

LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

MAJOR A. G. McCALL

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MRS. JEAN CHISHOLM MCCALL

No Total Defence scheme could have been successful if the first act of the wife of the principal organiser had been to leave the hills to avoid sharing the risks of mutilation and death accepted voluntarily by the families in the Lushai Hills.

With full knowledge of Japanese methods in 1942 and against all persuasion Mrs. McCall decided to remain on in the hills thus infusing truth and sincerity into the Total Defence scheme which was the answer of the Lushai people to the fall of Burma in April, 1942.

(See Plate XLVIII).

LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

By
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With a Foreword by
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FOREWORD

BY SIR KEITH CANTLIE

MAJOR McCALL was for many years in charge of the Lushai Hills. To his work he brought an ardent temperament, physical energy, a kind heart and a belief that he went as an emissary of his country to bear as best he could her great responsibilities to the hill people. This belief was a tradition of his class and not personal to himself; his desire is that this tradition of service be followed by others, now rapidly taking over political power from that class, both in Great Britain and in India. His object is to arouse the interest of the citizen who, though not himself an administrator, yet has the ultimate political power and must decide whether control and guidance is to be exercised. If so, he must see to the quality of that guidance, as exercised by his chosen administrators, in full knowledge that the problems are difficult and are likely to require sacrifice, not profit. Amongst these problems Major McCall presents Lushai, typical of many other areas.

He holds that the needs of the Lushais, arising from alien impacts on their culture, cannot be met by a policy of leaving them to their own future leaders. It is for those in charge of the administration, conscious of having disturbed the old culture and economy, to take the principal part in solving the problems due to their advent. These are not only social and cultural problems but also economic; for example, the growing population pressing on the soil shortens the number of years of abandonment, during which jungle can re-establish itself and cover the hillsides between the periods of one year or two years of cultivation. Erosion by rain on the hill slopes is causing anxiety among officials in all hill areas, but not, unfortunately, among the people.

Lushai, so far as is known, does not contain materials for modern industry, so profits from "exploitation" (to use a word which some seem to apply to any form of trading

whatever) cannot be expected. Help must therefore be at a sacrifice, spiritual and financial, the latter at any rate in the beginning, from those who control its destiny. Control at such cost will be welcomed, not resisted as domination and exploitation. Such is his idea: a not ignoble one. Officers of other hill districts have written books on customs, most valuable both for the science of anthropology and the art of administration, but the form adopted by Major McCall, though it contains abundant material for equipment of the administrator, is designed to arouse the interest of the citizen, who must be for ever remote in space from the scene of his responsibilities but not—such is his hope—for ever so remote in mind.

The book is a record of endeavour; one example is the attempt to introduce a moral code suitable for non-Christians yet not in conflict with that brought by the missionaries and spread by them with such devotion and zeal: another is the expansion of village custom to include simple hygienic measures through and by consent of village councils. There has been not only precept but practise. His wife and himself have had the distinction of creating an industry of weaving for sale and bringing it to success through many setbacks.

This foreword is not the place for criticism based on comparative anthropology, for comment on mistakes made since taking over the hills or for suggestions for the future. Major McCall is not alone among district officers in his anxiety about the perplexing future. His reward for service done came when the people of their own choice stood firmly with him, helping by all means in their power against the Japanese enemy in Burma, then separated from them by the thinnest of troop screens and in many places by no screen at all. The men of the other hill areas were as staunch: they deserve all help in the difficult times ahead.

SIR KEITH CANTLIE.

LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

GENERAL THEME

WHILE the Lushai Hills, a backward area of India, bordering on Burma has been taken for special analysis of many of the factors that can arise in the administration of a backward people, this analysis in principle will apply in major or minor degree to most similarly placed areas.

The United States of America will be faced progressively with responsibility for such administrations, whether directly under the control of the States or not. In any case the problem is one on an international level and one which from now on must persist increasingly with the creation of any new world order, *vide* America's proposals for international Trusteeship in the matter of the Italian Colonies.

The main purpose of the book is to show the following points through the subject taken, viz., Lushai :—

- (a) What happens when a backward people are exposed, undirected, to stronger culture impacts.
- (b) The necessity for fostering development along healthy and appropriate lines in cases where the backwardness of a people is such as to preclude them from fostering their own ordered development.
- (c) The necessity for a closer link of understanding of the difficulties of such people with those in the Homelands, without which the flow of suitable officers prepared to labour, suffer, and endure must become progressively less.
- (d) The projection through appendices and photographs of proof that the treatment accorded to the Lushais resulted in their support in time of trouble.
- (e) The Book contains authoritative matter compiled by me, the author, over a period of nearly twelve years' close study under conditions of much isolation and hard living.
- (f) Anthropological terminology has been omitted by me to widen the field of readers, though the principles of anthropology have been strictly applied.

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P R E F A C E

THIS book was commenced in 1939 when, with my wife, I was travelling to, and later in, South Africa. Its completion was delayed due to my recall to India on the outbreak of war, and subsequently by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour, an event which prevented retirement and which imposed fresh burdens upon me. Chief among these was the rallying of a whole people to offer civil resistance to any invader at a time when Indo-China, Siam, Malay, Java, Sumatra, Burma, the Andamans and many other Islands were falling to the first flush of a long planned Japanese campaign. This book, however, does not deal with this adventure, a story in itself, nor with any changes wrought by war. This book has, thus, been a child nourished in the agony of the exacting years 1939-1944. Moreover, its original form of presentation has had to be partially revised to accommodate the limitations imposed by rules and custom upon any writings by serving officers. In much of the narrative lies a tribute to the Government of Assam which, by long tradition, has been foremost in the field of constructive administration of her Hill peoples, the success of which has recently been demonstrated in the remarkable loyalty and steadfastness displayed by those people in the presence of a ruthless invader, the epic of the siege of Kohima and the tales of the Assam Regiment ringing nobly in our ears.

My work has been facilitated by service among friendly mission colleagues and a friendly people in a friendly land. I wish specially to thank Pu Buchhawna Khiangte, Assistant Superintendent Lushai Hills, my friend and advisor Pu Sainghinga Lushai, holder of His Majesty King George V Jubilee Medal, Pu Kailuaia Sailo, B.A., a great-grandson of the famous Lushai Chief Pu Suakpuilala, Pu Lianbuka Lushai, who was one of the party who served overseas in the Great War 1914-18 and afterwards, Pu Chalkhuma,

Pu Hrangdawla, Head Interpreter, the whole circle staff, the many Lushai Doctors in the Hills, and the many Lushais who never failed to collaborate with me when I was in need.

Not only for the foreword am I indebted to Sir Keith Cantlie but also for his encouragement in this venture. Sir Keith is an officer of the Indian Civil Service whose personality radiates a rich tolerance of all phases of life. I have had the great privilege sometimes of working closely with him over a period of many years of association and it was because of his sympathy with the human factor in all administration that I was so ready to seek his assistance and confidence.

There is nothing in this book to which the public at some time or another have not had full access. For the purpose of factual accuracy I have consulted Mackenzie's *North-East Frontier*, Colonel Shakespear's *Lushai Kuki Clans*, and Mr. Parry's *Monograph of Lushai Customs*, as well as many official documents. For the map of Lushai showing the necessary minimum of names I wish to thank Mr. R. C. Das, Assistant Engineer, P. W. D. Lushai Hills who produced the groundwork which enabled me to enlist the expert advice and assistance of Mr. Creed of the Survey Department. This gentleman's patience and understanding of the problem at once simplified my difficulties.

The illustrations were mostly completed before Japan attacked our territories in the East.

I have no hesitation in stating that if analytical account has had to be taken of the effect of missions working among the Lushais, the contribution made by them towards the welfare of the Lushai people as a whole is one of outstanding merit and purpose in which they, as well as our people, may justly take immense pride. The missions may well take pride in the success which accompanied the calls made to the Lushai people, when faced with invasion, indicated in Appendices A and B at the end of the book.

My personal gratitude goes specially to the Reverend Messrs. E. L. Mendus, B.A., and H. Carter, B.Sc., of the Welsh and London Baptist Missions, and to Miss K. Hughes (Holder of the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal), a friend and adviser of courage, humour, and wisdom, and to Miss

E. Chapman (Holder of the Kaisir-i-Hind Medal), whose counsel, especially on matters relating to education, was always helpful, stimulating, and sincere.

If there are criticisms concerning the local administration I must myself bear much of the responsibility as there is no man living who could not have done more than he actually did when opportunity offered. But this book also indicates the need for a closer relationship between the man in the street at home and his friends overseas.

I wish to record here my thanks and appreciation for much good advice received from Sir H. G. Dennehy, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam who, despite his vast preoccupations on urgent and important affairs of Government, dealt expeditiously with problems associated with the completion of the manuscript.

To my dear Uncle and friend, Brigadier-General John Charteris, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.E., I owe my deep gratitude for much sympathetic, patient, and able assistance.

Finally to my friend Mrs. Mabel Bowman, of Torrance of Campsie, and her brave son Mr. Ian Bowman, I.C.S., are due my grateful thanks for the encouragement which brought me into contact with the publishers, Messrs. Luzac & Co., and made possible the publication of this contribution.

A. G. McCall.

United Service Club,
Pall Mall.

1945.

ORTHOGRAPHY

FOR the purpose of giving some guidance in the pronunciation of Lushai names and words I use extracts from Mr. J. H. Lorrain's *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, printed at the Baptist Mission Press and published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. I have perhaps over-simplified some on behalf of the reader.

A As in father.

AW As in TALL, AWL.

E As in TELL, ELL.

I As in POLICE, MACHINE.

O As in No.

U As in TOOK.

B, D, F, K, L, M, N, P, S, V, Z. As in English language.

CH As in CHOP.

G Preceded by N, NG, as in SING.

H Aspirate, if preceding a vowel, otherwise cut off at end of a word, like E in French.

T Chiefly as in TOWN, and not as the sound in 'THE' or 'THIS'. Thangliana is, in English sounds, Tongue-lee-arna.

CHAPTER I

"THE LAND WE ARRIVE IN"

CONTEMPLATE a country about the size of WALES with no ordinary roads, even for bicycles, with but one small lake, rivers as yet too dangerous for boats, except in the hands of experts from a far distant land, all composed of steep and rugged hills lacerated by these same whimsical rivers and we have something like Lushai.

Lushai, land of tranquillity yet upheaval, of wisdom and dire folly, of plenty yet poverty, of spirit and materialism, hope and again despair, lethargy yet vitality, its very name alluring and provoking. Indeed no one has satisfactorily explained how the name Lushai originated though one idea is that it is a colloquialism for the term used by men of olden days to typify the people with the long heads, or perhaps the wise heads, the word LU meaning a head and the affix SEI meaning long.

But this explanation finds little or no support locally. The origin of the portion LU seems totally obscure. The predominant clan among LUSHEIS is the Sailo clan to which belong the rulers who are descendants of those Lusheis who were in power when the British Government extended its dominion over this land. Those over whom they rule are a medley of clans with some association with the HUALNGOS of the Burma Hills. The Burma Hills take the view that the HUALNGOS, who now number about 5,000 souls, are LUSHEIS who did not join in the emigration from Falam country into what is now LUSHAI LAND at the time when the Chins drove out the LUSHEI clans, perhaps around the year 1790 or the early nineteenth century. The HUALNGOS seem clearer on their origin. They claim that they originally sprang from the rocks at SEIPUI¹ in the Chin Hills of Burma and as time went on the inhabitants of SEIPUI became known as the sons of SEI which gave rise

¹ Not on map.

later to the name LUSHEI, since modified to LUSHAI, the modern name covering most of the inhabitants of the Lushai Hills of to-day. This theory that the Lushais had their origin in the Chin Hills is not repulsive to the people, but the internal history of the Chin Hills, so far as it has been verbally handed down, sometimes discloses the HAULNGOS in the guise of fickle go-betweens, a characteristic from which few of these kindred clans can claim immunity.

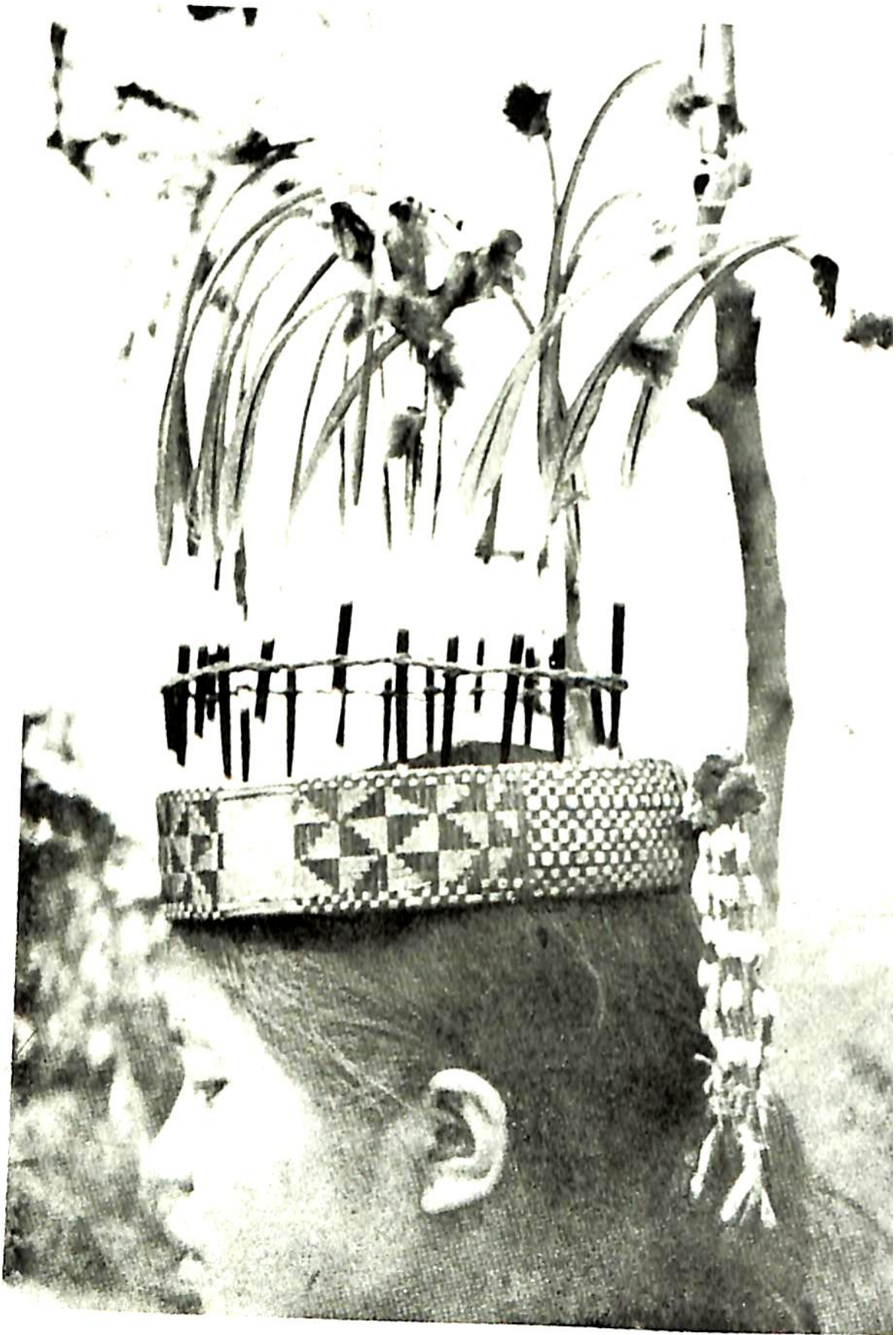
Tucked away as Lushai Land is, its life, nevertheless, has been vital, even particular. Where no sound of any motor car has ever yet been heard, the factory sirens as yet unknown, and glass windowed shops unthought of, in this wide expanse of long ranges of hills upon hills, human nature has had its full play of pathos, intrigues, jealousies, even suicides. How difficult this is to believe when first we penetrate further and further into the heart of the land, spirits rising as we gradually soar above the even lowliness of Assam's now distant plains. It would seem that a new life, a new strength, a new confidence, are all at hand as we stop a little to slow up and to look out and to see. Is it that we are responding to the invitation of this magnanimity, this purity of air, and this simplicity of nature?

In some cases the marches have seemed long. The stages from DWARBUND in Cachar to KANGLAI or the crane place (so named because the hills if small are yet high and, so, like cranes) and from KANGLAI to CHHIMLUANG and on to KOLOSIB have been enclosed, through monotonous bamboo groves, but after the last-named sixteen miles stage to KOLOSIB we feel the change. Is there not here a real post office, a place from which messages can be sent to LONDON, PARIS, and NEW YORK, even though there is nothing to afford protection from the tigers or the elephants nearby except the noises of man's titterings, his fires, his clatterings? Is there not now some growing sense of space to be derived from the grassy undulations which mark the reservation which is KOLOSIB, that hill of the old time chief KAWLA's head? Here is grass, the privileged joy of browsing cattle, in turn the pride and strength of

PLATE I



THE RALDAN ROCK



THE VAKIRIA

some Nepali or other foreign settler. Forty-five years ago the Lushais did not even realise that by appropriate manipulation milk could be extracted from cattle. Here then is KOLOSIB, the first northern outpost of the Lushai Hills, the douane by which travellers by land to North Lushai have to pass after authorisation by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills at Aijal and by the medical authority at KOLOSIB.

Ahead there lies Lushai—Lushai, the little known, the land which is totally surrounded by such varying contacts as the four areas of the Province of Burma called TIDDIM, FALAM, HAKA and ARACAN, the two Indian States of TRIPURA and MANIPUR, and the three British Indian districts of SYLHET and CACHAR in ASSAM and the CHITTAGONG Hill Tracts of the Province of Bengal.

The journey southwards from KOLOSIB into the heart of Lushai Land is continued stage by stage twelve to fifteen miles each day, first to BUALPUI, the place of the great muddy pool of ancient days TAWITAW, so named because of the SPONDIAS MANGIFERA or Hog plum trees nearby, and so on to Neibawi the last stage before we reach Aijal, the Headquarters station of the District. After the first day's march not a river is crossed, the path following the higher portion of an unbroken range to Aijal, 111 miles from Silchar, in the district of Cachar wherein lies the terminus for the mail train from Calcutta to Southern Assam.

Wrinkled men are passed on the way, men slooping along erect and balanced, leaving behind them in their trail a pungent aroma of home grown tobacco, and men dressed in much worn Lushai cloths or perhaps the fashioned relics of Chicago, Blackpool, or elsewhere. A cleanly turned out chief with varying supporters may seek to halt us on our way with an invitation to accept some Lushai rice beer or fruit or tea, perhaps even an offering of eggs neatly packed in cotton in a bamboo container, or sometimes a fowl as a token of welcome in keeping with age-long traditional hospitality. Nearer the villages, their bodies bent with the strain of supporting weights upon their backs, with the help of bands of finely plaited cane around their foreheads, women will be carrying heavy loads of firewood,

or water in several pipes of round bamboos, or rice gathered from the jhums.¹ There may be traders from distant Burma padding along on their way back from the plains of Assam laden with copper vessels, one on top of the other, calculated to yield them a profit of fifteen shillings per pot, less expenses, in return for their five weeks' absence from their homes.

Some may be "moving" or about to pem, which is the Lushai word for migrating. If more well-to-do, pack animals may be used, the queenly duck, in its travelling cage of twined bamboo, poised benignly on the top of the centremost of the three loads.

Guardedly observant, usually contemplative and distant, all have a ready capacity for cheerfulness and laughter, while the children, so often scantily clothed and dirty beyond hope, only want a joke or the toss of a coin to let loose the floodgates of wild and noisy abandon.

The houses are well built and usually last for eight years or so. Entry is by an incline of roughly hewn logs made rigid and leading up to the outside porch on which is stacked the family firewood and poultry baskets. There are no structural partitions to make small rooms but the interior is a dark, long, and rectangular spacing usually badly ventilated. The floors are made of split bamboo matting while the walls, supported on roughly hewn uprights, are made of a stouter bamboo plaiting. The roof is generally of thatch where this can be obtained, bamboo matting, held down in place by wind logs, providing the alternative. Each house has an outside verandah which is used for weaving, cotton processing, drying of rice, or just passing the time of day. Cooking is done inside the house on an open hearth the smoke from which, not infrequently, causes acute eye discomfort and, in more serious cases, premature blindness.

The further northwards we continue on our journey into Lushai the more open and grand the scenery becomes. To East and West of the DWARBUND-AIJAL main bridle track lie waves upon waves of hills, at first betraying deep ravined valleys but later only vying with each other for notice and pre-eminence.

¹ Jhum—Hill side cultivation.

There out to the west beyond the towering and majestic REIEK HILL, north of PHAILENG lies the MAWNG LANG hill on which, according to talk among the young bucks, climbing ladies cannot avoid exposing their nether parts so steep are its sides ! More to the east lies the RALDAN¹ Rock where one brave warrior held many at bay from its commanding pinnacle. The RALDAN, or the place where the battle was held, lies near CHUHLAWH, the village of the vulgar name, more conveniently translated as the "wages of sin", which is associated with a legend of some local colour. Once upon a time a Lushai woman found herself at the foot of her steep path homewards with a load so heavy she had not the heart to face the hill. So great was her plight that she let it be known that any man who would carry her massive load up to her village on the high hill could demand of her submission to his desires. Several men came forward, for she did not lack attraction. Fixing the plaited cane strands round his head and shoulders the chosen gallant set out with his heavy load. Up and up he went determined to be successful in his task and determined to claim his reward. But nature took a turn and by the time the unfortunate gallant had reached the woman's house on the hill top he realised the ropes had cut deep into his shoulders and, far from being able to claim his promised reward, he fell down exhausted and frustrated.

From bamboo groves, so oppressive up to KOLOSIB, the country changes gradually into perennial vegetation and friendly trees that afford shade and shelter to the dusty hiker. Orchids of enchanting variation peep from high out of their chosen security among the shady branches of tall trees, while here and there the rich red flowers of the Simul, or Indian cotton tree, provide a welcome tone of contrast and brightness among the expanses of green foliage.

Nights on the march are spent in staging bungalows which can challenge comparison with most in India. Not large, but spotlessly clean, set in kindly gardens, they offer a homeliness all their own. Except for lamps, all essentials are provided including crockery and furniture. Quick and efficient service is provided by permanent chawkidars

¹ Not shown in map.

assisted by Lushai water and fuel carriers. Except for milk and vegetables, which the Chawkidars provide, provisions, when available at all, are limited locally to fresh eggs, rice, or fowls.

So, day by day, mile after mile goes by through seemingly endless jungle until on the seventh day of marching the scene begins to change with the approaches to Aijal, which is about 3,700 feet high. Glimpses and visions of stone and permanent buildings begin to meet the eye instead of the ordinary Lushai houses. At first, five miles from Aijal itself, we come upon the settlement of DURTLANG. Here is the Welsh Mission hospital principally for Lushai women, magnificently equipped, though embarrassed for the lack of water like so much else in Lushai land. Nevertheless, the spirit of sympathy, service, and understanding, which is characteristic of this whole hospital is cherished throughout the length and breadth of the hills of North Lushai. Here it is that a lady doctor carries on her responsible work day by day aided by a capable and hardworking sister.¹ These two ladies bear a severe burden. There is none else but their Lushai nurses to help them in their isolated and non-stop venture in running this hospital, which is maintained chiefly for maternity purposes. The 50 beds are usually filled, though fees have to be paid and quite rightly too, while there are sometimes as many as 50 out-patients to be seen as well. The type of patient also does not permit of speedy disposal, added to which is the difficulty that must occasionally arise over language. The reader may doubt their ability to face up to such a task. When devotion to service forms the dynamic behind unflustered competency achievement can be almost boundless.

Some five miles further on, the outskirts of the station of Aijal are reached as the bridle path broadens out more into a road following the neat shooting range with its successive hillocks marking the firing points and then we pass the School for the children of the Bengali residents—then the Welsh Mission Bazar church, monument to the bold vision and tenacity of the Reverend E. L. Mendus, B.A. Thence we go through the main bazar, through the

¹ Doctor G. Roberts, M.B., Ch.B. Miss Gwladys Evans.

lines of the Assam Rifles Battalion till we reach the demure, neat, and unsophisticated gardens and bungalows which complete the main station. To come upon such a galaxy of attraction so suddenly after days of untutored nature creates an impression which can never fade. There is something of an infectious comradeship and a sense of shelter that is so often experienced in such lovely retreats as the SAN ANTONIO gardens of MALTA, or the gardens near the Governor-General's residence in Capetown.

Here is an introduction to, or the hint of, the motley which is so often Lushai. Young bloods with superlatively Oxford bags, in contrast to the more moderate Government or Mission employees, individually-minded folk with bright blue double breaster jackets, light coloured trousers, and irresistible green, maroon, or bright red woolly berets. The old-time villagers, sometimes half naked, visibly scorned by the sophisticated townee, padding along softly hawking articles for sale, the soles of his poor feet hardened by years of siliceous irritation. Less well-to-do town girls perhaps returning from the bi-weekly bazar, their firm round breasts wobbling with devastating allurements below some little pink cotton slip or blouse, not subject to the discipline of bodice or brassiers, but serving as an indication of their importance in the love play of these people, where their faulty caressing may cost a lubber no less than a ten rupee or fifteen shillings fine. Perhaps a young Lushai belle of the more monied classes may pass by, modest, supple, and with a grace all her own, her fair skin spotless and clear, her dress distinctive in the beauty of her Lushai PUAN and her blouse of soft and attractive material, though this is probably of non-Lushai origin. However, under provincial influences little modesty fronts are sometimes inserted demurely suggesting the beauty of virginal or, perhaps, unvirginal breasts. !!

Ethnologically the people belong to the TIBETO BURMESE group with complexions less fair than those of the Chinese. They share physiological affinities with the indigenous hill people of FORMOSA and in some respects with some of the inhabitants of KOREA, and of the SHAN STATES. Definitely Mongoloid their legs are specially developed, hair coarse

and black, and baldness is little known. One Lushai once described one of his fellows in the following unflattering terms, possibly due to some emotional reaction at the time. "The man is short—has small eyes—protruding ears—black complexion—shaved chin and moustache with hair all over his chest". Most of the points made are those which a Lushai social climber would most dread.

The majority of the people in the North Lushai Hills are Lushais, traditional subjects of the ruling clan of Sailo chiefs while further south are more varied clans, akin to the inhabitants of the Chin Hills, and these include PAWIS, LAKHERS, and FANAIS, the latter being famed in olden times for their ambassadorial genius.

There is little in the Lushai background to disclose the sense of any great chivalry towards woman. Without any ambiguity Lushai has been, and still is, a country for men before it is one for women, or even children. But where better placed Lushais spare their women the bondage common to the majority, the women retain their charm and grace well into the late years. But the attitude of old Lushai is betrayed by an old saying on a par with our own sentiment of old—"A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be" Old Lushai says :—

"Crab's meat is not counted as meat as women's word is not counted as word, bad wife and bad fence can be changed. But unthreatened wife and unthreatened grass of the fields are both unbearable."

The dress of the people, if not specially spectacular, is pleasing and efficient and is a cultural contrast to the splendiferous war dresses of the Nagas and kindred clans. In former days when the Lushais went into battle, or on a head hunting expedition, they cut finery to a minimum and relied more on guile and skill in ambush than on colourful and impressive trappings. There may be some relation between this fact and the fact that the Nagas have been known to employ members of the Kuki clans, racially affiliated to the Lushais, who are themselves victors of the latter in battle, as guards during wars of attrition with their

enemies. Modern Lushai men's workaday dress is, however, never very free from the exotic influence of the textile mills of Japan or elsewhere or from the enterprise of second-hand clothes dealers.

Women's workaday dress consists of a cotton KAWR or chemise and the HMARAM-PUANFEN, the Lushai name for the cotton petticoat which is coloured by various designs. Among these designs the most popular are the KAWKPUIZIK ZIAL¹ and the LENBUANG THUAM.² The petticoat is kept up by a cord or girdle known as KAWNGCHILE, sometimes being fashioned in spiral brass in the case of the more well-to-do women. The CHUMCHI type of girdle is composed of four lines of plaited brass strips. The KAWR is worn with sleeves and is open down the front, the little straight edged collar sometimes being linked at the neck. There is another type of KAWR called the DAULREM, named after a little chirping insect as the black cloth half sleeves and white waist band of the coat present some resemblance to it. Over the HMARAM PUANFEN and the KAWR a plain white or striped cloth is worn, thrown over the right shoulder the other end passing under the left armpit. On festive days more*colourful clothes are worn, the KAWR being bright with reds and greens while the body cloth is larger and striped in rich reds or other colours with closely woven, colourful, border designs. Unhappily the head-dress of old, known as the VAKIRIA, composed chiefly of brilliant parrots' feathers and porcupine quills inserted into a bamboo slotted ring and worn snugly over the head above the temples, is, if not unprocurable, certainly very rare. Seeds of PING PIH, a sort of indigenous white pulse seed, intermingled with black shiny beads, also added an attractive and contrasting dash of colour to it.

Jewellery played an important part in the finished picture of any well-to-do Lushai girl, but there were no diamond rings or sparkling sapphires. A pair of circular ivory ear-rings, one and a half inches in diameter and three-quarters of an inch thick, made out of an elephant tusk, would be worn hanging in the lobes of the ears which would

¹ Curled up fronds of the tree fern.

² Cluster of leaves design.

have been constantly stretched from childhood all through the growing years. The wearing of these ear-rings is fast dying out. The ensemble is completed by a necklace or necklaces of large, elongated, beads of clear round amber which are almost universally prized and worn to this day.

Women, especially the unmarried ones, have always been particular about their hair and the most popular method of achieving the best possible 'set' has been to apply pig's fat and to fix the hair by small combs, with a knot on the nape of the neck, after it had been all brushed firmly backwards from the forehead. Appearances are primarily effective from afar. But like her western counterpart the Lushai Belle is not unmindful of the lure of scent. Though the products of the factories of France may be beyond the means of most she seeks not to be outdone. Overnight she will lovingly place in some pig's fat the scented flowers of the *Michelia Champaca* and by the morn she will have secured her fragrant brilliantine for many a day to come. The combs are ingeniously made out of bamboo, so minutely split, tied by thread and then fixed by bees-wax, as only clever people could do.

Men's clothes have never been spectacular, ordinarily consisting of a plain white cloth seven feet by five worn round the waist with or without a longish coat open down the front. The performance of sacrifices of old is growing ever more rare and the cloth which marked the man of property and prestige is fast falling into disuse. But the traditional head-dress of chiefs is still worn on special occasions and consists of a number of the long tail feathers of the BHIMRAJ¹ bound together and inserted in the turban of chiefs' pattern. But under more modern conditions, where these prevail, clothes have taken on a fresh significance. The potentialities of a noble inheritance have given way to the calamity of second hand monstrosities. Dietitians deplore the disregard of Vitamin D, gift in measure of the Sun. Anthropologists bemoan the seeds of cultural extinction. The Hill man finds warmth and a sense of well being in his sartorial ventures and the bogey of his inferiority is superficially discounted. Shorts, moreover,

¹ Indian BHIMRAJ = Lushai VAKUL = BRONGO BIRD.



Sun and cloud over the rice fields of CHAMPHAI with the Hills of Burma calling in the distance.



JHUM CULTIVATION—THE FORERUNNER OF SOIL EROSION

Forests are bared—burned—and then planted broadcast, or by dibbling—cultivation being on a rotational basis. This picture appears in a small pamphlet by the author called *The Forests our Friends*, written for students of the Middle Standard and upwards

do not fall down ignominiously at football. The wife is spared much weaving for the families, now more in number than in the old days of higher infant mortality. The Lushai can visit India's large cities and not attract the excitement that an elephant might cause. He feels himself no longer a savage. In truth the significance of clothes is psychological. The problem of their misuse can only be tackled by an educative and sympathetic approach.

The people are traditionally nomadic and mentally volatile, characteristics which militate against easy reconciliation to the static conditions of living under the PAX BRITANNICA. At the same time they retain a cultural respect and some pride in their ancestors, social relations still being, in a measure, maintained on a well known and firm basis of age-long custom and practice. It is upon a people of this nature that the virile impact of Christianity, as mainly interpreted by two missionary bodies and the Salvation Army, has fallen. The effects, good or evil, upon the people present one of the main factors which must influence the present day administrative approach.

A people may achieve material greatness at the cost of their individuality, if their native soil provides adequate riches to attract enterprise, or, on the other hand, the world may pass them by. Lushais are a people who have been passed by these many years. Lushai longs to enter the arena of contest. Contests are ruthless and alluring but forbidding, and this debutante contents herself with contemplating all that is exotic and colourful in the big big world beyond her insular boundaries. A tough people, the Lushais hammer out a pattern with elementary tools, dreading eccentricity, spectators rather than contributors, musers more than creators and as imitators ingeniously stimulating. As a people they are actuated by instinct rather than by any objective analysis of problems. The past is a dim past, a past that has no record except that inscribed upon the hearts of the people by the accumulation of experience after experience related from father to son down through the ages.

The people live in isolated groups of settlements of from 20 to 100 or 150 houses, perhaps even more, usually

situated among the hill tops and often fifteen miles apart. Government maintains 1,000 miles of arterial bridle paths from which rough, and often steep, tracks lead off to the villages and the interior country. Within this whole tract of 8,000 square miles of precipitous hills there lies but one real plateau and that is at Champhai where wet rice is now extensively cultivated by the help of running waters, tracing through the four square miles of orderly holdings, themselves a proud witness to the advantages of a peaceful and enterprising administration. Where there is any regularity in the lie of the ranges these run from north to south, divided, not infrequently, by deep narrow gorges harbouring truculent and challenging rivers. The visitor from Aijal to Champhai must fall and climb at least two thousand feet in five out of the eight stages of the journey to Champhai, itself situated 5,000 feet above mean sea level.

Up to a height of about 2,000 feet bamboo jungles predominate, gradually giving way to tree jungles, these being protected by thickly knotted undergrowth with much thorn, cane, and aggeratum. Scintillating and alluring as a bride among her friends the *BAUHINIA* stands out in the deep valleys, with its delicate pinky white and almost translucent fragrance. Sharing in the beauteous grandeur all around are hundreds of busy little honeysuckers seeking to enjoy the honey from the blossoms. Carpeting this splendour little dainty wild flowers colour the foreground of almost impenetrable undergrowth. There are gentians, balsams, and stag moss, while pampas like grasses sway softly and gracefully in the gentle mountain breezes.

Although man's ceaseless war on animal and bird life has already had an effect, which is only too well marked, tiger, wild boar, bear, leopard, wild dog, most hateful of all vermin, wild cat, barking deer, and the occasional sambhur or elephant still remain, each and all seeking existence in changing conditions each in his own way. For instance, the tiger in the rains, secured by undergrowth, creeps higher up nearer to the villages in the search for easy prey among the domestic cattle.

The proverbial silence of the hills is often broken by

the excitable clatterings of monkeys of various kinds and a silent approach through the bamboo groves is often repaid by the vision of an undignified retreat by a number of monkeys as they make their getaway, jumping from one clump of bamboos to another, amid ceaseless gesticulation. The little wise hooluk, nervous, but the most human of pets, is not absent nor failing in his vociferous outbursts at all intrusion. If we travel in the rains between June and October our lives will be made a bane by the persistence of blood-sucking leeches. These appear sometimes from almost nowhere and from any direction. Some even fall from overhanging jungles and by some extraordinary means sometimes penetrate to the very depths of a marcher's clothes causing profuse bleeding before they can be detected. If care is not taken serious sores can result from leech bites. One of the most convenient methods for getting rid of a leech, with the least risk of poison resulting, is to hold a lighted cigarette to its tail. It will quickly extricate itself when it can be flicked off. To pull off a leech is unsound because it can in this way leave matter which may become poisonous and septic. If salt is poured on the leech the result is also instantaneous, but a cigarette is usually more at hand.

Climatically conditions are tropical and country only about 50 miles south of Aijal lies directly on the tropic of Cancer. Rainfall varies from 70 to 170 inches a year and the fall is subject to monsoon conditions which are the paramount influence between May and October—a period during which humidity is high, though the temperature seldom rises to 100 and then only in the premonsoon months of March, April and early May.

The method of agriculture is wasteful and extravagant but until others can create a system which can produce equally reliable results it is wiser for critics to exercise caution. The Lushai cuts down perhaps five acres of tree or bamboo jungle and, when this has become thoroughly dry in the months of March or April, he burns the wreckage to fertilise the land. Rice is sown in May, broadcast or dibbled on the burned hill side, preferably during soft falling rain, and after two or three weedings during the

monsoon the crop is reaped in December after running the constant risks of damage by drought, insects, wind storms, excessive and uncontrollable weeds—risks further enhanced near harvest time by the depredations of wild pig, rats, birds, deer, and other enemies of men's labours, who all take their toll by night, if not by day. No man who wins his existence from a hard forest by this indigenous method of agriculture can be called a lazy man. The system has, so far, though involving much labour, stood the test of ages, so that the Lushai cannot fairly be blamed if he does not show apparent enterprise in experiments in new forms of cultivation offered to him from time to time.

If the traveller happens to be passing through the rice fields around the harvest time he will be attracted by the graceful crimson coloured *AMARANTHUS* or *ZAMZO*, as it is known to Lushai, the kind protector from the evil spirit *TLINGTLALANGA*. For it was *TLINGTLALANGA* who brought evil. His movements were recognised by a sound like the tinkling of bells. If he was eating, the sound was quite unmistakable, a sound like *HMIRR HMARR HMIRR HMARR*. One sad day when he was in human form answering a call from a family to tend to the father who had fallen ill, while they were in their camp house in the midst of their cultivation, he actually commenced to eat the sick man's toes, eating and eating till not a hair of the father's head was left. In terror the mother seized her children and fled to the fields, hiding behind the *ZAMZO* plants. When *TLINGTLALANGA* eventually came to search them out for more food, though he was already fully gorged, he failed to find the family. It seems clear that, though *TLINGTLALANGA* peered here and there relentlessly and with avidity, so brilliant and grand were the crimson *ZAMZO* plants, behind which the family was hiding, that he quite failed to find them and in disappointment he eventually went away. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Lushais like to plant this bright and lovely flower near and around the little camp houses amid their fields of rice.

The only subsidiary crop of any great cash value is cotton which is grown among bamboo areas and near navigable rivers and often exported on rafts down these rivers, while

sweet potatoes, chillies, sesamun, mustard, and a few vegetables form additional food crops. Tobacco for home consumption is widely grown.

The economic condition of the people is very poor and is based on agricultural resources only, the right to exploit forests commercially vesting in Government's discretion. What prosperity there is is more artificial than real in that it relies on the continued receipts of cash from Government departments and personnel, aided by grants from the Missions for work in the hills, grants which owe their origin to charitably minded supporters, chiefly in the Home country.

The only tax the agriculturist can meet is a house levy of but two rupees or three shillings a year and for this small payment the householder acquires the right from Government for his family to use the forests and the land for his personal needs, and he also obtains the free use of all Government roads and can pursue litigation at no cost to the parties so far as the Government Courts are concerned. The difference of conditions which marks the salaried man and the man of the field is arresting and we perceive here the hint of a problem of artificial origin which looms ominously in local political affairs. We see a class which, with incommensurate effort, has become artificially rich. Money has fallen into hands before need for this money existed. This has given rise to exotic wants with no wide raising of the people's standard of living. But these problems are discussed in later chapters.

For the present we have glimpsed enough, perhaps to wish to see more. We have glimpsed the product of but forty-five years contact with the PAX BRITANNICA and all that this implies. What lies behind this oriental façade, attractive and alluring as we see it? There must be some history, some system of social custom, perhaps a relationship with the supernatural, folk-lore, and many other matters from which we may get a closer insight into the forces of which we must take count if we are to understand Lushai land, land of beauty, song, and contrast. Without such an insight our approach must end in misunderstanding, our sympathy remain misguided, our contribution misconceived.