

A JOURNEY ALONG A PART OF THE SIAM-BURMA FRONTIER.

By Lieut-Colonel J. P. ANDERSEN.

The Council of the Siam Society has done me the honour of asking me to write a paper on a journey along the Siam-Burma Frontier which I made last year. I would mention that, every year in the cold season, I go on a tour of inspection in the northern and western part of the circle of Nakon Sawan, and as last cold weather the tour was somewhat extended, and I passed through places and country far off the beaten track, perhaps an account of the journey may be of some interest to the Members of the Society.

On the 21st November 1922 I left Ayudhya and went by train to Paknampoh, from which place I travelled by "Lao-boat" up the river Me Ping to Kampengpet and Raheng. After continuing up the river as far as Ban Dak, I then returned to Raheng. I will not dwell upon this part of the journey as so many people have travelled over it, and the country is well-known.

On December the 18th I started from Raheng on the overland journey, using carriers as transport. For the first couple of miles the road led over paddy-fields, where people were busy with the harvest, then through jungle, of the worst kind that I know, consisting of stunted, thorny trees, at that season without a leaf. The ground was extremely hard and stony, and the whole place was desolate, dreary and blazing hot. It was a great relief to come to the small river Me Taw, and to be comparatively cooled by fording the five crossings of this river. The first night was spent in a permanent camp with a rest-house, belonging to the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, and situated about a mile off the road, at the 13th kilometer post from Raheng.

The next day the character of the country changed. At first the road ran through undulating country, with fairly open forest; later it followed a small stream between two ranges of low hills, and once or twice the stream ran through narrow gorges, where the path

climbed the hill-side round the gorge and then ran down to the stream again. At the highest of these gorges the ascent was steep and particularly difficult, at one place where the path ran over an outcrop of bare rock, and where the foot-hold must be difficult in the rains. A few sticks of dynamite, judiciously used at this place, would make a great difference.

That day I camped some distance up the small stream, at a place where the path began in real earnest to wend its way up the side of the first of the two mountain-ranges, running north and south midway between Raheng and Mesot. The day's march was a short one, but there was no water to be had again until we came down in to the valley on the other side of the range.

Not only had the character of the country changed, but the temperature had changed too, the air beginning to grow quite keen and cold; it was not, however, until I came to Me Sot that the weather became actually cold. But, best of all, there were no more mosquitoes; so the mosquito-net was packed away, and was not in request again until 2½ months later, when I arrived back in Kampengpet.

The next morning an early start was made so as to get to the top of the range before the sun became too strong. The ascent was rather steep in parts, but not so very bad while the air was cool and crisp and it was quite pleasant to walk. The path ran the whole way through ever-green jungle, now and then, when rounding a spur of the range, giving a glimpse of the surrounding country, hills and jungle everywhere. Pretty enough scenery, but nowhere was there an extensive view to be had.

Some time after midday I descended into the valley again and found, at the very foot of the hill, a small village, consisting of half-a-dozen houses whose owners make a living by selling rice, fruit and a few vegetables to travellers. There was also a telephone office, from which one could communicate with Raheng and Mesot.

Outside the village, in a grove of shady trees close to a small stream, a pious Buddhist had built a good and substantial rest-house. This rest-house had been entirely appropriated by the bullock-



Fullock camping ground on the road between Mesot and Raheng.



Carriers having a rest.



caravans, which pass along this road almost daily, and thus rendered unfit for the use of other travellers. The house was indescribably filthy, and the open place round it one huge dungheap. Bullock-caravans are the curse of the mountain-road: they spoil so many good camping-places.

About two miles from this village, the name of which is **Ban Pulut**, was a stream of clear water running through wide, open forest, and there I found a good camping-place. It had been a long day's march, and the carriers did not come in to camp until nearly 6 o'clock in the evening.

The next day's march was across the valley over flat country, mostly forest but also partly paddy-fields, and through three small villages. Early in the afternoon I came to **Ban Me-La-Mau**, which is a good-sized village situated on both sides of a fairly broad and shallow stream of the same name. From there the road began to climb the second the range, and so our camp was pitched just outside the village.

The second range is about the same height as the first, somewhere about 3,500 feet, but the ascent was longer and not so steep. On the summit of the range there was a line of high lime-stone cliffs, some of them rising up almost perpendicularly above the thick ever-green forest, with which the whole of the range is clothed. The road crossed the summit of the range at the foot of one of these cliffs, where there was a "San chao," to which everybody makes offerings of flowers or green leaves, and burns joss-sticks. Half-way down the range I camped, and next morning about 10 o'clock I arrived in **Mesot**. This was on December the 23rd., and it had taken me $5\frac{1}{2}$ days to travel the 79 kilometers from **Raheng**. It should only have taken 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ days, but it was harvest time, and everybody was at work in the fields; it was difficult therefore to get carriers, and the company I had was a poor lot, to say the least.

Mesot is quite an important place and I suppose it would be in order to call it a town. It lies 6 kilometers from the river **Me Moi**

(in Burmese called the Thaungyin), which forms the boundary between Siam and Burma. It is rapidly increasing in size, and many Lao* families are settling there every year and breaking land for new paddy-fields. The population is mostly Lao and Shan in about equal proportions; but there are also many Burmese, some Chinese, and a few Indians.

There is still a lively traffic with Burma, as it is possible to get from Me Sot to Rangoon in 3 days and nights. Formerly all the merchandise used in Me Sot and the surrounding country came from Burma, but since Burma introduced the 30% "ad valorem" duty a good deal now comes up from Bangkok, and most of it would come that way if the transport was not so difficult and did not take such a long time. The road between Raheng and Mesot is only a jungle-track and nothing is ever done to improve it, or even to keep it in a passable condition. If a tree falls across the path, people simply walk round it and in time a new path is made. There are no bridges over the streams, and in the rainy season it must often be very difficult, and at times even impossible, for pack-animals to cross the swollen streams.

Ever since I had reached the hilly part of the country the temperature had been pleasantly cool; but on Christmas eve it became very cold, and this cold weather lasted for fully two months, making jungle-travel very pleasant. I do not know what the average temperature was during these two months, but every afternoon after 4 o'clock flannel clothes became a necessity; and at night, with the inner tent almost closed, three blankets were only just enough to keep one warm in bed.

From Me Sot I went north to a gendarmerie station on the frontier called Medan, to which the easiest way to go was by the river Me Moi. As there were no boats to be hired on this river, I had two bamboo rafts built for the purpose. These rafts are made in the following way. Twenty-five straight and well-grown bam-

* Northern Thai.



Carriers crossing a creek on the road between Mesot and Raheng.



Limestone cliff along the pass over second range on the road from Raheng to Mesot.

boos of large size are lashed together side by side very firmly; on the middle of the raft a floor of split bamboo is made, rising about a foot above the raft itself, and over this floor is built an attap roof with two side-walls. On the rafts which I had made, the roof was just high enough for me to be able to stand upright under the ridge pole, and with a double 'durry' on the floor, and camp-table and chair set up, the cabin was complete. Both in front and at the stern was fixed a long steering oar made of strong bamboo with a piece of packing-case board firmly fixed on to one end; a primitive but effective means of steering. Long bamboo poles were used for poling and fending the rafts off rocks and other obstructions. The crew consisted of two men, one in front and one in the stern. These rafts are the only means of communication used on the Me Moi, and they can of course only be used *with* the current.

On Friday morning, the 5th January, I left Me Sot for the Me Moi, where the rafts were moored. About midday we cast off and commenced our journey down the river. I was on the first raft with a gendarme and my "boy"; on the second raft was another gendarme, the cook with his pots and pans, and an extra rafts-man. We did not go far that day but stopped at a small village, where the rafts-men came and asked for two Ticals to buy rice, fruit and two chickens, to be offered up as a sacrifice to the river spirits in order to propitiate them, so that no harm should befall us on our journey.

The Me Moi is a tributary of the Salween, and runs south-east and north-west, forming for nearly 150 miles the boundary between Siam and Burma. In the dry season it is shallow and does not run very fast, but in the rains there is a big volume of water and a strong current.

The next four days we floated slowly along between jungled-clad banks, with here and there a small clearing in which was planted either tobacco or sugar cane, and containing two or three houses. These small settlements were almost all of them on the Siamese bank of the river. In the distance could be seen, in Siam the range of hills which forms the water-shed between the Me Ping and the Salween, and in Burma the Donah range. We came through a few

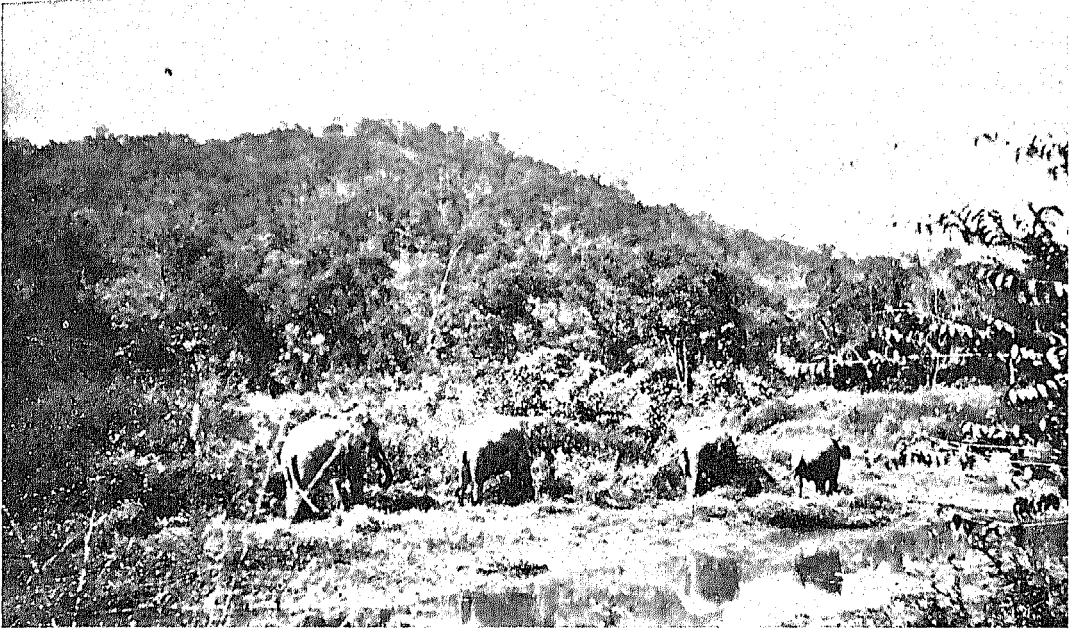
rapids, but none of them formidable and the rafts-men navigated them with ease. Every evening shortly before sunset we moored our rafts to the nearest convenient sandbank, and started again the next morning as soon as the heavy mist, which every morning lay like a thick blanket over the water, had thinned sufficiently to enable the rafts-men to see a couple of hundred feet ahead, generally not before 7 or 8 o'clock.

About midday on the fifth day we came to a curious place. A narrow lime-stone hill, about six or seven hundred feet high, rose from some smaller hills in Siam and continued on to Burná, where it again was flattened out into smaller hills. Right through this hill was a narrow gorge, through which the river flowed. It looked as if some giant, in a fit of temper, had cleft the hill with a stroke of an axe. At the surface of the river the cleft was only about seventy or eighty feet across, and I doubt if it was as much as 300 feet across at the top.

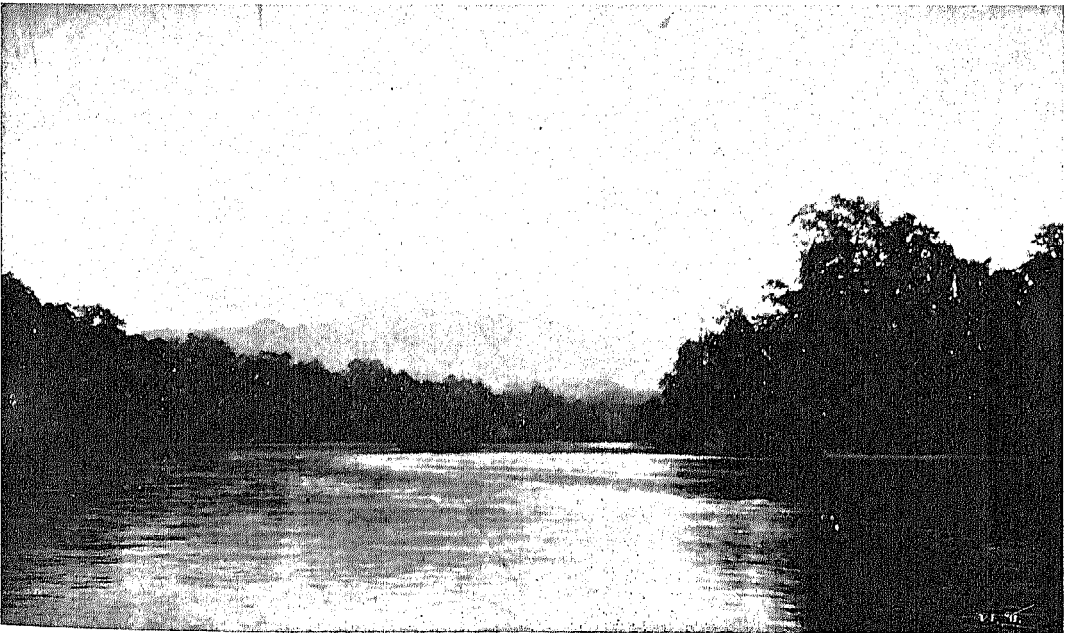
At the entrance to the gorge there was a rather nasty rapid, but inside it the water was deep and placid, with hardly a ripple. The high water in the rains had worn the softer parts of the rock away and formed deep caverns on both sides of the gorge; the harder rock stuck out in a curious formation. The hill is called Doi Maw Kara.

Shortly after we had passed through the gorge, we came to a rapid which was a really formidable place to go through. It ran in a very sharp curve, while the water raced with terrific speed over and against the boulders, and broke into white foam.

The rafts-men were at the steering-oars, while I, with the gendarme and the "boy", stood ready with our poles. The speed increased rapidly, and with the wind rushing past us and the roar of the water deafening our ears, the raft shot into the turmoil of the water, the whole of its length submerged. Frantic pulling on the oars, a few swift pushes with the poles, and we were through the rapid and floating serenely on. The second raft, too, came safely through,



Elephants let loose to feed close to camp.



Burma — Me Moi River — Siam.

A few hundred feet further on was another rapid, but a small insignificant one. The only thing necessary was to steer the raft straight between two big boulders over which the water broke, and there was plenty of room for this; but we met with disaster all the same.

My raft passed through without the slightest difficulty, and I was standing on it, looking back towards the second raft, but never for a moment thinking that there would be any trouble. Suddenly I saw the front part of the raft rise up in the air—a grinding sound was heard, the raft heeled over to one side and remained stationary, hung up on one of the boulders. The four men on my raft immediately jumped into the water, swam to the bank and ran back to the place where the other raft lay, leaving me on my raft in midstream. I managed to steer the raft in to the bank, tied it up, and walked back to have a look at the damage.

I found the raft firmly stuck on the boulder, its nose up in the air and water washing over the stern. All the men were in the river, and with the water boiling round their shoulders, they lifted and pushed with all their might, trying to get the raft off the rock. They worked hard for a long time, but the raft would not budge; at last, as it was beginning to get dark, there was nothing for it but to cut away that part of the raft which rested on the rock, and float off the remainder into the bank.

The next day the raft was repaired and the journey continued. The scenery was the same as before; only the mountains, seen in the far distance both in Siam and Burma, were higher. There were no more rapids and early in the morning of the 13th January we arrived in Medan.

Every morning and evening during this river journey, I heard the cries of pea-fowl and the crowing of jungle cock, and several times went after the sound, but I never saw any birds, and so had no chance of a shot. On almost every sandbank there were tracks of deer and wild pig, and one day I met a party of hunters, who the day before had shot a bison, a young bull with immature horns.

I left Medan on the 15th on the return journey to Me Sot overland, again using carriers as transport. The first day's march mostly followed the Me Moi, and except for one substantial Karen village which we passed through, the road ran the whole way through dense forest, where one saw much teak but few full-grown trees. The country around was of an undulating nature.

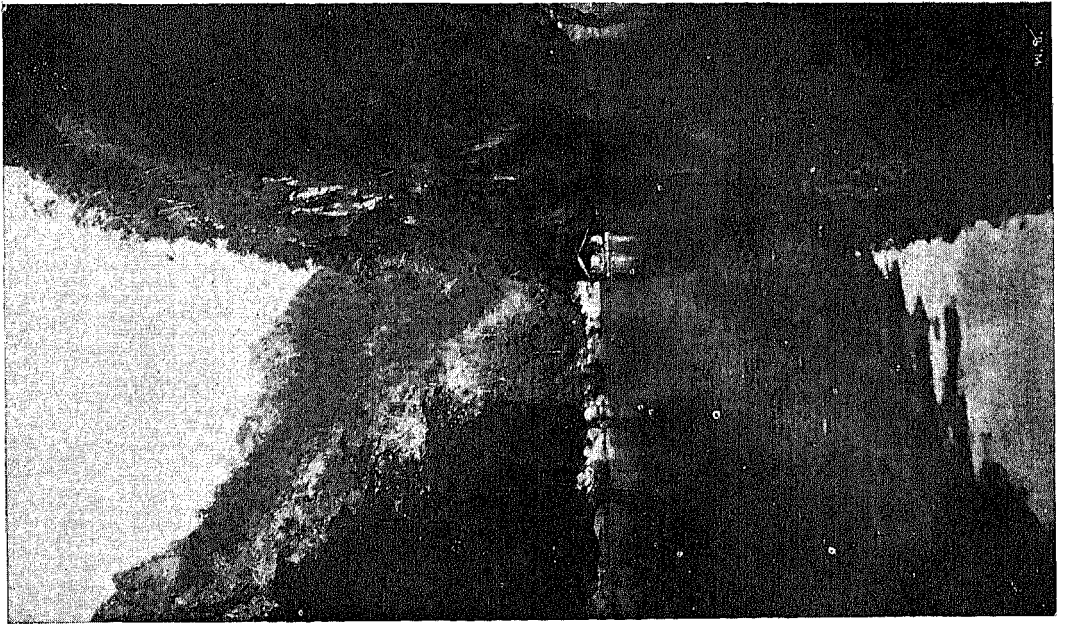
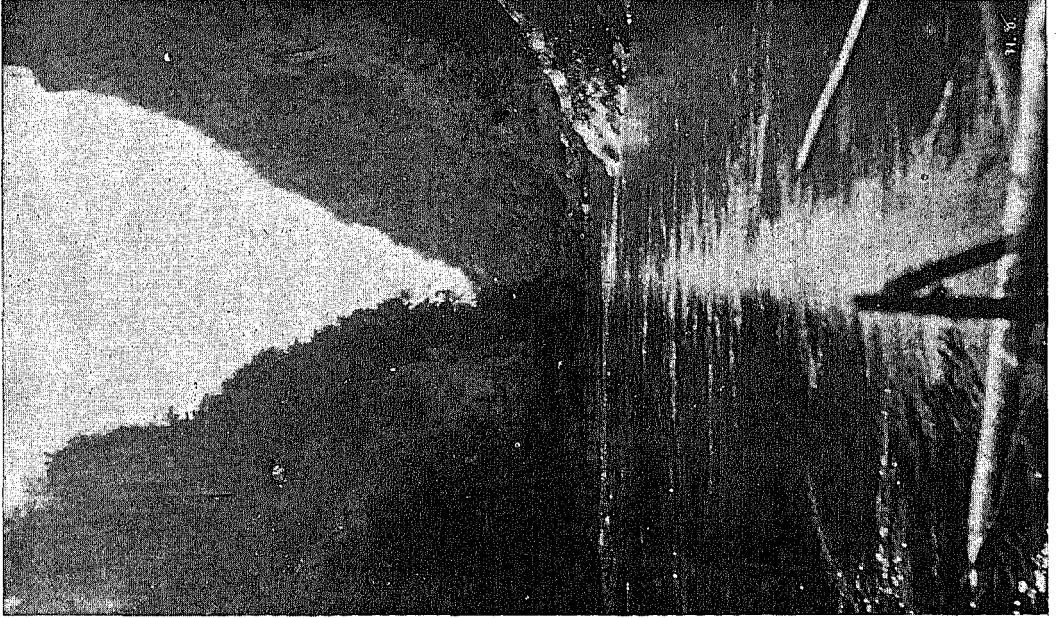
I camped by a creek called Me Kamo Noi, where the water had a peculiar taste, which I could not account for. My servants suggested that the taste was somewhat like that of fresh coconut milk, and that was actually what it most resembled. Those of the carriers, who knew this creek well, were aware of this peculiarity but could not account for it either.

The road was now some distance from the river, and continued so, the whole way to Me Sot. On the second and third days the country was slightly hilly, and the forest more open; there were only a few teak-trees, while on the higher hills grew scattered pines. I passed through several Karen villages, where one saw a good many small paddy-fields and much hill cultivation, and crossed many streams full of excellent water. One day in the sandy bottom of a creek, I saw the tracks of a smallish tiger, but otherwise no signs of game of any description.

On the fourth day the country, at first was slightly hilly, but soon became flatter. About midday we came to large paddy fields, and about an hour later, after passing one or two small villages, to Melamat.

Melamat is an important village with over 300 houses, extensive paddy fields, a gendarmerie station, and a branch District Office. It lies about five kilometers from Me Moi and through it runs an old trade-route from Burma to Nakon Lampang. This route is, however, not used much now except for the export of cattle from Siam to Burma, about 1200 to 1500 head travelling each year over this road.

At Melamat I paid off the carriers and engaged bullock-carts for the 40 kilometer journey to Me Sot. Usually this journey takes two days, and the carts camp at a place called Me Goet-Sam-Tao, but



some time before a tiger had established his head-quarters a couple of miles from this camping-ground at a small stream called Huey Boong, and had killed several bullocks near the camp. Becoming very bold, he sometimes strode down the road in broad day-light and had one day pulled down and killed a bullock in front of its cart. His mate had been shot by villagers just outside Melamat about a week before I arrived there. The latter had, a short time before, killed one man and wounded another, and on her left shoulder was found a terrible cut which the wounded man had given her with his 'dah.'

On account of the tiger at the Huey Boong the cartmen refused to camp at the usual place, and we therefore had to divide the journey into three marches, two short and one normal. The first day we camped at a prosperous looking village called Me Chalau, lying along a stream of the same name, and surrounded by extensive paddy fields. The people in this village, as well as in Melamat and the other neighbouring villages, were all Lao*.

The next day, after a couple of hours march, I saw the fresh tracks of a large tiger, made probably less than two hours before. I carried a "Paradox", which I loaded with ball-cartridge in both barrels, and thus fully prepared I proceeded along the road, keeping a sharp look-out through the jungle. For a little more than a mile the tiger had followed the road and then turned off into the jungle. A couple of hundred yards further on I came to the crossing of the Huey Boong, where I left the road, on the same side as the tiger had done, and for some distance searched the creek for tracks, but found none. The tiger had evidently not crossed the creek, so I returned to the crossing and set down to wait for the carts. It was some time before they arrived, but I did not hear or see the least sign of any tiger.

I stopped for the midday rest at the camping place of Me Goet-Sam-Tao, and later on in the afternoon camped in some paddy fields close to a fair-sized village. The next morning about 10 o'clock I arrived in Me Sot.

* Northern Thai.

The road from Melamat to Me Sot is only a primitive cart-track, running through flat country the whole way. The jungle consisted mostly of open forest with many huge magnificent trees, including a considerable amount of young teak.

I left Me Sot again on Saturday the 27th January, this time going south and travelling with elephants. The first day's march was mostly over paddy fields, and I passed through three big Lao villages. The next day's march lay entirely through jungle, mostly evergreen and containing many fine trees. We crossed many small streams, all of cold, crystal-clear water, tributaries of the Me Moi. The country was slightly undulating. On the third day the road turned more to the west, and in the middle of the forenoon I came to the Gendarmerie station at Chong-kaeb. The village of Chong-kaeb was only a small one, lying in the middle of paddy fields which on the north, east and south were surrounded by jungle. Towards the west the fields stretched down to the Me Moi, the opposite bank of which, on the Burma side, was formed of low perpendicular lime-stone cliffs.

From Chong-kaeb the road followed the river-bank for a considerable distance and then turned more east-wards, gradually getting into higher country, where the forest became very open with hardly any under-growth other than sparse grass.

In the afternoon of the fourth day I camped at a place called Poa-pa, where there was a huge spring, covering an area of 3 or 4 acres, and filled with a dense jungle of all kinds of aquatic plants. Masses of water ran in a broad, shallow bed of lime-stone for a couple of hundred yards; then the limestone suddenly ceased, as if cut off with a knife, and there was a drop of 2 or 3 feet, at which point the path crossed the water, the crossing being about 80 feet wide. Below the crossing a water-meadow had formed itself, about 200 feet wide and covered with a carpet of long grass, the water running through this meadow in a net-work of small channels. Some distance further on the meadow came to an end, but the water continued as a fair-sized stream and eventually found its way into the Me Moi.

On the fifth day the country became a little more hilly; the forest continued open, but there was plenty of young teak and some pine-trees. I passed through several small patches of paddy-fields, owned by Karens, but I did not see the villages to which they belonged, as they were situated higher up in the hills away from the road.

That day I camped at a creek called Huey Walaeh, which forms part of the boundary between Siam and Burma. It is one of the sources of the Me Moi, while another is the Huey Me Kala which comes from a mountain called Doi Pawui and runs its whole course in Burma. Doi Pawui is nearly 6,000 feet high and is one of the highest mountains along the frontier.

The road crossed the Huey Walaeh and continued through Burmese territory; the country was of the same formation, slightly hilly, with fairly open forest, and here and there stretches of ever-green jungle. About midday I came to a creek called Huey Nam Ron, containing a hot spring in its bed, and for several hundred yards down stream the water was hot — hence the name of the creek. The hot spring itself was not very extensive, but steam came out of the dry bed of the creek all round it for many yards. At this point the nature of the jungle suddenly changed, becoming pure bamboo, and so it continued for the rest of that day's march. Late in the afternoon I camped at a small creek called the Huey Pah Pai (the bamboo-jungle creek).

The next morning about 10 o'clock I came to a very small stream called Huey Pa-yo-kee, which also forms part of the boundary. I crossed it with one stride and was back again in Siam. The jungle had again become an extensive forest, with only here and there a clump of bamboo, but later in the afternoon I came to paddy-fields and shortly afterwards to a Karen-village, the first I had seen since leaving Chong-kaeb. I camped in a field beyond the village, where a small stream with pure, unpolluted water came down from the hills and joined a wider stream which ran past the village. Nong Luang was the name of this village.

The next day, some time before noon, I came to the river Me Klong and crossed it some 20 or 30 miles below its source. At the crossing there was a Karen-village called Ban Me Klong, consisting of about 20 houses. After having crossed the river twice more, and passed through a long stretch of dry and hot jungle, I arrived in Umpang.

Umpang is only a small village, but it is the headquarters of a District of considerable size, one that contains a good many more square miles than inhabitants. The whole of the District is a mass of jungle clad mountains, which towards the east, where they form the watershed between the Me Klong and the Meping-Menam, rise to a considerable height. The jungle is mostly very thick evergreen forest. The whole of the district is drained by the river Meklong and its four tributaries; the Huey Umpang and the Huey Melamung on the left bank, the Huey Kalata and the Huey Me Chan on the right bank. The two last-named come from Doi Pawui, the high mountain on the frontier, where the Me Moi also has one of its sources. All these streams are typical mountain streams, running in picturesque beds of limestone rocks, and often forming small waterfalls. They carry a fair volume of water the whole year round, and the water is cold and as clear as crystal.

From the village Umpang there was fine view, across a valley with paddy-fields, to a very peculiar mountain. It was a longish mountain rising about 2,500 feet above the valley, and seen from Umpang it looked like the head and neck of a young rhinoceros, whose horns were just beginning to grow. It was jungle-clad two thirds of the way up, but the upper slopes and the summit were completely bare of vegetation of any kind, a fact which has given it the name of "Doi Hoa Mott," which is Lao for "Kao Hoa Lahn" (the bald-headed mountain).

The population in Umpang and one or two of the neighbouring villages is mostly Lao, with a few Siamese and a Burman or two; but the folk in the rest of the district are Karens, who occupy villages scattered about in the mountains.

The district is rich in game, which is only natural considering the exceptionally good conditions it offers, namely, plenty of food and water everywhere and at all seasons, splendid cover, and an exceedingly small population, thinly scattered over a large area. All the time I travelled through the district I saw every day tracks of some kind of big game; at several places those of tiger or of leopard, often of bison, and almost every day I came across tracks of sambhur, barking deer and pig; one day I even saw the tracks of a rhinoceros. I did not see any of the actual animals, but that was because I did not attempt to do so. For a man who is keen on big game, and who can spare the time, Umpang is an ideal place. Of feathered game there was plenty everywhere, and on most days I shot some, either a jungle fowl or a pheasant, of which there were several kinds; one day I brought down a peacock-pheasant, and occasionally I got a few green pigeons, which are, I think, one of the very best table birds. I fired many shots after the big imperial pigeons but only bagged a few, as they fly very high and are not easy to bring down.

At Umpang I changed elephants and on February the 8th I left for the gendarmerie station at Me Chan, which lies only a couple of miles from the frontier. First I went back the road I had come, as far as Ban Meklong, then west-wards, through open forest most of the time, but later on through mixed bamboo-jungle, and at last to some paddy-fields near a Karen village, where I camped.

The next morning I came, almost at once, into real mountain-country again. For a couple of miles the road was up the course of a stream which came tumbling down over rocks, making a loud song about it, while the evergreen jungle was so thick that, at places where the path was a few yards from the stream, one could not see the water. The path crossed and re-crossed the stream several times, and at each crossing was a vista of dark water running in a dark tunnel of evergreen jungle, through the roof of which filtered a greenish light. Where there were no rocks to step on, one had to wade kneedeep through the water, which was as cold as ice.

Then the path left the stream and climbed a rather steep mountain, but after nearly an hour's hard climbing I came out on to

spur near the top of the mountain, from which there was a pretty view, though somewhat limited. Towards the north, only separated from the mountain I was climbing by a narrow and shallow valley, was a long low mountain crested with steep limestone cliffs, behind which was the imaginary boundary line between Burma and Siam. To the north-west I could see the tall mountain Doi Pawui, and further on another still larger mountain in Burma. Towards the west was a succession of smaller mountain-tops and steep cliffs, where lay my road to Me Chan. Towards the south and east the summit of the mountain barred the view.

From this point the road became less steep, running between limestone rocks and up and down over small hills. The forest was more open and long grass was the only under-growth, but down below in the hollows was ever-green jungle.

In the afternoon I came to the upper end of a long straight valley, which far away below opened up, and one saw wide stretches of paddy-fields spread out like a carpet. To one side was a small white square, the gendarmerie station, and behind it rose the mountains again over towards Burma.

I camped at a tiny stream which came from a small spring a little higher up, and the next morning I went down through the valley and across the fields to the gendarmerie station at Me Chan. One would imagine that the stream which ran by this station would be the Me Chan itself, but it is not so; it is called the Huey Kalata, and the village near by is Ban Kalata.

From this spot there is a road into Burma, to a police-station called Metan, about two or three days' march away, but it is a rather difficult mountain-road and is hardly ever used. Some miles further south another mountain-track runs from Siam into Burma, also to Metan, but otherwise there are no roads between Siam and Burma until one comes to the Three-pagoda pass in the Rajburi district. There is no natural boundary-line, and the country is broken up into a mass of small mountain ranges mostly running north and south.

On leaving Me Chan I passed first through some very thick jungle, but the road was steadily rising and soon I came to more

open forest on the side of one of the small ranges. To the west, a short distance away, was another range parallel with mine, and beyond that was the Huey Me Chan and the frontier. The hill-side was pretty steep, and was covered with grass four to five feet long. This overhung the path, which in many places was less than two feet wide, and walking was not so easy. Later on the path ran through a perfect maze of limestone rocks and cliffs. At one place was a steep cliff about 200 feet high, which the Karens believe is the abode of a very powerful spirit named *Chao Kam Ho*. Separated from this cliff by only a few feet was another almost perpendicular cliff about 100 feet high, with a broad and perfectly flat top, on which Nature had placed four rocks in a most peculiar position. The largest was the exact shape of an ordinary rice cooking-pot with its lid on, resting on the three others which were ordinary boulders of rock, placed in a triangle. It looked just like a jungle traveller's cooking-pot placed over the fire on three stones. This is where *Chao Kam Ho* cooks his food. At certain times of the year the Karens place offerings at the foot of the cliff, consisting of a pig's head and feet, with some rice and salt. A few hundred yards further on was the well where *Chao Kam Ho* goes to draw water. It was a circular hole on the very edge of the path, about 5 feet in diameter and with perpendicular walls. The surface of the water was about twelve or fourteen feet down, but I do not know to what depths the water went. There was, however, an under-ground outlet which came to the surface some distance away, lower down the road.

Shortly afterwards I left the limestone cliffs behind and soon came down to Huey Me Chan, which the road followed for a considerable distance. There were many crossings and the water was pretty deep, for even in its upper reaches the Huey Me Chan is a fairly big stream. At last the road left the creek, climbed over a small hill and along a grassy ridge, only to come down to the Huey Me Chan again near a Karen village called Ban Buleh, where I camped. From Ban Buleh the road again rose and continued through high, undulating country; the jungle was mostly open forest, but there was also a good deal of evergreen jungle and some bamboo, and the Karen hill-cultivation was much in evidence.

I had intended to camp that day at the Karen village of Nong Noi, but at Ban Buleh I was told that this village had just been removed to another site some three or four miles away. So I camped instead at a small creek named the Huey Nah, where there was a fine camping-place and plenty of good fodder for the elephants.

At the Huey Nah I received a visit from a leopard. I had just gone to bed when I heard him coughing some distance away, and not long afterwards I heard him again, much nearer. I got up, chained my dog to the centre tent-pole and waited quietly. Soon I thought I heard a slight, rustling noise in the dry leaves close to the tent, so I went outside with my gun and an electric torch, but could see nothing.

A couple of hundred feet away were my servants and the gendarmes, already asleep by their fire, which was dying down; a little further on the elephantmen had built a huge fire, round which they were still sitting, smoking and talking. In the fire-light I could see the elephants which were tied to some bamboo clumps close by; one was lying down, but the other two were still browsing among the young leaves. A very peaceful scene, and it was strange to think that a savage animal was prowling about in the darkness close by. I sat down in the entrance to my tent, the gun ready to to my hand, but I heard nothing more, so went to bed again after half an hour or so. Before I slept I heard the call of a sambhur stag repeated two or three times, but nothing else disturbed me that night. Undoubtedly the leopard was after the dog, but had not sufficient courage to enter the tent, although leopards have been known to do so.

The next day I travelled through the same kind of country and camped at the Karen village of Ti-ba-chi.

From the Me Chan gendarmerie station I had so far travelled in a southerly direction, but from Ti-ba-chi I went first south-east and then due east, up over a big jagged limestone range. The road led through a very narrow pass, and the rocks were so close together that there was barely room for the elephants to get through.

The ascent was not a very long one, for I had started in fairly high country, but the descent on the other side of the range, into the Meklong valley, was long and very steep. In many places the path was so steep that it was a little difficult for the men to go down it. I had just put a good supply of steel-caulks into my boots, and I also used a long iron-spiked stick, but even so I had to move carefully so as not to slip. I was rather anxious about the elephants, but they are marvellous beasts, and no hill-side seems too steep for them.

I camped that day on the bank of the Huey Kaluta, only a couple of miles from the place where it joins the Meklong. I have not often had such a pretty camping place. The stream was broad and had plenty of water, which ran quite straight for some distance. The river-bed formed a succession of deep pools, separated from each other by narrow barriers of limestone, over which the water flowed like a broad silverband into the next pool. Tall trees grew on either side almost down to the water's edge, their tops almost meeting overhead. I pitched my tent on a sandy spot only a few inches above the water's level, and sitting in front of the tent I had a beautiful view both up and down the creek. On the other bank, opposite the tent, an old gnarled tree with many branches leant out over the water. It had no leaves, but was completely covered with orchids and other parasitic plants. There must have been at least half a dozen different kinds of orchids, some of which were already out in bloom. The whole setting made a charming picture.

The following morning after a two hours march I came to the river Meklong, which proved too deep to ford, so the party crossed on small bamboo-rafts, of which there were many moored to the bank. There were two large Karen villages close by.

I then turned north again and camped, after having crossed the Huey Melamung, which is quite an important stream falling into the Meklong.

The following day the road went up over Doi Hoa Mott (the bald-headed mountain), of which the ascent, for two

thirds of the way, was quite easy, and not at all steep but after I had left the jungle behind and had come out on to the bare upper slopes of the mountain, it became much steeper, though the air was fresh and invigorating, and the view became finer, the higher I climbed. At last I arrived at the top of the mountain, and although to reach it, I had to leave the path and climb an extra two or three hundred feet, since the road does not go over the actual summit, still it was worth it, for I looked out over a splendid panorama.

To the north, deep down and almost under my feet, lay the valley of Umpang; behind it the country rose, and the tall mountain, over which I had gone on my way to Me Chan, closed the view in that direction. To the west were, first, the forest-clad lower slopes of the mountain down to the Meklong valley, then a smaller range dividing the Meklong from the Huey Kalata, and behind that again towered the high jagged limestone range I had crossed two days before. Towards the south, following the course of the Meklong, I looked out over a jumbled mass of mountains stretching far away until they became indistinct on the far horizon. To the east was another series of mountains which culminated in the highest point in the watershed between the Me Ping-Menam and the Meklong, well over 5,000 feet high.

The road ran along the upper slopes for a considerable distance, in and out of a number of small rounded hillocks. With the exception of some dry grass, which only grew here and there, there was no vegetation whatever.

The mountain was said to be the home of numerous wild animals of all kinds, but I only saw the tracks of wild pig, which were legion, and those of a large tiger which had wandered that morning along the path; I saw his tracks over a distance of more than three miles. At last, after having marched for a couple of hours through the jungle on the lower slopes, I came out on to the paddy-fields in the valley, had a hot hour's walk over them, crossed the Huey Umpang and was back again in Umpang.

I intended to change elephants in Umpang, and had expected the new elephants to be there when I arrived, so that, after a day's rest, I could start again on the return journey to Kampengpet. But there were no elephants to be seen, and nobody seemed to know what had happened, so there was nothing to do but to sit down and wait patiently till new elephants could be brought in. At last, in the evening of February the 21st, I was informed that my elephants had arrived, so everything was made ready for an early start next day. Shortly after sunrise the elephants turned up, and about 8 o'clock I finally left Umpang, my transport consisting of three elephants and a few carriers.

The direct road from Umpang to Kampengpet is rather difficult and in the rains often quite impassable, so that most people prefer to go the long way round by Me Sot and Raheng. None of the elephant-men or the carriers seemed to know much about the road; some of them had been over it before but a long time ago, and they were not sure that they could remember the way again.

To begin with, the road followed the course of the Huey Umpang up-stream. We passed through two Karen villages and, camped, late in the afternoon, at a third one called Ban Dibloe quite a big village with extensive paddy fields.

During the last part of the road the creek-bed had been full of rocks and boulders, but nothing compared to what it was like during the next two days.

From Ban Dibloe the valley became very narrow; the path was continually crossing the creek, which ran with a strong current in a bed that was nothing but a mass of rocks and boulders of all sizes. The water was as cold as ice and my feet soon became almost numb.

That day I camped on a ledge thirty feet wide between the bank of the creek and a steep hill-side; on the other side of the creek there was not even a ledge, as the hill-side rose, steeper than a house-roof, straight from the creek.

The next day's march was again nothing but a scramble over rocks and boulders and in icy-cold water most of the time, with steep hills on both sides coming right down to the creek. The water as a rule only came up to the ankles, but sometimes one had to go in above the knee. There was, of course, nothing that could be called a path.

At one place another fair-sized creek came tumbling down the hill-side, forming two pretty waterfalls, and there I found an open space, where one could walk on dry land for a couple of hundred yards. It was covered with tall kine-grass through which the path ran, and a fair sized tiger had evidently gone in there quite recently, as his pug-marks were still wet on the stones where he had come up from the creek; but he must have gone on and climbed the hill-side, for the dog did not show any signs of having scented him, which it surely would have done if he had still been in the kine-grass.

At last, after a very hard, unpleasant and tiring march, I arrived in the middle of the afternoon at the foot of the high mountain, which forms the watershed between the Meping and the Meklong. Characteristically enough, it has no name, and is simply called "Khao Yai" (i.e. big mountain). There I camped.

Knowing that it was a long way over the mountain, and that the journey had to be done in one march, I started the next morning when there was barely light enough to see the path. The road became steep at once, and for two hours it continued up and up, the whole way through thick evergreen forest; indeed, in many places the path was just a narrow tunnel. Then for an hour along an undulating ridge, as far as a small spring; from that point steep down for a while, then up again and along another undulating ridge, and at last down the steepest descent I have ever seen. Most of the men slipped and came down more than once, and in spite of my caulked boots and iron-spiked stick, I came down three or four times, once falling on my left shoulder-blade with such force that at first I thought it was broken. Fortunately it was not so, but it was very sore for many days.

It was four o'clock when I arrived at the foot of the mountain, on the eastern side, at the junction of two small streams, and there I camped.

From this spot the road followed the creek for some distance and then went up over a small mountain called "Khao Mawsoe," down to the "Klong Soon Mark," a wide creek, running in a very stony bed, full of granite boulders, some of which were the size of a house. At many places the river-bed, for several hundred feet, was a solid mass of granite, worn quite smooth by the water. The 'going' was quite as bad as in the Huey Umpang, and so at 3 o'clock I camped in some bamboo-jungle. The next morning, after a couple of hours march in the creek-bed, the road took to the forest again and the 'going' became better. I crossed a couple of small hills and passed through a Karen village, shortly after which the road again entered the creek-bed, this time not so rocky but full of soft sand and dense kine-grass.

The next day the road soon left the creek, went up over a low but long hill, and then down a small 'nullah,' where I disturbed some big game, which crashed away through the jungle. I did not see them, and the ground was too hard to discover their tracks, but I believe they were sambhur.

Coming out again to the Klong Soon Mark, I found that the path bifurcated, so I waited for the elephants and the carriers to come up. None of the men were sure of the road, but they believed that both roads went to Kampengpet, and that the one to the right was the shorter. So we chose that path, and though all went well to begin with, after some time the track was not so clear, and eventually it lost itself in jungle, so thick that even the elephants could not force a way through. There was nothing for it then but to turn back, and the most sensible thing, of course, would have been to have gone straight back along the way we had come on to the other road. But I had seen, a short distance back, another path going down towards the creek; so I thought we could take that, cross the creek, and get on to the other road without having to go the whole way back. But that path too, ended in impenetrable jungle, and when we

tried to cut across country to the old road, we became completely lost, and not even the Karens knew where to turn next. In the meantime, a jungle fire had started and was spreading rapidly over a wide area; the elephants would not face the fire, so the only thing to do was to retire from it, and at last we came again to the place where the jungle had first stopped us, a place which we had believed to be in quite a different direction. We then took the road back, as we ought to have done at first, and came at last to the junction of the two roads. This time we followed the left-hand path, crossed the creek and camped on the other side. We had wandered about in the jungle for nearly five hours. During the march back to the junction of roads rain fell, the first I had experienced during the whole tour.

The next day the road was fairly good, and the country slightly hilly. I passed through a small Karen village consisting of five houses only, then went up over a short steep hill and camped near another Karen village called Ban Samui, which was the last Karen village I met. The road thereafter ran through flat country, and I came again to the Klong Soon Mark, which had now become a broad and sluggish stream. I went through two Lao villages and camped at a third, called Ban Nah Baw Kam, on the banks of the Klong Soon Mark. From there was a good cart road, through wide open forest, and, having passed an elephant-keddah where wild elephants had been captured during the previous two years, I eventually reached the paddy-fields. Once more I crossed the Klong Soon Mark, marched through an important village and finally out, on to the banks of the Meping, just opposite to Kampengpet. The Meping was shallow enough for the elephants to cross, but my men and myself were ferried over in boats. I arrived in Kampengpet about 1 o'clock, on March the 3rd.

I left Kampengpet by boat on March the 8th, arrived in Paknampoh on the 11th, and on Wednesday the 14th, I travelled by train from Paknampoh to Ayudhya. The journey was finished.

The tour had lasted altogether 114 days, of which 71 were actually occupied in travelling. The total distance covered I calculate

40° 50' 98° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 99° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 100° 10' 20' 30'

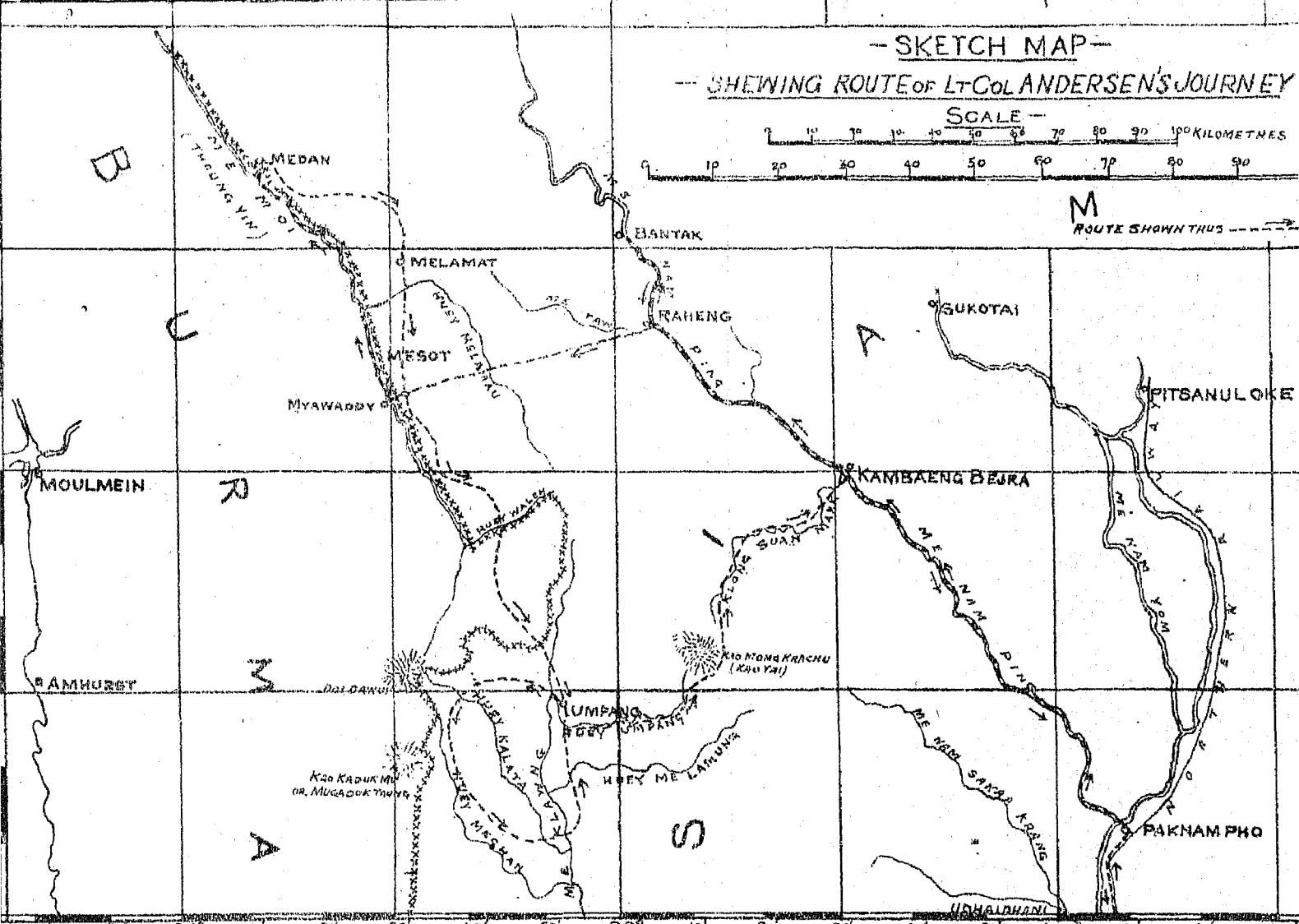
- SKETCH MAP -

- SHEWING ROUTE OF LT-COL ANDERSEN'S JOURNEY

SCALE - 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 KILOMETRES

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

M ROUTE SHOWN THUS - - - - -



40° 50' 98° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 99° 10' 20' 30' 40' 50' 100° 10' 20' 30'

to have been 1411 Kilometers, or 882 miles. If we divide this total up into the various methods of transport used, we arrive at the following figures :—

Railway	...	357	Kilometers	or	223	miles
Lao-boat	...	380	"	"	237	"
Bamboo-raft	...	95	"	"	60	"
Bullock-cart	...	40	"	"	25	"
Carriers	...	139	"	"	87	"
Elephants	...	400	"	"	250	"
<hr/>						
		Total	1411	Kilometers	or	882 miles
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