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NARRATIVE

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN CAMPBELL,

C B.

NARRATIVE

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN CAMPBELL,

C.B.

OF HIS OPERATIONS

IN

THE HILL TRACTS OF ORISSA

FOR

**THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN SACRIFICES
AND FEMALE INFANTICIDE.**

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P R E F A C E.



In presenting the following imperfect sketch of my humble labours in the Khond country, for the perusal of my friends, I disclaim all pretension of doing anything more than offering a plain, unvarnished statement of what I saw and did. I have only in my possession fragments of official Reports, and some private memoranda, to guide me—but I can safely assert, that the information, so far as it goes, may be fully relied on.

I look back with unfeigned gratification and thankfulness at having been the instrument used to accomplish a great and

good work, and I owe much to that illustrious statesman, the late Marquis of Dalhousie, Governor-General of India, who took the liveliest interest in this enterprise of civilization and humanity, and gave it, on every occasion, his powerful and generous support.

By the most Noble the Marquis of Tweeddale, when Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Madras, the most cordial sympathy was manifested, and from this distinguished nobleman I never failed to receive the most convincing proofs of the deep interest he felt in all our operations for the Suppression of Human Sacrifices, and Female Infanticide in the Hill Tracts of Orissa.

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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.



ONE special object in printing the following orders, letters, &c., is to shew that from the very outset of my connexion with the Khond country, I enjoyed the confidence of superior authority. From the Honourable Mr. Russell, General Taylor, Sir Frederick Adams, Lord Tweeddale, Lord Hardinge, Lord Dalhousie, and the late Court of Directors of the East India Company, I received the following expressions of approval.

I have thought it might not be uninteresting to reprint an article published in one of the Local journals long after I had quitted India.

Extract from Division Orders by General G. A. Taylor, Commanding Northern Division, dated Waltair, 10th June, 1834.

The command of the troops in Kimedý suddenly devolved upon Captain Campbell, 41st Regiment, at a very critical period, and when the state of affairs required active zeal, intrepidity, and judgment. Captain Campbell on this occasion as on many subsequent ones, when in command of his regiment, has proved he possesses these valuable qualities in an eminent degree.

Copy of a Letter from General Sir Frederick Adams, Governor of Madras, dated 26th June, 1834.

Dear Sir,

I have had most sincere gratification in reading the high and well deserved en-

comiums passed upon your zeal, energy, and ability by the Commissioner, Mr. Russell, and by Brigader-General Taylor, during the long and arduous service in which you have been engaged in the Circars. Praise from such men is worth ambition, and much do I feel gratified in saying I believe it is entirely merited.

It is a matter of very sincere regret that I have it not in my power at this moment, and under the operation of the existing regulations, to show some more substantial proof of the estimate I have formed of your merits, than can be conveyed by mere words; but be assured that my intention of doing so is most sincere, and I only wait for an opportunity to give adequate proof of my desire to evince it.



Extract from General Orders, Madras Government, 1st July, 1834.

The 41st Regiment deserves particular

notice. This was the only corps employed in Kimedý at the commencement of the insurrection of the Hill Chiefs, and not only afforded effectual protection to the inhabitants, and enabled them to secure their crops from the ravages of the insurgents, but made successful attacks on several of their strong posts before the arrival of any reinforcement. Since the formation of the Brigade, it has constantly been actively employed in co-operation with the other troops. Captain Campbell, who succeeded to the command of the corps on the lamented death of Major Baxter, has greatly distinguished himself by his firm and judicious conduct at that critical period, and by the ability and energy he has evinced on all occasions of active service.

Extract from a Letter addressed by the Honourable G. E. Russell, Esq., Commissioner, to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated 12th August, 1836.

Meanwhile letters arrived from Captain Campbell, conveying the gratifying assurance that all was well at Oodingherry. On approaching it, a large body of Khonds were observed within a few hundred yards of the camp, who as he advanced came forward with the evident intention of attacking his party. A canister shot from the howitzer failed to do any execution, but Captain Campbell gallantly charging with his little band of six troopers, killed ten men and took one prisoner, which so intimidated them, that they never afterwards ventured to show themselves in any numbers. The men who fell, resisted to the last, and one of the trooper's horses, or

rather a horse lent by Captain Campbell, was killed by an arrow.

Extract from General Orders by the Government of Madras, dated 4th March, 1837.

The Right Honourable the Governor in Council considers Mr. Stevenson, the Collector and Magistrate of Gangam, and Captain Campbell of the 41st Regiment N.I., at first Secretary to the Commission, and afterwards Assistant to the Collector and Magistrate of Gangam, to be entitled to high commendation for their zealous and efficient co-operations with the Honourable Mr. Russell on all occasions.

Extract from a Minute of the Honourable Mr. Russell, dated 19th January, 1838.

Captain Campbell has acquired a know-

ledge of the country and people of the Hill Tracts in the Gangam District under circumstances never likely to occur again ; and his local experience and personal influence with the different Hill chieftains give him an advantage over any other person who could be appointed to the situation of Principal Assistant to the Commissioner. My acquaintance with Captain Campbell commenced during the military operations in Kimedya, and all I have seen of him has been on service. I will not say that I have no private feelings towards him, for no one who knows his value as a public officer can do otherwise than feel an interest in him ; but I can with truth declare that the opinion I have stated is founded on public grounds only.

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation, Madras Government, dated 27th January, 1838.

The testimony borne by the Honourable

Mr. Russell to the merits of Captain Campbell, and the peculiar qualifications possessed by him for the projected office of Principal Assistant to the Commissioner in Goomsur, is as creditable to that officer as it is satisfactory to Government, and the recommendation submitted therein for his appointment to that office will receive favourable consideration.

*Extract from the Minutes of Consultation,
Madras Government, dated 14th March,
1838.*

The Right Honourable the Governor in Council has observed with much satisfaction the great success which has attended Captain Campbell's exertions to suppress the practice of Human Sacrifice in the Goomsur Maliahs, which is considered to be very creditable to that officer.

*Copy of a Letter from the Agent in Gan-
gam to the Chief Secretary of the Govern-
ment, of Madras dated 28th October, 1841.*

Sir,

I have the honour to request that you will lay before the Right Honourable the Governor in Council the accompanying letter dated the 26th inst., addressed to me by Major John Campbell, 41st Regiment, N.I., my Principal Assistant, intimating his wish to join his regiment in the event of its being destined for active service in China.

In submitting this communication, it may be permitted me to express my acknowledgment of the very valuable assistance I have received from Major Campbell during the last four years, and my regret should the exigencies of the public affairs in other quarters cause the temporary withdrawal of his service from this District.

Extract from a Letter from the Honourable Court of Directors, dated 17th June, 1846.

Consequent upon disturbances in the Golcondah District, and the great want of available troops in the Northern Division, the immediate movement of the 41st Regiment from Palaveram to Vizagapatam by sea was ordered. Notice the alacrity displayed on the occasion, which is considered highly creditable to Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, and the 41st Regiment, as well as to all the departments concerned.

Remarks by the Most Noble the Marquis of Tweedale, Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Madras.

Although all departments concerned

used their utmost to accelerate the embarkation of the corps, to Colonel Campbell, C.B., is due the credit of having the wishes of Government carried into effect so promptly, as he never made a difficulty from first to last.

Extract from a Letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, to Lieutenant-Colonel J. Campbell, C.B., Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, dated 12th February, 1849, with reference to the Campaign against Ungool.

I am directed to inform you that the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council considers that you have conducted the duty with which you were charged in a manner highly satisfactory; and His Lordship in Council desires me to convey to you the thanks of the Government for the

promptitude and decision with which this service has been performed.



Extract from a Letter from Secretary to the Government of India, with the Governor-General, dated 28th April, 1849.

In reply, I am directed to observe that the Governor-General considers this Report as a very sensible and most satisfactory one, and to request that you will convey to Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell the Governor-General's approbation of the firmness, skill and judgment which he has displayed in the performance of the arduous duties committed to him, and to assure him of the lively satisfaction which His Lordship has experienced in learning the full and happy results of his exertions.

From F. J. Halliday, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, to Lieutenant-Colonel J. Campbell, C.B., Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, dated 16th June, 1849.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 31st ultimo, with its enclosure, and in reply to assure you of the great regret with which the President in Council has learnt that the state of your health compels you to resign your appointment. During the period you have been at the head of the Agency for the Suppression of the Meriah sacrifice, the Government have had every reason to be satisfied with the progress which has been made towards the extinction of that rite, and equally so with the commencement which you have made in the adoption of measures for the suppression of the crime of female infanticide. Your proceedings have always

appeared to be judicious, and well adapted for effecting the great end in view, and from your continuance at the head of the Agency, the Government had confidently anticipated the early and complete extirpation of the Meriah rite within the limits of the tract of country under your supervision.

From George Couper, Esq., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, dated 3rd March, 1854.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of Colonel Campbell's letter, dated the 9th ultimo, and in reply to convey the expression of the satisfaction of the Governor-General in Council, at the results as therein reported of the operations of the Orissa Agency during the past season.

From F. F. Courtenay, Esq., Private Secretary to the Most Noble the Governor-General of India, to Major-General Campbell, C.B., dated 11th April, 1855.

Lord Dalhousie desires me to express to you his regret at learning that the state of your health is such as to cause the loss to the Government of India of services which he has frequently had occasion to appreciate so highly, and approve so cordially, as those which you have rendered in the Hill Tracts of Orissa.

The following observations are extracted from a despatch from the Honourable the Court of Directors, dated 14th June, 1854, and were forwarded to the Head-Quarters of the Agency, after my departure, by the Secretary to the Government of India, who stated that the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, felt assured that the Agency

would receive with satisfaction this approving testimony emanating from the highest authority.

“ In conducting the operations, and dealing with the rude inhabitants of the country, the officers of the Agency have experienced no ordinary difficulties, and appear to have shewn a wise discretion and a clear perception of the best method to secure success. They have maintained an attitude of firmness, without unnecessary resort to forcible measures. They have calmed angry feelings by conciliation, and have opposed rational persuasion to popular prejudice and error. They have substituted confidence by temperate explanation in personal conferences. The means of conciliation have been so well directed in the majority of instances, as not only to overcome the opposition, but to obtain the co-operation of the leading men.

“ Viewing the Meriah operations as a whole, they have been highly successful,

and are creditable to the officers concerned ; nor is it in measures of repression alone that we see cause for present satisfaction and future hope.

“ It is obvious that the germs of an ultimate civilization have been planted in the country, and we may entertain a confident hope that the advance of the population towards a higher social condition, will be in an accelerated ratio of progress.”

Human Sacrifices in Orissa.

*Extracted from “Friend of India,”
dated September 28th, 1854.*

All over India the warfare against the darker crimes is everywhere proceeding, and everywhere successful. Mr. Gubbins at Agra, Mr. Montgomery at the Punjab, and Mr. C. Raikes everywhere, are weaning the people from their habit of infanticide. Though thuggee by poisoning still flou-

ishes, thuggee in its traditional form may be considered almost extinct. Captain Hervey at Bombay pursues the criminal tribes who wander over the Western Presidency. Mr. Jackson in Bengal is enlarging the sphere of his operations against the Dacoits, and his hands will speedily be strengthened. Finally Colonel Campbell reports from Orissa the almost entire suppression of the practice of offering human victims, once as prevalent in Khondistan as in Carthage. In every one of these cases it must be remembered that the crime has been attacked by a special agency, armed with exceptional powers, and backed by laws which recognize the principle, that crime is deserving of punishment and not of impunity.

Hitherto the difficulties in the way of the Government of India have been almost entirely moral. Thuggee as well as infanticide have flourished almost entirely through the deadness of the moral sense, and of the natural affections. They were not regarded

as crimes by those who committed them, and like drunkenness in England, required preventive, even more than retributive legislation. In Bombay, the difficulty with the criminal races is the hereditary character of the tribes, who, like the gipsies in Europe, consider theft and fortune-telling as their natural occupations, the work they were born to do. Even in Bengal, the great cause of dacoity is the cowardice of the people, who are afraid either to cut down the dacoit, or to bear testimony against him. In Orissa, there were, in addition to these moral impediments to improvement, a physical one of no small magnitude. The Khonds are not only dead to all sense of their crime, and confident that it is directly sanctioned by the deity, but they also dwell in fastnesses, which it is scarcely possible to invade. The moral obliquity which protects the White-boy in Ireland, and the physical circumstances which guard the banditti in Calabria, are here united, and in their most

impracticable form. Legislation is useless among a people without the pale of law. Threats are absurd where they cannot be enforced even by a campaign. Bribery is powerless when the people believe a crime to be their greatest earthly gain, and moral suasion seems impracticable when applied to races who would consider a Missionary an acceptable offering to the Gods. The British Government, if placed in such circumstances, would probably employ force, as it has done on the coast of Africa, or let crime and people perish together, as in some parts of the continent of Australia. The Indian Government has not adopted either course. It has neither shut its eyes to a fearful crime, or attempted to bring wild tribes back to humanity by wholesale slaughter. A succession of Agents, trained in the school of Indian Politicals, have, for twenty-five years, steadily brought the moral influence derived from irresistible physical strength to bear upon the crime.

We have no intention of passing again over ground already familiar to our readers. Still less are we about to re-open the controversy as to which of three able officers may have obtained the greatest measure of personal success. We confine ourselves strictly to an analysis of the measures adopted for the suppression of the crime, and the degree of success that has been attained. The infected district stretches down the coast from the borders of the Orissa mountains far into Madras, over a territory as large as Wales. The country, itself semi-independent, forms part of two Presidencies, and it was not till 1845 that the Government centralized their operations by the creation of a separate agency.

From that moment the practice of human offerings rapidly declined. Every clan obeys its own chief, and every chief found it advantageous not to be at war with the great Empire beyond his borders. Here was at once a ground of influence. Every

chief was informed that his favour from the British Government, depended entirely upon his efforts for the suppression of human offerings. The majority consented, but their promises were broken, and the people, who are convinced their temporal welfare depends upon the practice, were as indignant as Tetzal when his indulgences were denounced. In some districts they became turbulent. Their chiefs were protected from their wrath, their country was opened by rough jungle paths, and they themselves were overawed by bodies of troops traversing their most inaccessible jungles. In other districts, numbers of children purchased for slaughter, are intended to labour as slaves, and the purchasers fancied they would lose money while incurring vengeance from above. Their fears were quieted, and as soon as sound guarantees were obtained for the victims' lives, the boys were left to labour. In some places again, young women were retained by the chiefs as concubines, and

afterwards sacrificed to the gods. The chiefs were persuaded to marry them, and thus put an end to all danger of their lives.

All victims preparing for sacrifice were demanded, and usually conceded, and during 1852-53, in only one instance was it necessary to employ the ultima ratio of force. Even in this case Colonel Campbell was attacked before he permitted his men to fire, and this solitary act of severity has produced the best effects. The determination of the Government, maintained for half a generation, the incessant visits to the hills, and the surveillance which amid a passive or discontented population is almost marvellous, have convinced the mountaineers that resistance is impossible. Right or wrong, with their creed or against their creed, the practice must be abandoned. It is abandoned accordingly. In Boad where the slaughter of children was carried to an extent we are almost afraid to record, where bits of flesh cut from the

living man were strewed on the field as a miraculous manure, where the land, so to speak, was guanoed with human blood, the practice has ceased to exist. In the Chinna Kimedya mountains, it is also suppressed, and Colonel Campbell thus records the existing sentiment of the people:—

“ Each chief was invited freely to express his sentiments on this important subject, which many did without hesitation, saying, that when we first came among them they were like beasts in the jungle, doing as their fathers had done before them; they now clearly comprehended that our only object in coming was to stop human sacrifice; not a fowl or any thing else was taken, not even a fence was injured by the people of the camp, their fields produced crops as good as formerly, and sickness was not more prevalent; it was no use resisting the orders of the Sircar; their Meriahs had been all removed, moreover they cost much

money, and they were now of one mind determined never more to have anything to do with human sacrifice. In two or three places it was asked, 'what shall we say to the deity?' they were told to say whatever they pleased, when the spokesman repeated the following formula. 'Do not be angry with us, O Goddess! for giving you the blood of beasts instead of human blood, but vent your wrath upon that gentleman who is well able to bear it; we are guiltless.' "

Nor is that all. The very source of the crime has been attacked. The people have become convinced that famine does not follow the abolition of the practice. They have been relieved of a severe money pressure caused by the purchase of the victims. They are entering more and more into the commerce of the plains, and are cultivating every year a wider breadth of ground. Finally, we would fain believe that degraded as these tribes have been, the natural

instinct which forbids the shedding of unnecessary blood, and the natural affection which makes men guard their young, are recovering their force. To sum up, in eighteen years a crime worse than any known in Europe has been eradicated—twelve hundred and sixty human beings have been preserved from a horrible death—an entire people has been induced to forego a crime sanctioned alike by antiquity and by superstition—and a district as large as Wales has been raised a whole grade in the career of civilization. All this has been effected by a Government declared to be oppressive, and by the class whom India honours, and England stigmatizes as Political.

We have but one word to add. Colonel Campbell has been concerned in these operations from the first. His firm gentleness has made them successful in the end. He has spent no small portion of a life away from civilization, and in a scene where his efforts have been honoured only by philan-

thropists. Had he destroyed in battle the number he has saved from immolation, he would have received honours, which should not be denied only because of his modest appreciation of his own success.

THE END.

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