M.R.O. 1—33,000—16-10-29.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Political DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 410 Press ~~Mis.~~

Dated 30. 6. ~~1838~~

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 32. From G. F. EDMONSTONE, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, with the Governor General; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort Saint George, dated Allahabad, 8th June 1858, No. 1569.

Foreign Dept. SIR,

No. 32 dated 12th May.
„ 40 „ *25th* „

I have the honor to transmit, for the information of the Government of Fort Saint George, the accompanying copies of the letters noted in the margin, from the Resident at Hyderabad, regarding a suicide committed by the Rajah of Shorapore while he was under Escort en-route to Chingulpett.

2. It appears to the Governor General that Lieutenant Pictet, the Officer who commanded the Escort, is liable to severe censure for having left his Arms inside the small Tent in which the Prisoner was confined; and it is therefore requested that the Madras Government may be moved to bring the conduct of that Officer to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army to which he belongs, for such notice as His Excellency may think proper.

From Lieutenant Colonel CUTHBERT DAVIDSON, Resident at Hyderabad; to G. F. EDMONSTONE, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, with the Governor General, dated 12th May, No. 32 of 1858.

Political Dept. SIR,

Dated 11th May 1858.

I have the honor to forward, for the information of the Right Honorable the Governor General, the accompanying copy of a letter from the Officer Commanding the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force and of its enclosure, reporting the circumstances under which the Raja of Shorapore shot himself in Camp at Ambarreepett, while en-route to Chingleput, to undergo his sentence of Transportation.

From Major General J. C. COFFIN, Commanding Hyderabad Subsidiary Force; to Lieutenant Colonel CUTHBERT DAVIDSON, Resident at Hyderabad, dated 11th May 1858.

SIR,

I have the honor to forward copy of a letter from Lieutenant Pictet, announcing the particulars of the death of the late Rajah of Shorapore.

I have directed the return of the Detachment to Secunderabad and the body of the Rajah to be brought in.

On arrival here a Court of Inquest will assemble to enquire into the particulars connected with his sad accident.

I beg you will let me know if you have any particular instructions regarding the disposal of the body.

From Lieutenant F. PICTET, 49th Regiment, N. I.; to Captain C. ROPER, Assistant Adjutant General, dated 11th May 1858.

SIR,

It is my painful duty to report, for the information of the Officer Commanding the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force, that the Rajah of Shorapore under my charge has shot himself. The circumstances are these: I had my own Revolver loaded and on arrival on the ground, I had the first Tent pitched and the Dooly with the prisoner therein placed, as I was only awaiting the remainder of the Tents, I placed my Sword, Belt and Pistol in the Tent, with the intention of remaining in the Tent most of the day and night. The Sentries both in the Tent were present, when I placed my Arms there, and were personally and particularly warned about them. I afterwards visited the Tent two or three times and found him sitting in the Dooly. It is now stated by one of the Sentries that he left his Dooly while eating his Rice, and turning himself in another direction deliberately opened my Holster, and took the Pistol, and has just shot himself through the stomach.

He is still living in a very lingering and ghastly state. The Ball has penetrated right through the body and the shot went out of the Tent.

The Sentry who must have been standing at not more than one pace from him, says: he never saw him approach my Arms and take the Pistol, nor did he see or hear him, cocking my Pistol, although he was actually facing the same Sentry at the time, which there can be no doubt about from the position, I found him in myself.

I have placed in confinement, both Sentries of course.

I am very sorry to say that the Dresser is absent with my leave having received orders very late last night, he could not prepare himself in time.

I shall await anxiously for instructions.

Before despatching my letter, I visited the Prisoner and found him quite dead.

From Lieutenant Colonel CUTHBERT DAVIDSON, Resident at Hyderabad; to G. F. EDMONSTONE, Esq, Secretary to the Government of India, with the Governor General, Foreign Department, Allahabad, dated Hyderabad Residency, 25th May, No. 40 of 1858.

SIR,

With reference to my Despatch of the 12th Instant, No. 32*, I have the honor to forward, for submission to the Right Honorable the Governor General, the accompanying copy of Proceedings of a Court of Inquest which was held on the body of the Rajah of Shorapore by order of the Officer Commanding the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force.

**Intimating the death of the Rajah of Shorapore. Dated 12th May 1855.*

2. I have been informed that the two Sepoys who were standing Sentry on the Rajah when he shot himself, have been tried by a General Court Martial and sentenced to dismissal from the Service.

Copy of Proceedings of a Court of Inquest assembled at Secunderabad, by order of Major General J. C. Coffin, Commanding Hyderabad Subsidiary Force on the 12th day of May 1858, to investigate the cause of death of Venketahpah Naick, a Convict, and late Rajah of Saorapore.

PRESIDENT.

Lieutenant Colonel C. Macleod, 42nd Regiment, N. I.

MEMBERS.

Captain T. Crewe, 7th Regiment, N. I.
Captain C. J. A. Deane, 42nd Regiment, N. I.
Captain J. Jenkins, 42nd Regiment, N. I., Interpreter to the Court.

The Court proceeds to examine a body said to be that of Venketapah Naik, and find a wound apparently of a Gunshot in the Chest right through the body. No other marks of violence were visible.

The following Jewels were found on the body, *viz.*, 3 small Gold Ear-rings with a few small Pearls, two plain Gold Rings, and 1 Gold Tartoa, all of little value.

The Court proceeds to hear evidence.

1st Witness. Lieutenant F. Pictet, 49th Regiment, N. I., called into Court and deposes as follows:

I commanded an Escort in charge of a Convict Venketapah Naik, late Rajah of Shorapore, en-route to Chengleput, whose body is now before the Court, I arrived at Umbarreeput at about 8 A. M., on the 11th May 1858, and immediately detailed a Guard of 1 Havildar, 1 Naick and 13 Privates of the 10th Regiment, N. I., and directed 1 Sentry to be placed on the Arms of the Escort, and two over the Convict, the latter with loaded Arms.

I removed the handcuffs from the Convict's hands, he was sitting in a Dooly with his legs outside in irons.

The Sentries were posted one on each side of the Dooly. On the arrival of the first Tent, I ordered it to be pitched immediately in rear of the pile of Arms the Convict and Dooly were removed into the Tent, the latter in the centre of the Tent lengthways between the two poles. The Convict was seated in his Dooly, on the right side as you enter the Tent in the same position as above described. The Sentries were posted as before facing inwards towards the Dooly. The breadth of the Tent did not admit of either of the Sentries being more than half a pace from the sides of the Dooly, I left the Tent and returned shortly afterwards with a Sword and loaded Pistol attached to the Sword Belt, in a Holster, and placed them against the pole at the lower end of the Tent on the right side as you enter resting also against the pole of the Dooly, at least two paces from where the Convict was sitting, and being in Irons, the Convict could not have reached the Pistol in less than 4 or 5 paces, and must have passed in front or rear of one of the Sentries and in view of both, on placing my Arms in the Tent I personally warned the Sentries over the Convict, in presence of the Havildar and Naik of the Guard to take care of them, and to remember that the Pistol was loaded I then left the Tent, visited the Convict twice during the forenoon, the 2nd time about 11½ when I asked him if he had had his Rice. He replied "No" and twice asked me to go into the Tent which I did not do, he was seated as before described in the Dooly. About half an hour after this, I was aroused by my Servants who stated that a shot had been fired in the Convict's Tent, I was at this time asleep in the Bungalow, I at once proceeded to the Tent and found the Convict lying on the ground, on his back with his feet towards the door, and his head close by the flap of the further end of the Tent, my Pistol was lying on the ground near his left hand, he had a wound in his Chest and was lying insensible, he breathed for about half an hour and died. I questioned the Sentries as to how this had occurred, but they could or would give no account of it, and I consequently placed them in confinement.

The Witness retires.

2nd Witness. Serjeant A. Mathewson, 4th Battalion Artillery, is called into Court and deposes as follows:

I was ordered to accompany the Escort in charge of the late Rajah of Shorapore commanded by Lieutenant Pictet, 49th Regiment N. I., yesterday the 11th May, we marched to Umbarrepett, I was in the Soldier's Bungalow about 11 A. M., I heard the report the Fire-arms, which proceeded from the direction of the Convict's Tent, I went immediately to the Tent, and saw the Convict lying the ground with his arms extended and feet towards the door of the Tent, a Pistol was lying near his right side, blood was gushing from a wound in his Chest, I observed a hole in the back part of the Tent, and pointed it out to Lieutenant Pictet, the body was raised and it appeared that the Ball had passed right through it. Shortly after this Convict expired. The body now before the Court, I recognize as that of the Convict, the late Rajah of Shorapore. There were two Sentries with loaded Muskets over the Convict in the Tent; one on each side of the Dooly facing inwards, I measured the distance from the door of the Dooly where the Prisoner ought to have been to the place where the Officer's Arms were, and found it to be two paces, the Convict could not have reached them without connivance or neglect on the part of the Sentries.

The Witness retires.

3rd Witness. Naik Benee Perchard of the 11th Regiment Native Infantry is called into Court, and deposes as follows :

I was Naik of a Guard of 1 Havildar and 12 Privates over the late Rajah of Shorapoor yesterday morning at Umbarreepett, I posted two Sentries with loaded Muskets, one on each side of the Dooly in which the Rajah was seated on the right side of it as you entered the Tent. The Sentries were facing inwards towards the Dooly, they were cautioned in my presence to take care of the Officer's pistol which was loaded, as well as his Sword which was standing against the rear pole of the Dooly. Close to one of the Bamboos of Tent, I relieved the 1st Sentries about 10 A. M., and the same orders were communicated to them their names are Mahomed Ukbar on the right, and Mahomed Tippoo on the left of the Dooly, facing inwards. I went to sleep after this close to the Dooly near the door of the Tent; at about 11 A. M., I was roused by the Sentries calling out "he has shot himself! he has shot himself" !! On getting up I saw the Convict lying on his back, with his head towards the rear of the Tent, and his feet towards the Door, blood was flowing from his Chest, I did not hear the report of fire Arms. About a quarter of an hour after this the Rajah died, I recognize the body now before the Court, as that of the late Rajah of Shorapore, when under Sentries in the Fort he had leg Irons on, but not hand cuffs, I questioned the Sentries as to how he had shot himself, both stated that they did not know any thing about it, that they heard the shot and that was all, without their connivance or negligence the Rajah could not possibly have got at the Pistol, they were immediately put into confinement by order of the Officer commanding the Escort.

The Witness retires.

4th Witness. Mahomed Ukbar, Private No. 1230, B. Company, 10th Regiment N. I., is called into Court and deposes as follows.

I was posted at 10 A. M., yesterday, the 11th May 1858, at Umbareepet as Sentry over the late Rajah of Shorapore in his Tent, I was on the right side of the Dooly and Mahomed Tippoo on the left side both facing inwards and with loaded Arms. When the Prisoner moved out of his Dooly we were ordered to watch him, he was not permitted to go outside the Tent, the Naik warned us, when posted to take care of the Officer's Sword and Pistol, which latter was loaded, both were placed against the rear pole of the Dooly about the centre of it, the Pistol was in a Holster attached to the Sword belt. The Prisoner's, *i. e.*, the Rajah's Servants brought his food about 11 A. M., put it down in the Tent and went away. At this time the Rajah was seated on my left hand and a little to the rear not in the Dooly, I called out to the Naik of the Guard that the Convict's food was come, the Naik was asleep at the other side of the Tent near the door, getting no reply from the Naik, I moved two paces towards him at that instant, I heard a shot, and looking round, saw the Convict had shot himself, and was lying on the ground struggling, his head towards the rear of the Tent and his feet towards the door about five paces from it.

The Witness retires.

5th Witness. Mahomed Tippoo, Private, No. 1114, B. Company, 10th Regiment N. I., is called into Court and deposes as follows :

I was Sentry over the late Rajah of Shorapore at Umbarreepett yesterday, the 11th May 1858. About 10 A. M. I was posted on the left hand side of the Rajah's Dooly as you entered the Tent, the Prisoner was seated on the left and rear of the Sentry on the opposite side of the Dooly; his legs in Irons, but without handcuffs, his servant brought the Prisoner's food about 11 A. M., I called out to Mahomed Ukbar the opposite Sentry to rouse the Naik who was asleep one pace only from where I was standing, he called out to the Naigues, but receiving no reply advanced two paces towards him, at this instant I heard the report of a Pistol, and on looking found the Prisoner struggling on the ground with the blood flowing from his Chest, the Pistol was lying near his head. When posted our orders were to take great care of the Officer's Sword and Pistol which were standing against the end of the Dooly towards the rear of the Tent, the Pistol being loaded.

The Witness retires.

6th Witness. Assistant Surgeon R. Atkinson, 1st Royal Regiment, being called into Court, deposes as follows :

I examined the body of the late Rajah of Shorapore, now before the Court, and discovered a gunshot wound in his Chest on the left side in the direction of the heart, passing right through the body which must have caused almost immediate death, the body appears otherwise healthy as far as external appearances go.

The Witness retires.

Verdict. The Court is of opinion that Venkutapah Naik, late Rajah of Shorapore, committed suicide by shooting himself with a Pistol through the Chest and heart.

SECUNDERABAD, *12th May* 1858.

(Signed) C. McLEOD, Lieutenant-Colonel,
42nd Regiment N. I., President.

(„) F. CREWE, Captain,
7th Regiment N. I.

(„) C. A. DEANE, Captain,
42nd Regiment, N. I.

(„) THOMAS JENKINS, Captain,
42nd Regt. N. I., Interpreter to the Court.

MEMORANDUM.

In reply to enquiry, the Pistol and its Holster were sent to the undersigned.

There is a stiff leather flap covering to the Holster secured by a leather strap fastening to a brass button. It would, therefore, take some *little* time for even the Owner to take out the Pistol but for one circumstanced as the Rajah was, unfamiliar with the Weapon and its case, and agitated and excited as he could not but have been to some degree, the operation of the drawing the Pistol could not have been so instantaneous as the Sentries would have it appear. Mr. Pictet, states that his reason for leaving his Arms in the Prisoner's Tent, was because he went to the Bungalow only till the Tents should come up, that he could not go to the Bungalow straight from the Prisoner's Tent, and therefore left his Arms where he knew he could find them immediately, which he had no hesitation in doing as two Sentries were over the Prisoner, and a Havildar and Naik and 9 Sepoys besides inside the Tent.

(Signed) R. BURTON, Major,
Depy. Judge Advocate Genl. H. S. Force.

(True Copy.)
(Signed) C. ROPER, Captain,
Actg. Asst. Adjt. Genl. H. S. Force.

(True Copy of a Copy.)
(Signed) A. R. THORNHILL,
1st Assistant Resident.

(True Copies.)
(Signed) G. F. EDMONSTONE,
Secy. to the Govt. of India, with the Govr. Genl.

No. 33. ORDER THEREON, No. 410; dated 30th June 1858.

Ordered to be referred, through the Military Department, to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. J. A. Wilson.

No 140

Ordered to be referred, through the Military Department, to His Excy the Commander in Chief of the Army.

Fort St George
30 June, 1858

To the Military Department. Despd 8th