a Column into the Kaukkwe country for several reasons--1) it's an entirely unknown and unmapped district, 2) the Sawbwa (headman) of Ganga has been raiding on his peaceable neighbours, twice burnt their villages, and murdered all women and children, and seized all the cattle, 3) the Sawbwa of Wuntho made his escape into the fastnesses around Ganga and is reported to be raising a following there. We got a description of the man by wire last night--5' 6", small light moustache, not a tooth in his head, dress usually khaki, but probably now in disguise. If caught, he's to be dealt summarily with. . . . The plan of campaign is to split the Column up into two parts each 120 strong, one to work up the Kaukkwe River and to attack Nankho if possible from the North, the other to push up the valley of the Mosit Chaung (stream) and attack a group of villages of which Ganga is the centre. This attack to take place simultaneously with the one on Nankho. After this the columns will probably combine and knock about the jungle for a month or 6 weeks, getting perhaps across to the west side of the Kaukkweo

These columns were decided on and the details of officers and strength of each sanctioned by the Genl Com. Burma about 5 days back; and I, with Bols, Devonshire Regt. and Bell, 11th M.I., was going to command the Mosit column; and Farrant, Captain M.I., the other one. Then all of a sudden I get a telegram from Vere to say he's on his way up here, and yesterday he arrived by the mail without the slightest knowledge that there was anything on here. He's been in Allahabad with time expired men for the last 3 months and his company being up here he was ordered to rejoin at Bhamo. So this just cuts me out of commanding the column, which is

a nuisance. It's only a small affair of course, still it might have turned up trumps somehow. Farrant's column went off on Saturday morning in the government steamer 'Bhamo' and we follow on Tuesday morning down to Shwegu where our rations and transport is collected. We are to have eleven elephants, which will enable us to start up from Mosit with ten days rations. Beyond this I can tell you no more. Nothing is known of the details of the country or villages. Of course I shall do all I can to bring back some sort of map; but it's hilly and thick jungle and consequently very hard to map. We shall probably be out about a month.

Since I started writing this I have received the following telegram from Reggie Oxley at Thayetmyo 'All here ordered up to Manipur Frontier start fourth inst.^d By the time this reaches you you will probably know more about the disturbances up there than I can tell you now.^b

Lagyagatong Village, Begun April 18th, 1891

My last gave you news as far as the 9th of April. By that evening all our transport was in and next morning, the 10th., we were up as early as 3 a.m. Indeed we were all glad to be stirring, for it had been a wet windy night and our blankets wet and limbs stiff. Fire^s couldn't be allowed so there was no means of getting things dry. By 4 a.m. the force was ready to start; and only waiting for the first streak of dawn to get under way, for on a moonless night it's quite impossible to get along these jungle paths. They are very narrow, and troops can only move in single file, while in many places the way is overgrown and has to be cut. The force was divided as follows: 40 of our men, 20 Madras Inf. with Vere, Bell and self in one party; 20 Devon Mounted Inf. and 10 of our fellows under Bols (Devon Regt.) and with him George the political officer.² Elephants and baggage and transport were left to follow on

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1. During disturbances at Imphal, Mr. Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam, and four other officers were murdered on March 24 while trying, under a flag of truce, to negotiate with rebels who had attacked the Residency. The troops guarding the Residency then retired to Silchar. Columns from Silchar, Kohima and Burma reoccupied Imphal on April 27.
 2. E.C.S. George, C.I.E., Deputy-Commissioner, Bhamo District.

with a guard of 30 Madras Inf. We took one day's rations and a blanket each, 60 rounds per man. We thought we were in for some busy work, as Natsha was said to be stockaded, also all the road from Natsha to Taungdu. This last was our destination. We were to proceed via Natsha and Lagya-gatong: Bols party to go round by Mansak.

About 1/2 past 4 we made a start and both parties kept together for the first 6 miles to Kuse. The path as far as this led down a deep valley, across a small 'chaung' or stream, and up a steep ascent to Kuse. This was the last friendly village and from this point we were prepared to look out for 'squalls'. What may be expected is a stockade across the path, usually 20 or 30 yards beyond a turn in the road so that you come on it unexpectedly. The wily Kachin places himself behind this and directly the head of the column appears round the corner they fire one salvo from their primitive guns and make a bolt--to catch them is almost an impossibility; you can do nothing in the way of flanking parties, the jungle's far too thick, and a file of men 30 or 40 yards ahead of the column is your advance guard. If they see anything suspicious ahead they should get off the path and into the jungle at once and hollow back to the column behind. If the road is stockaded you may be able to work a small party round thro' the jungle unless it's too thick, in which case the obstacle must be rushed. Well, going along with the advanced file is sufficiently exciting to make the march interesting. You've got to keep an eye on your guide too; he's a Kachin and therefore the very essence of treachery--you warn him he'dl be shot if he attempts to run away or if he leads you into an ambush; so the poor man is in a pretty good funk, placed as he is between two fires. He rode a pony where practicable, and disguised his nervousness as best he could fanning himself in an airy sort of way with a cluster of bamboo leaves. We found the road blocked with trunks of trees at several points, all of which were good places for loosing off at us and shewed careful choosing; but no Kachins were behind these obstacles. The two Tommies on ahead with me were as cool as paint and enjoyed the job immensely, plainly and in forcible language showing their disappointment as we found each stockade undefended. All thro' the path was very difficult, now down a steep descent, now clambering up on all fours; and streams knee deep to be crossed. We only go about 2 miles an hour and in the middle of April by 9 a.m. the Burma sun strikes precious hot on one.

About 10 a.m. the guide informed me we were nearing Natsha, and ten minutes later he desired to be allowed to

fall back to the rear of the column--as he was valuable in the future I allowed him to do so, and we went on carefully up a steep ascent to the village, but could see no sign of it till we actually came upon a stockade at the entrance of it. 3 minutes later the whole lot of us were loose in the village and Kachins bolting from every house (there were about a dozen houses). Most of them were armed with guns and spears and loosed off at us prior to dashing into the jungle, which they did with wonderful celerity! There was firing for 2 or 3 minutes and then the fun was over. Two of them were shot down, poor devils--both dead; and about 1/2 a dozen seized. We searched the village and got some guns and spears. The head man was one of the prisoners and from him we learnt that our arrival was a surprise. They knew the white men were coming up but expected us by the short road from Mosit, i.e. via Pawpon, and this road he said was stockaded and held. We had a halt for about 1/2 an hour at Natsha, tied up the prisoners and brought them on with us towards Lagyagatong. The path was still as bad as ever and this last 6 miles in a blazing sun was really hard. There were several stockades, but all deserted; but our captives informed us that we were to be resisted at Lagyagatong, so there was something to look forward to, and when we were within a few hundred yards of the village we halted to get a 'breather' for the last 3 miles were all steep up against the collar. We rushed the village by two approaches both of which were blocked. There were a few shots fired by the Kachins, more I think to give the inhabitants the signal to bolt than to do us harm. We caught sight of one or two forms disappearing into the jungle, but beyond them the village was absolutely deserted. They had evidently left in a hurry for fires were still burning and all their household goods strewn about. We left a small guard here and pushed on at once to Taungdu which is on an adjoining knoll and only 1/4 of a mile off. It's here that the Tonga Sawbwa has his house--much the same style as all the others--bamboo with thatched roof raised a few feet from the ground--but rather bigger and better finished than the other houses. He's the gentleman we particularly wanted to catch, being the instigator of the raids and murders which were committed some two months ago; and to punish which is one object of the expedition. We found everything deserted; the Sawbwa had bolted. We got some guns, skins, fowls and pigs which last the men were very pleased to get, a pleasant change from the bully beef. Half an hour later Bols' party arrived; it was rather amusing to see them rush into the village--they had heard our firing and thought there was work to be done, and their chagrin was great when they saw us all squatting down

munching our biscuits. George, the deputy commissioner, ordered Taungdu to be burnt and half an hour afterwards the whole place was in a blaze. By Jove, how the houses burnt. We then all took up our quarters at Lagyagatong from which place I am now writing. . o . We've done a good deal in the way of making ourselves as comfortable as possible under the circumstances: tables, chairs and beds made of bamboo, rough shelters rigged up for the men.

The day after we got in here we were all out in small parties searching the jungle for the fugitive villagers. I, with 20 men, got on quite fresh footprints leading down the dry bed of a stream--very steep descent and jungle so thick around and overhead that we seemed almost in the dark. We went struggling on for an hour or so down this place when we suddenly emerged on to a small clearing; the bed of the stream widened and there was a rock-bound deep pool, the sides one mass of ferns. Crack, crack, splash, splash, and a couple of shots fizzed into the water; this was followed by a scrummage and rush amongst the jungle to the right and above us. That's all we saw of the wily Kachin. We couldn't go straight on as the sides of the pool were perfectly sheer and smooth, so the only thing was to try back and up. This we did, and came on two or three fresh-made sheds, a fire, a quantity of grain in baskets, and several spears and dahsø--an excellent hiding place, with just clearing enough down to the bed of the stream to give them a chance of firing on any intruders by that route. I left ten men there and tried to give chase; but if you could see a Burma jungle you'd understand what a fool's errand I was on. Every yard we had to cut with our swords, while the Kachin slips through it like an eel through water. I chucked it after an hour as we had lost all signs of their tracks, and got back to the rest of my party. Despatched 10 men back to our camp for coolies and waited their arrival, then burnt the huts and carried back the grain. We got back about 3 p.m. and found all the other parties in and a tremendous lot of hidden grain had been brought up from the valley.

Bhamo, April 27th, 1891

Here I am back once more, and very glad I am. There's not much fun in garrisoning Kachin villages, waiting for natives to come in and hand in their submission to a

1. Knives or swords.

political officer. . . a My last letter was sent off from Lagyagatong on the 16th April. 17th April, all troops turned out early to erect huts for Farrant's column. On the previous day we had cleared and burnt the jungle to make room for them. 1 p.m. the 50 Devons and 20 Mounted Infantry of Farrant's party arrived from Miketawna. I've just noticed from a mark in my journal that in my last, though despatched on the 16th, I had only given you an account as far as the 11th April, so I must hark back to that date.

12th April, 40 K.R. and Devon Mounted Infantry with Vere, Bols and myself marched to Miketawna to communicate with Farrant's column, which was expected to reach there that day from Nankho. The distance was only 8 miles, but the road (though the natives term it the main caravan route) was execrable--very hilly, and in many places a way had to be cut. The M.I. had to lead their ponies almost throughout. We reached Miketawna, being the main village of a group perched on a high ridge, at noon. Farrant's main body had been in about 1/2 an hour and his baggage was arriving as we marched in. I, with our 40 men, stayed there that night. Vere, Bols, and M.I. returned same afternoon to Lagyagatong after a council of war with Farrant and Godbur, the political officer attached to his column.

13th April, I returned with my 40 men to Lagyagatong, leaving Farrant's column at Miketawna. He was unable to move for a day or two as the Political Officer had to hold a durbar with the heads of villages round there.

14th April, half in our camp at Lagyagatong. Very hot, and not much cover from the sun. We played some rubbers of whist.

15th April, having obtained news that the refugees from the villages of Taungdu and Lagyagatong were collecting at a certain point down in the valley to the N.W., I took 40 rifles to try and secure them. Our guide took us down a terrible path; quite the worst we had yet seen; and after 3 hours' hard work, cutting, climbing and scrambling, we reached the bottom of the valley and came on a beautiful stream, clear as crystal and pools 10 or 12 feet deep. There were a few rough bamboo shelters, but nothing to show that anyone had been there for days. The guide said he knew no exit from the place except by the path we had come. However, before we retraced our steps I had a good look round to see if I could find any way by which the people, supposed to have been there, could have made their retreat.

But my search was fruitless; so after an hour's half we made our way back to Lagyagatong which we reached at 2.30 p.m.

16th April, nothing of note. Got my mail and wrote some letters. All men clearing jungle to make room for Farrant's column.

17th April, already written above.

18th April, Farrant and 50 Native Infantry arrived from Miketawna.

19th and 20th April, nothing of note. We stuck at Lagyagatong. The Political Officer busy all day interviewing various Sawbwas, assessing fines, etc., etc.

21st April, all British Infantry (50 K.R.R., 50 Devons, 40 Mounted Infantry) marched to Pawpon under me, with Bols and Wren. No opposition met with. Got in 10 a.m. Good village--capital water supply quite close. We had a most enjoyable bath in the cool of the evening.

22nd April, Vere, Farrant and the 100 Native Infantry joined us at Pawpon from Lagyagatong, which they had burnt previous to leaving. At 12.30 p.m. a runner arrived from Mosit with a telegram from Bhamo recalling Vere and our 50 men: 'To return without delay, steamer will be ready at Shwegu to take you to Bhamo'. This we thought might mean Manipur, and so we lost no time in getting off. An hour later we were off with 2 days' rations and 25 mules. We marched till 8 p.m. and bivouacked.

23rd April, up at 5 a.m. and marched at 6. Arrived Mosit at 9.30. Crossed over to Shwegu in country boats. No steamer there, so our rapid march was thrown away. It was really rather a good performance if you look at it:

received order at 12.30 p.m.)	
marched 1.30 p.m.)	22nd April
did 16 miles and bivouacked 8 p.m.)		
marched 6 a.m.)	
did 15 miles and arrived Mosit 9.30 a.m.))	23rd April

24th April, waited in Shwegu.

25th, launch arrived at 1 p.m. Got on board at once and got within 9 miles of this when we had to tie up for the night.

26th, started at 6, arrived Bhamo 9.30. Find we aren't wanted for Manipur; but that orders had been received here to send us back as soon as possible to Myingyan. The remainder of the column are to return shortly. . . . Vere, Lanison, self and our 100 men leave this for Myingyan on the 5th. I hear from Okeden that Myingyan is unbearable-- thermometer 108 in the houses and heat absolutely stifling.

Bhamo, Begun May 5th, 1891

Not much news from here. Almost all the columns are back. The Devons who were out on the Mogaung column for 3 months came in last week. They were an extraordinary sight. Boots almost entirely gone and uniforms in rags. They've been marching all the time. The Jade Mines (up N.W. of Mogaung) have been taken and a post is being formed there.

Myingyan, May 26th, 1891

There's not much to report from here. Thank Heaven I think we've broken the back of the hot weather. There are clouds all round and a good deal of rain and thunderstorms about us, though we never seem to get them actually here. Still, it cools the air, and means the beginning of the monsoon. For the last week I've never had it more than 100° in my room. But even now it's quite bad enough and you can't stir out between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. except just to get across to lunch. Our daily routine is: called at 5 a.m.; bath, dress, and parade at 1/4 to 6; orderly room 7.15, and business for the day finished generally about 8. We all breakfast then and repair to our quarters about 1/2 past 9 or 10. . . . Writing, reading, and various work to be got through keeps one employed till about noon, when you are glad to put in an hour or so's sleep. Lunch over at the Mess at 2. Play whist from 3 to 5; then on two days of the week polo; two days I have an afternoon parade; other days a ride or game of lawn tennis. Dinner 8.30, bed about 11. That's the daily round, and there's little to break its monotony.

Myingyan, June 23rd, 1891

I'm sorry, very, that my first letter from Lagyagatong village went astray. Of course it may still turn up. It

was rather a long 'un I remember; and gave an account of our first march of near 25 miles from Mosit. Breakfast at 5.30 one morning and nothing to eat till 4 o'clock next afternoon owing to the wretched transport arrangements and to wrong information received as to distances and state of the road. It was certainly the hardest time we had; being at the very outset too made it worse.

Mandalay, September 23rd, 1891

The great topic of conversation just now is the scheme of the winter operations. We received a letter before I left to say that the 1/2 Battn. at Myingyan made up to 400 men would be for the Chin expedition next winter; and two days ago the details appeared in Burma Orders and the papers. I send you a short précis. Just at the moment I can't put my hands on the Burma District Orders, but roughly this is what we are sending:--9 officers and 450 men, to be employed on 5 different columns, four of 100 men and 2 officers each, and one of 50 men and one officer. Half of us work from Haka and half from Fort White. Operations begin about 1st. week in December and probably last 4 months. Besides ourselves there are to be 2 Battns. of Native Infantry, 1 Mountain Battery (6 guns) from India, 1 section Mounted Battery (2 guns) from Mandalay, some Sappers and Miners.

Then entirely separate from the foregoing, there are to be 3 columns from Bhamo: one into Jade Mines district, and two eastwards to the Chinese frontier.

Myingyan, Begun October 20th, 1891

I send you extract from Burma Orders re detail of columns. . . o

Chin Hills

Extract Burma Dist. Orders 12th. Sept. 1891.

(a) Fort White Section

- I. The Kamhow Column. To explore Kamhow country.
Captain Stevens 4th Pioneers Commanding

Troops 1 Officer 2 guns Mountain Battery
 1 - 50 rifles K.R.R.
 2 - 100 - 10th Burma
 1 - 50 - Madras Pioneers
 Transport 570 coolies
 Rendezvous and Base of Supplies - Tiddim
 N.B. This column will probably remain out the whole cold weather.

II. The Twengal Column. To operate in Nwengal and Yahow country.

Major H. Parry Okeden K.R.R. Commanding
 Captain C. J. Markham K.R.R. Staff Officer
 Troops 1 Officer 2 guns Mountain Battery
 2 - 100 rifles K.R.R.
 3 - 150 - 39th Gharwallis
 1 - 50 - Madras Pioneers
 Rendezvous - Mwebingyi
 Transport 658 coolies.

(b) Haka Section

III. Baungshe Column. To operate in Baungshe country.

Lt. Rainey 12th Burma Commanding
 Troops 1 Officer 2 guns M.Ø.
 2 - 100 rifles K.R.R.
 2 - 100 - 12th Burma
 1 - 50 - Madras Pioneers
 Rendezvous at Minywa 1st December. March on Shurkhua.
 Secondary base of Support at Yokwa. Temporary post will be established Shurkhua. Column remain there 1 month, then march to Haka, leaving small garrison at Shurkhua.
 Transport 850 coolies.

IV. The Klang-Klang Column. To operate against the Klang-Klangs.

Captain Browne 39th Gurwallis Commanding
 Troops Same as No. III.
 Transport ditto
 Rendezvous Haka. Column will operate against villages of Thau, Hriangkhan, etc. Possibly a column from Fort Tregear will cooperate.

V. Tashon Column. To occupy Falam and operate against Tashons, Nwengals, Yahows, in cooperation with No. II column.

Major Howlett 12th Burma Commanding

Troops	1 Officer	2 guns	M. Batt.
	2 -	100 rifles	K.R.Ro
	2 -	150 -	K.R.R.
	1 -	50 -	M. Pioneers

Transport as for No. IV.

Rendezvous Haka.

First objective, Falam, which will be the base of further operations; when column departs for Nwengal country a garrison must be left at Falam.

2 doctors with each column.

Transport all coolies, except ammunition for M. Batt. guns (42 rounds per gun) which is all on mules.

Myingyan, November 28th (sc. October), 1891

The date of our departure from here for the Chin expedition is fixed for the 12th of November and, at present, we are in readiness to leave on that date in the Government steamer 'Bhamo' for Kalewa. But the arrangements for coolie transport from that point seem still to be in a very embryo state and it's more than probable that our departure will be postponed. Kalewa is unhealthy and it would be a bad arrangement to send troops up and keep them waiting there for transport. Such a course would probably result in fever getting hold of the men at the outset of operations. Once up in the hills the climate should be excellent--nights of course very cold indeed.

Myingyan, November 24th, 1891

You've pretty well stated the object of the Winter columns; practically a display of force. You see for four years the Chin Hills have been in an unsettled state and the present Chief Commissioner wishes to settle affairs once and for all. That the whole affair is very necessary is apparent: for otherwise the Government of India would never have sanctioned the expenditure incurred by sending out so strong a force. What with coolies, etco, it comes to a very large sum. Then besides the mere display of force, there will be a great deal of entirely new country traversed and the opportunity taken of surveying and noting the exact limits of each tribe and of each Chief's territory with a view to a future settlement of revenue to be paid. And also to enable us in time to localise the responsibility in case of any further outbreaks.

On board cargo boat 'Manwyn' en route
to Pakokku, December 1st, 1891, 1 p.m.

This week I can tell you my prospects for certain, for at this moment as you will see from the above address we are fairly started for the Chin Hills. It was only last Friday that I heard for certain where I was to go. . o I am going in command of the 100 of our men on the Baungshe column--Gunning commands the column (which consists of 100 British and 150 Native Troops and 2 guns) and Rainey 12th Burma is Staff Officer. Sackville-West goes as my sub-altern. I'm very well content with the turn of events, and with my messmates.

We paraded at 6.30 this morning and marched down to the shore, the VII Bengal Infantry band playing us away. The General and Staff and most of one's acquaintances were there to wish us good luck, and we embarked on the tender at 7. Transshipped to this boat about 8.30, and after a lot of delay (taking in Myingyan cargo) we got off just before noon. We've a flat on each side of us and don't get along very fast. The skipper says we shall reach Pakokku at 2.30 this afternoon. I've got 72 N.C.O.s and men, being the Head Quarters of C and F Companies. At Pakokku we join 128 of from H. Qrts, also Markham, Lanison, West and Allgood, and of course Gunning. On the 3rd we march up to Minywa (not Monywa on the Chindwin). There the Baungshe Column is formed, F Company with self and West forming a part, C Company with Markham, Lanison and Allgood proceeding direct to Haka. I can't of course say for certain how long the Baungshe operation will last: probably about a month; we then march to Haka. Whether I shall be able to get out again on Tashon Column or not I don't know, but shall make every endeavour.

Pauk, December 7th, 1891

My last letter was written from Pakokku the day before we marched. Next day Thursday the 3rd Decr. we paraded at 8 a.m. and marched to Kanhla, arriving there at 10 a.m. Distance 6 miles. Our transport--some 40 small two-bullock carts--had started at 6 a.m. and were in about the same time as the column. The march was an easy one along a rough cart-track and there's nothing of note to report. We stopped in a small mud hut, and there were other larger ones for the men.

Friday Dec. 4th, 'Arouse' went at 5 a.m. Transport on the move by 5.20. Column marched off at 6 a.m. It's quite dark till half past five and only just light enough at 6 to inspect the men. Sun rises about 1/4 to 7. Nights and early mornings chilly, days hot. We halted for breakfast 8.30. On again at 10. Arrived Tabya at 1.45. Distance 15 miles. . o . At Tabya we found the same class of mat and bamboo rest-houses for the men, also a very comfortable two-roomed public works bungalow which we took possession of. Another doctor caught us up here, making our party up to 8. He's a wild Irishman straight from Netley, uncouth and with a brogue that would stop a bullock cart: on the whole not much of an acquisition. The other medico, Philson, is the best of little fellows, and all round we are an exceedingly cheery party and have great jests over our rum and bully beef. As long as we've got the cart transport we are able to carry a certain amount of comforts, and Ahmed Khan, my man, who is chef to the party makes up capital dinners.

Saturday 5 December, 'Arouse' at 5 a.m. Marches off at 6.15. The issue of quinine having first been served out to all ranks. It's pretty beastly, and the men spit it out if they get 1/2 a chance. Halted for breakfast after 6 miles. Soon after leaving the breakfast place we got into a defile running through a low range of hills. The descent on the further side was pretty sharp, the road being cut along the side of the hill, crossing a number of nullahs¹ over wooden bridges. At the foot, we got into the dry bed of a river, and the last two miles into camp were uncommonly heavy: sand ankle deep all the time, and sun striking down hot. On these occasions one hears very little from the men, just the rattle of their canteens and accoutrements, but otherwise perfect dead silence, with the sweat pouring off them.

We got into Pyinchaung at 12 noon: a small village, with the usual thorn hedge surrounding it; accommodation scarce, and men, officers, and carts, hospital followers, dhooli² bearers and followers were all pretty well packed together. We got into a bit of a mat hut, about 10 foot square, and made a very fair night of it. Really and truly, if you've got two or three blankets, it doesn't matter where one is this weather. A bit of shelter over head, if you

1. Watercourses.

2. Litter.

can get it, is good, as the dew is heavy. We turned in early that night, as we expected a hard day's work on the morrow. In the jungle it often seems to happen that the Sabbath's a busy day: so it turned out yesterday.

Sunday Dec. 6th, 'Arouse' at 4.30 a.m. 50 rifles of F Company under me paraded at 5 a.m. and marched down with the baggage to the river, about 2 miles from Pyinchaung. Carts went slowly and we didn't get there till 6.15, by which time it was light enough to begin getting the kito across. Piled arms, and stripped the men of every stitch, putting on only coats and boots (you'd have laughed to see us). Then started getting the arms and accoutrements across. First a piece of water about 100 yards across, only knee deep; then a strip of sand 200 yards; then another bit of water about 80 yards across with water up to the middle, rapid current, difficult really to stand, and steep bank 15 foot high on far side. We had just piled arms and beginning to get the baggage across, when the remainder of the column arrived, crossed, and went on. The carrying of baggage was a hard job. Every cart had to be unladen, and loaded up on far side; the men worked well, but we didn't get the job over till 9.15. My orders were to get the baggage across and then get on after the column as quick as possible, leaving the carts in charge of the baggage guard. Well, it took us a little time to get the sand out of our boots and to get into our things; then we marched off. First 3 miles good, through the most infernal sand: I took them very slow and we stuck to it till 11.20 without a halt. By now we were on a fair track, but the most any of us had had that morning was a cup of tea and a bit of biscuit at 1/4 to 5, and the sun was doing its worst.

I had taken the precaution to fill all the men's water bottles before leaving the river, but they had all been drained before this. Atkins ain't very sensible in these matters: if he's thirsty he drinks and chances getting more later on. Besides this, the water-bottles served out to British troops out here and in India are a disgrace. Simply a soda-water bottle covered with leather. They hold next to nothing, water in them gets tepid at once, and they frequently get broken. A tin or vulcanite bottle of fair size with a felt cover ought certainly to be served out. Well, by this time the men were a bit done, so I called a halt for 8 minutes, though I believe really in plodding on slowly and stopping as little as possible: the effort to go on again is great and one's apt to get a little stiff. The men had been keeping up well and no one had asked to

fall out. We shoved on again and reached the breakfast place (a small village about 1 mile before the second crossing of the Yaw River) at a quarter to one. I was glad enough to get at the victuals, for we had done a decent morning's work. The remainder of the column had only been in 20 minutes.

At a 1/4 to 2 we all fell in; quinine ration served out, then marched down to the ford. We fully expected to have to take all baggage out of the carts again (these little country carts come along well and had caught us up before we left the breakfast place). Fortunately we found the river, which was about 1/4 of a mile across with several sandbanks between the strips of water, only half way up to our knees, and the carts were able to cross laden. We took the men's boots and trousers off, which caused a certain amount of delay, but by 3 p.m. we were all over and on our way to Pauk--a good road, a bit up and down in places and generally through pretty thick scrub jungle with a fair amount of big trees. We marched into camp here at 5.10 p.m. Mat huts for the men, and another public works bungalow here where we are installed. We are to change carriage here, and the infernal Commissariat Agent has not got our pack-carts ready. His excuse is that no regiment has ever done the march from Pyinchaung here in one day, and he didn't expect us till today. I'm much afraid we shan't get off. It's 4 p.m. now and no carts have arrived. So we shall probably not go till tomorrow.

Minywa, December 19th, 1891

My last letter was posted at Pauk on the 7th. inst. and I trust it will reach you in due course. Since then we have been quite out of the beat of Post Offices, though all along our route there has been a telegraph line, and at one point, Tilin, there is an Office. Here we are within 14 miles of Gangaw where there is a Postal and Telegraph office, and in the course of a few days there will be branches established here, the line, which passes through the camp, being tapped and a small field telegraph rigged up.

To give you a detailed account of each day's march from the time of our leaving Pauk to our arrival here would, I think, be uninteresting and entail much repetition. So I will endeavour to summarise. The marches and distances were as follows:—

Dec. 7th.	halt at Pauk (wrote to you)	
8th.	march to Chaungu (7 miles)	
9th.	" Yebyu	11 "
10th.	" Yedu	7 "
11th.	" Anyaban	11 "
12th.	" Tilin	13 "
13th.	" Shwekondaing	14 1/2 "
14th.	" Mawle	12 "
15th.	" Minywa	6 "
		<u>81 1/2</u>

Between Pakokku and Pauk there were four marches, 6, 15, 12 1/2 and 17 miles respectively, making a total of 50 1/2

132

132 miles in 13 days or just over 10 miles a day.

The 'arouse' used to go at 5 a.m. and parade at 6. After the quinine ration had been issued to officers and men we marched off. Half way we halted an hour for breakfast and arrived in new camp between 11 and 1 according to length of march. When the march was only 6 or 7 miles, the men used to get their breakfast at 6.30 and we marched at 7. Throughout the road was good, far better than we expected to find. It's a 'kuccha'd cart road, unmetalled and in wet weather very heavy. However, at this time of year it was in capital order; sometimes a bit of 1/2 a mile or so of heavy sand, which was beastly, but again there were also good gravelly bits where the going was first rate. On the whole, I think, the road was a pleasant surprise for us all. Gradients never steep, though at one point we were 2,000 feet above the level of the Irrawaddy (here we are only just 400). Throughout we were marching through teak and In² forest, and thick undergrowth with hardly a single break where you could get anything like a view. One gets very tired of it, and quite longs for a bare rocky hill like you see in the Himalayas. The teak trees were nothing out of the way, 30 or 40 feet high and 6 to 10 feet girth were the largest, and there were any quantity of young trees down to small ones only a foot or so high. The In tree is uninteresting and need not be described. The road wound through low hills and occasionally one went over a highish pass or khotal. In the afternoon some of us used to go out and shoot for the pot, but

1. Lit. 'raw'--hence temporary.

2. Dipterocarpus tuberculatus.

it's not a country that's well stocked with game, and a few jungle fowl, pigeons and doves used to be our bags. The pigeons give you some pretty shooting at times, and the gentle dove is a very excellent addition to bully beef and biscuits. I'm not very good in the teeth, and after a bit one's gums get so awfully sore you can hardly eat at all.

At Pauk we got some fresh bread, which seemed a great luxury. The villages don't afford much in the way of supplies--a few fowls, eggs and pumpkins, also now and again sweet limes. As a rule there was a village at each camp, varying in size from 15 to as much as a couple of hundred huts, and always very closely packed and surrounded by a double thorn and bamboo stockade. These were all Burman villages, with two exceptions--namely Shwekondaing and Mawle which are inhabited by 'Taungthas', a small race quite distinct from Burmans, with a dialect of their own, and a peculiar dress, made of tartan pattern--on the whole they appeared cleaner and more well-to-do looking than the Burman villagers. At each camp there are bamboo rest huts for the men, very ricketty affairs with teak-leaf roofs, but still they afforded good shelter from the dew which was always very heavy. At some of the villages we found public works rest-houses, two-roomed buildings raised 15 or 20 feet from the ground on piles, with a few chairs and a couple of tables in them. Otherwise we were in the same class of hut as the men, and we made ourselves very snug and comfortable, closely packed together. The only drawback being the filthy state every camp was in, for 500 Darjeeling coolies were marching up two days ahead of us, and had fouled everything. In some of the sheds the stench was almost unbearable. However, it was better than sleeping out in the open.

A word about the men and their marching. With one exception, a Sergeant who got a sharp go of fever and had to be carried one day, we never had a man in a dhooli, and not a single case of sickness the whole way up. A few blisters and sore feet, but nothing serious. This was not a bad record considering that 80 out of the 200 men were recruits from the 2nd. Bttn. and averaged only 9 months' service, also that some 50 of the men were fitted with new boots actually at Pakokku and the remainder only got their October issue of boots a few days before leaving Myingyan and Thayetmyo. There must have been some bad management

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1. Taungtha--a word meaning simply 'hill people'--are probably of Chin origin but have become largely Burmanized.

either on the part of our Quartermaster's office or else with the contractor at Cawnpore. Had we started on the 1st. Nov. as was originally intended, every single man would have had to go with one pair of boots and those boots which have been in wear since last April.

All has turned out well, so there will never be any notice taken: that's the usual happy go lucky sort of way we English go about our business. Our luck will turn some day, and then--well, I hope that may be after my day.

But this small matter of boots absolutely pales before the glaring mismanagement of the Commissariat Dept. Apparently up to a few days ago there have been no arrangements whatsoever made for rationing these columns for the winter operations. It is as far back as last August that the detailed orders with regard to these columns were published, and since then there have been no alterations made. As far as Pauk all went well with us, and there was nothing to give a hint of what was in store for us ahead. There we were to receive 2 days' fresh rations and also tinned rations to last us to Minywa (this place). Well, no fresh rations at Pauk, and only 6 days' tinned rations. But we were informed by the Commissariat Sergt. at Pauk that there were rations in any quantity at Minywa. One day delayed at Pauk (owing to carts not having been collected, though the Agent knew the date of our arrival a week before) and 8 marches to Minywa: that is 6 days' tinned rations to last 9 days! However, by wiring to Gangaw we could get rations sent out from Minywa to meet us at Shwekondaing. The Pauk Commissariat of course undertook to arrange all this. However, on arrival at Tilin we found a telegraph office, so to make sure everything was cut and dried Gunning wired to Gangaw--and received answer to say 'no biscuits at Gangaw or Minywa, 800 lbs of biscuits at Kan, 450 lbs of biscuits at Haka, 40,000 supposed to be en route from Myingyan to Minywa'.

Well, 200 men consume 200 lbs of biscuits a day, so we were in the pleasant position of knowing that there wasn't a week's ration of biscuits anywhere in the Chin Hills, at any rate on the Haka side. Really and truly the whole thing ought to be laid before the House (For Heaven's sake don't circulate this letter; a Gladstonian M.P. would give his eyes to get hold of details I could give him). Well, we had to march into this place on half rations of biscuits, and now the men have a lb of flour served out to them and have to do the best they can with it! and of course there's a certain amount of grumbling.

A few cart-loads of biscuits turned up from Pakokku the day after we got here and that enabled C Company with Markham to shove on to Haka, but unless they find rations at Kan, goodness knows what will become of them. Local supplies are practically nil. Two days after we got here, 30,000 lbs of flour arrived here from Kan by river, and on opening the sacks the whole lot has had to be condemned; it's full of lice and musty--absolutely unfit for human consumption. Kerosine oil tins were found absolutely empty. All these supplies are what went up to Manipur last winter, and many of them have been condemned before.

On the 16th the two mountain guns under Knapp arrived, having marched from Manipur, dropping 2 guns at Kalemyo for Fort White and two guns at Kan for Haka. On the 17th Markham, Allgood and Lanison with 100 C Company left this en route for Haka; with, as I said before, starvation practically staring them in the face; but strength at this place had to be reduced for on the following day (18th) 200 of the 12th Burma with the two Rainey brothers in charge arrived from Pakokku, 100 of them under a native Subadar going on next day en route to Hakao MacNabb, Political Officer, arrived on 18th. So now the column here is complete, but there's next to nothing to eat. There's a lot of rice, so the 50 Madras Pioneers are well off; flour very scarce and all the 12th Burma are flour (or 'atta' as it's called) eaters, and also our men too now, as there are no biscuits. The battery, also the 500 coolies, eat flour too; and there's no gram for the battery mules.

So you have the extraordinary and I suppose well-nigh unprecedented state of affairs--namely, a column starving at its base at the very outset of the operations, it having been well known for nearly 4 months past that the above-mentioned column would be at its base ready to start active operations on Dec. 1st (that was the original date, it's now the 19th) and that the column would be employed in operations extending over from 4 to 6 weeks. It isn't as if there's anything ahead of us in the Shurkhua direction; everything is behind, either still at Myingyan or else on its way up here, and there are two routes by which rations can come--one the way we came via Pakokku and Pauk, the

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1. Indian Company Officer.
 2. Rough-ground wheat.

other Chindwin river to Kalewa and then per country boat via Kalemyo, Kan and Gangaw to this place, Minywa.

I've written at great length about this want of preparation. Of course we can talk about nothing else. Here we are stuck at Minywa, a not particularly healthy spot, down at the foot of the hills, with no prospect at all of getting away. Our first objective is Shurkhua, 70 miles west of this. Tonwa, half way, is a friendly village and we've had parties out as far as that in former years. Tonwa should by rights have been stocked with 1 month's rations for the Baungshe Column by 1st. Nov! At this moment there is nothing there.

There is no Post or Telegraph office here (this also should have been arranged), and Gunning and MacNabb have been in three times to Gangaw (15 miles) to put themselves at the end of the wire and get into direct communication with Myingyan. Of course a report on the whole state of affairs has been wired in full. MacNabb has informed heads of his department also, and by now I suppose Simla knows how we stand. If this column is delayed, it means all remaining columns will also be delayed, for our coolies and medical staff are used again by them. This will entail keeping men up later and having to march them back at the most unhealthy time of year--and consequent sickness which is bound to follow.

Someone ought to be tried by Court Martial; we are all here decided on that point.

A.A.G. Myingyan wires to Gunning, 'Position of affairs most serious you can't leave Minywa till you get one months complete rations'. Well, Heaven only knows when that will be.

Minywa, December 24th, 1891

Owing to repeated telegrams and clamourings on the part of Gunning, the Commissariat Dept. have at last been stirred into something like action, and are now beginning to do what ought to have been done a month ago. They shied a bit at first, and a telegram actually came to say that in the opinion of the Chief Commissariat Officer at Myingyan, the 30,000 lb of flour which we had condemned might be saved by drying the same in the sun. I must tell you this flour was alive with lice and weevils and perfectly

sour. However, a committee of three doctors (we are rather well off for medicos) sat at once on the flour, and after having made themselves nearly sick with tasting a portion of every bag, decided that there wasn't an ounce of it fit for human consumption. Well, since then more atta and more biscuits have arrived, and we have got a month's supplies of everything except biscuits, of which there is only 10 days. And tomorrow, Christmas Day, we make a start towards Shurkhua, which is about 7 marches from here in an almost due westerly direction. . . . The road is only a small track throughout, and we've got some ghastly looking ranges of hills to get across. The 50 Pioneers under Holloway left this morning. They will clear a place for the remainder of us to camp at the first halting place, and we shall all proceed on together the following day. From this out, we proceed with military precautions, though in a country like this it's impossible to do anything in the way of flanking parties: the jungle is far too thick for that. We shall have just over 900 coolies, and they alone will extend over something like four miles. If the Chins only had any sense and 'any stomach for the fight', what a dance they could lead one of these columns! 50 Chins well armed and well led could almost entirely cripple our movements, I should think. . o .

As I thought would be the case if we were kept any time in a place like this at the foot of the hills, these boys straight out from home would get fever. One after another they were admitted to hospital, and this morning we sent off 8 of them in carts to Gangaw: all fever cases, and all men of the last draft. They will stop at Gangaw till they are fit (there's a civil apothecary there) and then be sent up to Haka to join C Company.

Every morning now it is damp with a very thick fog which wets everything. This lasts till about half past 8, when the sun gets up and the rest of the day is fine, warm and bright. After this, of course, we find no shelter of any kind except what one can rig up with bamboos and a waterproof sheet.

Camp Shurkhua, New Year's Day, 1892

We hear that a runner is to go back tomorrow to Myingyan with letters, so I take this opportunity to send you a line. It's not the best place for letter writing--a bleak hillside, over 5,000 feet high, with nothing to keep

the cold wind from you but a few fir trees. Such is Shurkhua Camp. It's pleasant enough in the middle of the day when the sun's at its strongest, but about 4 one begins to want to put on an extra coat, and the nights and early mornings are just bitter, and you feel it rather coming up from those low lying valleys we've been camping in till now. Sackville-West and I have got a little lean-to made of fir branches and our two waterproof sheets, and I can tell you we are glad enough to get close together at night. . . .

Christmas Day, reveille went at 4.30 a.m. Coolies got started by 7 o'clock. It wasn't so bad considering it was the first morning and all loads had to be adjusted. On the whole the little Goorkha coolies took the loads they were given without grumbling. Column marched off at 8.30 a.m., having breakfasted first, and arrived at first camp about 2 p.m. Road throughout fair, and ran through In and bamboo jungle. About 3 miles after starting we passed the first Chin village of Pawle . . . but after that there wasn't a sign of a living thing, not a bird, not an insect, nothing but dense jungle. The Pioneers, who had gone on the previous day, had cleared a small place for camp, and we soon got the men settled down. They rig themselves up lean-tos with bamboos, leaves, and their waterproof sheets. I've got my company divided up into messes of 12, with an N.C.O. in charge. It simplifies their rations, and is a good thing in many ways. I mentioned before that we divided ourselves up into 3 messes. Well, we intended to dine together on Christmas Day and do our best to have as cheery an evening as possible under the circumstances. Unfortunately the fates were a bit against us, and we had a terrible lot of invalids in our party, no less than 6 out of 13 being on the flat of their backs with fever. This jungle fever is infernal. Robust health and all precautions avail nothing, and the malaria bowls over the fittest without the slightest warning; then while you are in its clutches you are absolutely and entirely good for nothing. With luck perhaps you can just manage to march along to the next camp, but Heaven help the fever-sick man who has to be carried along these hill paths in a hospital dhoolie--bump, bump, bump--and as likely as not perhaps dropped over the khud. Dinner over, the sound ones got round a big camp fire and, with all solemnity, drank the health of those at home. It was a striking sight, looking through the bamboo jungle where scores of

1. A deep ravine or steep hillside.

camp fires blazed. Round some were gathered Tommies discussing their tots of rum; further on a group of swarthy warriors, Pathans of the mountain battery, nearly all men with three medals on their breasts, and thundering fine hardworking men they are. You can just see two little screw guns, and behind them the double row of battery mules. Away to the right there is a greater blaze of light; there the jungle gleams with a hundred little fires round; the little Goorkha coolies are cooking their meal. I really might go on describing for pages, but I don't think you would be any nearer picturing the scene.

Saturday Dec. 26th, marched at 8.30 to 2nd Camp, distance 11 miles. Path fair for men and mules, but awfully steep in parts. These Chin tracks never go round a hill, always right over the highest peak, and the climbs are something awful, hand and foot, tooth and nail. That day we went over one ridge 2,100 feet, down the other side, and camped at the bottom of a valley where there was a good running stream and lots of water. I had fever all that day, couldn't touch food, and turned in soon after arriving in new camp.

Sunday Dec. 27th, marched at 8.30 to No. 3 Camp. Same sort of jungle, a climb of 2,400 feet, and then dropped down into valley with stream and lots of water. Troops and hospital on one side of chaung, coolies on the other. All dense bamboo jungle which had to be cleared for a bivouac. These deep low-lying valleys are regular fever traps, but one must camp near water so there's no help for it. This day Knowles (transport officer), Entrican and Philson (doctors) were all three down with fever, and the two former very bad indeed. By Jove, it's perfectly awful to be really bad on one of these jobs: no comforts, and no rest, for the sick must come along somehow every day, and I must say I do pity them. I've luckily had only touches of fever myself, but it's enough to show one what it is like. I was on rear guard that day and got in about 3 o'clock, having had very little bother on the road. Sackville-West, Rainey junior and myself are the only fellows available for rear guards, so we get lots of experience in that line. That night I had fever on me and got precious little sleep: every rag heaped over me and teeth still chattering with a temperature of 102 or so isn't conducive to peaceful slumber, so that I was rather a worm the following morning.

Monday Dec. 28th, Column marched at 8.30 a.m. to No. 4 Camp, just beyond the village of Tonwa. Distance 12

miles, but they were just as hard as they make 'em--a bad road and terrible climb of over 4,000 feet, the khud tremendously steep and track in places very dangerous for mules, as our casualties showed. Three mules went over the khud and one battery pony. One mule broke his back and the pony had to be shot; the other two mules were got up again--how on earth they weren't killed is a marvel. One of them, carrying half the gun, must have gone down over 600 feet, very steep, and finishing up in the rocky bed of a dry stream. Of course, we had to lend a hand getting mules and loads up the khud, and a real hard job it is too. The Pioneers cut a zig-zag for the mule, and the gun had to be hauled up inch by inch. You never saw such devils to work as these gunners: nothing seemed to tire them and the worse things are going, the better pleased they seemed to be. When we were hard at it that day, I said to one of them, 'You are having a hard time.' 'Sahib', he said, 'it is our duty to have hard work every day', and started off sliding down the khud for about the 10th time. They are grand fellows. Throughout the day the Madras Pioneers were clearing and improving the road, and very good work they did.

Column got into new camp about 4 p.m. Tonwa is a large village, some 50 or 60 houses, and we were able to get some provisions in the way of chickens, eggs, sweet potatoes, and oranges. The rear guard under Rainey did not get in till 11.45 at night after a real hard day of it, picking up and bringing along the pieces.

Tuesday Dec. 29th, reveille not till 6 and coolies didn't start till 8 o'clock. Column not till 11. The former were a bit done up after their long day, and two of them being reported missing a search party was sent back along the road. We had an easy march that day of 5 miles, mostly down hill, and encamped in bamboo jungle close to a good stream where there was lots of water.

Camp Lotaw, January 6th, 1892

My last letter gave you a detailed account of our doings to Monday Dec. 28th. Next day we marched to No. 5 camp, a short march of only about 3 1/2 miles, a very steep descent and bivouacked in the bottom of a valley. Knowles and Entrican very bad indeed with fever.

Dec. 30th marched at 8.30 a.m. to No. 6 Camp. Distance 11 miles. A very hard march, starting with a climb

over 5,000 feet, path about a slope of one in one. I was on rear guard and had a real long day. With me 20 of my own fellows, who worked well and never a word of grumbling. Not 1/2 a mile from camp, we came upon sick men and loads left behind by sick or lazy coolies. I had four dhoolies and some spare coolies. The dhoolies were soon all full and with the bad road and having to half carry, half drag some six sick men who we had picked up and who really weren't fit to stand--but dhoolies were full so there was no help for it--they couldn't be left behind. I rigged up some stretchers later on, with a couple of bamboo poles and men's coats. We halted at the hill top and ate the grub we had brought with us about 5 p.m., and soon after starting again night came on us, and we weren't half way. We wanted water, too, badly, but of course there was none up there, so the only thing was to shove along. We got some torches from the pine trees and got on fairly well, very slowly; the path was almost impassable in places, and dhoolie-bearers were constantly going down the khud; this entailed perhaps half an hour's halt while some of us climbed down to see whether the beggar was dead or alive and, if the latter, to pull him up. Once a dhoolie, sick man and all, and two out of the four bearers went over--luckily no damage beyond cuts and bruises. At about 8 miles we at last came to water--how glad we were to get it. It was now between 10 and 11 p.m. About 12 we met a search party from camp, come out with lights to give us a hand. The last 3 miles were the worst as far as road was concerned, and the extra lights were of great service. They also brought out a few coolies, also most acceptable as my fellows and coolies were overladen with the various débris we had collected en route. At last, after a very steep descent, we reached camp, and it was 1.20 a.m. when I reported 'rear guard and all baggage in, Sir'. Gunning and Rainey, Staff Officer, were waiting up and had some food ready for me, also something for the men, who needed it badly for they had been on the go since 9 a.m., something over 27 hours.

Runner is off, so you must leave me at this point. I'm awfully fit and well, but several of our party and many men have fever. Frost every night (2 or 3 degrees) and thermometer up to 85 in the day. I dare say the change of temp. is trying.

1. Sic: sc. 22 hours.

On march between Shurkhua Post and Lungno
village, Begun January 8th, 1892

I've given you news up to the end of the 30th December. Our camp was on the hillside, 3,500 feet up, and an awfully cold spot. We woke next morning to find all standing water frozen, and everything stiff with hoar frost. From our camp we could see the village of Shurkhua, which was perched up on the far side of the valley, 1,500 feet higher than we were and about 4 miles distant. Coolies were very done up after the hard work of the previous day, and many of them went sick. Chin coolies had to be procured from Shurkhua, and the column didn't get under way till nearly 10 a.m. A steep descent to start with and then a tremendous pull up of over 2,000 feet to Shurkhua village. There was a very bad bit about half way up, and two of the battery mules went over the khud. One broke his back; the other was recovered safe and sound, though he had fallen certainly six hundred feet.

Shurkhua is a large village, some 100 houses, very strongly stockaded, with a deep cutting or covered way (a bullet-proof passage, in fact) running entirely through it. It took us a long time to get through this narrow passage; all side loads of the battery mules having to be taken off and carried through by hand. This camp at Shurkhua was a very cold spot, a bare spur with coarse long grass and a few clumps of fir trees.

Friday 1st. Jan, halt at Shurkhua Camp. Quite a reasonable New Year's Day, with a biting cold wind and hoar frost on the ground. The camp there was 5,000 feet high. Political Officer and Gunning interviewed villagers of Shurkhua and laid their plans for the forthcoming move in a southerly direction, against the village of Lungno which was reported to be 'bellicose'.

Sat. Jan. 2nd., halt at Shurkhua. Day spent in building the Shurkhua posto. For this purpose men and officers had to shift their bivouacs higher up the hill, all hands including coolies and Kahars^b at work. An enclosure some 50 yards square was started and two long rows of huts built, rough affairs with fir boughs for walls and roofs, but good protection against the dew and wind; jungle cleared down the hill side to the watering place. This is important

1. Bearer or personal servant.

as the Chin is fond of lying in wait and sniping men on their way up and down to the water. The post commanded the village, and lies on the main path from Shurkhua to Haka (which latter is three marches distant). Last year a column visited Shurkhua from Haka. They heard the direct route was strongly stockaded, so when within 10 miles of Shurkhua they left the high ridge they were on, dropped down into the deep valley, crossed the stream, and approached Shurkhua from the opposite heights and shelled the village at 4,000 yards. As you may imagine, the guns produced an extraordinary effect on the poor unfortunate Chins, who forsook their village after the first shot. I believe 40 rounds were fired with great accuracy, but as the village was deserted there wasn't a Chin touched.

Throughout, all the Chins we've seen are bumptious, truculent looking devils. Regard us--and very naturally too--as invaders; and never seem the least pleased to see the white man. We have with us nearly a hundred families, friendly only because having submitted themselves they want to see their neighbours knock under as well, and also because it gives them a chance of paying off inter-tribal scores. They are evil-faced looking devils; armed with old Tower guns; make their own powder and shot, and are dead shots up to 150 or 200 yards; wonderfully active up and down hill, in fact almost uncannily so. All friendlies are known by a scarlet turban. . o . They are generally very well made and muscular fellows, but don't run to much height. They smoke bamboo pipes, eat anything, and appreciate a 'chew'. 'Baungsheo' means simply the tribes that wear their puggaries in a particular way, i.e. forward on the head. 'Baung' means puggaree, 'Sheo' in front. They do their hair, which looks sleek and well oiled, in a top knot high up in front of their heads, and round this they wind the puggaree, starting with a turn round the lower part of the crown. They are extremely neat in this head-dressing, and absolutely uniform in their head cloths, which are white with one dark blue line running across the top part.

The Chins brew beer from millet, rice, in fact any grain, and sometimes it's not at all bad stuff, rather like cider, but I believe it won't keep. The Chin always drinks for 'drunk' and not for 'drinky'. To get drunk is his greatest pleasure, and for a Chin to tell another he's drunk is to pay a high compliment.

Well, these are the people that Government are spending lakhs of rupees on. At first sight it seems unnecessary

to come up into these hills at all, and one would imagine that a number of small posts established along the frontier would effectually prevent Chins raiding Burman villages, and would of course be a far less expensive method than sending these expeditions and establishing posts right in the heart of the Chin Hills. But this tract of country cannot be considered as a frontier line. It's simply a number of lawless tribes right in the centre of British authority--Manipur, Shillong, Assam on the north, Chittagong on the west, Burma, Akyab and Arakan on east and south. Away on the Chittagong side the hill tribes (Lushais) are far more amenable, chiefly because we have been in touch with them for over 20 years, while it's only 3 years ago that we came in actual contact with these fellows; and from the outset we have found them difficult to deal with.

At first we tried the 'zubberdushti' (high-handed) method with them; that was when General Faunce¹ was in command; villages were burnt, prisoners taken, and so on. It didn't answer. Then, under Symonds,² the reverse was done. The Chins were made much of, etc., etc. That didn't seem to do either, and from what I can gather the policy now seems to be to steer a medium course,³-treat them kindly, pay good prices for all local provisions, coolies, etc, but to be down severely on any infringements of our authority. Thus in former years all Chins were allowed to carry arms. Now any native (except red-turbanned ones) seen with a gun has it taken from him. It's just as well too, for there used constantly to be cases of two or three armed Chins meeting a column on a march; they would be allowed to pass, and then calmly secrete themselves in the jungle and have a pot shot at the tail end of the rear guard. In the same way a column out from Haka last year was surprised on its way back and lost 6 sepoy killed besides Forbes and a dozen sepoy wounded.³

Sunday Jan. 3rd, marched from Shurkhua to camp 8 1/2 miles distant, and about 2 1/2 miles short of a large village called Aika. We had to leave behind 23 of our men, all fever cases except one of dysentery--a large percentage

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1. Brigadier-General E. Faunce.
 2. Major-General Sir W. Penn Symonds, died of wounds in South Africa, 1899.
 3. See letter of February 13 below

out of 91 men. The other detachments also had to leave about the same percentage behind. Almost all ours were boys of the last draft, and the long halt at Minywa was probably responsible for the large number of sick, for there's nothing in these hills to give fellows fever. . . .

Our general direction was south, first back through the village of Shurkhua, then, leaving our original road (the one we had come in by) on our left, dropped down a couple of thousand feet to the Boinu River (The Chieftain's Bride) which we struck about 4 miles after starting. Here we picked up the guns which had started a couple of hours before us. The road down to the river had to be made almost throughout by the Pioneers, to enable the mules to pass. From this point the path lay along the bottom of the valley for over a mile, and we had to cross and recross the Boinu river 6 times--a rapid stream, 30 or 40 yards across, and almost up to our waist-belts; the men had to hold up their pouches to keep them out of the water. We now left the stream and struck up the mountain side--a terribly steep climb, practically no path, and it really seemed almost an impossibility to get the guns up. 20 of my fellows were detailed to lend a hand, and it took us almost four hours to get them up the worst of it (about 3/4 of a mile). In places where the hillside was nearly sheer we had to make a zig-zag path. Three mules went down, but fortunately we lost none. Some of us had a narrow squeak. Some half-dozen of us had just shoved a mule up a bad bit, got him to a place of comparative safety, and were going down to bring up the next, when we heard from above cries of 'Kubberdar neechi' (look out below), closely followed by the sickening 'bump, bump' sound, which told us a mule was coming down on us. There wasn't a moment to be lost--the khud here was so steep that you couldn't see above you--some of us scrambled up the zig-zag, others down, and next second crash came the mule. She struck the path, carrying 5 or 6 feet of it away, and bounded on, followed by a shower of debris, rocks, branches; and last of all the 'chase' (breech piece), which had fortunately become detached, came tearing down. This bit of the gun only weighs something over 230 lb--a pretty little toy to drop on to one's toe. When the cloud of dust had cleared, we peered anxiously down the khud, and to our joy saw the old mule standing some 60 feet below us, calmly grazing at bamboo leaves as if nothing had happened. On going down we found she had struck a tree and bounded into a thick clump of bamboo which had brought her up. The chase luckily had gone clear of her, and beyond some deep, ugly cuts about the head she was none the worse. They certainly are

marvellous animals. It took us some time to get her up, and much longer to haul up the breech-piece which had gone thundering down, carrying whole trees with it, some 500 feet. This had to be dragged up by ropes, foot by foot, and up a slope so steep that you couldn't stand without holding on with your hands. The native gunners are wonderful--I felt my men and myself were children beside them--great strapping, wiry fellows, absolutely untiring and undefeated by the worst difficulties, swearing and joking and the sweat pouring from them all the while.

We got to the top of the hill at last, and found the rest of the column waiting for us. The path seemed fairly good and level, so we shoved on and left the guns to come along with the Pioneers. We didn't get into new camp till 5 p.m., after a very steep and difficult descent into camp, finishing up over a bad rocky bed of a stream. I cleared a place and cut grass for the battery, as we knew they wouldn't be in till late. They came in about 7.30 p.m. and the coolies and rear guard weren't in till nearly 9.30, so we had a longish time to wait for food.

Monday Jan. 4th, marched to village of Aika and camped about a mile beyond; an easy march of 3 1/2 miles. There was a real bad bit for the guns to start with and again, as I was on rear guard and the guns went behind everything, I had the job of helping them up. Two more mules over khud, and unfortunately one killed--back broken. He went over a very bad place, with a sheer drop of 30 feet, and landed on a rock. The native driver went over too, fell on the mule, and escaped with a few scratches and a sprained wrist. We got into new camp at 3.30 p.m., having left the previous camp about 10. An easy day as rear guards have been going. Two more of our men down with fever, but able to walk along. Aika, a very large village, with a tunnel or cutting similar to the one at Shurkhua; strongly stockaded. People appeared friendly, and the usual supplies procurable.

Tuesday Jan. 5th, marched from Aika at 9 a.m. Very stiff pull up soon after leaving camp. Distance 7 miles. Guns, being the slowest unit on these bad roads, marched in rear of transport. Road at many points very bad for mules, and battery didn't get in till after dark (7 p.m.). The last half-mile was a fearfully steep descent and road terrible; in the dark almost impossible. We turned out with lanterns and torches to help the battery. At places the mules had to be actually lowered by drag ropes, a difficult job in the dark. Everyone began to think that it

was rather a mistake attempting to bring guns into this country. Of course, in the event of having to attack a village they mean a great saving of life. If any of these villages offered a determined resistance, there's not a doubt that the taking of it would entail a certain amount of loss. They are very strongly stockaded, and the approaches few and confined, though as a rule there's a weak point somewhere if you've the time to find it. Now of course half a dozen shells dropped into a village and every man Jack of 'em decamps. Guns are undoubtedly a safe thing to have, but they spoil sport.

Wednesday Jan. 6th, marched at 8.30 to camp below Lotaw: easy march of 3 miles, all along the bottom of the valley and most of the time knee-deep in stream--and precious cold it was, for no sun gets to the bottom of these valleys till close on mid-day. Everything was into new camp by 1 p.m.--a nice camping-ground, on the left bank of the river. The valley here was 3 or 4 hundred yards across, and Lotaw village some 2,000 feet up the hill on the other side of the water from camp. I believe the post of Shurkhua is to be moved to Lotaw: MacNabb (Pol. Off.) considers it a better position as being in the heart of the country we wish to influence; and the situation is preferable to that at Shurkhua--water supply better, etc.

Thursday Jan. 7th, marched to camp 6 miles beyond Lotaw. All the way again through water. Good camping ground. I was on rear guard and got in about 4.30 p.m. The natives of Lotaw are very wild jungly fellows, and evinced quite the proper savage amazement at revolvers, watches, etc. They didn't care a rap for coin of the realm, but I secured a dozen oranges and a good lump of bananas for the top button off my breeches. We have 7 men down with fever, mostly youngsters--going through this water, with no dry change to get into, probably causes it.

Friday Jan. 8th, marched at 8.30, only about 6 miles. In and out of water all the way, at times up to the thigh. Valley narrowing a good deal, large boulders and bad going. These marches of rock and water play the devil with boots. Only one pair apiece. After we had gone about 3 1/2 miles, the Friendlies who were flanking high up the hill on our right sent down word to say that they had met a number of the Lungno warriors come to meet us to offer their submission. I must tell you (I forget whether I have before) that this village of Lungno is the one we were going for. When we were a long way off, they sent insulting messages, and we all thought we were in for a bit of fun. For the

last few days every possible precaution had been taken to prevent our camp being surprised. On the march the Adv. Guard moved with care, expecting to be potted at any corner; while on rear guard you had the same small excitement to help wile away the monotony of the march. So it was a considerable damper to us all to hear that these beggars had caved in. The only thing was that perhaps it was but a dodge to put off our guard and we hung on to this belief to cheer us up. On the receipt of this news, MacNabb at once struck up the hill, accompanied by myself and 20 rifles, to interview the Lungno men. It was a tremendous climb, but at last we struck a small upper track; and a short way along this brought us to the group, some 25 or 30 of them, unarmed and very peaceful looking, with plentiful offerings of Chin beer, fruit, chickens and eggs. The men drank the beer and MacNabb did a certain amount of talky-talky, rather limited as none of his interpreters seemed to understand the Lungno dialect. After a bit, we returned with them to the column and continued the march, getting into new camp about 2.30 p.m.

Saturday Jan. 9th, marched 13 miles to Lungno village. First 2 miles along bed of stream (as on previous day), then left the valley and had a severe climb which brought us up to a height of 7,900 feet (when we left the river we were at 4,200 feet). There was a rare air on the top and we got a good view. Then came a long descent, at first gradual and then steep, down to a very good camping ground. A stream runs at the bottom of a broad valley (general direction E and W), the camp being about 500 feet above the north side. Lungno, a large village, lies on the other (south) side of the valley, on about the same level as our camp and 3/4 of a mile away as the crow flies. We found that the villagers had made ready to give us a warm reception. The last mile of steep descent down a spur was stockaded and heavily 'panjied' (i.e. bamboo spikes stuck firmly into the ground and protruding about 8 or 9 inches. They are skilfully hidden in the long grass and slightly inclined forward. There are myriads of these placed within a few inches of each other, and they offer a far severer obstacle than you would imagine. Almost as strong as steel and very keenly pointed, they'll run through the sole of a boot like butter, and bamboo always makes a nasty, unclean wound. We had one or two men spiked, and several mules and followers. I saw one mule with the spike sticking out through the coronet, having gone clean through his hoof).

We had sent 4 sick back from our last camp, with other sick of the Native Troops, and 20 Pioneers, the whole under Holloway; and I'm sorry to say we have since heard that one of them, Pte. Mansell, succumbed soon after getting into Lotaw. Holloway seems to be having some trouble there, and the villagers stoned the men who were digging Mansell's grave, and he anticipates difficulty when he begins to construct the Lotaw post.

Sunday 10th Jan. Monday 11th, Tuesday 12th (yesterday) we have been halted at Lungno camp, awaiting the arrival of rations from Shurkhua, preparatory to making another move in a S.W. direction and coming back in 6 days to Lotaw (returning by a different and more westerly route from that which we have come). From here we send back direct to Lotaw the 2 guns and all sick--we shall again have to send back 10 men, all prostrate with fever. How they'll get back I don't know; and there's another Pte. Atkins with whom it's only a matter of hours (fever and kidney complications). He marched in here, poor chap, without falling out, and I think that last 13 miles did for him. He's been unconscious for the last two days.

Camp Lotaw, Baungshe Column,
Begun January 22nd, 1892

Wednesday 13th Jan, sent off a letter to you from camp opposite Lungnoo Pte. Atkins died about 4 p.m. We had to bury him quietly after dark in the thick jungle beyond our quarter guard, and destroy as far as possible all traces of a grave. For these Chins will dig up a white man and like to ornament their village with his head stuck on a pole. So we wrapped the poor fellow in his blanket and laid him quietly in his grave. The Company were all there, also Gunning and Philson (our Medical Officer), and I read a portion of the burial service.

Thursday Jan. 14th, marched at 10 a.m. to village of Kailung, having first started back to Lotaw the guns and all sick under Knapp, R.A., with Philson in medical charge. Thus we started once more with a clean bill of health so to speak. 10 men of my fellows had to go back, all fever cases. This left me 53 rifles out of my original 101--a good instance of the survival of the fittest. My casualties in the way of sick, etc., had been as follows:ø-

25th. Dec. '91	10 men to Haka
3rd. Jan. '92	23 left at Shurkhua
9th. Jan. '92	3 sent back to Lotaw
14th. Jan. '92	10 - Lotaw
	<u>2 deceased</u>
Total	48

53 remaining fit.

All the above were dysentery or fever, but the remaining 53 were, I think, fit for any amount of hard work.

I was on rear guard, and we passed first through the village of Lungno, then 2 miles of fairly level path, steep descent, crossed stream, and very steep ascent of 2,000 feet, passing through a small village. 5 more miles brought us to camp at the bottom of a deep gorge with stream at bottom. Got in at 7 p.m. just at nightfall.

Friday 15th. Jan. marched at 7 a.m. We were told that we had 19 miles before us, starting with a climb of 4,000 feet, and no water on the road. If, however, water was found, the column would halt and the march be divided into two. Well, we began to climb directly we left camp, and a very stiff pull up it was. We started at 4,300 and climbed to 8,500, a rise of over 4,000 feet. Soon afterwards we did find a trickle of water, and so it was decided to halt for the night. This was about 12 noon, and we had come only about 4 1/2 miles. We encamped in thick wood, oak, rhododendron, and undergrowth, a damp place where the sun never penetrated.

Saturday 16th. Jan, marched at 7 a.m. to village of Ruava, distance 14 1/2 miles. At first we ascended a thousand feet or more, bringing us to the top of the ridge where the barometer showed 10,000 feet. This is, by a long way, the highest point yet reached by a column in the Chin Hills. Our general direction since Lungno had been up till now S.W. but this day we made a turn to the N. and the high ridge we now found ourselves on ran generally N. and S. There was a fairly clear view to the E. (i.e. away towards Minywa) and I must say as one saw range after range rolling away into mist it did seem rather wonderful how you could get a column of 300 men with some 1000 coolies and followers through such a country--a country which yields practically nothing for the sustenance of such a force. Away west, it was more hazy, and after three or four ridges there was nothing to be seen but a dead straight

line of mist which almost hoaxed us into thinking that we were looking at the sea. Not such a very stupid mistake after all, for we were only between 60 and 70 miles off the Bay of Bengal, and I dare say from that height on a really clear day you might have seen the sea.

There was a rare air up there, which made one's ears tingle. The path for 6 or 7 miles ran right along the top of the narrow ridge, the hill top mostly bare, but now and again you would come to several acres of oak and rhododendron in a blaze of blossom, and here the ground was white with hoar frost. Wild flowers seemed scarce, but there was a great amount of everlastings. We all enjoyed this bit of the march, and one felt loath to go down the other side of the hill. We made a turn to the left and a gradual descent down a spur which ran to the west and at right angles to the main ridge, which finally brought us to the village of Ruava. Column bivouacked at 4.30 p.m. and rear guard at 7 p.m.

Sunday Jan. 17th, marched to Sathawng, distance 14 miles. On rear guard . . . I fetched up to new camp just after dark, 7.30 p.m.

Monday Jano 18th, marched at 9.30 about 5 miles. Camped low down in thick woods. On duty.

Tuesday Jan. 19th, marched at 8.30 a.m. to village of Shirkilai. Long ascent to start with of 3,000 feet, bringing us up to 8,400 feet, where we got a view of Shurkhua village and our old post there. Camped about 2 p.m. in some cultivated ground just beyond village.

Wednesday Jan. 20th, marched into Lotaw camp, distance 5 miles. On rear guard and got in about 3 p.m. Encamped about 300 yards north of our original camping ground. Here we picked up 36 men who had been left behind sick, and I'm glad to say that all except 12 men were able to do duty, though none of them look up to much hard work, and doctor says they'dl not be fit to go on column again this winter. However, I hope Haka for a bit will pull them round; it's said to be a healthy place, though what they really want no doubt is some change of food.

Thursday Jano 21st, halt at Lotaw. I had parade at 10.30 and subsequently the men were employed on fatigue up at the new post, which lies about 800 feet up the hill side, opposite and rather lower than Lotaw village. . . o I've turned out some of my fellows and some of the 2nd.

Burma and built ourselves a capital grass mess hut with table and seats out of old beef boxes, and various other comforts. Also had men's lines tidied up and made ship-shape, as we heard we might be here several days. . . .

Saturday Jan. 23rd We are still halted at Lotaw. . . . I'm very glad to say we get on the move again tomorrow, when we start for Haka. The Baungshe Column I believe has been a great success politically. So MacNabb says. But of course we are all a bit disappointed that things have gone so smoothly with the wily Chins. We've certainly had our share of sickness, and throughout the rations have been a thorn in Gunning's side. You see, rations tie a column down in country like this where no supplies are obtainable locally.

When we go off tomorrow we leave behind here 50 Madras Pioneers under Captain Holloway, 100 2nd. Burma under Lt. Rainey, a hospital with Surgeon Entrican in charge, also men of all detachments who are too sick to move to Haka. We leave 12 men. The Madras Pioneers and Burma detachment move up, I believe, to the post tomorrow which yet has a good deal wanting to complete it, but of course the Pioneers are here for the purpose. The post, according to the present arrangements, will be evacuated after two months, by which time it is supposed that British influence will be sufficiently consolidated in these parts. So tomorrow there will be only my fellows and the guns going away from here, also the 20 Mounted Infantry, 2nd Burma. I must say I don't envy the lot of those who have to stop here for two months. There's no sport at all to be got in the surrounding hills, and a very poor chance of getting anything beyond bully beef and biscuits to eat and rum to drink; and the country so absolutely peaceable that there's not the excitement of having the post attacked. We hope to make Shurkhua in three days from here (we took four coming). There we shall probably halt, as there are about 100 loads to pick up and the coolies will want a day's rest prior to tackling the marches to Haka, which consist of three very stiff marches, the first 18 miles, no water all the way and very little at the end. . . . We hear C Company up there have lost one man and 13 others down with fever, contracted no doubt in that pestilential spot Kan, where they were delayed for want of transport (another gross failure in arrangements).

Haka, February 1st, 1892

I've rather tumbled on my feet as regards the next column, the Klang-Klang. Knowles, Captain Royal Irish and transport officer in charge of the Darjeeling Coolie Corps, had to be left behind at Lotaw sick. He was very down about it and very ill into the bargain: dysentery with fever on top of it and liver bad into the bargain. Directly we got here, Gunning asked Howlett (Comg. Officer of Haka) to wire down to Myingyan to get leave for me to take Knowles' place. Sanction came yesterday. So I'm off on the Klang-Klang column on the 5th of this month--commanding officer, Major Browne, D.S.O., 39th Garwhalis; Staff Officer, Lt. Grant of same regiment; 100 60th Rifles under Markham, Lanison and Allgood; 100 39th Garwhalis under Lieut. Evatt; 25 of 4th Madras Pioneers under Lt. Swaine; and 2 guns 8th Mountain Battery under Captain Birch. Same medical establishment as for Baungshe column. It is a punitive column to punish certain villages for a particularly treacherous attack they made on Mocatta's column last year. It's too long a yarn to tell you here; but it was a baddish business, and had it not been for the Manipur outbreak occurring just after, you would have heard something of it in the papers. The village of Klang-Klang and others ought to have been punished at once, but we made the usual muddle and delay, and execution has accordingly been put off till now. Klang-Klang is only two marches from here, and I believe the furthest point we reach is only 10 marches from here. There are already out at Klang-Klang 100 39th Garwhalis, and 10 days' rations for the column, and heliographic communication between Klang-Klang and Haka. We shall be away about one month, and, I believe, Shakespeare¹ (Political Officer of the Lushai Hills) comes out with a small force from Fort Tregear to meet us. The names of the villages we go to are:--Thualam, Thau, Hmunlipi, Thangzang. . . . I have something like 380 Darjeeling coolies, Goorkhas, Garwhalis and Bootias. Very good little fellows, take them all round, but of course with precious little idea of discipline. I have them in ten troops, each in charge of a Sirdar² (who have hardly any control over the little divils). Then there's a 'Line Sirdar' or sort of Sergeant-Major; he's a

1. L. W. Shakespeare, author of A History of the North-Eastern Frontier of India, etc.

2. Chief of a military force.

good man, very; a babu⁶ for drawing rations and keeping accounts, etc.; also a British Sergeant (one of our fellows), who is sort of second in command to me; Marshall, Surgeon Captain in medical charge of Coolie Corps. That's my force, and I believe I get 200 extra rupees staff pay for doing the job. Whether Knowles will be fit to go out on the Tashon column or not is of course, uncertain; if not, then I suppose I shall continue in the billet, and so be able to see everything that takes place on the Haka side of the Chin Hills, which of course will be good experience for me and far preferable to stopping here in Haka.

Sunday Jan. 24th, we marched from Lotaw to Aika. Distance about 10 miles. Got in 4 p.m. Left 13 sick at Lotaw post.

Monday Jan. 25th. Marched from Aika to foot of Shurkhua hill. On rear guard. Got in at 4.30 p.m.

Tuesday Jan. 26th, marched to Shurkhua, camped on old post.

Wednesday 27th, marched to Khuapi. Distance 15 miles. On rear guard. Not in till 7 p.m.

Thursday 28th, marched from Khuapi. Distance 12 miles.

Friday 29th, marched 11 miles. On rear guard. Had to shoot a battery mule which I found by the path, having been left with a couple of men, utterly done up and apparently in a dying condition; so I took the line between the poor beast's eyes and one inch above and blew his brains out. This is the first mule I've ever had the pleasure of shooting, therefore I note it.

Saturday 30th, marched 14 miles into Haka. . . . You will note our marches from Shurkhua to Haka were long, but path throughout ran along high ridges and going very good.

Haka, February 4th, 1892

This is a bitterly cold spot, and the houses not of a grand build, though they seem comfortable enough after

1. Clerk.

knocking about in the jungle. Our men's lines are about 300 yards below the fort, and our officers' quarters close to the men's--a low hut, sunk about 3 feet into the ground, grass roof, wattle walls with earth banked up on the outside and covered with old gunny bags (rough canvas) inside, a small passage with earth floor down the centre and opening on it four cabins, each with two berths in them, each cabin being about 7 foot by 12, with a tiny porthole. The whole thing gives you an idea of being aboard ship.

The post itself is an irregular work, roughly about a mile round and defended by breastwork and abattis. The huts inside are much the same as ours, only a little more roomy, while the mess hut boasts a fireplace. There's flat gravelled piece of ground, about 150 yards by 80, just outside the fort, used as parade and football ground. Behind Haka, i.e. south-east of the post, there rises a high crest--7,000--well wooded on the Haka side, while looking away west and north towards Klang Klang and Fort White, you get a fine open view over the surrounding hills. The poor 2nd. Burma fellows, who have just come here on relief and who expected that they couldn't be kept more than five years in the place, now hear that this is to be their permanent Headquarters. It's a poor lookout, with no chance of getting a cart road up here for years and years. It is with the greatest difficulty you can get anything up, and by the time a bottle of Whisky reaches here it's more than doubled in value. So taking one consideration with another, the extra 100 a month they give these fellows in Burma Regt. don't seem much of a catch. There's nothing to report in our daily life here. One eats a great deal and smokes a great deal, and I dare say would drink a great deal only there's nothing to drink.

Camp below Thau, February 13th, 1892

My last letter was written from Haka on the eve of our departure for the Klang Klang column, and I will now endeavour to give you some account of our doings.

The objects of the column are, primarily, to punish a group of four or five villages implicated in the very treacherous attack made on Mocatta's column in April last. He, in company with MacNabb (Political) and with an escort of 100 Garwhallis and 2 guns British Mountain Battery under Lieut. O'Leary, set out from Haka with ten days' rations, bound for Thau where they were to meet Shakespeare.

He is the political of the Chin-Lushai Hills and was to come from Fort Tregear, the frontier post on that side, with a small escort. Previous to this, General Tregear had in '89 marched across from the Chin-Lushai Hills as far as the village of Klang-Klang, and there joined hands with Rundall,^d who had gone out from Haka to meet him. Tregear's column had cut a mule track throughout, and apparently when Mocatta started, there was not the slightest idea of meeting with any opposition. The total distance, as the crow flies, from Haka to Fort Tregear is about 50 miles, by the mule track about 75. Thau is the most westerly village of the Chin Hills and is two marches from Fort Tregear.

Well, to continue my account of Mocatta's column, Thau was reached in safety, but there had been a good many occurrences to arouse their suspicions on the road. In the first place Klang-Klang village was found deserted, Thualam the same. While in camp at the latter place, 50 or 60 armed Chins passed them, going in the direction of Klang-Klang; these men said they were friendly and stated they had been called in by the Klang-Klang Chief to 'make their bow' to the Political Officer. They were therefore allowed to pass. When the column got near Hmunlipi (the mule track doesn't pass quite through the village) messengers were sent into the village and came back with the intelligence that the Hmunlipi warriors had gone into Klang-Klang but had returned as the Klang-Klang chief had been unable to organise resistance to our column. This news clearly showed that some idea of resisting us had been entertained. At Thau, for some reason or other, Shakespeare failed to meet them. I fancy it was due to some blunder about the dates. Having only ten days' rations with him, Mocatta was bound to get back at once to Haka though, as I said before, things in rear of him looked uncommonly suspicious. There was one other course open to him, namely to push on two days to Fort Tregear. There he could get any amount of rations, and from there he could communicate by wire (round through Burma) to Haka and get a force sent out to meet him. You see 100 rifles was a very small force to cope with anything like a general rising. MacNabb advised Mocatta to do this, but the latter considered he would be exceeding his orders if he left the Chin territory and, I dare say, underrated the danger that was behind him.

1. Political Officer.

Accordingly the column started on their homeward journey. On nearing Hriangkhan, MacNabb with an escort of 30 rifles left the main track and went to the village, which he found entirely deserted. This looked bad, and he hastened back to rejoin the column as quickly as possible. He caught them up about 3 miles from Hriangkhan. They were halted for breakfast in a deep-cut valley, with a stream at the bottom. The Garwhallis had piled arms, the mules of the battery had their loads off, and everyone was busy with breakfast. I can't say confidently what precautions Mocatta had taken, but I believe there were some sentries posted. At all events, he couldn't have shoved them very far up the hill or he must have disturbed the Chins which were swarming all round him. MacNabb's arrival, with his account of the desertion of Hriangkhan, set everyone speculating on what turn events were going to take, when all of a sudden a hot fire was opened on them from all sides. Several sepoy dropped, but officers and men were soon in their places. At this moment in came the rear guard, carrying a couple of men who had been bowled over. Having seen the spot, I can imagine that for a few minutes things must have looked a bit queer. The place is an extremely nasty one to get out of, and commanded all round from the top of high precipitous rocks, which are covered with jungle, entirely hiding an enemy. Forbes, Lieut. Garwhallis, took some men and cleared the Chins away. In doing this he was shot through the arm, while a Naik¹ at his side was shot dead through the heart. I think their total casualties were only 5 sepoy killed and 1 British and 1 native officer and some 7 or 8 sepoy wounded. So all things considered they got out of it uncommonly well. All the rest of that day they were fired on, and with dead and wounded to carry they made but slow progress. Night found them still 5 or 6 miles short of Thualam, and they bivouacked on the top of a ridge, making a kind of zareba with abattis. They could get no water, and with the Chins all round them they had a baddish night of it. Next day, after burning their dead, they continued their march into KlangeKlang, fighting the whole way. Here they were met by Colonel Mainwaring (39th Garwhallis). News had been brought into Haka by friendly Chins of the attack, and all available troops at Haka were started out.

There's no doubt that there and then strong measures should have been taken. Klang-Klang should have been burnt, and a column sent as soon as possible to do the

1. Corporal.

same to the other villages known to have been implicated. You must understand that only a year previous to this all the chiefs of these villages had taken the oath of allegiance, we in our turn promising not to disarm their villages for three years provided they didn't use their arms against us. However, just at this time the Manipur affair broke out. The military authorities had their hands full, all available transport was taken from the Chin Hills; and this little contretemps, which under ordinary circumstances would have received a good deal of attention, was allowed to slide. It wasn't till six weeks later that orders came to fine the villages a certain amount of guns and property. It was now too late in the season and Klang-Klang alone could be dealt with. So one part of our business this year is to punish the remainder of the villages, or in other words merely to insist on their paying the fine, which to me seems a very inadequate punishment for the offence committed. But peace-at-any-price seems to be the policy. These beggars refuse to pay up the guns (generally only from 20 to 40 according to the size of the village is about the amount required) until a column is at their very doors, then they come out and pay up smiling, get patted on the back by the Political, who is then able to report that everything is going on in a satisfactory way and who accordingly gets the credit of having immense tact in dealing with the recalcitrant Chins, while Government has spent lacs^b of rupees in sending a costly expedition through the most difficult country to enforce the collection of a few old Tower muskets.

A second and important reason for this column is the choosing of a route for an intended cart road and eventually, I believe, a railway from Chittagong to Haka.² The opening of such a route will, it is hoped, encourage emigration from India to the Chin Hills. India, for many reasons, is fast getting over-populated, and the necessity for emigration is every year more urgent. The native of Hindustan, who is averse to crossing the sea, would probably

1. Lakh: 100,000.

2. Projects for a railway linking Burma with Bengal were often considered, but were abandoned on the grounds that on neither side of the boundary was there any large centre of population or supply which a railway could serve, and that communication by sea was cheaper. Despite Lieut. Watson's statement, movement by sea from India to Burma was common.

make use of this new exit. A good overland route from Calcutta to Chittagong is of course already open, part of it being by river. Well, I've written at length on the cause and objects of this column, but I thought it might be of interest to you, more especially as it's almost impossible for you at home to get any clear idea of what is going on in these wilds from the very scanty reports which appear in the papers. The story of the attack on Mocatta's column, too, never became public property, as even out here there was scarcely mention made of the incident in the papers. No doubt it was intentionally hushed up. I will now get on with a diary of our doings since leaving Haka.

Friday Feb. 5th, column marched out of Haka at 9 a.m. My coolies were all ready loaded up to time, and Browne, commanding the column, afterwards told me he was pleased with the way the transport got off; he had expected some bother and delay on the first morning. We marched ten miles, on a good mule track which crossed and recrossed a mountain stream about a dozen times. Column got into new camp at 1.30, coolies about one hour later. A good camping ground, 5,200 feet high.

Saturday Feb. 6th, marched at 7.30 a.m. into the village of Klang-Klang, about 7 miles. Here a forward post for rations had been formed, and a number of my coolies changed their loads. After a three hours' halt there, we went on down to our camping ground, 2 1/2 miles from Klang-Klang. Everything in by 5.30 p.m.

Sunday Feb. 7th, column marched at 10.30 a.m. 6 miles, over an ascent of 2,000 feet. Descended again to 4,200 feet and encamped in dense jungle about 300 yards short of the village of Thualam. Good road throughout.

Monday Feb. 8th, marched at 7.30 a.m. 11 1/2 miles to Hmunlipi village. This we found entirely deserted and accordingly we took up our quarters in the empty houses. The Chins had evidently fled hurriedly--fire still burning and all their personal effects scattered about. In fact, the havildar¹ in charge of the advance party of Mounted Infantry reported having seen some 50 or 60 armed Chins bolting up the hillside as his men came in sight of the village. Parties were sent out in search, but as might have been expected, they didn't come up with the Chins. In his native land with a perfect knowledge of every hill-

1. Sergeant.

track and hiding place, and with his wonderful endurance and activity, the Chin is almost invulnerable. Hmunlipi was originally intended as the permanent post from which the further operations of the column could be carried on, but owing to the very insufficient water supply, another site about two miles south was selected, and accordingly next day, Tuesday the 9th. Feb, the column marched there.

Hmunlipi was left intact, though owing to the non-payment of their fine, the Political Officer decided that the village would subsequently have to be burnt. For the present, the timber and planks in the houses would be useful in building our new post. The site of this post is exactly above the spot where Mocatta's column was first attacked last year; it's on a fairly high ridge and about three miles by road from Hriangkhan village (3,000 yards as the crow flies). From the post you can see most of the houses, some half dozen of them, shewing up clear against the sky line. From the post you cannot see Hmunlipi village. The post is called Laawva from the stream which runs beneath.

Hriangkhan not having come in with the guns demanded from her, Birch, Captain R.A. in command of the two mountain guns, was ordered to shell the village. The native gunners were delighted and in a very few minutes the two 7-pounders (the screw guns) were in position. 3,500 yards was first tried with common shell, but the burst evidently fell clear over the brow. The range was reduced and the third shell fired burst right in the middle of the village. Having found the range, fire was continued with shrapnel, and in all half a dozen shots were fired. This was only by way of intimidating the villagers--a very poor way of fighting from the infantry soldier's point of view, and the fact is that while a column has any guns with them you will never get a chance of rushing a stockade. At the very first round from the guns, we could see through our glasses the unfortunate terrified natives flying into the jungle. I must say I felt horribly like an Easter Sunday sightseer at a Brighton field day. The practice made by the guns was certainly good and interesting to watch. It's a marvellous gun. . o . This was about 12 noon, and at 2 o'clock 50 K.R.R. and 50 Garhwallis under Major Browne started off to visit Hriangkhan, the guns again firing a few shots to cover their advance.

I was told off to do a little job of my own and considering I am, as Coolie Corps man, a sort of departmental officer, I was fortunate to get anything to do. Otherwise

I should have accompanied the Hriangkhan party though, after the guns firing, there wasn't the remotest chance of finding any defenders in the village. Well, my job was to take 20 Garhwallis, go back to Hmunlipi, and see if I couldn't capture any of the villagers, who in all probability would be sneaking about either in the village or in the surrounding jungle. Well, I proceeded along the path until I got to a point where the path was visible from the village, and then struck into the jungle. Hmunlipi lies in a sort of horseshoe of hills.

I must close this abruptly as the mail goes out early tomorrow. We are now (I am writing on Sunday the 14th) at Thau village and have met Shakespeare and others from Fort Tregear. This letter will go via Chin-Lushai Hills and Chittagong.

Post at Laawva, February 29th, 1892

We marched in here at 2 o'clock today after our ten days 'dour'. . . o My last letter to you gave news up to Tuesday 9th or to be accurate up to the time when I came in sight of the village of Hmunlipi with my small force of Garhwallis. Keeping high up, with the crest of the horseshoe shaped hills between us and the village, we got well round to the back of it. Then, dividing the party into three, we rushed down to the village, each party on separate and converging spurs. I must tell you that in the morning Hmunlipi had been unintentionally fired. I think my coolies got the credit for it, but I dare say some Garhwalli chucked a match into a house just to give it a chance! Any how, when we got there ten or twelve houses were blazing and the dense black clouds of smoke made it almost impossible to get through at all, and equally impossible to see more than a few yards. Therefore our chances of catching any villagers who might be about were minimised. My orders were to fire on any armed Chins, but not on unarmed men or women and children. Well, personally I saw no one, but there were a few shots fired, some of them evidently not Martinis. However, when I got my men together I found there was no harm done, though several of them assured me that they had wounded their men! Our captives were only a couple of old men, very harmless fellows I think, but I had to bring them back to the post which we reached about 5 o'clock. Half an hour afterwards the force from Hriangkhan returned. They had met with no resistance, and had captured three or four villagers, one of

whom stated that he was standing in the verandah of his house when our guns began shelling the village, and a fragment of shell struck his gun which was in his hand at the time. The gun, which he gave up, was cut clean in two about half way between muzzle and action. A bit of a shave for the man! There were many marks on the houses, showing the excellent practice the screw guns had made, and one poor beggar had been pretty well cut in two. Our men got a good deal of common loot in the way of chicken, eggs, pumpkins, and so on; also some fine sambur'sb heads found in the chief's house.

10th Feb. we halted at Laawva post. At daybreak 50 K.R.R. under Lanison, 50 Garhwallis under a Subadar, and 250 coolies were sent to Hriangkhan, 3 miles distant, to fetch thatching grass, of which there were many stacks in the village, for roofing the huts in our new post. I went in command of the party. It was thought probable that the villagers would have returned and give us a warm reception, but we found the place entirely deserted. I placed strong picquets at various points round the village, keeping remaining troops under arms at the chief's house, while the coolies were employed tying up their loads. Every thing was ready for our return journey by 10 a.m. and we were back in the post by noon. At 2 p.m. I had to go out again with all my coolies, this time to Hmunlipi, 2 miles, to fetch planks and uprights. They have very fine planks in some of these Chin houses, most of them 60 or 70 feet long, 3 feet broad, and 2 or 3 inches thick. As you can imagine, these take a good deal of carrying along a bad road, and we didn't get back to the post till just after dark (7 p.m.) and I think my little 'coolie boys' thoroughly earned their night's rest.

Well, next day the 11th. Feb. we were at the same job again, starting at 10 and getting back at 4 p.m. I only had half the coolies with me, the remainder being employed at the post, building huts and abattis. That evening Ainslie, Lieut. R.E., caught us up; he is attached to the column for the purpose of giving his opinion on the best route for a cart road between Fort Tregear and Haka. Since then he has conferred with Shakespeare and Boileau, R.E., whom, as I told you, we met by appointment at Thau village, and they have pretty well decided on the route that should be adopted. It will probably cost 15,000 rupees a mile and its total length will be 400 miles or so. Therefore

1. *Rusa aristotelis*.

it's very doubtful whether the outlay will ever be sanctioned, especially as the returns gained from such a road would be practically nil. Personally I think they make a mistake in choosing the Chittagong-Haka route at all for a road, for it means traversing the Chin Hills at their very widest part; and I believe the best natural route from India to Burmah is through Manipur and Tammu, eventually striking the Chindwin river somewhere near Kindat. Of course, one objection to that is that in the dry season the navigation of the Chindwin is so difficult.¹

Friday 12th Feb. marched from Laawva post at 8.30 a.m. 12 1/2 miles to camp below Thau village. Coolies not in till dark. Thau villagers met us with their fire of guns, so no chance of a fight here.

Sat. 13th Feb, marched up to Thau village, a very steep ascent of 2,000 feet; the road had to be made the whole way, and column couldn't start till 2 p.m. I employed the long wait in beginning my last letter to you. Coolies got into new camp at 4.30. I then had to take them back to assist guns and transport mules up the hill. Battery all over the worst part by 6 p.m. but transport mules had then not begun the ascent. It was getting dark and the climb, bad enough in the day, would have been impossible at night; so I ordered the transport mules to stay where they were. As it was, we killed one pony, and many others over the khud. A rather dangerous business as we were working in zig-zags, and a mule down above meant a very fair chance of someone being killed below either by the falling mule, the load, or the scores of rocks dislodged in his fall. I didn't get back to the camp at Thau till half past 9. Had a snack and then turned in.

Next morning, Sunday 14th. Feb, I had to take the coolies back again to our previous camp to bring up the loads of the mules, it having been decided to send the battery and all transport mules back to the Laawva post, as the road ahead was reported to be impassable for mules. . . .

Monday 15th. Feb, marched at 8.30, about 11 miles, and camped 3 miles short of the village of Bwe. This was a very hard march, part of the way making our own path. The original intention was to get to Bwe but it was getting

1. Lieut. Watson's views were sound: when ultimately a road linking Burma with India was made, it ran through Tammu to Manipur.

dark, so a halt had to be made at the first water. It was only the feeblest trickle and all hands suffered rather from the want of water. The little there was, was quite thick and muddy and it was difficult at first to keep the coolies from drinking their fill, as they had to pass the water supply on their way in. They had had no water since starting at 9 o'clock, and this was 7 p.m., so you can understand they took a bit of driving past it, but on the whole they behaved well and obeyed my orders unhesitatingly.

Tuesday 16th, marched at 8 a.m. 10 miles, passing through Bwe. Here a couple of men had to be taken prisoner, men who had raided and murdered in a neighbouring village. According to their lights they had done a fine thing, having revenged a raid and murder perpetrated on their village some 20 years back. So pleased were they that they at once came up and bragged of their doings to MacNabb, the political.

Wednesday 17th. Feb, marched at 7.45 a.m. to Vamkua, distance 8 miles. Encamped just above village. March through high grass above our heads and thick bamboo jungle.

Thursday 18th, marched at 7.45 a.m. to Wantu, distance 9 miles. The camp was made low down by the Laawva stream, 5 miles short of the village. The infantry, leaving coolies, guard and commissariat with me in charge, were pushed on to the village and came back the same day into camp.

Friday 19th, marched at 7.45 a.m. back to Vamkua and on past it in the direction of Hriangkhan, camping 5 miles short of the latter. This was a hard 14 mile march, including two climbs each of over 2,000 feet. The column didn't get in till 6 and the last coolies not till 9 p.m. The path was bad, and I had great difficulty in getting the coolies and two sick men who were carried into camp, and I was glad to turn straight in without caring to eat.

Saturday 20th, marched via Hriangkhan back to Laawva post. As the former had not paid their guns, the Political Officer ordered the burning of the village, which was carried out accordingly. It's a heavy punishment, as it takes a Chin fully three years to collect planks and timbers for a house.

Today, Sunday 21st, we are halting at the post. Some slight alterations are being made in the post, but the

coolies are having a day of rest and they deserve it thoroughly. They have worked well and behaved well since we left Haka, and I'm glad to say that Browne (Commanding Column) has twice complimented me on my management and arrangements of the coolies; and he's not at all a man who throws his praises about haphazard.

When we got in here yesterday, we heard the very sad news of poor Knowles' death. He, you will remember, is the man who came over from India in charge of this coolie corps, and whom we had to leave sick at that miserable out of the way post Lotaw. He died of abcess of the liver, brought on by fever and malaria. It seems so very sad, a fellow dying out in the jungle like that, with hardly a white man near. (There were three others there, but in six weeks' time we shall vacate the post and his grave must be left uncared for and solitary on the mountain side.).

Laawva Post, March 1st, 1892

My last letter was, I think, written on the 21st, the day before we started off on a fresh 7 days' 'dour' to visit the village of Thangzang and others lying beyond it. On the morning of the 23rd we marched out of the post at 7.45 a.m.--50 K.R.R., 100 Garhwallis, and the 2 guns. For the first mile we followed the Hmunlipi path, eventually keeping up on the top of the ridge and leaving the village of Hmunlipi below us and on our right. The path after this became bad for mules, and there were constant halts to repair the road for the battery, so much so that throughout the coolies, with whom I was marching, were close up to the remainder of the column. About noon rain, which had been threatening for some days past, came down in torrents and we were soon all wet to the skin; and very cold it was, with a bitter wind blowing and howling through the fir trees. The rain didn't improve the pace, and the path very soon became so slippery and in places broken that it was with the greatest difficulty that an unladen man could keep his footing. Mules and coolies were constantly slipping over the khud, and all round things were a bit uncomfortable. However, we shoved along till 5.30 p.m., by which time we had covered 12 miles, but were still three miles short of Thangzang village which we originally hoped

1. Lotaw was evacuated on March 20.

to reach that day. Immediately in front of us there was a sheer rise of over 1,000 feet, and it would have taken three hours at least to get the battery up. We were close to a good stream, so Browne decided to halt. About 6 p.m. it cleared up a bit--bivouacking in a quagmire is always rather uncomfortable--but we were able to light big fires and get ourselves warm and dry.

Next morning, the 23rd, Browne very wisely decided to send the two guns back to the post; it would have entailed an enormous lot of labour to get them on, and it was pretty well certain that we should have no need of them. The remainder of the column marched on up the hill, through Thangzang village which was found completely deserted. A dozen houses were ordered to be burnt as the village had not paid up the requisite fine of guns. From Thangzang we went on to Lungler which we reached about 3 p.m. Distance 8 1/2 miles. We had had a fine morning, but the weather looked so threatening that we were billeted in the Chin houses, and very glad we were to get a roof over our heads, for that night it came down in buckets.

Next morning, the 24th, broke fine, crisp and cloudless, and we hoped that we had said goodbye to the rain. The force was now divided into two parts--Browne with the Garhwallis marched on Dawn while Markham took our men out to Klangpi. Both places were reported to be within one day's march of Lungler, at which place the two parties were to rejoin again the following day. Each party took three days' rations in case of accidents. I went with Markham, Allgood and Philson completing the quartette.

We left Lungler at 7.30 a.m. and all went well till 9 o'clock. Clouds had been banking up, and rain now began to fall in sheets. A very steep descent had brought us down to the Tingva stream, through which we had to wade waist deep. It was 1/2 past 11 before I got all my coolies across. We had only come about 5 miles, and our destination was reported to be 12 miles further on. We now began a tremendous climb, and it required all one's energies to get the coolies along at all. The path, at any time a bad one, was as slippery as ice, the rain was blinding, and the cold wind cut clean through one. Through this sort of thing we struggled on till 5 in the afternoon, by which time we had crossed another ridge, slid and tumbled down the other side, and struck into a second stream which had to be crossed and recrossed fifteen or sixteen times. Here I halted my coolies and let the rear guard come up. As far as I could judge we must still have another 6 or 7

miles to do, and with the coolies dead beat and many of them cut and a good deal knocked about with falling down, it seemed more than probable that we were in for a night of it. However, when things seem at their worst they usually begin to mend, and soon after getting my gang on the move again I was met by a Chin bearing a note from Markham to say that he had found a small village (not our original intended) and had decided to stop for the night--it was only two miles from the stream we had just left. To make matters still better, the rain began to abate and by 7 p.m. we fetched up to the village of Lungding and were able to get everyone, including coolies, housed. The little fellows had been marching for twelve hours nearly and weren't they just glad to get into their journey's end.

Next morning Markham and Allgood took 30 rifles and marched on into Klangpi, interviewed the chief, got paid the requisite tribute, and returned the same afternoon to Lungding, where Philson and I with a guard of 20 men and the coolies had remained. No white men had ever before been to the village, and we had a good deal of fun with the uncouth Chin, shooting off our revolvers and burning their hands with a field-glass lens.

26th Feb. marched back to Lungler, 9 miles. Found Browne's party had done their 'dour' in the two days and had come in for the same drenching that we got. This day we sent several helio messages to Fort Tregear, which was only about 24 miles distant as the crow flies.

27th Feb, marched back to our old camp below Thangzang village, distance 8 miles.

28th Feb, MacNabb with Allgood and 30 rifles K.R.R. started off to Haka. They were to visit various villages en route and to reach Haka on 2nd March. Remainder of column marched back to Laawva post, 11 miles.

29th February, halt at Laawva Post. . . a

March 1st, Markham, Lanison and 40 K.R.R., together with Birch and the battery, all sick of corps, left post for Haka with mule transport; Major Browne, headquarters of column, Garhwallis and coolies remaining at post. You see we were unable to evacuate the place till the arrival of 100 men 2nd Burma Battalion from Haka, who are to form the permanent garrison there. About noon of this day, this party marched in under Lt. Williams.

2nd March, Ash Wednesday, remainder of Klang-Klang column marched from post in the direction of Haka and halted at our old camp below Thualam village. Distance 11 1/2 miles.

3rd March, marched at 7.30 a.m. to camp in the Sanva stream. This was a long march. At 6 miles we passed through our old camp below Klang-Klang village, right up the steep ascent and through the village, a dip on the far side, then severe climb of 3,000 feet, three miles along the top of the ridge, then dropped down to the Sanva valley. We thought we were going to halt here at our old camping ground (our original first march out of Haka), but for some reason Browne pushed on two miles further. This made a total distance of 18 miles, all up or down severe hills except for the three miles of ridge and the last two miles along the Sanva stream. My poor little coolie boys were dead beat, and so as darkness came on and still many of them had not come in, I took out a party of men with some lamps and torches. The Sanva stream had to be crossed and recrossed seven times in the last two miles, and this meant scrambling and climbing over huge slippery rocks and boulders--not an easy job for a coolie in the pitch dark with 80 lbs on his back. We went back three miles good before we met the rear guard, labouring along with two dhoolies in which were sick men. It was half past 9 before we got everything into camp, and I was pretty ready for dinner after doing 24 miles; it doesn't sound much to those who are used to an English country lane, but when you are climbing or descending most of the time it makes it as much as double the distance.

Next morning the 4th March we marched into Haka. We soon came up with Birch's rear guard--his party had been encamped only two miles ahead of us the previous night. . . .

We start out on the Tashon column on the 10th inst. I go in charge of my coolies and in addition I shall do Transport Officer to the column, having 150 mules as well in my care. Our first objective is Falam, four marches due north of Haka. . . . There I believe we meet the Nwengal column from Fort White. . . . The column is 100 rifles K.R.R. with Gunning, Allgood and Sackville-West; 100 2nd Burma Battalion under Presgrave, 50 Madras Pioneers under Swan, 2 guns of the 8th Bengal Mountain Battery, and 150 Garhwallis (these last will be left to garrison Falam while the subsequent operations are going on). The transport is 400 Darjeeling coolies and 150 mules.

Camp near Tashon, Tashon Column,
Chin Hills, March 14th, 1892

Up to the present our advance has been unimpeded. The column marched out of Haka at 8 a.m. on the 10th instant and I got my mules and coolies off without a hitch, though out of the 500 coolies some 130 had to be left behind, sick; they have never got over the 'doing' they got in the Baungshe country, and fever and dysentery has been rife amongst them. Our first march was 12 1/2 miles, the whole way along a mule track, an excellent trace, with nothing steeper than slopes of one in seven. The consequence was we got along swimmingly, and everything was in new camp by 4 p.m. . . .

On the 11th we marched to a camp on the Paova stream, about two miles beyond Hairon village. Still a good road and no trouble with transport. Here we picked up 100 2nd Burma and 50 Pioneers who had been sent on in advance some ten days previously to repair road and to form a guard for rations at Hairon (rations had been sent out there by Chin coolies). So next day, the 12th, it was about as much as I could do to fit in the transport, the baggage of these extra men making a good deal of difference. However, by double loading the mules we were able to get on and marched 11 miles to Laiza village. In places the road was bad and two or three of my mules went over the khud, but fortunately there were no casualties.

Sunday 13th, marched at 7.30 a.m. on Falam. This was the day we anticipated our first fight. We have never before been into Falam; in fact last year a small column was practically 'warned off' by the Chins. There were then reported to be some 4,000 of them, and it was considered advisable to retire. We had a long climb of about 4 or 5 miles, and from the top we got a splendid view of the great valley in which Falam lies and at the bottom of which flows the Nankathe or Manipur river.^b The village itself was hidden by a spur and couldn't be seen; immediately below us and on our side of the spur lies the old and now deserted village of Tashon. We now descended to Tashon and there all transport had to remain, while the column advanced over the spur to Falam village. The valley

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1. The Manipur river flowing south from Imphal into the Chin Hills turns eastwards near Falam and ultimately joins the Myittha river.

here is very large and open--more like a piece out of the Himalayas--and it was a pretty sight seeing the column move off, guns and Rifles by an upper path under Gunning, Burma Regt. and Pioneers below. Men and mules looked like so many flies on a wall. However, no resistance was met with, the village (some 500 houses) absolutely deserted, and the troops bivouacked for the night just above the village. After taking on the baggage, I had to come back to Tashon (only about 1 mile) from where the column was camped, with coolies and mules, 20 Mounted Infantry, and a guard of 40 Pioneers, there being no ground available where the column was.

Monday 14th, about 10 a.m. the Nwengal Column marched in from Fort White. Our meeting, of course, had been pre-arranged. They had exchanged a few shots while crossing the Nankathe stream and had bowled over 4 or 5 Chins, no casualties amongst our men. . o .

Tuesday 15th at 6 a.m. I sent all my mules back to Hairon to bring out more rations. Both the columns combined marched through Falam village, just by way of show I imagine. But as the town is practically deserted, there was virtually no one to 'tread on the tail of our coats' or to admire the display of military power. As my coolies were not required to take part in this parade and as I've seen quite enough Chin villages to satisfy my curiosity, I stayed at home.

From a political point of view this capture of Falam--though it has been a bloodless affair--is about the most important blow yet struck in the Chin Hills. This is the head village of the Tashons who, amongst all other tribes, have for years held their own--bullying their neighbours and generally yodoming the surrounding country. Their swagger and bluster is proverbial. They even told the neighbouring tribes that if the 'Kalars'¹ (white men) came to attack, their village, they wouldn't even trouble to use their guns, they would beat us back with sticks, and that any Kalar who should so much as look on Falam would die. And now on top of that the brutes have made a complete bolt of it. The only drawback is that the chiefs show no signs of coming in, so that it's impossible for

1. A term used in Burma, originally for Hindus, later for any foreign from countries west of Burma.

our political officers to come to any sort of terms.^b They are probably swarming all round us on the mountain sides; in fact at night one can see their fires and, with the full moon we've got now, I think it's a great pity that small parties aren't sent out at night to hustle them about a bit.

This old village of Tashon has been fixed on as the site for the permanent post, which eventually will be garrisoned by 400 Garhwallis. At present we have to stay here until the arrival of 100 Garhwallis from Haka, and until all rations which have been collected at Hairon are brought out here.

Wednesday 16th, the Nwengal column marched out at 7 a.m. to visit a large village (name forgotten) about 11 miles to the north of this place. They will return on Friday next. Meanwhile the Tashon column halts in Falam and I stay alone here with the transport. My mules came in at 7 a.m. this morning, and at 10 a.m. they, accompanied by 200 of my coolies, started back again to Hairon for more rations. In addition to my other duties I have been made Provost Marshal.

MacNabb hopes to get through three 'dours' of ten days each, returning to the post here after each.

Camp Vamkamwa, Tashon Column, March 24th, 1892

We left Falam on the 29th, carrying seven days' rations, seven more having been sent on ahead via friendly Chins to Klau, two marches out. We arrived here on the 22nd, and yesterday and today the column has been employed in visiting villages near here. Meanwhile I was sent back with 200 mules to fetch on the seven days' rations from Klau. It's ten miles back from here; with a couple of stiff climbs. I came back today, leaving Klau at 4 a.m. (lots of moon) and getting in here at 9 a.m. It's fearfully hot now in the middle of the day, and troops and transport are beginning to feel the effects. I lost three mules this morning over the khud--two killed and one I had

1. B. S. Carey and H. N. Tuck, The Chin Hills, Rangoon, Government Press, 1896, Vol. I, p. 65, state that representative chiefs from the Falam area came in and accepted the terms offered.

to shoot. The road in places was execrable and mountain side so steep that, once gone, there was little chance of a mule fetching up unless a friendly tree came in his way. . . . We go on from here tomorrow on a seven days' dour.

Falam Post, April 3rd, 1892

All small luxuries in the way of stores ran out long ago; clothes in rags; boots gone to pieces; men looking fairly fit but thin as rails and fine as sticks. Some of our fellows (about 30) have been on all three columns, and four months' continual marching, with no change from the everlasting diet of bully beef and biscuit, is bound to leave its mark. All this and hardly so much as a shot fired. You must own it's disappointing. . o .

Sunday 27th, column divided into two parts: guns, K.R.R., all sick and all mule transport marched at 6.30 a.m. 11 miles to village of Klangkhua. . a .

Monday 28th, turned out of the blankets at 4 a.m. and found it a threatening morning, quite dark and heavy clouds all round, strong gusts of wind. In fact, we felt we were in for it, and before we had time to pack up the storm broke on us, a perfect deluge, and not a stick of cover as we were camped on a ridge 7,000 feet high. However, we marched sharp up to time and fortunately about 9 o'clock the rain stopped. We were now at the bottom of an immense valley, and following the course of a stream on quite the worst path I've yet seen in the Chin Hills. It was a good thing we hadn't got the guns and mules with us; as it was, the little coolies had their work cut out to make any headway at all. Their loads were saturated, 'going' as slippery as ice, and in many places it was a case of fair hand and foot climbing. We camped that night in a Chin village. The last of my coolies and I didn't get in till 7 or 8 o'clock, and it was a real hard day for them.

March 29th, marched at 6.30 a.m. to camp just below Klangpa peak and close to the source of the Boinu River. A short march of 5 miles, and one of the nicest camps we've yet been in--an open grassy valley, 1/4 of a mile broad at the bottom, with the Lai Va stream running through it, the ground simply carpeted with violets and other wild flowers, here and there patches of rhododendron bushes all ablaze with crimson blossom. Elevation 6,900 feet, and a keen, fresh feeling in the air, though the mid-day sun was a bit

overpowering. We got in about 11 a.m., and some of the fellows with a small escort went on to see the source of the Boinu, the large river of the Chin Hills, which lower down is called the Kaladan and which, after many hundreds of miles, flows into the sea at Chittagong.⁶ We crossed it more than once on the Baungshe Column. Personally I was quite content with the spot I was in, so spent an idle day in camp.

Wednesday 30th, marched at 6.30 a.m. seven miles to large village of Klangron. After getting settled down in camp Newland--our photographer--and I made a tour of the village and he got some pictures done while I amused the subjects by showing them my revolver and so forth. What 'fetches' these savages more than anything else is the burning glass out of one's binoculars. This was a very hot day, and our camp was in a small cultivated valley, with a strong wind blowing up clouds of dust.

Thursday 31st March, marched at 6.30 a.m. to camp on the Zakhliir stream, near the village of Klau. We began with a steep ascent which brought us up to nearly 7,000 feet, and then a steady descent to Zakhliir valley. Here, as pre-arranged, found the other half of the column under Gunning. They had been in camp there for two days.

Friday 1st April, marched at 6.30 a.m. en route to Falam Post. We encamped a bit on the Falam side of our old ground. Distance 9 miles. We heard the first news of a fight at Shurkhua (a large village which I dare say you will recollect in connexion with the Baungshe Column). It seems that the garrison of the Lotaw Post had received orders to evacuate Lotaw and make their way into Haka. It was always understood that this move should take place towards the end of March, by which time the surrounding country would, it was expected, have been brought 'thoroughly under control'. . . . Well, Passingham and 100 rifles 2nd. Burma got as far as Shurkhua with Chin coolies from Lotaw (they were entirely dependent on Chin coolies for transport). At Shurkhua it was intended to obtain a fresh supply of coolies, the Lotaw men being allowed to return to their villages. The Shurkhua Chief refused to give a single man, so Passingham with 70 rifles went to the Chief's house where he found swarms of Chins all armed. Tuck, the Political there, reports, 'The attitude of the

1. Lieut. Watson's geography was again at fault the Kaladan reaches the sea at Akyab.

Chins was threatening and impertinent, I called upon them three times to put down their guns; at this time a disturbance took place and the O.C. troops ordered his men to fire.^a It ain't a very lucid account, and doesn't show who actually began hostilities,^b but once started the game seems to have gone on merrily enough. Passingham's men were chiefly Pathans and they are men with plenty of stomach for the fight. All the same, it took an hour to drive the Chins from the village, fighting from house to house. 15 Chins were reported killed and 30 wounded--our loss only 2 sepoy killed, one wounded. Subsequently the whole of the village was burnt. This no doubt was a stupid thing to do, as it leaves you with no hold on the villagers. Leave their village, and they're sure to come back sooner or later, when you can dictate your terms. Burn their village, and they are compelled to take to the jungle and will probably give you no end of trouble hunting them down--backed up by the knowledge that they have nothing further to lose.²

This news took MacNabb off post haste to Haka, while I follow tomorrow with my coolies to take out rations to Passingham from Haka. The Tashon column is at an end. It's four marches from Haka to Shurkhua and I shall only have to make one trip out, so that I hope that I shall start down the hill about the 15th or 17th of April. I was in hopes that we should be sent by the new road to Hanta, down the Myittha river to Kalewa in country boats, and thence down the Chindwin by steamer. The coolies were sent down that way last year; in fact, it's usually considered the only possible way at the time of year, as the heat is so tremendous. However, a few days ago I heard that orders have come for the Coolie Corps to march to Pakokku. That's over three weeks' march through a deadly district in the very worst of the hot weather--Haka-Kan-Gangaw-Minywa and the remainder of the same route I originally marched up in December. It's a bore, of course, and

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1. According to Tuck's report, repeated warnings to disperse were disregarded and the Chins began to aim their guns at the troops; he then requested Lieut. Passingham to open fire (Carey and Tuck, op. cit., p. 62).
 2. Tuck (ibid.) reported that three-quarters of the village was burnt during the fighting so as to deprive the Chins of cover, and that next day he gave the villagers permission to return to what was left of their homes.

I hope the little beggars will get through all right; they can't stand heat, being hill men, and are very prone to cholerae-in fact, all Goorkhas are. Of course I shall march at night and halt during day. The worst of it is, I shall be alone, Marshall, the Medical Officer belonging to the Coolie Corps having gone down country, sick. I shall only have a half-caste Hospital Assistant, but he's a first-rate man at his work and did very well last year on the same job. The coolies then got cholera at Prome and lost 93 men out of 300. Hope we'll do better this year.

Haka, April 7th, 1892

I got in here with my coolies the day before yesterday, having done the journey from Falam in two days (36 1/2 miles), only to find that Passingham's party had managed to get Chin coolies--after the lesson Shurkhua got, all the surrounding villages sent in hundreds of coolies without even being asked for them--and had arrived in Haka the day before, it having been decided to withdraw the garrison. So my coolies are not required to make the trip to Shurkhua; in fact, I was told I might inform them that their work for the winter was over. The little beggars were beside themselves with joy, and I must say I wasn't at all sorry to hear the news.

However, 'there's no peace for the wicked' and this morning I'm told that the coolies have to make a trip out to Falam Post to carry rations. Those in authority might have thought of this before and so have avoided giving the coolies a disappointment. As it is, it makes it all much harder for me. Some of the beggars say they won't go back to Falam, and it's entailed a deal of talk and persuasion to get them to consent. Even now many of them are mutinous and disinclined to agree. There's a great deal to be said on their side. Government originally agreed to have them out of Burma by the 1st of May. This is quite impossible now; and the coolies know exactly how long it takes to get down to Rangoon, and what date they should leave Haka. Government is a deal too fond of breaking faith with their employees. Exactly the same thing took place last year; after their time was up, they tried to force the Darjeeling coolies to go to Manipur, but they refused absolutely.

Well, I start tomorrow back to Falam; with loaded coolies it will take four days, i.e. till the 11th. Return

in three or if possible two days, arriving Haka again on the 14th or 13th. Leave Haka en route for Pakokku on the 15th, arrive Pakokku about the 7th of May, leave Pakokku 8th May, arriving Rangoon about a week later. . . .

We have been getting a deal of rain the last few days, and marching was as miserable as it could be. I don't at all look forward to my trip to Falam; a mud hut in Haka is vastly preferable to an open mountain-side with only a mackintosh sheet to protect one from the elements.

Haka Post, April 7th, 1892

My original outfit has well nigh run dry. All small luxuries used up, but there are worse things than Tommy's stick tobacco; clothes in rags (walk about with a shirt on when breeches are being repaired, and clad myself in breeches when shirt goes into dock); boots in shreds (only held together by stray bits of twine, deftly sewn by the Transport mochi¹); and so on. . . . I'm sorry to say we've got to march all the way to Pakokku. . . . It's about 5 to 1 on these coolies getting cholera (on both previous occasions they have) and then one may get hung up somewhere for a month, and lucky if you don't stop there for ever. There's another route, namely by road to Hanta, country boat from there to Kalewa on the Chindwin River, and thence by steamer. Probably this costs the Government a few hundred rupees more, so of course it's out of the question, especially as it's a matter of no importance whatever if 60 or 70 coolies die.

Camp above Mangkheng Village, en route from Falam to Haka, April 12th, 1892

April 7th, halt in Haka post. Heavy rain in afternoon which came through the roof of my mud hut in streams.

It seems that at the fight at Shurkhua the other day there were 32 killed and over 50 wounded. Everyone (including MacNabb who is a great 'peace at any price' politician) agrees that the lesson is the best the Chins have ever had and will do a great deal to establish British influence. The Chins can never believe that we are going to

1. Saddler.

stay here permanently--'why', they say, 'you've not even brought your wives with you' Such a thing as a bachelor existence seems an impossibility to them.

April 8th, marched at 4 a.m. (I find with only transport and a small escort it's far better to get the bulk of one's march over before sunrise. By 8 a.m. it's awfully hot even up here) to my first camp on the Falam road. Distance 12 1/2 miles. I had with me my 350 coolies, 200 mules, and escort 50 rifles 2nd Burma Battalion.

April 9th, marched 4 a.m. to camp on the Pao Va stream. It was a fearfully hot day down there--a large rocky valley with no shade, myriads of flies by day and mosquitoes at night. Distance 7 1/2 miles.

April 10th, marched at 4 a.m. to Li Va camp, distance 10 miles.

April 11th, marched 4 a.m. into Falam post, distance 6 miles; got in a little before 7.

April 12 (today) left Falam 4 a.m. and came along here 11 miles.

This constant getting up at 3 a.m. takes it out of one a bit. What with heat, flies, etc., one can't do much in the way of sleep by day to make up for it. I have a snack before starting, breakfast about 3/4 of an hour after we get in, another meal 5 p.m., bed when it gets dark.

Haka, April 15th, 1892

Well, my work is pretty well over and I start down the hill tomorrow. We got in here from Falam all right yesterday morning, having on the night of the 13th come in for one of the heaviest thunderstorms I've ever been in, and torrents of rain from 5 p.m. till 10 p.m. All very unpleasant when one's bivouacked on an open hill side.

Shwekondaing, en route from Haka to Pakokku, April 26th, 1892

Up to date, our march down country has proceeded without a hitch and, under the circumstances, we are doing the

thing as comfortably as possible. From Haka to Chaungwa I got mules for my sick to ride, the worst cases being carried in dhoolis, and in this way managed to get away without leaving any invalids behind at Haka. . . . At Kan I got carts for the sick and also some for our kit, and since then we've come along fairly comfortably. I start the coolies off at 2 a.m. each day with my sergeant in charge, and we ride on ourselves about 5.30 or 6 and find breakfast ready on arrival, one cart always going ahead over night. There have been small contretemps in the way of carts breaking down, etc., and today we lost our way taking a short cut and didn't get in till 3 p.m., having left at 5.30. The heat in the day is pretty severe, and one longs for punkahs and ice; at the same time, I don't think we miss luxuries of that sort so much as we would had we come directly from them. It's a great pleasure, too, to get on the flat, to have a gallop, and to be able to see more than half a mile ahead of you. We get some rain and thunderstorms now and again, but nothing to inconvenience one; in fact, they serve to keep the temperature down. I shall post this at Pauk which we hope to reach on the 2nd May.

2nd May, arrived Pauk safe. Coolies go to Rangoon via Mandalay.

Pegu Club, Rangoon, May 12th, 1892

On the 6th of May we marched into Kanhla, the first halting place from Pakokku, where I intended remaining with the coolies if there was any delay about the steamer. Pakokku bazaar was infected with cholera and therefore to be avoided. . . . Next day we paraded at 2, marched into Pakokku and straight on to the steamer and got off by 9 a.m. . . . At Myinmu, which is about half way between Myingyan and Mandalay, we took on board Marshall, my real doctor, and 120 sick coolies who had come down the hill some time previously and had been waiting for us. Next morning (9th May) we reached Mandalay about 9 a.m. Marched coolies at once to the station where there was a good shady place for them to stop till the train left at 6.30 p.m. I had over 100 men too sick to walk, but I got gharries^b for them all, and on the whole we made the change from boat to railway very comfortably. . . . We got

1. Horse-drawn vehicles.

the coolies off by special train at 6.30. . . . We got to Toungoo next morning, the 10th May. . . . Housed the coolies for the day in the fort which was handy to the station. . . . We entrained again at 6.15 and started off at 1/4 to 7. Some of the 52nd came down to see us off, and they were fairly staggered at the state some of the sick were in. Poor little beggars, wasted to skeletons and many of them absolutely unable to stand. . . . That night there were several of them very bad and one, I'm sorry to say, succumbed in the train about 2 a.m.

Well, barring the coolie who died, we made a very good night of it and ran into Rangoon at 5.45 a.m. yesterday morning. Found everything cut and dried for us, and three hours later I had my coolies comfortably lodged in the Transport lines and my sick in the Followers' hospital, where they are in the very pink of comfort, all in beds with sheets, lots of milk and ice and other medical comforts. The fact is that last year the coolies were allowed to go to the wall on their return journey, no arrangements made for them, no one to meet them, and some actually died in the streets. Consequently there was a devil of a row (just in the same way that there'll be a devil of a row when we get our first hammering from some continental foe--you must have disaster before you can expect the Englishman to arouse himself--but this is all beside my story). So this year they're all on their 'ps and qs', and I hope in the week that we are here a lot of the sick will take a really good turn.

Fort William, Calcutta, May 24th, 1892

My last was sent from Rangoon on the 14th inst. They kept us there till the 18th, an exceedingly bad arrangement as far as the coolies were concerned, and we were on the verge of cholerao that is to say, there were 4 or 5 deaths and other cases which most certainly would have been called cholera had they occurred in an epidemic. As it was, they were more or less hushed up.

Fort William, Calcutta, May 30th, 1892

Wednesday 18th May, embarked all the coolies on the 'Clive' by 7 a.m. and sailed at 8 a.m. We had quite a departure, the truth being that the authorities were only too pleased to see the last of the coolies. The General

Commanding Rangoon, the Chief Commissariat Officer, and the head doctor were all on the quay to 'speed the parting'. . . . On the night of the 20th we anchored off Sangar Island at the mouth of the Hoogly, having taken the pilot on board about 3 that afternoon. Left Sangar at daylight 21st and got up the river and alongside the Government ghat¹ at 1 a.m. . . . I got the coolies settled down in their camp, about 20 minutes' walk from the ship, by 3 o'clock.

Monday 23rd, to coolie lines at 7 a.m. Despatched 80 of the sick with Marshall in charge to Darjeeling.

27th May, to coolie lines in a.m. and settled up with remainder of my men and despatched them off by train. I must say I was not at all sorry to see the last of them. Landing as they did with 70 or 80 rupees in their pockets, there was always a likelihood of their creating a disturbance in Calcutta. The police authorities were much afraid of them, and it was only by going bail as it were for the coolies that Festing and I were permitted to leave the lines at all. I gave it as my opinion that there would be no disturbance, so it was satisfactory to see the last of them go off without the slightest hitch. Poor little beggars, there was no vice about them; their greatest ambition being to rig themselves out in the finest clothes they could buy. One fellow actually bought six watches. And you would meet them coming back from the bazaar either in carriages or with Calcutta coolies carrying their purchases behind them. As long as the money lasted, they were determined to 'cut a dash'. I suppose there were very few who had any of their money left by the time they got home. I did all I could to avoid this and have them paid in Darjeeling; but it entailed some slight extra trouble to the Commissariat, so the authorities wouldn't carry it out.

Tuesday 31st, I left in British India steamer 'Goa'. . . . We get into Rangoon about 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Myingyan, June 26th, 1892

Here I am back again at this, the most beastly place in Asia. . . . Friday 23rd, I started my work as Adjutant

1. Landing-place.

again--parade at 6 a.m., Orderly Room etc. after breakfast, went on with the cricket match--officers were defeated. Also went to the funeral of a poor fellow in my company who died of dysentery and fever: result of the Chin Hills. I'm sorry to say many of them are dying off now, and funerals are almost daily occurrences.

Myingyan, July 18th, 1892

I saw the printed Chin Hills despatches the other day and I'm glad to say in his General Report General Stuart^b said, 'Lieut. Watson K.R.R. has managed the corps with judgement and energy and I trust that his services may also be acknowledged'. . . . Major Browne, 39th Garhwal Rifles Commanding Klang-Klang Column said in his report, 'The working of an indisciplined coolie corps required a considerable amount of firmness, energy and tact, but Lieut. Watson displayed all these qualities to the full and the Coolie Corps under his management worked admirably and he deserves great credit'.

1. Major-General R. C. Stewart, commanding Burma District.