LITTLE PEOPLE IN FAR-OFF LANDS



2125

Sunny Plains and Snowy Mountains

Burma, Siam and Tibet

F. TAPSELL

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Date 2/2/8
ERNAKULAM.

Sunny Plains & Snowy Mountains

BURMA

CHAPTER I

THE SIGHTS OF BURMA

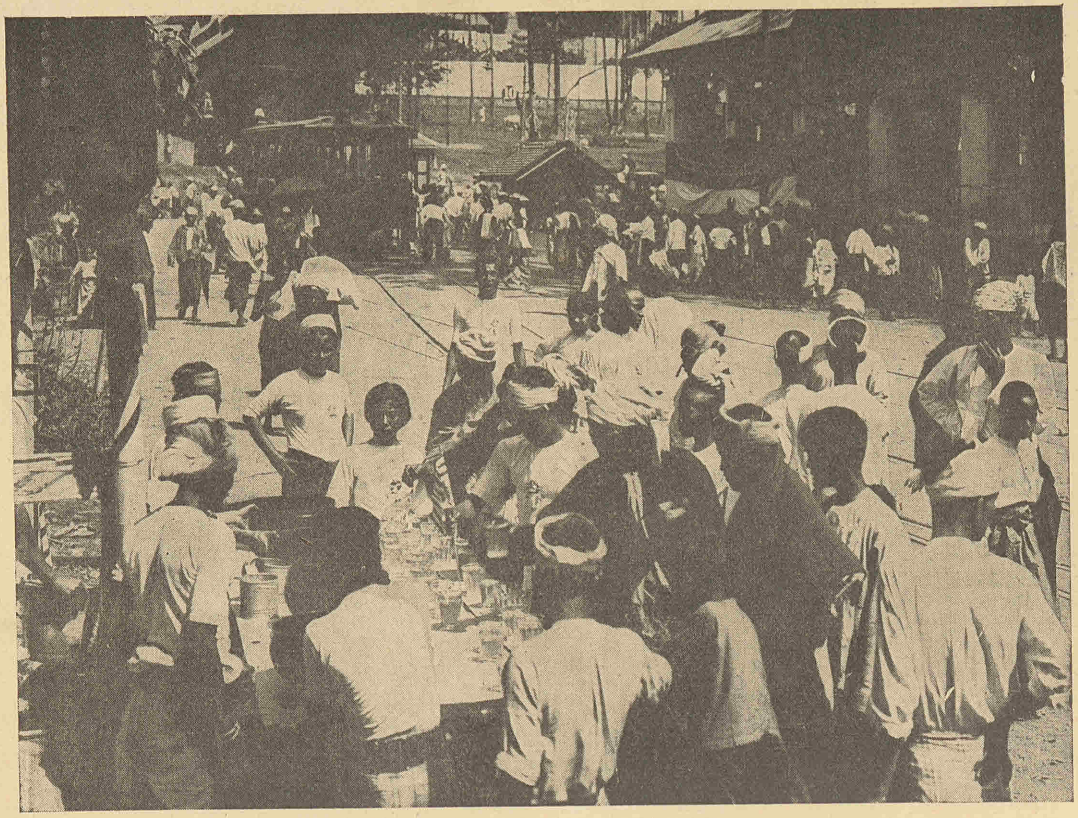
BURMA, once part of India though now separated from it, is a Governor's Province of great importance. You will see from your school map that the country is bounded by portions of Tibet and China, and the north-western frontier touches Assam. The great Bay of Bengal forms the western frontier.

The principal river is the Irrawadi, which spreads itself into a gigantic delta and finds an outlet in the Bay of Bengal.

Rangoon stands out prominently, for it is a busy seaport and the capital of Lower Burma.

If you were to ask me what were the chief sights of Burma, I should say the pagodas and the markets. First, I will tell you about the pagodas; for the country seems to be full of them. You see them dotted here and there, on every hill and all along the banks of the rivers.

You probably know that a pagoda is a sort of sacred tower, to which the people go to say their prayers, and the men of Burma do all they can to make them beautiful. Many of them are of richly



A street scene in Rangoon. Both young and old keep the lemonade stall busy.

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carved work, and painted in red and gold, so that they glitter brightly in the sun and can be seen a very long way off.

Round each pagoda is a platform, and it is on this that the people say their prayers. Let us watch for a moment. See, there is a woman with a tiny girl toddling by her side. She holds up the wee girlie, who bows her head and clasps her hands before the shrine.

As we watch, the scene constantly changes. Those who have said their prayers rise and go upon their way. Others at once take their places, so that there is a steady stream of people coming and going along the way to the pagoda.

The people of Burma have deep faith in their religion. And, for the most part, they are kind, good-natured people, too, giving largely of their goods and money to help those who are worse off than themselves.

There are but few shops, so that in every town, and in almost every village, a market is held from about six to ten o'clock in the morning.

The greatest of these markets is at Mandalay, the capital of Upper Burma on the River Irrawadi. There are endless rows of stalls, and you can buy almost everything you can think of. The market is divided into alleys, where each woman has a space about six feet square for her stall, and there she sits, cross-legged, in the midst of her wares.

As soon as you enter the market, the noise nearly

deafens you. Such a lot of laughing, talking, and cracking of jokes! Sellers are making the best bargains they can, buyers are trying to beat down those prices, and it is all done at the top of their voices.

Near the stalls are little groups of coolies, or porters, each with a big basket on his arm. They are waiting to carry home the goods you buy and so earn a few small coins.

The market, like most things and places in Burma, is a blaze of colour. On some stalls are lengths of silk, of brilliant hues such as we do not know how to make. Silk weaving is one of the chief industries of Mandalay. Fruit of every colour is heaped upon others. There are fish stalls where there are prawns as big as small lobsters. On others grain; and perhaps next to these a stall of pots and pans. Others, again, contain sugar and spices.

Seated among the stalls, the girls and women of the market look cool and fresh in their white jackets, while many of the girls have bright flowers twined in their hair.

Now just a few words about the villages, and then we will pass on to the children of Burma. A Burmese village usually consists of several little huts, with rush walls and thatched roofs, grouped about in clusters. Tall trees cast a grateful shadow among them. Dusky little children are playing about and smile up at you as you pass.

A couple of girls are bringing home jars of water upon their heads. At the door of one of the huts a woman is grinding corn. Another woman, with a basket of bananas upon her head and a baby strapped upon her back, is setting out for the market.



A Burmese village showing a cluster of huts with thatched roofs and rush walls.

Such is the kind of scene that would meet your eye at a village in this land, where all the people seem to be content and happy, for they want but little. Enough food to eat, a little house to live in, a bright-coloured dress for special days and holidays, and they wish for nothing more.

The cultivation of the land is by far the most important work carried on in Burma. The chief crop in both Upper and Lower Burma is rice. The food of the people consists as a rule of boiled rice, with salted fish or dried fish, and boiled vegetables, onions, and chilli, a kind of hot peppery food. Occasionally they eat meat—maybe elephant flesh or chicken.

On page 9 you will see a picture of an elephant busy in one of the timber yards of Rangoon. Burma is proud of its timber supplies and it is from the forests of Burma that the world draws its supply of teak for shipbuilding.

CHAPTER II

THE CHILDREN OF BURMA

The little people of Burma live a very easy, happy life. As soon as they come into the world, a warm welcome is awaiting them. While tiny, dressed in nothing but their own pretty brown skins, they lie kicking in the dust in the garden, and coo and chatter all day long to themselves and to one another.

When they grow older, the boys go to school at the monasteries. They are taught by the monks there to read and write, and to do quite simple sums ; but that is all they learn. Except in the larger towns, there are no schools to which the girls can go—

which means that you very seldom meet a country girl who can read or write.

They work at home instead. They mind the babies, learn to cook and to weave, herd the cattle, and work in the fields. They go to the well for water; but this is looked upon more as play than as work, for there they meet their friends and hear all the news of the village—so you may guess that now and again mother has to wait a very long time for her water.

The children of Burma, both girls and boys, dress in very bright colours; but these are rich rather than gaudy. They tone well with the brilliant sunshine and deep-blue skies, the golden pagodas, and the deep reds and browns of the shrines.

All the girls learn to weave at a very early age. They weave the cloth their own clothes are made of, and cloth for their families also. In the larger houses, where servants are kept, it is the servants who do the weaving.

It is not thought good manners for a girl to laugh in public. She may smile, but that is all. Never mind how badly she wants to laugh, she must not do so, if there are guests in the house, or if she has gone with her mother to call on some friends.

In this land of Burma children are rarely scolded, and you do not often hear a child cry; but, if a child should be scolded, it is more often than not because of having been rude to father or mother.

At about the age of ten a boy has to go through the greatest ordeal of his life, for then his body and legs must be tattooed. This is such a very painful business that only a very little can be done at a time. No matter how bad the pain, a boy must not flinch or cry out. Should he do so, he will be branded as a coward for the rest of his life. Bravery is looked upon as the greatest of all virtues in a man or boy, and so the boys of Burma are trained not to show what they feel.

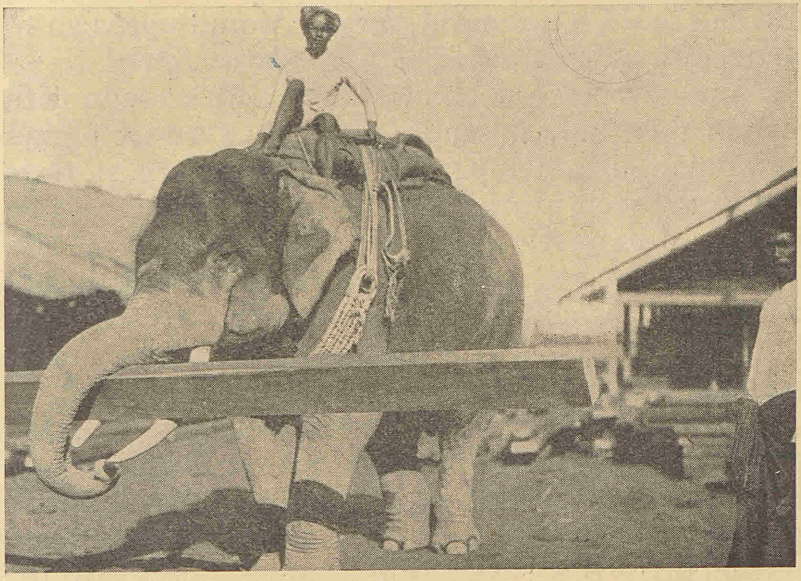
When boys are about twelve years old, they must spend some of their time in a monastery. While they are there, they wear no gay clothes and their heads must be shaved. Some few stay on and become monks in their turn ; but most of them return to their homes after their time of learning is ended, and start their business in life, for they are then looked upon as men.

There are many festivals in the life of a Burmese boy—one when his head is washed for the first time, another when his first tooth is cut, a third when he goes to school for the first time, a fourth when the tattooing is over, and yet others on many other occasions.

But in the life of a girl there is only one, and this takes place when she grows from a child into a girl, or, as they would say, into a woman, for she is then thought to be old enough to marry.

On this day her ears are bored with great

ceremony and she wears ear-rings for the first time, never to be without them afterwards. Her face is powdered, and her hair dressed in a great number of tight little coils ; very sweet and pretty she looks



One of the many elephants that work in the timber yards near Rangoon.

in her short gay-coloured skirt and a little white coat with very wide sleeves.

On this day all the friends and relations are asked to the house, and there is a great deal of feasting and merry-making ; so you may imagine how every girl looks forward to the time when she will have such a festival of her own.

Yet there is one drawback. Once a girl's ears are pierced, and the feast has been held, she must never again go out and play with the other boys and girls in the streets or gardens. However, she feels very big, for she is now looked upon as a grown-up, and so she does not mind, for she would not wish to be always a child.

You never see a child stamp and scream with rage in this land, any more than you ever see a man or woman in a temper. From their earliest days they have been taught that it is very wrong to give way to ill-temper.

But there is one thing they do, which we do not think good for children. From a very early age they all smoke cigars, which are about six inches long; not only the boys, but the girls as well.

I expect you will think it very funny when I tell you that the grown-up people believe in fairies just as much as the children. They call them "nats" and say they live in the trees and flowers. In some of the trees they even build little houses for the fairies to live in, and no one must ride close to these trees lest the fairies should be frightened. People must dismount and walk by at a little distance, and as quietly as they can. If they do not keep this rule, they think some harm will befall them, as there are some very bad fairies as well as good ones.

SIAM

CHAPTER I

THE VENICE OF THE EAST

NOW glance at your map again and you will see quite near to Burma is the country of Siam and the large sea called the Gulf of Siam. The country was formerly known as Thailand, meaning "The Land of Free Men."

There is a town in Siam which is called the "Venice of the East," because it is a town largely built upon the water. In many parts rivers and canals take the place of roads; and, if you wish to go out, you go in a boat.

Many of the people spend their lives in the floating houses, and there are also shops and even a market upon the water. To form the market, numbers of boats come in from the country with loads of fish, rice, fruit, and many other things. They all row to the same spot and anchor their boats so close together that they form a kind of island, on which people may walk from boat to boat to buy the things they need.

The market is held in the night. It is so very hot in the day that a great deal of the work is done by the light of the moon. Some of the people stay up all night and go to bed about eight or nine o'clock in the morning.

If you live in one of the floating houses and wish to move to another part of the town, you do not need to pack up your belongings and clear out the house ; all you have to do is to hire a steam-tug, which will take you, house and all, to the place in which you wish to live.

Some people who have no houses on the water merely live on their boats, and there are many children who hardly know what it is to run about on dry ground. They are as much at home in the water as you are on land.

When they are little more than babies, their mothers tie some cork round them so that they cannot sink ; then put them into the water and let them float about, and bob up and down, until they learn to swim. They might very well be called the Water Babies of Siam.

But the town of Bangkok, which I am telling you about, is not all water. There are many streets which, in the dry season, are white with dust. On either side of these streets are rows of low wooden houses and shops, the latter being open to the road in front.

Here you will see quite as many Chinese as Siamese people. This is because China is the next country to Siam. Nearly all the hardest work seems to be done by the Chinese. While they are at work they wear blue cotton clothes, some bright and some dingy, according to the length of time they have been worn.



Bangkok, the "Venice of the East." Many of the people spend their whole lives in these floating houses and shops.

The rickshaws, a kind of little carriage to which there is no horse, are pulled by Chinamen. The roads are swept by Chinamen, and many of the shops, too, are kept by Chinese.

There is the ice-cream seller. He carries a pail on each end on a long stick and goes up and down, calling out what he has for sale. The children hear and flock to him, eager to spend their coins in very much the same way as the children of England.

Then there are curry sellers, from whom you may buy a meal for a very small sum ; but you must not mind eating it out of a bowl that is seldom, if ever, washed, and is used by all kinds of people.

Along the roads are carriages for hire, something like our own. They are called " gharries." The drivers of these wear a white linen coat and a red fez. If it rains, they think it a pity to get them wet ; so coat and fez are taken off and tucked away under the seat. There are trams in some of the streets, and also buses ; so that you see the people of Siam are not so very far behind us, in some things, at any rate.

Here and there we see monks in their yellow robes. Some carry big palm-leaf fans which they hold in front of their faces, when they meet anyone. Many of them have an iron bowl ; and, as they pass, people come out of their houses and put food into the bowl. When it is full, the bowl is taken to the monastery ; and its contents serve as the food for the monks who live there.

Nearly every young man goes to a monastery and becomes a monk for a time. Sometimes it is only for a few months, sometimes for years. The monks teach the children the few lessons they learn, and they also assist at the religious festivals, of which there are a great many in Siam.

While they are doing their lessons, the children sit cross-legged upon the ground. They write on slates, but have very few books to read and none to write in. At least, this is so in the country. But now, in most of the larger towns, there are schools for both boys and girls, in which many things are taught. And in Bangkok, the chief city, there are schools on modern lines where English masters teach, and where lessons are given much the same as in England.

We say that even a cat may look at a king, but in Siam, until quite recent years, the people might not look at their king. When he was coming, people had to lie flat upon the ground with their faces buried in the dust. When he had gone by, they might rise, but not before. They do not keep to this rule now. Some years ago the king saw how silly it was, so he made a new law that his people should merely bow their heads when they saw him.

Siam is one of the few countries where wild elephants still live, and almost the only land in which white elephants are ever found. The people of Siam look upon these as sacred, and their flag has on it

the picture of a white elephant. But, if you saw one of these highly prized animals, I fear you would not think much of it ; for they are not really white at all, but a pale drab colour which looks rather dirty.

As the white elephants are so very rare, I will tell you only about the brown ones, such as many of you have seen. They live in the plains, and in the dense parts of the forest, where few men ever go. They will not often attack people, unless they are driven to do so ; but then, if they are in large herds, they carry everything before them.

Every two or three years there is a great elephant hunt in order to obtain fresh elephants for the king's service. A number of men, with a few tame elephants to serve to entice the wild ones, set out for the forests and hills ; and all the elephants they can find are driven in a huge herd to a piece of ground which has been enclosed on three sides with a strong fence.

As soon as the whole herd is within, the fence of the fourth side is built up so that they cannot escape. For a little while they rush to and fro and trumpet out their rage at being thus caught in a trap ; but they soon seem to know that man is their master, and wait quietly enough for what is to come.

Men then go in among them and choose those they think the best, perhaps not more than twenty or thirty out of the whole herd. They tie a rope round one leg of each of those they have chosen, and make it fast to a very strong post.

Then once more the gates are opened, and the rest of the herd driven away to the wild land from which they came. They are free until the next elephant hunt, when perhaps it will be their turn to be tamed and used for carrying timber, or for transporting heavy weights on long journeys.

In addition to the elephant, which of course is the biggest of all the wild animals which roam in the rough jungle country of Siam, there are many other big animals. Occasionally the tiger is hunted, and leopards, and several kinds of wild-cats such as the leopard-cat are to be found. Two other creatures which must be mentioned are the rhinoceros, a great clumsy fellow with horns on his nose, and also the water-buffalo, which is tamed and used for drawing the plough in the muddy rice fields.

There are several kinds of snakes, too, in the rough country, but many of them are not poisonous.

Of the monkeys that abound in Siam, the commonest is the gibbon monkey. Perhaps you may have seen this type of monkey at the zoo; it is small, but very active and nimble and runs all over the cage, often catching fruit or nuts in mid-air. They are so swift in their movements that some people say they have seen them capture birds on the wing with their paws.

Fish is very plentiful in the rivers of both Burma and Siam. In the wide rivers and estuaries one often sees that huge, lurking monster called the crocodile.

Sometimes only the tip of the nose and the eyes are to be seen above water. At other times the crocodile floats gently down the river like a huge log or tree trunk, until it reaches its prey, which may consist of anything it can overpower.

CHAPTER II

THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF SIAM

The little people of Siam are merry little folks, with straight black hair and brown skins, and a twinkle in their eyes which tells you they are often up to mischief. But let us begin with the baby and take a peep at them in all the stages of childhood.

I told you their skins were brown ; yet, if you saw a Siamese baby, or very tiny child, you would think I had made a mistake, for it is quite a bright yellow. But this is not really the colour of its skin ; it is only that the baby has been rubbed all over with some yellow paste, to keep the insects away.

For the first few months of his life, a Siamese baby spends most of its time hanging from the ceiling of the house in a wicker cradle. He is quite happy there ; but, if he begins to fret, as the best of babies will do now and again, mother gives the cradle a push which sets it in motion so that it swings gently to and fro, soon rocking baby off to sleep.

He learns to walk and to swim at about the same time ; and soon after that he does much as he

pleases and goes where he will. He sleeps when he is sleepy, and eats when he is hungry, and does what seems to him the best thing at the moment.

His first act when he wakes in the morning is to run to the nearest water, and in a well-watered land such as Siam there is sure to be a stream close at hand. He jumps into it, splashes the water all over him, and, as soon as he is tired of splashing and playing, comes out, feeling as fresh as a daisy and quite ready for a meal.

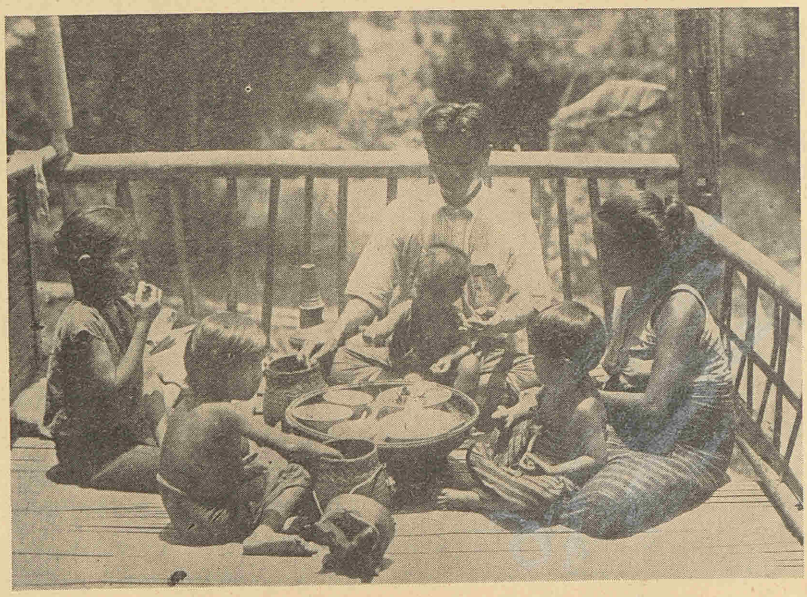
He has not to bother about clothes ; for until he is about eight or nine years old he wears none, and then only one thin garment, which is tied round the waist, and draped to look like a pair of knickers. This costume is called a *panung*.

The girls begin to wear this garment at an earlier age than the boys ; and, when they grow a little older, they also wear a scarf folded over the body. If they wish to look very smart indeed, they wear a white linen jacket with a gay scarf tied over it.

Amongst some of the tribes a custom still exists for all the top of the head to be shaved except for one tuft of hair. This tuft, also, is cut off later on, and the day when it is cut is the greatest day in a child's life. The cutting takes place when a girl is about eleven years old ; in the case of a boy, rather sooner.

A day which they think to be lucky is chosen, and at one end of the room a platform is made and

covered with white cloth. Upon this the child whose top-knot is to be cut is seated. Fresh mats are put on the floors and a raised seat made for the monk, or monks, who will perform the ceremony.



A Siamese peasant family at their midday meal.

Many friends are invited and each must bring a present. The child is dressed in rich clothes and wears as many gold and silver ornaments as the family possess.

As soon as the monks arrive, the girl goes to the platform, raises her hand to her forehead, then bows her head to the ground, and so she has to remain for

a very long time. The monks begin to chant ; and, while they sing, the guest of highest rank cuts off, not all, but a third part, of the top-knot. Then the two eldest members of the family cut off the rest, one of the monks pours water over the child's head, and the ceremony is over.

This is followed by feasting and merry-making which sometimes last as much as three days. From this time the hair is allowed to grow into a short crop, which stands up all over the head.

Now let me tell you how the children employ their time—for very many of them do not go to school. Well, I think the greater part of the day is spent either *on*, or *in*, the water. They swim, play all kinds of games in the water, and now and again have a mud battle, pelting each other with the soft mud that lies under, or at the edge of, the water.

When they are tired of this game, and look more like mud stacks than small boys and girls, they jump into the water again and wash off the mud. By this time they are ready for a rest. First, perhaps, they climb a palm tree and pick a coconut, then they lie down to eat, and have a nap afterwards.

Fish and rice, cooked with, or without, curry, are the food they mostly eat at home ; but they do not have set times for meals. Every member of the family seems to know how to cook ; so anyone feeling hungry simply goes into the house, and cooks and eats a meal.

The houses are built of wood. They are raised above the ground on poles ; this is because during the rainy season most of the land is flooded. All the rubbish of the house is thrown down between the boards of the floor ; and the dogs of the village come and eat up what scraps they can find.

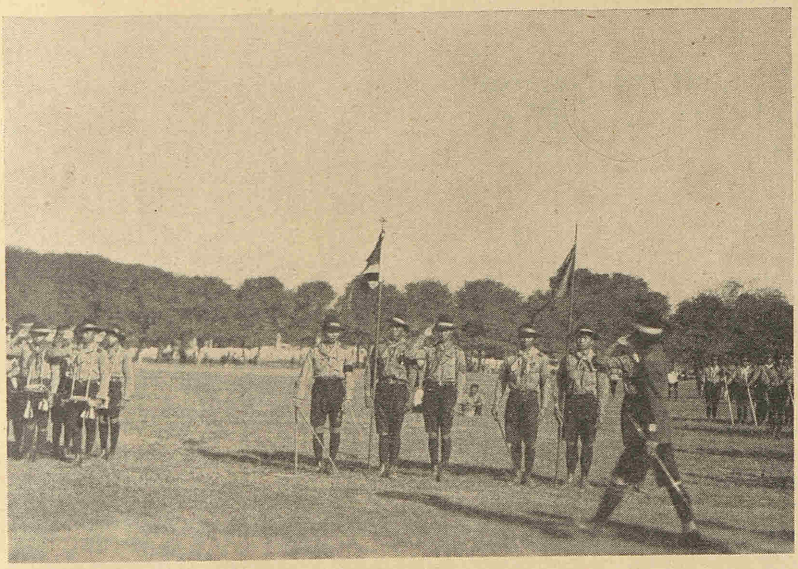
At a very early age boys begin to smoke ; so that you may often see a group of small boys smoking away quite happily under the shade of a tree. Another habit which is very common amongst all ages is *betel* chewing. The betel-nut palm tree bears a nut which the natives are fond of chewing. It tends to stain the lips deep red, but makes the teeth black.

When they are a little older, many of the boys spend their time working in the rice fields. At first their work is merely to scare away the birds ; then comes the time when they sit on the backs of the bullocks and plough, or help to sow and gather the rice.

The girls learn to pound rice, to work the rice mill, to look after the chickens, and to help mother in the house. Very few of them ever go to school, or learn to read or write.

The boys do not play games such as football or cricket, for it is too hot to run about much in the daytime. They keep crickets and teach them to fight ; and they will also teach a certain kind of fish to fight. They are very keen on watching anything fight ; yet, strange to say, they very seldom fight

among themselves. You hardly ever see Siamese children quarrel, and they are very generous, always ready to share and lend anything they have.



Boy Scouts of Siam attending a rally near Bangkok.

Before we leave Siam and go on to Tibet, I must tell you one very funny thing the little people believe. They say that, when it thunders, a great giant up in the sky is having a quarrel with his wife. When it rains, they say that the sky-maidens are having their bath and splashing the water down on to the earth. If this were true, we might sometimes wish that the sky-maidens who dwell over *our* land, were not quite so fond of bathing.

TIBET

MOUNTAINS OF SNOW

TIBET is a very great contrast to the two other lands we have read about in this book. You will find it on the map to the north of India, beyond the range of mountains called the Himalayas. It is, for the most part, a land of high mountains and of snow that never melts, a land where there are no trees, but scant grass, and no flowers, except in the low-lying plains.

The people are sturdy and strong, and they need to be, for they have to work hard in this barren land to make a living. They are not, speaking generally, very pretty to look at, for their faces are wrinkled and their eyes half closed by the great cold and the glare of the snow. Yet, in spite of the bitter cold and the hardships they have to endure, they live to a good old age, until they are so old that their faces are nothing but a mass of wrinkles.

" But how can they live, if the land is so cold that nothing will grow ? " you ask. Well, the greater number of them are either shepherds or traders. They keep herds of sheep, goats, and a kind of long-haired oxen called yaks, and exchange the animals, or the wool and butter they get from them, for grain, sugar, and other things from India.

Some of the people live in rough huts made of

wood, but the nomads, those who travel from place to place with their flocks, live in black tents made of a coarse cloth which is woven from the hair of the yak. Sometimes they build a low wall of mud round



A nomad mother of Tibet and her children outside their home.

the outside of the tent to keep the cold wind from blowing in under its sides.

The shepherds all wear sheepskin cloaks with the wool inside. Sometimes they have to wear three or four of these cloaks, one over the other, in order to

keep warm. On their heads they wear sheepskin caps, which they can tie down over their ears.



A Tibetan peasant, proud of her quaint head-dress

Round the waist the peasant wears a belt, which takes the place of pockets, as you will notice in the picture on page 29. From the belt hangs a knife, a pipe, or a wooden bowl for food, a bundle of wool for spinning, a prayer wheel, a bundle of rags, and anything else they may wish to carry with them. What sort of a thing a prayer wheel is, I will tell you presently.

The women and children wear much the same clothes as the men. When they are at work, they slip one arm out of their cloaks ; or, if the work is heavy, both arms are taken out. But, as they wear no other clothes under the skins, it is mostly too cold to do this for any length of time.

They wear ear-rings, strings of beads, and as many ornaments as they can obtain ; but the dress is very dull in colour, save for their boots, the long leggings of which are mostly red or of some other bright colour.

Their head-dress is the thing the women most pride themselves upon. It is a strip of cloth, or leather, with one point hanging over the brow, and another point reaching to the waist behind. This is sewn over with as many gold and silver ornaments as the woman can afford to buy. It is the greatest wish of every girl to see how bright she can make her head-dress. It is worn only on fête days.

Now what about the little people who grow up amid the snow? Well, they are very sturdy little mites, perhaps because the weakly ones seldom live beyond babyhood, leaving only the strong babies to grow up into men and women. In spite of the great cold, you will sometimes see them running about without any clothes at all.

They do not seem to play many games, and of toys they have none, unless the stones of the earth and the bones of the animals they have eaten can be called toys; for they play mostly with these, while they are tiny. When they are older, stone throwing and wrestling are the two games most played by the boys, and the girls have too much work to do to play any games at all.

A new baby always has a happy welcome, from its mother at least; for almost every mother has lost so many of her babies that she is glad of a newcomer to help to fill the vacant places in her heart.

You would think their food not at all inviting. It consists of bread, baked from the grain which they

have bought in exchange for their flocks, and of dried or raw meat. They drink tea, but not as we drink it ; for they add butter and salt instead of milk and sugar to it.

Even the very tiny children are taught to say their prayers, but they do this in a way we should think very strange. In each hut or tent there is a prayer wheel. This is a little round box which revolves on the top of a stick. In the box are a number of prayers written on long strips of paper.

The child holds the stick in his hand and sets the box spinning round and round. As long as he does this, he is supposed to be repeating the prayers that are written inside. The people of Tibet believe that the oftener a prayer is repeated in this way, the more effect it has. Besides these small wheels which are turned by hand, there are also huge praying wheels turned by wind and water.

Men, women, and children all do the same ; and they never forget to say their prayers as many times a day as they are told is right.

Oh ! before I forget to mention it, I really must let you know of one funny custom of the people of Tibet. When two people meet, they do not shake hands, but put out their tongues at each other. *We* should, of course, think this very bad manners ; but, with them, it is simply a way of saying, " How do you do ? "

Now I want to try and tell you how hard life may

sometimes be for these people of the mountains ; for it is not very easy for us to picture it to ourselves.



The women-folk wear many ornaments to brighten up their drab dress, and sheepskin caps which tie down over their ears.

High up among these mountains it is winter all the year round ; so there is no warm summer to look forward to if days are cold and dreary.

The men, or at least those who can afford to do

so, travel from place to place on rough long-haired little ponies. These ponies do not mind the cold and they can climb almost as well as a sheep or a goat.

Perhaps some traders are taking a herd of yaks to the low lands, or to the borders of India, to sell them. To reach the part where they wish to go, they must cross some of the higher mountain passes, where there is nothing but snow to be seen ; and they must carry food for their animals, as well as for themselves, for they will find none by the way.

They can move onwards only at a very slow pace ; for here and there the snow-drifts are so deep that they would bury men or animals, were they to fall into them. One step at a time, and that a very slow step, is all that can be made ; for some of the men must go in front and dig a narrow path through the snow, along which the animals may walk in safety.

If they did not do this, all might be lost at any moment. They try the ground with their long staffs, so that they may know if there is a deep drift before them, or if it is safe to venture forward.

Before they have gone far, maybe, the snow begins to fall and sweeps round them like a thick white veil, driven so hard by the icy wind that very soon men and animals are almost dead with fatigue ; yet they dare not stay to rest, for to rest or sleep in that great cold would mean certain death. The storm does not abate. Is there any hope that they will ever reach the end of their journey in safety ? Yes, there

is *just* a chance, but no more, when they are caught in such a storm as this. Yet they must face all these risks ; for, unless they can take their yaks, or sheep, or goats to lower land, where there is at least some scanty grass upon which the cattle can feed, some of the animals will die, as it is not possible to carry food enough to serve for any length of time.

And again, if they did not take their goods to where they can sell them, the men could not live.

Life in the valleys and plains of Tibet is a very different thing from the life of the mountains ; for it is sometimes very hot there, and green trees, fresh green grass, lovely flowers, and many kinds of fruits are to be found growing wild.

The people are not so rough, nor are they so strong and sturdy as the mountain tribes. They live in houses either of mud or wood, and they grow grain in the fields and vegetables in their gardens. I do not think they work so hard, but they certainly obtain a great deal more for their work than their mountain brothers ; but it is each to his liking, and neither would wish to change places with the other.

But of these lowland people I have not space to say any more, for I wished most to give you a little peep into the life and ways of the people whose lives are spent upon the snowy mountains of Tibet.

QUESTIONS

BURMA

Chapter I

1 Tell me what you know of the pagodas of Burma.
2 Why are the markets of Burma so important ?

Chapter II

1 What work do the girls do in this land ?
2 What is the greatest trial in a boy's life in Burma ?
3 Which is the most important event in a girl's life ?

SIAM

Chapter I

1 What town is called the "Venice of the East" ? Look at the picture on page 13 and then tell me all about it.
2 Describe an elephant hunt.
3 What other wild creatures are to be found in this country ?

Chapter II

1 What clothes do the children of Siam wear ?
2 Tell me as shortly as you can about the ceremony of having the tuft of hair cut off.
3 Why are the houses of Siam built on poles ?

TIBET

1 What is a yak ?
2 On what food do the people live ?
3 Describe a prayer wheel, and say how it is used.
4 Look at the picture on page 29 and then tell me all you can about the dress of the Tibetan.

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