

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Madras DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	227.	Press
36-37		~~Mis.~~
Dated	25-2-1860.	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

17

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
for the month of February 1860.*

Read again letter from the Secretary to the Church Mission Society, dated 15th December 1859, No. 8 and recorded in Proceedings 21st December 1859, No. 1700.

No. 36. Read also the following letter from WILLIAM KNOX, Esq., Magistrate of Kishna District; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, dated 9th February 1860, No. 53.

1. In obedience to the Orders of Government, dated 21st December last, No. 1700, calling for a report on the circumstances mentioned in a letter from the Reverend F. N. Alexander Young on account of a festival at Ellúr, Mr. Melville my Head Assistant was at the place at the time, and I will now quote his letter* in extenso, he says.—

*Dated 31st January 1860.

“ 2. I would in the first place remark that this festival is not, as the Church Missionary correspondent seems to suppose, a thanksgiving for exemption from cholera, but on the contrary it is intended to appease the goddess and thus to avert cholera.

“ It is held from time to time in years in which that disease is prevalent and the last celebration of the festival took place three years ago. As far as I have been able to find out, it differed in no respect from that at present animadverted on.

“ 3. I would further remark that this festival will be found to have been celebrated in all the towns and most of the principal villages in the District with much the same details.

“ 4. This year the festival began on the third day after the Moharam, and my attention was first called to it by a sort of dispute between the Mussalmén and Hindús. The latter being in the habit of deluging with water the part of street in front of the small shrines of the goddess. The Mussalmen objected to this and the Hindús were directed to pour water moderately in front of their own houses only.

“ 5. The only other part of the festival seen by myself, was the procession described by Mr. Alexander. I cannot say that I saw any thing in it to call for the strong language used by that Missionary.

“ 6. There was a large crowd of people, some 6 or 8 of whom had the heads of buffaloes tied on their heads; there were also some baskets filled with what appeared to me to be the skins of sheep and also some baskets with their heads, the car described by Mr. Alexander, on which live animals were impaled I did not see, though I have since learnt that it was in the procession at the time, but was so low as to be concealed by the crowd. The people taking part in the ceremony seemed excited, but not more so than at any other festival, and considering their numbers, were orderly.

“ The number of sheep and cattle killed was large, but not nearly so great as Mr. Alexander makes them out to be. The number of buffaloes killed was according to the testimony of two of the principal directors of the festival, two in each street, in all four. The highest estimate is 24, judging from what I saw I should put 12 as the probable number. The number of sheep is uncertain, but between 4 and 5 hundred in all. As the Secretary to the Church Missionary Society observes this is “(at least according to our notions)” a large and unnecessary destruction of animal life, but if we held the same belief in the efficacy of the sacrifice as the sacrificers, we should probably think that exemption of cholera was cheaply purchased at the expense of some 4 or 5 hundred sheep and 11 or 12 buffaloes. The procession came through the large bazar along just the same road as the Pirlú in the Moharam festival, and in fact it is the only street in Ellúr in which a procession could, or is allowed to take place with the exception of a short street running at right angles to it.

“ If they left the high road and turned into any of the by-lanes they would come on private property and there would be endless disturbances,

“ There are two parties of Hindús who celebrate the Ammavarú festival, those of the East and West streets. They both carry on the festival independently of each other till the last

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
for the month of February 1860.*

"day, when they both join in the procession. As those of the East street turn into the large bazár at right angles to it, they meet those of the West street (which is a continuation of the bazár) and as disputes frequently arise as to who should go first, the Tahsildar had stationed some peons there to preserve the peace. There may have been other peons who being of the Hindú persuasion and off duty, joined in the procession, but if so, they did it in the exercise of their religion and not by order of the Tahsildar.

"I forgot to mention that in September when the dispute occurred between the Hindús and Mussalmen about pouring the water, some peons were stationed by my order to see my arrangements carried out, and to keep the peace.

"Any body who could be so wrong headed as to suppose that the peons were stationed to show that Government sanctioned this procession, would equally have supposed that the police men who were placed in the streets during the Chartist processions at home, were meant to show that Government approved of those demonstrations.

"But while Government does not sanction these processions, Government allows to every body Mussalmen or Hindú the free exercise of their religion so long as it does not interfere with the rights of other members of the community.

"Now as Elúr is a Hindú town the fact of the procession passing through the bazár injured no body. Mine was the only European house near which it passed, it did not pass within the 200 yards of any of the other houses.

"The road it took is the usual one not only for that procession but for all processions, Mussalmen or Hindú.

"With regard to the impalement of live animals, of which I heard for the first time in Mr. Alexander's letter, it is of course painful to think that any set of people should think such cruelties necessary to their religion. Had I known of it previously to the procession, I should have forbidden their being paraded through the town, but any orders I might have issued would have been powerless to prevent their doing it at some other time.

"As to the last paragraph of Mr. Alexander's letter, I have only to remark that the procession is no more dependent on the Collector's "mandate," than those of the Moharam and Dasara, and the "mandate" if passed would be a strange commentary on the terms of the proclamation issued by the Queen on assuming the Government of this country."

2. I would only observe that Mr. Melville appears to me to have acted judiciously in this business, the Police were used as Police to keep the peace and nothing more. It is to be observed that the Head of Police at the time was a Mahomedan and therefore very unlikely to support the Hindús in their proceedings particularly considering the quarrel about the water and the very natural objection raised by the Mahomedans to have their houses and shops daubed all over with mud alluded to by Mr. Melville in paragraph 4.

3. I was not before aware that live animals were ever impaled as described, I should at once have put a stop to this at Elúr and elsewhere had it been brought to notice, for nothing can justify such wanton cruelty. As, however, the matter is now before Government, I shall wait their orders. I would only suggest that Missionaries be advised to be more cautious than Mr. Alexander was. If the excitement raged so fiercely, he could have hoped to do little good, indeed he admits this and a thoughtless word spoken at random by any one of the crowd might have drawn down on him the anger of the mob, in which case the consequences might have been most serious in spite of the Police.

No. 37.

ORDER THEREON, 25th February 1860, No. 227.

Resolved that a copy of the above letter from the Magistrate of the Krishna District be furnished to the Secretary to the Church Mission Society in reference to his letter of the 15th December last.

*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Judicial Department,
for the month of February 1860.*

2. The Government consider the explanation submitted to be satisfactory. With regard, however, to the last paragraph of Mr. Knox's letter, he is informed that, although such ceremonies as that in question cannot be interfered with, whatever may be the number of animals sacrificed, provided they are put to death in the usual manner without any circumstances of cruelty, yet that such barbarities as the impaling of live animals are not for a moment to be tolerated, and must be altogether prohibited.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

8.3.59

Proceedings of the Madras Govt.

Read again letter from
the Secretary to the Church
Mission Society, dated 15
Decr. 1859 N^o 81. — Accepted in Proceedings,
21st Decr. 1859 N^o 1700.

Read also letter from the
Magistrate of the Krishna
District — Enter 9th February 1860, N^o 53.

Order — a copy of 25th Feb. 1860. No 227.
Resolved that the above letter from
the Magistrate of the Krishna District
be furnished to the Secretary to the Church
Mission Society in preference to his letter of
the 15th Decr. last.

2. The Govt. consider the explanation
submitted to be satisfactory. With re-
gard, however, to the last para. of Mr.
Finch's letter, he is informed that, altho'
such ceremonies as that in question can
not be interfered with, whatever may be
the number of animals sacrificed, pro-
vided they are put to death in the usual
manner without any circumstances of
cruelty, yet that such barbarities as
the impaling of live animals are not
for

I understand only 1 specimen was presented
 appears to me to have acted judiciously in this
 case. The Police were used as Police to keep the peace
 & nothing more. It is to be observed that the Head
 of Police & the Police were on the 1st of Feb. 1860
 particularly considering the quarrel about the water
 & the very natural objection raised by the Mahomedans
 to have their houses and shops closed all over with
 much attached to by Mr. Maclellan's party.
 I was not before aware that live animals
 were not impaled as described - I should at once have
 put a stop to this at Delhi & elsewhere had it been
 brought to notice for nothing can justify such wanton

29 Feb 60
 Judicial Department

From
 William Knox Esquire,
 Magistrate of Krishna District
 To J. Pycroft Esquire,
 Chief Secretary
 to Government
 Fort Saint George

Dated 24 February } 1860
 Received }
 No. 53

No. 251.

Submitting a Report
 in obedience to the Orders
 of Government dated 21st Decem-
 ber last No. 1700 on the Circumstan-
 ces stated in a letter from the
 Reverend Fr. Alexander,
 Young on account of a Festival
 at Ellore.

With an Order.

Nos 3rd Decem 1859 et 1859
 Jud. D. to Reg. 23rd March
 No. 8 of 1860
 Rep. to No. 184 of 1860

for a monument to be tolerated, and
 must be altogether prohibited.

[Signature]

The Secretary to the
 Church Mission Society. } Sept. 1860.
 "Magistrate of the Krishna District."

17 Feb 60
 30437

so perfectly we could have begun to do little good - indeed
the advice to the poor thoughtless, poor, ignorant and random
by any one of the crowd might have drawn down on him
the wrath of the Lord. A. P. 18. 9

Have the honor to be,

Yours most obedient servant

Wm. Lloyd Garrison