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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE

Government of Madras

Judicial

DEPARTMENT

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Orin. Bureau Coll. Office

25 June 1866

Jr

Ed. D. Thomas Esq.

Jr

Collector of Orin. Bureau

J. D. Hamilton Esq.

Secretary to Government

St. L. George

Sir,

I beg to submit, thinking they may be interesting to Government, a few facts regarding the Hill Fishes of the Belgherries, and to request the favorable consideration of Government, for a proposal I make as regards the same.

2. The three Chief tribes, (as Government are perhaps aware) on these hills are, the "Toda", "Borgher", and "Lodra" of the Toda.

there are ~~2000~~ in all - of the Burgers
about 1800 of the Stots too.

The origin and residence there,
of the Lodas, has never yet been traced.
Certain physiognomy, and some few
Customs, have led observers to fancy
they were remnants of an old Roman
Colony - others, that they are of the
Gothic or Irish Tribes - their language
has a few words like Latin; but
appears to be, in the opinion of the
German missionaries, Doctor Schmidt,
and other good linguists, an old
dialect of Latin, mixed up with
the Canarese of Abyssinia. They are
entirely pastoral, and cannot as
yet be induced to cultivate - the
other Tribes pay them a small
voluntary tribute, in grain - and they
market the hides made from their
Buffaloes.

(2)
The Burgers are early traced
to Abyssinia - they speak pure Canarese
and no dark are related to these
Hills about 200 years ago, probably
driven up by some oppression or
overpopulation below - the Burgers
are agricultural - and grow wheat,
Barley, and several other dry grains.
The Stots, about 600 in number in
villages are the men with the pattern
and artificers of the Hills - they
are a low and degraded set, filthy
in habits and person - yet thorough
and hard working - their language
is also a dialect of Canarese.

5. The only other Tribes, for
in number, are the Corunkers,
who live half wild in the woods on
the Hill sides - in small huts
occasionally on Rocks or fortresses.

(for safety from wild beasts), and
cultivate small patches (burnt
down in the woods), with the Hoe -
Collecting also Honey, wasp, and
wild fruits. They are drugged,
abused, and occasionally murdered,
by the other Tribes, as having the
power of witchcraft, and the "evil eye".
Mr. Burghen will meet ^{of them} one after
dark, if he can help it.
I have been endeavouring
for several years, to put a stop to
the Custom peculiar to the Hills,
and productive of much evil and
mischiefe. ^{1st} As at every funeral
used to sacrifice 20 and 30 fine
Buffaloes, worth, at an average,
20 Rupees each. the loss of property
was great. and the mode of sacrifice,
a brutal and savage one. the

animals

went from so
to 2000, and
going to the
party.

(3)
animals were clubbed, not to death,
but to inability to move, by a broken
spine, and then left to die in agony
with some difficulty. I have
persuaded the Todas to give
me their word & signature, willingly,
that in future only one, or two at
most, will be sacrificed at each
funeral. they would not drop it
entirely - but they have kept their
word as to the number, ^{not more than}
two; for more than 2 years, & appear
now glad of it. a D. will give a
similar waste of property (tho.
without cruelty) at a Burghen
funeral. A high Bamboo frame
is raised, 20 or 30 feet high - covered
with new good cloth, and set fire
to, it goes off in one short blaze.
I tried, without success, to get them
to

to burn their old clothes, and save the
new ones. after much talk, they agreed,
and promised me like the Todas,
to burn only 10 Rupees worth at each
funeral; and I learn from the
Lahirdan, and others, who have been
present as Spectators, that they
also have kept to their word.

6. 3. Custom still exists,
which I hope to stop, it is one of
the most evil, and ill healthy, and which
unfrequently leads the women to
destroy themselves, by opium (a sure
and common mode on the Hills).
after a woman is married, and - Burgher
even has children, if she is fancied
by another Burgher, he pays the
father or other relation, highly, she
is taken by force, Compelled to leave
her own home, and live as the wife -

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of another man - permanently, and
against her will, in most cases.
the Custom, an inveterate one,
causes endless quarrels, and often
death. Some of the head and most
respectable Burghers, have promised
me to discontinue it, and I
hope gradually to put an end
to it.

7. The 4th and worst, is
that of female infanticide, by
the Todas, long known to exist
and still, (I have reason to fear),
secretly and partially practised,
tho' outwardly denied by the Todas.
the few female children still
to be found in the Thimor, shows
that the habit tends to keep
their numbers down - as a consequence
of this evil, and the paucity of
females,

Todas
villages.

females, another social evil follows -
 one woman marries (like the old
 German Custom recorded by Lichten) all
 the brothers of a family. The mode
 of destroying the Zoda infant, if a
 female, is by exposing it the next
 morning at the door of the Cattle
 kraal, when fresh opened, the whole
 herd, half wild, rush over and annihilate
 the wretched infant. The Zoda
 lifting their own hand against
 it. I have argued with the Zoda in
 vain - they deny it - but still practice
 it partially; (I fear from Burgher
 and other information) I am trying
 to check it, by making each man
 report, and register, every successive
 woman - and produce the child, after
 some months, when under penalty
 of a fine for each omission.

I am not sure whether
 a law compelling
 not force which is an error

I have perhaps no warrant
 for compelling the register or
 enforcing the fine - but I see no
 other mode of checking it - and
 there are occasions, like this, when
 to effect a desirable object, one
 must go a little out of the line of
 Rules and Regulations, and
 incur a little responsibility for
 a great good.

What I would wish of
 is, to be permitted to promise 50 R (for a
 few years to come) for each female
 child, of 1 year old - as a sort of
 dowry or present - the cost to Government
 would be slight, and the object
 to the Zoda, considerable.

I have the honor to be
 Sir,
 Your Obedient Servant,
 P. J. Murray
 Collector

Cambridge
 25th June 1856

See letter from the Zoda
 to the Zoda 29 Dec 1854
 in B.D. Proc. 9 Jan 1855 -
 the whole of the Zoda is attached to
 the Zoda 29 Dec 1854

presented - but I am sure no
good in opposing those profane
children of the time - when there is
no proof that infanticide continues.

Take respect to the barbarous
custom of killing the little children.
We are surely liable to the law, for cruel-
ty to animals - & that it is not well
subject to enforce it at home - it

should be explained to them -

Wm. L. G. -

The people might perhaps
prohibit the cattle dogs
from - please

N^o 836

Extract from the Minutes of Consultation

Dated 7th August 1856.

Read the following letter from the
Collector of Coimbatore.

Here enter 25 June 1856 N^o 26

H
C
M
R

1. The Magistrate of
Coimbatore offers observations
upon the customs of the various
races inhabiting the Nilgherry
Hills. He remarks on the practice
among the Todas of sacrificing
Buffaloes. and on that of female
infanticide which he has
reason to fear is still secretly &
partially resorted to by that tribe
though

though outwardly claimed by them
With a view to the final sup-
pression of this atrocity he asks
to be permitted to promise, for
every 5 years, to come for
each female child of one
year old. as a sort of dowry
or present.

The Right Honorable
the Governor in Council
observes that the late Magistrate
of Malabar in a letter of 29th
December 1842, at which time
the whole of the Neilgherry Hills
was attached to the Malabar
District, gave it as his opinion
founded on the result of a
recent census, that Female
infanticide was no longer
practised among the Todas. The

Govt.

Govt are not prepared to offer
dowries for Female Children
when there is no proof that
infanticide continues. If there
be ground to believe that it
does the Magistrate should
detect a case and have the
parents punished.

3. The Governor in Council
considers that the custom of
sacrificing buffaloes should
not be tolerated even on its
present reduced scale. The
Magistrate should
~~continue his~~
~~endeavour to~~
~~suppress the~~
~~practice~~
The Magistrate should receive full
power to suppress the
practice of sacrificing buffaloes
if so barbarous
a practice
Police to prevent any further
cases of it.

Council

Cps
To the Collector of Coimbatore. Disp^d 7th

J. R. B. Smith

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