

**THE KHOND AGENCY AND THE CALCUTTA
REVIEW: BEING A REPLY IN REFUTATION OF
THE MISREPRESENTATIONS AND DISTORTIONS
OF FACTS, CONTAINED IN SEVERAL ARTICLES
ON KNOND AFFAIRS, PUBLISHED IN NOS. IX,
XI, XV AND XX OF THE CALCUTTA REVIEW**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 97806494194

The Khond Agency and the Calcutta Review: Being a Reply in Refutation of the Misrepresentations and Distortions of Facts, Contained in Several Articles on Knond Affairs, Published in Nos. IX, XI, XV and XX of the Calcutta Review by Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

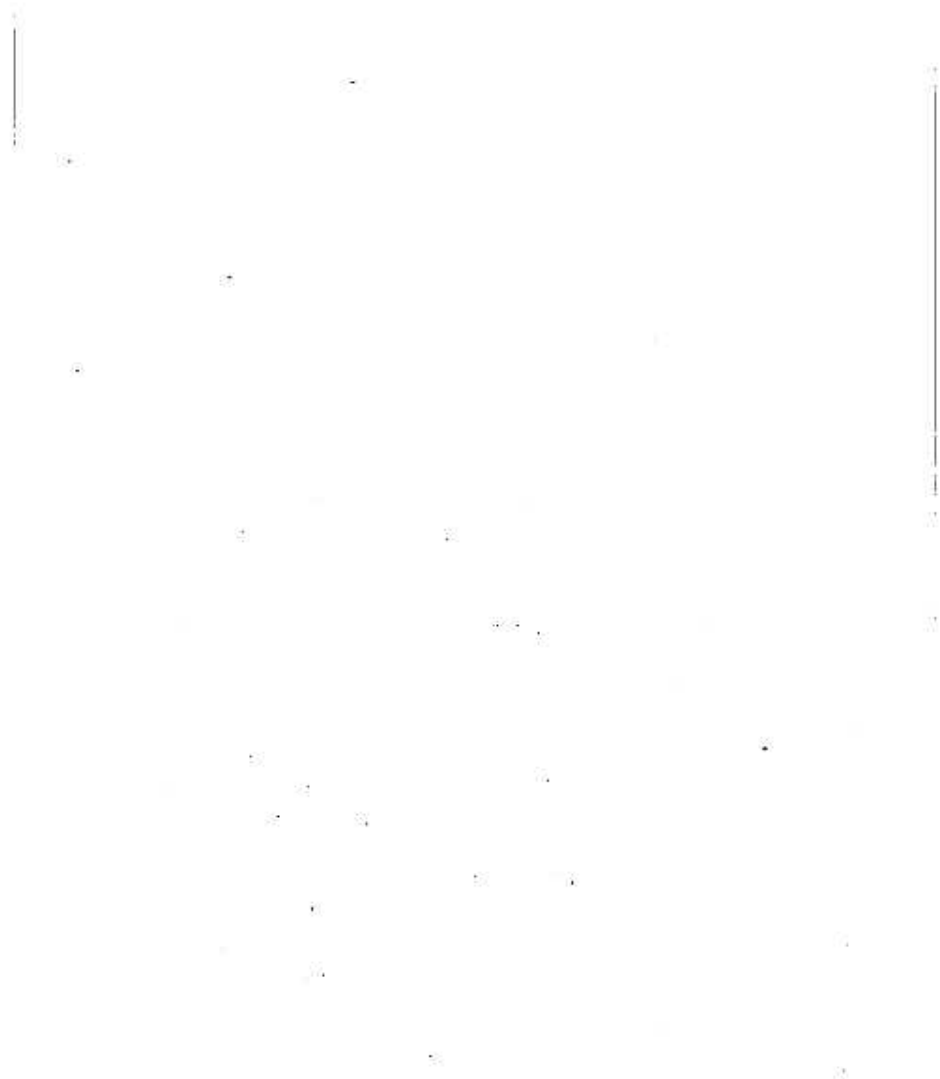
www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS

**THE KHOND AGENCY AND THE CALCUTTA
REVIEW: BEING A REPLY IN REFUTATION OF
THE MISREPRESENTATIONS AND DISTORTIONS
OF FACTS, CONTAINED IN SEVERAL ARTICLES
ON KNOND AFFAIRS, PUBLISHED IN NOS. IX,
XI, XV AND XX OF THE CALCUTTA REVIEW**

PREFACE.

THE *Calcutta Review* has from time to time contained a series of articles, under various headings, treating of the progress of affairs with the Government Agency for the suppression of Meriah Sacrifices among the Hill tribes of Orissa, which, though professedly based on official documents, nevertheless abound in partial and erroneous statements and distortions of facts, their object being to exalt the character and justify the measures of Captain MacPherson, to the prejudice of others. These however would have remained unnoticed but for an article which appeared in the XX Number of the *Review* in which the character and measures of officers now connected with that Agency are so slanderously assailed, and truth so completely sacrificed, as to induce some public refutation. Hence the present pamphlet. No pretension whatever is made to literary merit. But in reference to the facts stated, and the conclusions deduced therefrom, the most searching examination is earnestly invited. Should the Reviewer, or any other party, see fit to notice this pamphlet, it is hoped that in any objections or counter-statements that may be offered in reply, all vague generalities will be avoided, and a specific statement given of the time, place, and date of each occurrence adverted to.



PART I

So much has of late been said and written respecting the various, and, in some degree, conflicting plans and operations for the abolition of human sacrifice in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, that, but for the sake of truth, and fair dealing, we should not have felt inclined again to request attention to it. We unfeignedly regret the necessity that has been forced upon us; and our regret is the more painful, when we reflect on the character and position of the parties to whom, by the force of truth, we are in this instance constrained to be out and out, most unequivocally, though most reluctantly opposed. Honesty forbids us to write as if we were ignorant of the authorship of the articles in question; and while we lament that such a one should have so far forgotten the rights of his neighbour, we unhesitatingly asseverate that the tale of Goomsoor affairs contained in No. XX of the *Calcutta Review*, is one elaborate fabrication of exaggerations and misrepresentations. It is painful to write thus; but when the writer boasts of having had all the official documents connected with Goomsoor affairs placed at his disposal, it is difficult to imagine how he could have been ignorant of the true state of affairs—unless indeed the papers relating to the period of which he writes, were withheld from him, and in that case it will be no easy matter to find an apology for his recklessness in writing so magniloquently and confidently, on a subject of which he could know—just nothing. “A man,” says Luther, “obliges himself to babble strange things without knowing what he says, when he undertakes a bad cause; we strike our foot against divine truth, and the divine word, when in compliance with the wishes of others, we bustle through a scene in which we have no just cause to appear.” Just so with the eloquent Reviewer. He has gone bustling through a scene with which he

could be but very imperfectly acquainted,—ever and anon waxing laboriously eloquent, uttering strange things without knowing what he said or whereof he affirmed. This is the most charitable conclusion to which his fine writing conducts us. He has warmly espoused the cause of Captain MacPherson; and seems determined at all risks to give him a triumphant “progress,” if not through the streets of Rope, through the pages of the *Calcutta Review*. And he must be adorned, for the show; laurels must bedeck the hero’s brow; and, if these are not to be found among the “glorious blossoms” of which the “freshening glow and budding promise of a genial spring,” had erst awakened a joyful anticipation, the achievements of others must be made to furnish them. To him—to him alone must be ascribed the merit of having abolished the Meriah, and tamed the inhabitants of Khondistan. All must stand aside that he may receive the honor due to the discoverer of the “grand central principle” for the abolition of the horrid rite of human sacrifice. “Peace and justice!” What a glorious combination! What an inestimable boon to any people! And yet, strange as it may appear, it does not seem that any of our hero’s predecessors had ever dreamt of the benefits to be derived from the preservation of the one, or the wise administration of the other. All that any of them ever did “does not amount to, does not approximate, does not even come within sight of, the specific use and application of the peculiar scheme of justice propounded by Captain MacPherson.” But alas! “The best laid schemes o’ mice and men, gang aft a’ glee.”

Let there be no reflections on the *sohemers*. It is patent to the commonest understanding that, had the Government let our hero alone—or rather had not General Dyce, in the exercise of a ruthless despotism, removed him from the scene of action, “there is scarcely any reasonable ground for doubt that long ere now the horrid rites of female infanticide, and human sacrifice, would have been abolished throughout the larger portion of the Khond territories.” Not that the labours of others are to be wholly despised. Among them are to be found “men endowed with noble and generous feelings”; and, albeit their plans and processes, when “fairly tried,—weighed in the balances of experiment,” were found wanting, “they helped to shew how very deeply the ab-

horrent rite of the Meriah sacrifice had struck its roots into the physical, social, and moral being of the Khond tribes hitherto visited;" and thus served to enhance the merit of our Indian Dejoces, who, by "an admirable combination of prudence, conciliation and firmness," was able, in so brief a period, to produce among them such marvellous results. Honour to whom honour is due; "and as we endeavoured to do ample justice to these predecessors in the work—indeed ampler justice than we have any reason to suppose had ever been publicly rendered to them before—we shall now pursue an impartial course with reference to their successor."* We are assured by the Reviewer that his "earnest desire has been throughout to do the fullest justice to all parties so far as the authentic materials within our reach could possibly avail us." &c. &c.

Charity—well stretched—would lead us to hope that the Reviewer then had never seen the following extract from a minute of the Honorable Mr. Russell dated 19th January 1838.

"Para 10. Captain Campbell has acquired a knowledge of the country and people of the hill tracts in the Ganjam 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 Kimedey, 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: and I am confident that, as such, His Lordship will pardon it, although perhaps not strictly regular, should the arrangement take place, I would recommend that Captain Campbell's services be considered available in all parts of the District, and that he should be employed as described in a previous para—retaining at the same time the immediate charge of the Corps of Peons."

* Calcutta Review, No. XV. page 13.

Or this extract from the minutes of consultation under 'date the 27th January 1838.

"Para 4. The testimony borne in this Para to the merits of Captain Campbell, and the peculiar qualifications possessed by him for the projected office of Principal Assistant to the Commissioner, 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 (should the proposed arrangement be sanctioned by the Government of India,) when Mr. Inglis the Sub-Collector in Ganjam shall either be promoted or leave the district."

Or the following extract of a general letter from the Honorable Court of Directors dated 8th July 1840, No. 5.

"We are much gratified at the success which has attended the efforts of Mr. Bannerman and Captain Campbell to put down the atrocious practice of human sacrifices in the Khond Villages on the borders of these Collectorates, by which already not only a large number of lives have been saved, but there is much reason to believe that at least in those parts where our power is the most understood, an effectual check has been placed on the future performance of these barbarous rites—Of the general course which has been pursued by the Local Officers, which is strictly in accordance with the instructions contained in paras 11 to 19 of our Despatch dated 21st November, No. 17—1838, we entirely approve."

In the opinion of the Reviewer however, all that such men ever accomplished were but "twilight gropings—abortive but well meant experiments." Let us hear himself. "On the 15th December 1841, he (Captain MacPherson) proceeded on his journey to the Khond country. Thither for the present, we shall not follow him. His labours in the Khond cause, we consider of far too great importance to admit of being dismissed with a slight or superficial sketch. From the great and unexpected success which attend them, as well as from certain *marked* and *original* features by which they were distinguished, alike in principle and mode of operation, we have no hesitation in declaring that they constitute a *new* and *distinctive* epoch of their own, in the history of Government measures for the abolition of the Meriah sacrifice. With

Lieutenant MacPherson's appointment, we consider that the *first era* of comparative ignorance, twilight groping, abortive but well meant experiments, and really philanthropic but somewhat disheartening conclusions, terminated; and with his appointment we, in like manner, consider that the *second era* of maturer knowledge, fuller and more steady light, more skilful and successful experiments, and equally philanthropic but more cheering conclusions, commenced. The narrative therefore, of this *second* and more hopeful epoch we purposely reserve for a separate place in a future number."

And this, we are told, is doing ampler justice to such men than had ever been done before. Is this the Reviewer's idea of justice when he dilates upon its administration, as the grand means of reclaiming barbarians? Or, does it change its nature when administered among the more civilized tribes of our race?

It was in 1836-37 during our Military operations in Upper and Lower Goomsoor, that the cruel rite of immolating human beings was first brought to light among the neighbouring hill tribes. Captain Millar of the 43d Regiment M. N. I., succeeded in rescuing 12 victims, and his services were thus acknowledged by the Madras Government.

"Captain Millar will realize in his own mind an ample reward for his most commendable conduct in having rescued 12 victims destined for these horrid sacrifices; as the gratifying reflection of having been the means of saving so many human beings from a cruel and untimely death, cannot fail at all times to be a source of genuine happiness to him; the discretion however with which he continued to effect his humane purpose is entitled to the warmest and most unqualified approbation of Government."

That most talented Officer, Mr. Russell, to whose judicious management the Madras Government had entrusted the conduct of affairs in Goomsoor, was the first who brought the subject of human sacrifice among the Khonds prominently to the notice of Government. He then suggested the propriety of adopting certain measures, amongst others the selection of a suitable agent, for staying this horrid evil. To adopt the language of the Reviewer—and most fully the sentiment expressed by it—"The recommen-