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A KING'S HISTORY.

King Thebaw has fled before his enemies. Of course no one but the thick-headed king himself, and those who supported him in his defiance of the British expected that he would be able to offer any appreciable resistance to the forces sent against him. Thebaw has always been one of those unfortunate characters who, through an inordinate amount of self-conceit, utterly fail to have any idea of the way in which they are regarded by others. This failing has on several occasions placed his majesty in the most ludicrous positions, and indeed the present war is due in great part to a curious idea which the King conceived, and by which he thought to satisfy his pride. He was already in debt when the thought struck him that it would be a grand thing for him to prepare a magnificent banquet to celebrate the boring of his daughter's ears. To this feast he would invite all the crowned heads of Europe. But there was a difficulty in the way of this truly striking idea. The King was bankrupt. The Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation had already paid the King large sums of money from time to time in advance, in anticipation of duties which would become due from timber worked out of the forests leased by them from the King. In order to have his banquet, and in order that he might complete one of the many Pagodas he and the Queen had set their hearts on having, it was necessary to obtain still further

money by hook or by crook. All Mandalay merchants of all nationalities were pressed to contribute. Then the whole sum was demanded from the Corporation, and every persuasive argument was made use of. The King's chief adviser, hearing that the thing was being put in the form of a request, stated in a loud voice in open Court that the demand must not be put in a mild form; he would put the matter clearly before the Corporation's Mandalay

Agent, and if the money was not forthcoming with good grace, he would see that the Corporation's work being carried on in the forests should be made so unpleasant for them that they would not be able to work at all. It was these unlawful attempts to extort money which brought on the war which has ended so unsatisfactorily to King Thebaw.

The King according to the reliable accounts has never been much more than a

puppet in the hands of those about him. He was called bloodthirsty and a drunkard when he waded through the blood of his brothers and relations in order to get to the throne. This description is probably not altogether just. His chief adviser was an ignorant, cruel, and unprincipled being. He was one of the principal officers of the old King's body-guard, who, in one of his generous freaks, installed him as one of his body-guard at the moment when it was ex-

pected sentence of death would be passed on him for the many crimes he had committed.

Burmans are cruel by nature, without generally betraying any such trait in their faces, but the King's chief adviser has cruelty and brutality clearly marked in every feature. It was this man who placed Thebaw on the throne. As officer of the guard, he knew of the late King's death before any one, probably eight or ten days before even the Ministers of the Court, and during that time he hatched and schemed his arrangements for butchery, etc., with the present Queen's mother. He is believed to have done much of the butchery with his own hand, and certainly helped the King to drown his remorse by initiating him into and prompting him to use strong drinks. This habit the King has probably not kept up, at any rate his features betray no sign of it.

The Burmese monarch waged war at a great disadvantage. He had not made himself popular among his people and ammunition had to be purchased from Italian firms and brought into Burmah through British territory packed in packages resembling those of macaroni. But there was scarcely



A BAD CASE.

(Continued on Fiftieth Page.)