

AN EARLY BRITISH MERCHANT IN BANGKOK.

It is generally known to present day residents of Bangkok that the headquarters of the new Irrigation Department, on the west bank of the river, was originally built for the first British merchant who settled in the present capital of Siam. The history of this merchant furnishes an interesting chapter in the history of Bangkok of ninety years ago, and does not seem to have been given in any detail before. It is perhaps hardly necessary to recall that the hardy pioneer who came to trade with the Third Monarch of the Reigning Dynasty was a Scotsman. Robert Hunter, for such was his name, hailed from Greenock, and came to Bangkok in August 1824, a little over a year after Stamford Raffles had taken his farewell of Singapore, broken in health if not in spirit. Hunter first lived in India, then came on to Singapore, and the Crawford Mission towards the end of the 2nd Reign turned his attention towards Siam. Hunter reached this country at a time when the capital was in the state of uncertainty which accompanied the Accession to the Throne of the Supreme Monarch of the Kingdom. The Second King of the present Dynasty died in July 1824, and Phra Nang Klao had been on the throne but a few weeks when the first British-born merchant to reside in Bangkok arrived.

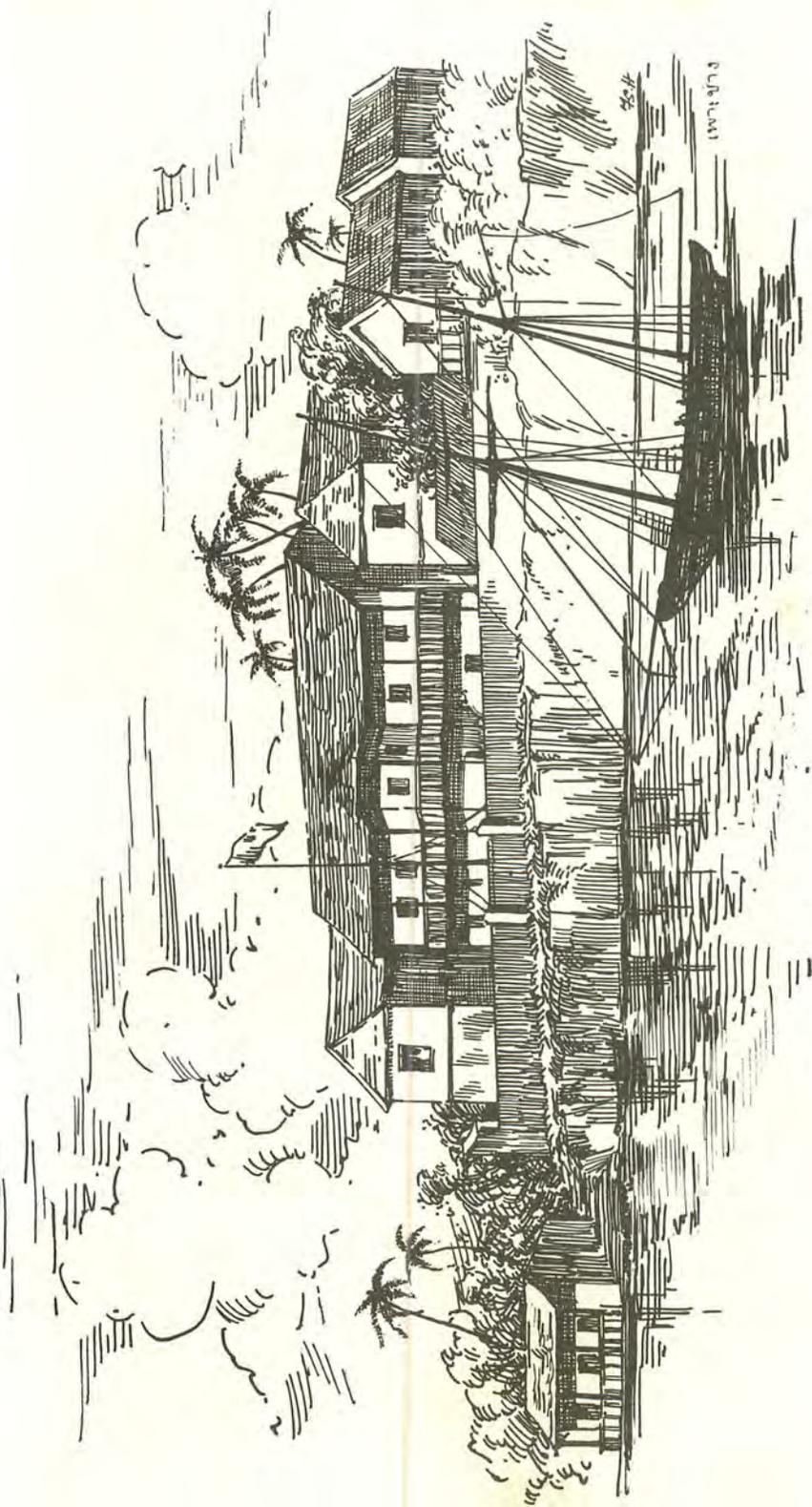
He did not settle in Bangkok at once, but made journeys to and from Singapore and traded with the Rajahs of Pattani, Trengganu and Kelantan on these journeys. He also apparently retained business interests in Singapore. Buckley, in his *Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, republishes Braddel's list of European Inhabitants of Singapore in March 1827. There Robert Hunter is given as of the firm of Morgans, Hunter & Co. There is a record of another trading venture in 1833. George Windsor Earl, who wrote *Voyages and Adventures in the Indian Archipelago 1832, 1833 and 1834*, describes a journey to Bangkok with Robert Hunter. He says he had on board several seamen belonging to a vessel of Mr. Hunter which had lately been sold in Singapore, and Hattee, a fat good humoured little Siam-Chinese, the personal attendant of Mr. Hunter. Hunter proved a most

agreeable companion. He had spent many years in the different parts of the Archipelago and therefore possessed valuable information concerning it.

No one desiring to do business came to Bangkok without bringing gifts, and Hunter arrived at an opportune moment. King Phra Nang Klao was experiencing trouble at Viengchan, and among the gifts which Hunter brought were a thousand muskets from India, which no doubt proved very acceptable at this juncture. The King had the wood on which the barrels were placed painted red, and these muskets are known in the country to-day as *pün rang dëng*. But despite careful search in likely places I have not been able to find one of these muskets. The Museum has been examined without success, nor does the collection of arms at the Ministry of War contain one.

It is not known whether Hunter had definitely decided to settle in Siam when he came up to Bangkok, but we find that, shortly after his arrival, he consulted with the Phra Klang, stating that he wished to trade and made application for land on which to build a place of business. The Phra Klang reported to the King, who ordered him to arrange a place for Hunter. In the previous Reign when the Portuguese Consul, Carlos da Silva, with Joachim Xavier as Secretary, came from Macao to Bangkok, a place was provided for him to reside in, and the land and building were afterwards claimed as a gift from the 2nd Reign. This is the site at present occupied by the Portuguese Legation. Joachim Xavier, it may be noted in passing, was commonly known as Samien Yiking and was the father of Khun Pasa Pariwatta (Louis M. Xavier), who was the grandfather of the present Phya Phipat Kosa. In order to avoid a mistake in Hunter's case similar to that made in the case of the Portuguese Consul, it was arranged that he should rent his *hang*. The Phra Klang had a piece of land in front of Wat Prayurawongse, and this he presented to the King, and in return Phra Nang Klao allowed the revenue obtained from the sale of bamboo wood to be temporarily devoted to the erection of the building for Hunter.* The first building erected was a three storey building with two wings, one on each side. The verandah of these wings joined the second storey of the main building. The cost of the whole was 180 catties, and allowing for the very solid

* There is Siamese authority for this statement.



The British "factory" from Neale's "Residence in Siam."

nature of the building this was a very reasonable price. The rental was Tcs. 600 per annum. On the other hand, Hunter's own written statement was that he paid the 600 ticals as the rent of the ground and that the buildings were erected at his own charges, the King agreeing to pay for them when he gave up possession. But instead of that being done, Hunter says when he left Siam he was made to pay not only the rent for the ground, but an equal sum for the buildings.

By vessels trading to Siam the building was called the British factory, but to the Siamese it was always known as "Hang Huntraa." The factory was the rallying point for all foreigners visiting the country, and in all the books of the period one finds references to the hospitality of Robert Hunter, who not only accommodated visitors, but in virtue of his position afforded them introductions to the Siamese and accompanied them to Court when the Sovereign gave audiences.

Earl writing of his visit in 1833 says, "Landing with Capt. Burgess at the factory, we found Mr. Roberts, the American Envoy, from the sloop Peacock, and Mr. Morrison, son of Dr. Morrison of Canton, staying there. The factory is a large white washed brick building two stories in height, and forming three sides of a square, the fourth being closed by a high brick wall. The ground floor was appropriated to warehouses, kitchen, and servants' rooms the upper portion being occupied by the Europeans." The Rev. Howard Malcolm, of Boston, visiting Bangkok about 1837, says, "Robert Hunter offered to introduce me to the King, but for various reasons I thought it inexpedient."

Neale in his Narrative of a Residence in Siam say that Hunter lived for some time in a floating house, moored near the Phra Klang's residence, and here it was that the business was started in December 1824.* This floating house, Neale says, was double the size of any of the others, very neatly painted, well furnished, with a nice little verandah in front. While he lived there his head clerk, Mr. Smith, of Paisley, died of malarial fever, and Mr. Hayes, another assistant, was also unable to work for nearly a twelvemonth, owing to the effects of the same complaint. Of the building erected

* Hunter's own Memorial gives the date as Auugust 1824,

for Hunter, Neale writes: "Mr. Hunter's was a very fine prominent house, opposite to which the British ensign proudly floated on feast days, and here every stranger found a home, for a very prince of hospitality was Mr. Hunter and his young partner Mr. Hayes." In those days business was conducted in a more leisurely fashion than at present. Neale, who lived with Hunter, says: "We breakfasted at ten and after that meal were wont to walk backwards and forwards on the splendid balcony Mr. Hunter had erected, as much for the sake of exercise as to enjoy an uninterrupted half hour's chat. Then Mr. Hunter betook himself to his counting houseOccasionally we amused ourselves at Mr. Hunter's by playing Lagrace and we were once or twice guilty of a game at ringtaw. Night, however, brought with it its enlivening candle lights. The darker and more stormy the night, the more brilliantly illuminated the rooms used to be, and if the weather was particularly damp, we made ourselves comfortable with a good dinner and some fine old sherry, and then as a wind up, a drop of hot whisky toddyOne hour before midnight, as indicated by the old clock at Mr. Hunter's house, was the signal for us to disperse for the night, and long before that time arrived, the whole city was hushed in deep repose."

The "factory" was the first building to be erected in accordance with European ideas, in the Third Reign, and was called *Tük Farang*. Afterwards Phra Pin Klao (Second King of the Fourth Reign, then holding the title of Krom Kun Isres, and leader of the Young Siam party of that day), built a house on European lines. This was designed by Mr. Chandler, and is still preserved at Phra Raja Wang Döm, now the Naval College, near the Vijayendr fort at the mouth of Klong Bang Luang. Mr. Chandler built another house for himself in the compound of what is now the Siam Forest Co., Ltd. at Bangkolem. Other American missionaries, arriving about this time, built their houses on piles. Then came Angelina Sap's house, the 2nd Robert Hunter's house, Dr. Samuel Smith's at Bangkolem, and the building of the British Legation in the 4th Reign. After that houses of that description were erected in different parts of the town. The term British factory was really a misnomer. In the sense that the Dutch had a factory at Ayuthia and at Phra Pradaang (in the district below the present Paklat), and the English in Bencoolen, the establish-

ment of Hunter on the west bank, could not be called a factory, inasmuch as it was not under the control of the British Government, as the other factories were, of their respective Governments.

At this time Portugal was the only one of the western nations which had a Consulate established here. It was opened in 1820. But she had little, if any, trade directly with Siam, and no great amount through her East India dependencies. Great Britain was represented in trade by Hunter, and there were several Mussulman merchants whose business brought to Bangkok three or four ships annually from Bombay. The native commerce of the kingdom was carried on entirely by means of junks of Chinese fashion up to 500 tons burthen. Square rigged vessels were first built in the Second Reign by the Phra Klang, as Government vessels. One was named Buddha Ummarth and the other Riddhi. They were used both for trading and sending Missions to China. In the Third Reign not only were more trading vessels built, but also war ships, such as Siam Bipop, Chop Samute, Soot Sagara, Chon Chap Chor, and Phonephen Tale. The building of these was superintended by the late Regent, known in the Third Reign as Khoon Sit (Luang Siddhi Naiwen), and later by Phra Nai Wai (son of the Phra Klang). Some Siamese and Chinese merchants also built square-rigged vessels, but made the head of the vessel like a junk. Bradley in his calendar, describing his recollections of 1835 (Third Reign), says Hunter had then about four vessels annually making voyages for him. The larger junks plied between Bangkok, Singapore, and Batavia; the smaller traded to the ports on the east and west coasts of the Gulf of Siam. Junks in the China trade then, as now, made one voyage each way a year. From February to June there were 60 to 80 of these junks moored in the river in two lines. These junks were practically a great bazaar for a period of two months or more from the time of their arrival. Each junk was freighted with the goods of several parties, and the commodities brought were chiefly teas, silks, Chinese crockery and Japanese wooden and lacquer ware.

Hunter doubtless perceived the possibilities of the Capital as a trading centre, despite the fact that trade was carried on for the King and could always be made a royal monopoly. Moreover, like the traders of a later generation in Bangkok, he realised that the most profitable business was to be transacted

with the Court. The "Hang Huntraa" imported among other things cut glass and silks of good make. The cut glass especially was much fancied by Royalty and competed successfully with the glass imported from, and called, Batavia, which had hitherto held the market. Hunter studied the wants of the people who could afford to buy his goods and did well from the time of his arrival in the country.

Some stories are still current regarding his business dealings. On one occasion he persuaded an official to provide him with the measurements of the floor of the Amarindr Hall, and in due time a costly carpet arrived which Hunter wished to sell to the King. But not only was the price rather high but the official had evidently misled him, for the carpet was much too small; and the King refused to buy. No one else dared to buy it and finally with the King's permission the Phra Klang was allowed to purchase it, and it long adorned the sitting room of that nobleman's residence.

In 1843 Hunter advised the Phra Klang to have a steamer such as was then in use in Europe. The Phra Klang was in favour of making the purchase if the price was not too high. Hunter ordered the vessel which duly arrived and was moored in front of the Phra Klang's house (until recently the residence of the late Chao Phya Bhanuwongse). Capt Bronze brought the vessel out. She was a paddle boat and called "Express." Difficulties arose regarding the price, and the boat was not bought. It is said the King was not impressed and pretended he did not believe an iron boat could float. An experiment was accordingly made with an iron bowl belonging to a priest, and on seeing that it floated Krom Luang Midisawarind, as he afterwards became, then the head of the Chang Sang (department for making arms) examined the steamer and subsequently made a small model for the King to see. His Majesty thereupon declared that there was no need to buy the imported vessel as when such boats were needed they could be made in Bangkok.*

At this time cowrie shells were universally in use as small change, and were brought by vessels coming from Surat and Bombay, together with other goods for the Indian merchants located at Tük Khao and Tük Dëng, and there was a considerable profit attaching to

* This is a Siamese account of what happened. The matter is dealt with at length in Hunter's Memorial.

their re-sale. A percentage of every shipment was presented to the King and the accumulations were kept in large Sawankaloke jars under the Chakra Vatti Hall in the Palace. In the 12th year of the Third Reign the King sent three nobles to visit Singapore and the Malay States, and on their return they reported that a copper coinage was in use in Singapore, and Hunter was requested to submit several kinds, and if one was approved an order would be given. The Phra Klang had two models made. One had Muang Tai in Siamese characters and two stars on the one side, and on the reverse a model of an elephant. The other was a design of lotus flowers. The coins did not commend themselves to the King and, when a small consignment arrived, Hunter found they were not wanted.

Not only did Hunter import, but we also find him conducting a thriving and profitable export business.

The political and commercial treaty which was the practical result of Captain Burney's Mission to Siam in 1825, led to a big increase of trade with foreign countries, so that in 1842 the number of square rigged-vessels that resorted to the river of Bangkok was no less than 55, chiefly under British colours. Nine of them were regular traders to Bangkok, and with the exception of three or four direct from Great Britain, most of them came from Bombay, Singapore or China. These boats mostly took away sugar, the average annual export of which was in 1844 put at 110,000 piculs of first quality.

Hunter enjoyed the King's countenance and favour for many years. But early in the forties evidence was forthcoming that the long period of prosperity which the firm had enjoyed in virtue of its close connection with the Court was drawing to a close. It may be mentioned that James Hayes came out to join Hunter in 1835, and later on one Christopher Harvey was also connected with the firm. Hunter had prospered very much and it is probable that his success led him to be less diplomatic in his handling of his business. He also incurred the displeasure of the King for importing opium for re-sale to Chinese. At that time the importation of opium in any form was prohibited, the Burney treaty stipulating, "merchants are forbidden to bring opium which is positively a contraband article in the territories of Siam." No one better than Hunter knew this, but the high profits to be made

in successfully evading the law probably led him to break it deliberately.

It may not be without interest to describe briefly the method of commercial intercourse between the firm and the Siamese. Goods were sold on credit, and the mode of payment was principally produce for export, the exportation of ticals being seemingly prohibited. When the sugar produce practically became a royal monopoly, dealers in sugar only being able to sell to the King or his representative, it created an awkward situation for the foreign traders, and Hunter was not slow to lay a complaint before the Governor of Prince of Wales Island, and later before the Governor General of India. The details which follow are taken from the correspondence published in the Burney Papers. James Hayes, his partner in business, first petitioned the Governor of Prince of Wales Island. After detailing the transactions of the firm in sugar, which Hayes maintained were being carried on at a loss, he proceeded.—“ In 1841 my firm in Siam had purchased up a very large quantity of teakwood timber. The exportation of Teak having been allowed hitherto, no suspicion had been entertained of a prohibition of this article, more particularly so, as the officers of the Siamese Government were aware of our buying up the said timber. If we had been informed beforehand, or while buying this timber, that its export would not be allowed, it would have prevented a very serious loss; but the Siamese did not do so until it was in the act of being shipped, and as it was principally purchased by barter, the price it commanded in Siam, when resold, left us very heavy losers.” Again in the case of the “ Good Success ” arriving in Siam to purchase a cargo of sugar, “ the Government monopolised the whole trade in this article, and seized two boats which were at that time in front of the British factory.” In due course the Captain of the “ Good Success ” complained of the obstructions placed in the way of trade.

The Penang Government consulted the superior authorities in India, who replied that “ it did not appear to be established that the King had by the proceedings directly violated any article of the existing treaty, and that the interference of the Government of India was not, under the circumstances, necessary.” Finding that Hayes’ statement of the firm’s grievances did not meet the support anticipated, Hunter drew up a memorial to Lord Ellenborough.

He described himself as a British merchant and agent, and his memorial showed that he commenced business as a general merchant resident at Bangkok in August 1824 and "established a house there which has since hitherto been, and now is carried on under the firm of Messrs. Hunter and Hayes. That at the time of his first establishment there your Memorialist being the only British-born merchant resident in Bangkok, had to contend with all the difficulties attendant upon an experimental trade with people with whom at that time European Governments had no fixed commercial relations." The memorial also went on to show that when Hunter left Bangkok in February 1844 there were five permanent commercial establishments there, carried on by British subjects, of which Hunter and Hayes was the only one in which British-born subjects were interested, the other houses consisting of one native merchant from the Madras coast and three branch establishments of native houses at Bombay. The increase of trade, it was stated in the memorial, was principally fostered by the quiescence of the authorities who allowed cargoes to be despatched without let or hindrance, as long as the vessels paid the duties imposed and agreed to in the Burney treaty. Then in 1842, the trouble referred to regarding the "Good Success" arose. Hunter had contracted to buy 2 to 3000 piculs sugar from dealers at 7 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ ticals a picul, but by an order then issued by the authorities, sugar could only be purchased from the Royal stores. After a good deal of trouble the "Good Success" was loaded with sugar from the King's store at Tcs. $9\frac{1}{2}$ per picul. The same regulation regarding sugar was enforced in the following season, 1843, but the crop being large that year the firm were able to buy from the authorities at Tcs. $8\frac{3}{4}$ a picul, as compared with the dealers' selling rate of Tcs. $7\frac{1}{2}$. In the season of 1844 the right of dealing in sugar was farmed to two Chinese, who paid Tcs. 2 a picul for the privilege, and half a tical duty per picul. The average price that season was Tcs. $7-7\frac{1}{2}$. Hunter alleged that the exporters lost by means of this monopoly something like Tcs. 275,000, most of which fell on the trade of British subjects. Hunter's second grievance was that at the request of the King he had procured and brought out to Bangkok "at great expense and risk" the steamer "Express," which the King failed to take delivery of. It was in this steamer Hunter eventually left Siam direct for Calcutta, "to claim of the Supreme Government not only that protection to person and property to which British traders are

entitled by the positive terms of the treaties made with your Lordship's predecessors in June 1826, but also redress for a manifest breach of those treaties which stipulated for a direct commerce between British subjects and the subjects of Siam without intervention of the State or its agents, in consideration of a consolidated measurement duty on their vessels entering the port of Siam."

The Under Secretary to the Government of India in preparing a memorandum on Hunter's memorial pointed out:—"From the treaties in force it does not by any means appear that any interference was intended with the King or that he should be prevented from monopolising any product of his dominions or granting such monopoly to any persons should he be so disposed.....The half tical levied from the sugar dealers for their monopoly by the King which goes under the name of duty as stated by Mr. Hunter can be considered no infraction of the treaty, for it is not levied from them because they sell to the English, but it is the sum paid by them for their monopoly to whomsoever they may choose to sell it. But it must be remembered that Mr. Hunter's differences with the King of Siam appear to have originated not so much on account of the sugar monopoly, which had been going on for two years previously without complaint on the part of Mr. Hunter, but on account of the steamer "Express." Until we are made aware of the whole circumstances of that transaction, whether the King furnished the funds for the purchase of the vessel, it is not possible to say whether the King may not have some just claim against Mr. Hunter."

The Commissioner at Moulmein, asked for his opinion regarding the dispute, reported that "the King and the nobles are traders, so is Mr. Hunter, who had for many years great influence with the Court. This he has now lost, and instead of being in some sort partners, he and the Ministers or King have become rivals in trade."

Hunter claimed to have abandoned property to the amount of three lakhs of rupees when he left Bangkok to go to Calcutta, but he had left a European in charge, one Mr. Harvey. Mr. Hayes (locally known as Samian Jim) was at home at this time. Hunter returned to Penang from Calcutta, where he explained in detail his grievances, and then went back to Siam. It has been suggested that this steamer "Express" was brought out partly in view of a possible conflict

between the Siamese and the British. This possibility was mooted at Bangkok, where it was thought that after the British had settled affairs with China, they might pay Siam a visit. Every preparation was made to effect a show of resistance. The fortifications at the entrance to the river were repaired, chain cables stretched across the river, and a large supply of guns ordered from England through Hunter and Hayes, as also the steamer "Express." The peaceable return of the British troops to India on the conclusion of the peace with China changed the King's view on the subject of the ordnance and steamer commissioned from Hunter and Hayes. Apparently Hunter then lost his temper and informed the Siamese that he would sell the steamer to the Cochin-Chinese, with whom the Siamese were on hostile terms, and this impolitic speech led to a request for his removal. Hunter left as we have seen and took the "Express" to Calcutta and on his return to Singapore handed her over to the Cochin-Chinese for the sum of 53,000 dollars. The guns and mortars ordered were also disposed of, together with a quantity of iron and sundry goods, bringing down Hunter's estimated losses from three lakhs to under one.

The Governor of Prince of Wales Island reported that it did not appear that the King had openly thrown any obstacles in the way of Hunter to retard the recovery of his debts, "although the withdrawal of the King's countenance from a former favourite would doubtless indirectly tend to this end.....When it was remembered that Mr. Hunter was looked upon and treated with the greatest kindness for a long period of years by the King and Court, the exasperated feelings of the King upon being told that negotiations would be entered into with his enemies are not to be wondered at. On the other hand had the Chinese war continued I am satisfied that the steamer and military stores would have been purchased without a murmur, but arriving as they did when their necessity appeared no longer urgent the King wished to obtain them below their estimated value, or considerably under the sum agreed for, and it was while smarting under this ungenerous proceeding that Mr. Hunter expressed himself in the unguarded manner referred to."

Hunter continued to try and get the support of the Governor while he stayed at Singapore, stating that advices he had received from Bangkok showed that Mr. Harvey (then in charge of the firm)

wrote in a strain of the greatest personal alarm. The Governor replied that he had no doubt the novel situation of Mr. Harvey, who he learnt was a very young man, could be anything but agreeable, and he thought it was to be lamented that he was left behind in such circumstances.....He did not think, however, there were sufficient grounds at present (March 1844) to warrant any movement on his part. In a further communication to the Governor of Prince of Wales Island, Hunter stated that after the sale of the "Express" he chartered the schooner "Venus" and sailed again for Bangkok on June 29th, 1844. He arrived in Bangkok in the middle of July and went to see the Phra Klang. Hunter according to his own statement was received very coolly, and the Minister enquired why he had returned to Siam. The Phra Klang added that it was understood that the object of Hunter's journey to Bengal was to complain against the King, but that he was too little a man for the Governor of Bengal to take any notice of. The Phra Klang also added that as he (Hunter) had sold the "Express" to the Cochin-Chinese he had better go to Cochin China himself and get them another steamer. When Hunter applied for a pass to permit the schooner to leave Bangkok to return to Singapore, he was informed that it would not be granted unless he left with the ship, and he was obliged to consent to this, and ten days after his arrival in Siam, he returned to Singapore by the "Venus," having obtained permission to return with a large vessel to remove his property.

On arriving at Singapore Hunter chartered the "Gunga" and immediately returned to Siam. When the "Gunga" was half laden, it was His Majesty's intention to visit the temples and the "Gunga" was told she must go outside. This was done, and the ship continued loading by small junks. Hunter was also informed that he must go down the river while the King was afloat, and he remained away from Bangkok for three days. Later Hunter states in a further memorial the Phra Klang came to his house late one evening and stated Hunter must go down the river and remain outside the bar. Hunter accordingly, after some demur, left in a small boat in the middle of the night with young Mr. Christopher Harvey and reached the "Gunga" safely. Remaining on board for several days, Hunter again essayed to come to Bangkok, but was met at the river mouth and told he could not return until the King gave permission. Hunter does not categorically state

whether he did come to Bangkok again, but it is probable he did. He finally left the country on 29th December 1844, leaving Christopher Harvey for a short time to try and collect some of his debts. In his memorial he put his outstandings at 40,000 Spanish dollars besides which he claimed to have suffered heavy losses from a large quantity of goods having been returned to him by parties to whom he had sold them.

To a later memorial, dated 6th February, 1845, the Indian Government replied (16th Aug., 1845), "as the circumstances mentioned in Mr. Hunter's memorial do not differ materially from those on which the decision of the Government on the former occasion was based, it was considered unnecessary without further instructions from the Court of Directors of the East India Company to take any notice of the representation submitted by that individual, or to reopen the question of infraction in connection therewith, notwithstanding the adverse opinion recorded by the Law Commission in their report." The opinion of the Law Commission, it may be added, has not yet been found. A letter from the Court of Directors addressed from London, 2nd January 1846, to the Governor and Council of Bengal stated "with respect to the personal injuries complained of by Mr. Hunter, they appear to have been in some measure provoked by his own imprudence; and there would probably have been difficulty in establishing the facts in such a manner as to entitle your Government to make a public demand of redress on his behalf. We approve, therefore, of your non-interference. The general question remains whether the King's assumption of a monopoly of sugar is an infringement of the treaty. You referred the question to the Law Commission, who are of opinion that it is so. Major Broadfoot is of a contrary opinion, and you have determined not to interfere. Monopolies being a frequent and even habitual resource of the Siamese Government for purposes of revenue, we cannot but think that, if the Government had intended to bind itself never to re-establish them, an express opinion to that effect would have been inserted in the treaty. Without distinct proof in the correspondence at the time that such was the intention of the negotiations, we do not think our right of remonstrance sufficiently clear to induce us to exert it."

As far as can be ascertained nothing further was done by Hunter to prosecute his claims, and probably the dispute was then drop-

ped, after being under discussion for about three years. There is no doubt that, despite his losses, Hunter had done very well in his twenty years trading with the Siamese, and he went home. As far as we know, Hunter stood well with the British authorities both at Prince of Wales Island and in India up to the time of his falling out with the Siamese. Capt. Burney was glad to avail himself of his services during his Mission in 1826, and indeed Hunter was present, at Captain Burney's personal request, when the Mission were received in audience by His Majesty. He was also useful to the Indian Government on the occasion of Dr. Richardson's overland journey from Moulmein to Bangkok in 1839, and on the occasion of the decision of the King of Siam to restore the expelled Rajah of Kedah to his territory. "No British authority took part in the negotiation," a minute of the Court of Directors held in London 30th December 1842 states, "but it is considered to have been much aided by the good offices of Mr. Hunter," to whom a present of 5000 dollars* was made in conformity with expectations previously held out. For these services Hunter received the thanks of the successive Governors General at these periods. Hunter had the Siamese title of Luang Avudh Viset, conferred principally in recognition of his gift of muskets.

Hunter married in 1825, and his bride was Tan Puying Sap, whose home was close by the "Hang Huntraa" at Kadi Chin. This lady has quite an interesting ancestry, which it is believed extends back to Constance Phaulcon of Louvo. I have put together the information as far as it goes in an attempt to prove the relationship of Tan Puying Sap with Chao Phya Vichayen of Louvo. Phaulcon was married to a Japanese lady, and they had one son. This son afterwards served Siam, and was sent as Envoy to Pondicherry. He married a lady of Portuguese descent and died in 1754. There were many granddaughters of Constance Phaulcon but only one grandson, named John. He was taken into captivity at the fall of Ayuthia, but escaped in a few years and returned to Siam, settling in Bangkok at Sta. Cruz. One of the grand-daughters was taken to Mergui as a prisoner of war, and while there met Jean Chi, a Portuguese Captain in the Burmese Army, and subsequently married him at Mergui in 1768. He was a Catholic and came from Macao. Of this marriage

* Another official document of the period gives the sum as 5,000 Rupees.



From Bishop Pallegoix's Description of Siam.
Supposed to be portrait of Angelina Sap.



there was a daughter, Philippa, who married one Ta Vian, and was alive in 1861, when a census of the people at Sancta Cruz was taken. Angelina Sap was the daughter of this marriage, and she was born in 1805, and married in 1825 to Robert Hunter. She was thus a great grand-daughter of Phaulcon. The lady is spoken of as being a beauty, extremely fair, with eyes like Queen Victoria. She was accomplished, and it is not unlikely that part of her early life was spent in the palace of Wang Lang. In Bishop Pallegoix's book is a woodcut of a Siamese lady, which is said to be the portrait of Angelina Sap, and which Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse has recognised. Her portrait was used as being the fairest type the Bishop could get. Before her marriage she was always spoken of as Tan Puying Sap. She dressed grandly and was considered to be the most fashionable person of her day. On great occasions her silk panung was converted into a skirt, and she wore big silk pahoms (black or pale yellow). In old age she was stout, with very little hair.

Hunter was a sportsman, and fond of sailing. He had a cutter called "Friends" of about thirty tons burthen, in which excursions to the islands at the head of the Gulf were undertaken.

Of the marriage one son was born, in 1827, and was named after his father. He was sent home to be educated, and when he returned the father built himself a building on the klong at Sancta Cruz to the north of the "factory." It was in front of Angelina Sap's old home. Hunter the second married in 1849 Rosa Ribeiro de Alvergarias Noi, the Catholic daughter of Phya Viset Songkram. Of this gentleman Crawford wrote in 1822 :—"I had an interview this afternoon with Pascal Ribeiro de Alvergarias, descendant of a Portuguese Christian of Kamboja. His acquirements were remarkable, for he not only wrote the Siamese, Kambojan, and Portuguese languages with facility, but also spoke and wrote Latin with considerable propriety.....He was married to the lineal descendent of an Englishman named Charles Lister, a merchant who settled in Kamboja in 1701." He was descended from the Cambodians who settled in Samsen, but at the time of his daughter's wedding was said to be living at Ban Kamen, on the site now occupied by the palace of the Prince of Kambaeng Bejra. Robert the second was liked by the Siamese and in the course of time received the Siamese title of Luang Sura Sakorn, and carried on the duties which John

Bush was later on to develop, and which are to-day under the control of the Harbour Department. Hunter the second had a great deal to do with Sir John Bowring when that Minister arrived in Siam. On the arrival of the "Rattler" in the river Hunter went on board, and Sir John says:—"As far as I can see the arrangements for my entertainment have been confided to the care of Mr. Hunter." The "Rattler" after some discussion came up river and moored opposite the British factory. "I am located," Sir John wrote, "in the building called the British factory, but the building has been reconstructed and put in good order for my reception. I occupy two apartments above—a sitting room, large and airy, and a bedroom which has been newly papered, in which I sleep in a bed which is ornamented with drapery of scarlet and gold and from which garlands of flowers are suspended. Jars of fresh water are placed on my table with bouquets of roses and a Siamese servant speaking English has me in special charge." At one of the plays given by the King in honour of Sir John at which Hunter was also present, His Majesty called out to Mr. Hunter suggesting that he should bring Mrs. Hunter to the palace to dance, adding "that he knew this lady could dance as well as any of the performers then playing." It is to be assumed that the King spoke from knowledge as we know that the lady was brought up in the Palace.

Hunter the second was registered as a British subject at the Consulate, June 20th 1856, eight days after its establishment. By his official position the second Robert was brought into contact with the foreign sailing vessels visiting the port, and had a reputation for courtesy coupled with diplomacy in the carrying out of his duties. He also acted as Secretary to the Kalahome, and is so described in the register of deaths at the British Consulate. His religion was given as Presbyterian. He died very suddenly at Sancta Cruz, where he lived in his own house near his mother, at the age of 38 years, on the 19th April 1865. It may be recalled in passing that the death register of the British Consulate is singular in that the first entry is that of the British Consul himself. The second Robert had two sons, Robert the third and John Hunter. Robert was born in 1851/52 and John in 1854. Nori his third child was by a lesser wife. Robert the third and John were sent to be educated in Singapore at the establishment of the Reverend Mr. Hodgson and later were sent to Scotland. Mrs.

Leonowens in one of her books has the following reference to Mrs. Rosa Hunter:—"She had two sons, who had been taken away from her in their infancy by their Protestant father—lest they should be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith—and shipped off secretly to Scotland, in order that they might be educated under the influences of the Free Church of Scotland, in which he had himself been brought up. This occasioned a breach between husband and wife which led to their ultimate separation, and Rosa returned to the home of her childhood where I visited her at short intervals to write her letters in English to her absent boys," whom she regarded as lost "by the foolish prejudices of their father." Both of the grandchildren appear to have been in Government service at one time, one being described as Hunter Foreign Office and the other as Hunter Army. Robert the third inherited his grand-father's capability for business, and went to Cambodia and traded with the support of King Norodom. He fell ill, however, and returned to this country. He died in 1889. John remained in the service of Government and enjoyed a considerable reputation as a translator. He was also unfortunately a gambler, and is said in his desire to have money to have mortgaged his father's and his grandmother's property. The old lady died in her eightieth year on April 30th 1884. John died in 1891. Neither of the male grandchildren of Hunter married, but Nori did. She is described as being very fair. Her husband was a son of one Benjamin Bing, and of this marriage there was one son, and many daughters of whom some descendants survive. The son was in the army, and is reported to have died at Ubon in February this year. Benjamin Bing was a brother of Luang Akanee (Nai Chit), the man who established the first photo studio in the country and also managed the old gas works at Sao Ching Cha, from which gas was supplied for the illuminations at King Chulalongkorn's Coronation. There are several descendants of Hunter through Nori or Norah, but there is nothing to be gained by tracing the history of the family further.

The successor to Hunter's firm in the factory was a Portuguese merchant called Joseph but, losing money over the venture, he gave up after a short tenancy. In King Mongkut's reign the buildings were repaired and kept as a residence for distinguished visitors. They were repaired prior to the visit of Sir John Bowring, and again for the Austrian Mission, which arrived in 1869. The Irrigation Department's

new home was originally two properties. That on the klong belonged to the Somdej Chao Phya Ong Yai, who rented it to Dr. Bradley. The doctor lived there until King Mongkut gave him the land at the entrance to Klong Bang Luang where his daughter still lives. His late Majesty presented both the British factory and Bradley's old house to Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse. The new owner pulled down the old warehouse on the north side and replaced it with a two storey brick building. The south godown is still standing, but Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse removed two rooms at the river end in order to extend the original home of Hunter. In the latter's time these warehouses had very wide verandahs, which were made smaller during the alterations preparatory to the arrival of the Austrian Mission. The factory itself Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse did not alter, except that the doors and windows were remade, and the back verandah pulled down. For many years the property was known as Rajadut House. Thus although the buildings devoted to the Irrigation Department are not yet a century old, they have acquired an historical interest.

In conclusion I should like to add that in addition to the authors quoted, I have received much kind assistance from Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse, from the President of the Siam Society, and the Rev. Father Colombet, and they have also lent the major portion of the exhibits here this evening.



Genealogical table to show Robert Hunter's wife's ancestry.

CONSTANCE PHAULCON

MARRIED TO A

JAPANESE CATHOLIC.

Issue ; ONE SON, A CAPTAIN IN THE NAVY, WHO WAS SENT AS ENVOY TO PONDICHERRY, AND DIED IN 1754. HE MARRIED A LADY OF PORTUGUESE DESCENT.

Issue ONE SON AND MANY DAUGHTERS

John, a grandson, taken into captivity at fall of Ayuthia, 1767. He escaped in 1769 and came back to Siam.
He settled at Sta. Cruz.

One grand-daughter was married in captivity at Mergui to Jean Chi, a Portuguese Captain in Burmese Army.

Issue : A Daughter named Philippa, married to one of Portuguese Descent, called Ta Vian. Was alive in 1861 when a census of people at Sta. Cruz was taken.

Issue: Angelina Sap, Born in 1805, Married in 1825
To

Robert Hunter

Issue : SON, ROBERT HUNTER M. ROSA RIBEIRO [SEPT. 1849]

Issue

ROBERT
Born 1851
Died 1889

JOHN
Born 1853
Died 1891