

TRAVELS
IN THE
BURMAN EMPIRE.

BY HOWARD MALCOM.

ILLUSTRATED WITH A MAP OF SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA,
AND WOOD ENGRAVINGS.

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very little care, and yield a highly nutritive food, though little valued in comparison with rice.

Indian corn, called here *Pyoung*, grows well wherever planted, but is cultivated in too slovenly a manner to produce as it might. It is rarely given to cattle, but is consumed by the natives in a green state, and is sold, ready boiled, in all the bazaars, at a mere song. The common yield is from fifty to seventy fold.

Among the most esteemed varieties of pulse are a sort of kidney-bean (*phaseolus max*); and several kinds of French bean (*dolichos*); and Gram (*vicia arifinum*), called by the natives *Kula-pai*, or "foreigner's bean," which produces very abundantly, but is raised in small quantities, and chiefly in the northern districts.

The Nhan (*sesamum orientale*) is largely cultivated, chiefly for an excellent oil, which it yields abundantly, and which is used both for food, unction, and light. It seems to be the same plant called Vanglo in the West Indies, and Bonny in our southern states. It is a delicate annual, from two to five feet high, leaves three inches long, opposite, downy.

The Mong-nyen (*sinapis orientalis*) is also raised in considerable quantities, chiefly for the oil, which is an excellent substitute for butter, and is much used also as an unguent.

The certainty and regularity of the periodical rains, in the western and eastern districts, render a general failure of crops altogether unknown. In the middle region, round Ava, the reverse is sometimes true.

Whether the true hemp is cultivated in Burmah I know not, but Dr Wallich saw the beautiful single lanceolate-leaved *crotilaria* raised for that purpose.

The tea-plant grows indigenous in all the upper provinces, and is raised in large quantities for exportation to the rest of the country. Part of it is prepared as a pickle, in which form it is a favourite article of food among all classes; and part is dried and put up in hard round balls. I used the latter during my whole residence in the country, and coincide with all the missionaries in pronouncing it equal to the best black teas of China. The taste, however, is somewhat peculiar, and few are fond of it at first. It is generally supposed to come from China, being mostly brought by the Chinese and Shyan caravans; but several of the chief men at Ava assured me it is the product of their own territories, purchased on the way. It sells at Ava, at about one rupee a viss (twelve cents per pound). In the lower provinces, it brings double that price. But even at the latter rate, it is exceedingly cheap. There is no obstruction to its exportation.

Black pepper is indigenous, and in some places small quantities are cultivated. It might be made a great article of export; but the natives do not esteem it as a condiment, preferring the long red pepper, or chilly. The latter article might also be made an important article of commerce, and is now exported to some extent. With it the people of the upper districts purchase rice, &c., from the lower districts. It is found wild in great quantities. Cultivation seems to increase the size but not the pungency of the plant.

The sugar-cane attains its full size and richness in fertile spots, and sugar might be exported to a great extent. Millions of acres, adapted to its most successful cultivation, lie wholly uninhabited. Though almost every Burman raises a little sugar-cane, it is merely to be eaten in its natural state, and none, that I know of, resort to it for sugar. The Chinese round Umera-poura make a considerable quantity of excellent light-brown sugar, which is sold very cheap. They also clay some of it, and produce an article as white as our loaf sugar, but much abridged of its sweetness.

Indigo grows wild, and is cultivated also to some extent. The mode of extracting the dyo is unskillful, and the whole product is used in the fabrics of the country. The high price of labour will forbid the exportation of this article.

The ground-nut (*arachis hypogea*) grows well, and in many places is attended to, and produced in considerable quantity; but as a general thing, it is entirely discon-

The process of raising garden vegetables is much the same as with us.

Honey is exceedingly plenty, but always derived from wild bees. It is less prized than that from Yunnan, and is of a darker colour; but is consumed largely, and exported to some extent. In obtaining it, the bees are not destroyed.

The wild animals of the country are the elephant, elk, tiger, leopard, buffalo, deer (of several species), antelope, bison, nyctiau, rhinoceros, wolf, goat, hare, racoon, serval or mountain cat, civet cat, tiger cat, pole cat, hog, black bear, porcupine, ichneumon, squirrel (of several kinds), baboon, and monkey (of many kinds), mole, otter, and rat. Some of these are scarce, others, particularly the elephant, tiger, deer, hog, and rat, are very abundant.

Elephants are most abundant and noble in Pegu, but are numerous in some of the mountain districts. The feline animals are most abundant in the maritime districts. Much is said of the white elephants of Burmah. There is now but one known to exist in the empire—an old and remarkably fine animal, which has long been the pride of royalty at Ava. He seems to be an albino.

It is very remarkable that the jackal, though found in great numbers over nearly all the warm regions of the world, and particularly numerous in Bengal and Chittagong, is wholly unknown in Burmah. Yet the mountains which divide Burmah from the adjacent jaekal regions, are not only passable in many places for travellers, but have open roads or paths, constantly used. The whole *canis* genus, except the common house-dog, seems wanting in Burmah. Neither the jackal, fox, wolf, nor hyena, have yet been found in the country.

There are alligators of at least two species, and some attain the largest size. In the tide-waters they literally swarm, and not unfrequently kill men sleeping on the little boats. Sharks abound at the mouths of the rivers. Turtles and tortoises are very common on the coast; and some places are so frequented by them to lay their eggs, that the spots are farmed out by government for a considerable sum.

The domestic animals are the buffalo, braminny cattle, horse, ass, mule, goat, dog, hog, cat, sheep. Some of these are very rare. Indeed, none are common but horses, horned cattle, and dogs. Animal food being prohibited by their laws, none are raised for food; and woollen garments being little known, sheep are not wanted for wool. Except a flock owned by the king, I heard of none belonging to natives. English gentlemen sometimes keep a few for the sake of the mutton, which run with the goats, kept for milk, and are tended by the same man. So entirely in these hot climates do sheep lose their distinctive features, that, in seeing them mixed with goats, I never could tell them apart. They are never white, as with us, and their wool degenerates into hair. May not this illustrate Matt. xxv. 32, 33—"He shall separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats?" Though an unaccustomed eye could not discern the difference, the shepherd knows each perfectly. So, though, in this world, hypocrites mingle with God's people, and resemble them, the "Great Shepherd" instantly detects them, and, at the appointed time, will unerringly divide them.

The braminny cattle are not numerous. The buffalo is used instead, and is the same which is common in Siam, Assam, and China. A correct idea can be had from the annexed drawing. It is of twice the size of the braminny ox, of a dark dun colour, with huge black horns. The animal is remarkable for its aquatic habits. Being nearly destitute of hair, insects annoy it exceedingly, and it generally takes its repose in the water, with but a part of its head visible. He is managed by a cord passed through the septum of the nose, and draws in a yoke like ours, generally single, and not in pairs. To see an animal so huge, and generally so ferocious, thus easily humbled and restrained, throws a strong light on the 19th chapter of 2d Kings; and often,