

A BURMESE RIVER.

FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF ALEISTER CROWLEY.

THE next day we resumed our journey; I walked most of the way and shot some partridges and pigeons for lunch, which we took at Leh-Joung; this is not a bungalow, but a village. We went on in the afternoon to Yegyanzin, where we had the good fortune to meet Carr, the Forest Commissioner of the District, and his assistant Hopwood. Unfortunately he was unable to give me any elephants, as they were all in use; but told me I ought to have no difficulty in getting coolies and probably ponies if I required

directly under the hill on which the bungalow was situated. I took down the shot gun with the intention of killing a big paddy bird which we saw from the bank. These birds are valuable on account of the aigrette. I fired, but my shot did not seem to hurt him and he flew off. I resigned the gun to the Burmese boy, and had just finished my bath when the impudent beast came back. I hastily signalled for the gun, and putting on a topi and a towel round my waist proceeded to stalk him across the ford. I suppose I must have presented the most ridiculous spectacle that one can imagine. Thornton, at any rate, said he had not laughed so much for years, and I dare say that the paddy bird laughed too; but I got the best laugh in the end, for after about ten minutes' infinite pains I got a close shot at him which put an end to his career. That evening we tried to eat roast parrots, but it was a total failure. I am told, however, that parrot pie is quite a good dish. Well, I don't like parrot, so there will be all the more for those who do.

AN EXCITING ENCOUNTER.

The next day I summoned enough energy to go for a stroll. I was very anxious to show Thornton a beautiful view of hill-side and river, which I had come across on my way home. We set out, he being armed with a sketch book and kukri, which he would always carry about with him, though I could never understand the reason; if he had been anticipating the day's events, I should not have troubled to enquire. At the edge of the hill weariness overtook me; I sat down, pointing to him a tiny path down the hill slope which he was to pursue. He was rather a long time returning, and I was just about to follow in search, when I heard his cooey; in a couple of minutes he rejoined me. I was rather surprised to see that his kukri was covered with blood. I said "I knew you would fall over something one day. Where have you cut yourself?" He explained that he had not cut himself, but that an animal had tried to dispute the path with him, and that he had hit it on the head, whereon the animal had rolled down the steep slopes towards the river. I could not make out from his description what kind of an animal it could possibly be, but, on examining the tracks, I saw them to be those of a nearly full-grown leopard. We did not retrieve the body, though it must have been mortally wounded, otherwise Thornton would hardly have escaped so easily.

The headman now returned, and told us that he could not give us coolies to cross the Arakan Hills. Nobody had ever been there, and it was very dangerous, and everyone who went there died, and all that sort of thing. But he could



THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

them. We combined forces and had quite a nice dinner together. One does not realise how nice Englishmen really are until one meets them in out-of-the-way places. The following day we went off again and arrived at Mindon at 2.30 p.m. The road had become very bad, and in the springless bullock-cart travelling was by no means pleasant. In fact, after two or three big jolts we agreed to take turns to look out, and to give warning if a particularly frightful jolt seemed imminent, but for all our precautions, I was badly let in on one occasion. The road had become level and appeared to be the same for the next 200 yards, so I turned back to light a pipe. Without a word of warning, the driver swung round his oxen off the road into an adjoining paddy field, at least three feet below, and we got the nastiest shaking of our lives. The last seven miles were particularly irritating, however, as there was little or no shade, and it was out of the question to relieve oneself by walking for more than a short distance.

On arrival at Mindon, we summoned the headman and told him to get men for the cross-country journey to Kyaukpyu. He seemed to think it would be rather difficult, and was evidently not at all pleased with his orders, but he went off to obey them, and in the meanwhile sent round the village shikari so that I might go out after buffalo the next day. I accordingly started at 6.45 next morning for the jungle.

It soon began to get hot, and a double .577 is not the kind of toy one wants to carry on a fifteen-mile tramp. As a matter of fact, I probably did nearer twenty miles than fifteen, as I was going eight hours with very little rest. We went up and down hills repeatedly, but the wild buffalo was shy, and, as a matter of fact, I did not the whole day see anything whatever shootable, except some small birds which I took home for dinner. In the afternoon we went off bathing together in a delightful pool



MAGNATES OF THE SECTION.

give us men to go about twenty miles, and no doubt we should be able to get more coolies there. I thought there was more than a little doubt; and, taking one thing with another, decided it would be best to give up the idea and go instead back to the Irrawaddy and down the Mindon Chong; we consequently hired a boat of the dug-out type, about 35 feet long and just broad enough for two men to pass; over the middle of the boat was the usual awning.

(To be continued.)