ART. XI.—*On the Connexion of the Mōns of Pegu with the Koles of Central India.* By Capt. C. J. F. S. FORBES, of the Burmese Civil Commission.

AMONG the races now occupying the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, the oldest, the Mōn, has been little studied, and is generally passed over as an insignificant tribe of little interest in any way. Yet the facts which point them out as being the occupiers of the Delta of the Irrawaddy before the arrival of the Tibeto-Burman tribes, from whom they are quite distinct, seem worthy of consideration.

Although the Mōns are the oldest race now existing in the Peninsula, there is reason to believe that they had their predecessors. The earliest Mōn traditions state that when the Buddhist missionaries arrived on the coast, they were welcomed near Thatone, but were opposed and stoned by the Beloos when they attempted to land near Martaban. Close opposite Martaban is the large island called to this day Beloo-gyun¹ (Beloo Island). We know that Beloos (Monsters) was the name given to an aboriginal people whom the Mōn and Burman races found occupying the sea-coast. It may reasonably be conjectured that these aborigines belonged to some of the tribes now found on the Andaman or Nicobar groups. These last have been conjectured to be descended from refugees of the Mōn race themselves. F. A. de Roepstorff, the latest authority we have on these islanders, in his interesting monograph and vocabulary, and also in his remarks in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, July, 1876, thinks they “are possibly the remains of a race of Mongolians, who were peaceably settled on the Nicobar Islands, cultivating the land, and perhaps in a higher state of civili-

¹ In the Mōn language, T'kaw 'k'ming.

zation. They were perhaps attacked by the Malay race that is now living on the Nancowry group." This may be so; but, from the little known of them and their language, though there may be sufficient to connect them with the great family of Mongoloids, their affinity with the Mōns of Pegu is at present merely a conjecture unsupported by evidence.¹ That the Mōns found an aboriginal race in the country, and drove them out, is probable. Whence came the Mōns themselves? That they do not belong to the Tibeto-Burman family is clear and acknowledged. Two authorities, to whom great deference on this point is due, the late Dr. Mason and Sir A. Phayre, have adopted a theory which, as it appears to be gaining ground, demands examination.

Dr. Mason, in 1860, was the first to propound it. In his work on Burma, page 130, he writes: "In its vocables the Talaing (Mōn) is the most isolated language of Farther India. Its roots are not allied to Tai, Burman, Karen, Tounghu, Kyen, Kemu, Singpu, Naga, Manipuri, nor any other known language spoken by the Indo-Chinese nations. Nor is it cognate with the Chinese or Tibetan, or any of the Tatar tongues, of which specimens have been published. It is not related to the Sanskrit or Hindu families of Northern Hindustan; nor to the cultivated tongues of Southern India and Ceylon, the Telugu, Carnataka, Tuluva, Tamil, Malay-alam, Malabar, and Singalese. I have compared the Talaing with vocabularies of all these and others, and find it radically different; though, here and there, words of apparently common origin may be discovered. Whence then has it been derived? In Central Hindustan there are several wild tribes inhabiting the mountainous regions, which are called Koles, Oraons, and Goands, whose languages seem to have had a common origin. The first notice of these people which I have seen was published by Major Tickell in 1840, in a paper on the Koles, whom he denominates Hos. This paper affords the most complete view of the people and their language that has yet been made public; and from this it is

¹ There is, nevertheless, a certain amount of resemblance to the Mōn in the vocabulary of the Nancowry dialect.

apparent, singular as it may seem, that the Talaing language has a radical affinity with the Kole. The first six numerals, the personal pronouns, the words for several members of the body and many objects of nature, with a few verbs, are unquestionably of common origin, while many other words bearing a more remote resemblance are probably derived from the same roots." (Then follows a list of words.)

"The Chinese, the Tai, the Burman, the Karen, and all the known languages of Farther India, including the Assamese, are known to use numeral affixes; while the Talaing language stands alone, and, like Occidental tongues, unites the numeral to the noun. Thus a Talaing says: 'àkăbaing bà' two passages, 'tnom pi' three stones, and 'sgni paun' four houses. While in Chinese, and in all the other Indo-Chinese languages, the numeral is united to an affix. The Kole has the same idiom as the Talaing. A singular noun in Kole is made plural by affixing *ko*, and, in Talaing, there is a plural affix *tau*. But what confirms still more the common origin for the Talaings and Koles is their name. One tribe among the Koles are called Oraons, who, at an unknown period, were driven by the Brahmanical Hindus from the neighbourhood of the Ganges. 'It is these Oraons,' writes Major Tickell, 'who first give us accounts of a people called Moondas, whom they found in possession of Chootia Nagpoor.' These Moondas now call themselves Hos, but are more generally known as Koles. *Moond*, their ancient name, is almost identical with *moan*, the name by which the Talaings now call themselves, and it would be difficult to find any two nations of a different origin with names so nearly the same."

Sir A. Phayre, in his "History of Pegu,"¹ follows Dr. Mason. He says: "That learned man has, in his work on Burma, pointed out the remarkable similarity between the language of the Mun of Pegu, and that of the Horo or Mundá people of Chutiá Nágpúr, called the Kols. The first syllable of the word Mundá, which is used, as I understand,

¹ Journal Asiatic Society Bengal, 1873, p. 35.

to designate the language of several tribes in the western highlands of Bengal, rather than as a tribal name, is identical in sound with the race name of the people of Pegu. The connexion of the two peoples, as shown by the similarity of their languages in a series of test words, has been commented on by the Honourable Mr. Campbell, in a paper on the Races of India, in the *Journal of the Ethnological Society*. We appear, then, to be forced to the conclusion, that the Mun or Taláing people of Pegu are of the same stock as the Kols and other aboriginal tribes of India who may have occupied that country before even the Dravidians entered it."

In the *Journal of the same Society* for 1876, Sir. A. Phayre repeats, and finds a confirmation of, this theory, in the resemblance between the stone implements found in Pegu and in Chutia Nagpúr, which will be considered separately.

Now let us examine the philological arguments adduced.

The coincidence of words in the two languages we shall leave for the present, merely remarking that the comparative tables given at the end will show equal, if not greater affinities to several other languages. With regard to any argument founded on the resemblance between the tribal names Mun and Mundá, we may observe that we find the tribal names Múndu used by the Man and Kamba, and Múntu by the Pokomo tribes in South Africa, according to Prichard, but we surely would not thence conclude any connexion between these latter and the Kolarians.

Max Müller truly says, "Grammar is the most essential element, and therefore the ground of classification in all languages which have produced a definite grammatical articulation." Again, "Languages, though mixed in their dictionary, can never be mixed in their grammar." Let us then compare the grammatical structure of the Mōn or Mūn, and the Kol or Ho languages.

The Mōn is exceedingly rough and guttural, abounding in a rolling sound of the letter *r*, and sudden abrupt checks in the pronunciation of words ending in a silent *h*.

The Ho language of Chutia Nagpúr is described thus: "The sounds are exceedingly pure and liquid, without strong

aspirates or gutturals, and in some words the inflections of the vowels are inconceivably complex and mellifluous."

Dr. Mason gives two points of Mōn grammatical construction, which he considers as showing its distinctness from the other languages of "Farther India," and its affinity to the Kolarian. The first is the *non*-use of numerical affixes, as in *signi* 'house,' *paun* 'four,' 'four houses;' *tnom* 'stone,' *pi* 'three,' 'three stones.' But in this the Doctor, who was not a proficient in the language, is entirely mistaken. The Mōn *does* use numeral affixes, though not to the same extent as its neighbour, the Burman, as is shown in the following examples: *mnēh mooä sakoo* 'man one person,' or 'one man'; *katä mooä kätēh* 'board one flat thing,' or 'one board'; *kaow pee doong* 'flower three blossoms,' or 'three flowers'; *pathoä paun t'nong* 'nails four long things,' or 'four nails.'

Secondly, that the Talaing (Mōn) has a plural affix *tau*, answering to the Kol plural affix *ko*. But the Burman also has a plural affix *tō*, pronounced *dō*, as *thoo-dō* 'they,' *loo-dō* 'men.'

The arguments on the affinities in these two cases are therefore worth little, and cannot counterbalance the strong evidence of divergence in most essential points of construction.

1. The Kol has a distinctive possessive particle marking the genitive case, as *sètá* 'a dog,' *sètá-á* 'of a dog'; *ho* 'a man,' *ho-á* 'of a man.' The Mōn has no genitive case affix, but denotes it by placing the thing possessed before the possessor, as *lat mnēh* 'book-man,' for 'man's book'; *mee nyēh* 'mother he,' for 'his mother.'

2. In Kol the adjective always precedes the noun, in Mōn the adjective always follows the noun to which it belongs.

3. In Kol the demonstrative pronoun, in like manner, *always* precedes the noun, while in Mōn it is generally a suffix, as *mnēh wuh* 'man this,' for 'this man.'

4. The verb in Kol admits of conjugation in moods and tenses in the active and neuter. The Mōn has no inflexions of mood, tense, or number.

5. The Kol possesses three numbers, the singular, dual,

and plural; to which the pronouns add a fourth, the plural comprehensive. The Mōn has not the slightest trace of the peculiar dual number.

It seems almost impossible to consider two languages so widely apart in their structural character as capable of being brought into affinity with each other on the strength of a resemblance in a certain number of words in their vocabularies. A similar coincidence between words in Chinese and Anglo-Saxon English has been traced, but we must seek the explanation of this elsewhere than in affinity of race.

Nevertheless, Sir A. Phayre finds strong confirmation of this theory in the resemblance between the peculiar stone implements originally found in Burma and the Malayan Peninsula, but, lately also, discovered in Chutiá Nágpúr. He remarks in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for January, 1876: "I observe in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society for June, 1875, a paper by Mr. V. Ball, on Stone Implements of the Burmese type found in the district of Singbhúm. I beg to bring to your notice that the stone weapons hitherto sent from Burma have, I believe, all been found within the limits of the territory, in the delta and valley of the lower Eráwati, occupied from time immemorial by the Taláing or Mun people. The language of the Mun race of Pegu is connected with that of the Ho or Mundá people of Chutiá Nágpúr, called Kol. I beg, on this subject, to refer to my paper on the History of Pegu, in the Society's Journal, vol. xlii. of 1873.

"The form of the stone implements remarked on by Mr. Ball tends to indicate a connexion of race, or intercourse in prehistoric time, between the Kols and the Mun of Pegu. The supposed origin of these weapons, as thrown to earth in the lightning flash, is, as remarked by Mr. Theobald, the same among both peoples."

This argument is again referred to by Mr. Ball in the same Society's Proceedings for June, 1876, where he says: "Sir A. Phayre shows that the part of Burma in which the stone implements occur—the valley and delta of the lower Eráwati—is inhabited by a race called Mún, whose language

presents affinities with that of the Múndás of Singbhúm. Hence the probability of an early intercourse having existed, and possibly of an identity of origin, between these now widely-separated peoples, becomes very great."

Now to carry out Sir A. Phayre's argument, we must allow the premiss, either that the Múns and Mundás are the autochthones of Pegu and Singbhúm, or that there is reason to believe that the ancestors of these peoples used stone implements when they migrated into their present localities.

With regard to the Mundás of Singbhúm, we *know* that they are not autochthonous, for the Bhooyas or Bhooians occupied the country before them. We have certainly no *proof* of who were the predecessors of the Múns in Pegu, but there is every reason to believe that they found an aboriginal race before them.

There is little, if any, cause to suppose, according to the second premiss, that the ancestors of the Múns, or of the Mundás, were among the races who employed stone implements, at the period when they arrived in their present localities. The probability is to the contrary. Both races possess words for iron original to their languages, and not borrowed from their neighbours, and with our knowledge of the constant waves of migration that swept over Eastern lands in the prehistoric times, it appears far too arbitrary an assumption that neolithic implements belong necessarily to the variety of the human species now occupying the locality in which they are found.

The remark respecting the similar origin ascribed to these implements by both peoples is not of much value as an argument in point, for we find the same idea prevailing in England, in Brittany, in Finnland, in Japan, and other countries.¹

There really, then, is no proof that the stone implements found in Pegu and Singbhúm were fashioned or ever used by the early Múns and Kols inhabiting those districts, and not by some still earlier primæval races, perhaps of the Negritto family.

¹ Tylor, *Early History of Man*, p. 226.

But although there is no ground for believing in a race connexion between the Mōns of Pegu and the Kolarian races, it does not follow that there may not have been a prehistoric intercourse between them. The former idea has been carried to its fullest development in the Official Report on the Imperial Census of British Burma in 1872, where it is stated that "the Talaing nation appears to have been formed from two distinct stocks, both starting from India, and uniting into one people at Burma. The name Talaing is supposed to be merely a reproduction of Telinga or Telingana, and the people to whom the name was primarily applied are taken to have been Dravidian colonists who came over by sea and settled at Thatun. . . . The other, and probably more numerous stock, are believed to be identical with the pre-Aryan Kols of Central India, and call themselves Múns."

Dr. Logan appears to present the most reasonable view of the subject. "The first migration from the northern side of the Himalaya is now best represented by the Anam, Kambojan, Mōn, and Lau tribes. Their languages have structural and glossarial characters which distinguish them from the Tibetan, and, in the first era of their southern dispersion, they must have occupied a part of Bengal, and had a close intercourse with aboriginal Indian tribes of the north-east Dravidian or Kol family. At a later period they were intimately connected with the succeeding great migration from Tibet, that of the proper Tibeto-Burman tribes, but appear to have been gradually pressed by them to the eastward and southward. . . . Two thousand years ago the Chinese found the Anamese in possession of the basin of the Sang-koi." "The Mōns long preceded the Siamese in the Tenasserim provinces, and the languages of the Simang and Binna of the Malay Peninsula retain deep traces of their ancient influence to the south. Before the great southern movement of the Lau, the Mōn appear to have occupied the basin of the Menam also, and to have marched and intermixed with the closely-allied Kambojans of the Lower Mekong."¹

¹ Journ. Ind. Arch. vol. ii. pp. 70, 76.

The actual routes of the successive migrations of branches of the human race in the earliest times must ever be a matter, more or less, of mere speculation. At the same time, physical geography points out to us prominently three great lines eastward along which the masses must have moved; viz., one over the passes of the Thian Shan, along the great highway of Chinese Tatar, across the Desert of Gobi, into China Proper: the second, over the Karakorum range into the Valley of Kashmīr, and thence into Tibet: the third, through the Khyber Pass into the Valley of the Indus.

The Chinese, and probably the Karens, seem to have followed the first, but, according to the earliest Chinese annals and traditions, they found aboriginal tribes, the Miao, Lo Lo, and others before them.

The Mōn-Anam races, to use Logan's term, appear to have taken the second route, through Tibet, debouching into the Upper Valley of the Brahmaputra, and, thence, spreading at an unknown date eastwards into Farther India as far as the Gulf of Tonquin, probably pressed on by their cousins, the Tibeto-Burman tribes, following the same course. This, of course, must remain a mere conjecture, but, if we allow a sojourn more or less extended in the valley of the Brahmaputra to the early progenitors of the Mōn-Anam races, the intercourse between them and those Kolarian tribes who once occupied Bengal is accounted for.

The relation of the Mōn-Anam languages to each other, and their divergence from their neighbours, is shown in their structure even more than in their vocabulary.

1. The Mōn, Siamese, and Annamitic are agreed in the use of prefixed case particles (prepositions), while all the Tibetan dialects adopt suffixes (postpositions). The Chinese employs suffixes to mark the locative case, but prefixes in the others. The Karen also employs prepositions throughout.

2. The Mōn, Siamese, and Annamitic are distinguished by the inverted form of the genitive, that is, the thing possessed precedes the possessor, as *house man*; in Chinese, Karen and Tibeto-Burman, the natural order, *man's house*, is followed.

3. The Mōn, Siamese, Annamitic, and Karen agree in the postposition of the demonstrative, while the Chinese and Tibeto-Burman place the pronoun before the substantive.

4. The Tibetan languages are, above all, distinguished from the Chinese and East Himalayan, or Mōn-Anam, by the great inversion of the sentence in which the verb comes after its object.

It is thus seen that while the Mōn, Siamese, and Annamitic dialects all accord with each other on these important structural points, they differ with the Tibeto-Burman in *all*, and with the Chinese and Karen in some, while they agree in others. We are, therefore, apparently warranted in classing the former languages under a separate head, and, from their structure, awarding them a date anterior to any of their present neighbours.

When, however, we come to compare the vocabularies of all these races, we find affinities that can be accounted for only on the ground of intimate connexion and intercourse at some period of their history in their present localities, or by the theory that they formed, in a prehistoric time while still settled in their original Western home, one family speaking a common tongue, before each in its turn quitted the primæval hive on its Eastern migration. There is no doubt the Mōn, the Burmese, the Siamese, the Karen, have, to a certain extent, mutually influenced each other by contact and intercourse in their present abodes; but we cannot conclude the same of the Mōn with the Chinese and pure Tibetan dialects, and must therefore refer the coincidences between these to a common radical origin—calling this Turanian, Mongolian, or what you will.