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ART. I.—*Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly, May, 1849.*

As a fruit of the Spirit of Christ in the church, and of the motions of that Spirit towards its proper manifestation, the Annual Reports of our Board of Missions are signs of the times. These yearly statements of the aims and results of our activity in the natural and legitimate direction of true Christianity, indicate a method and a scale of operations, honorable to the zeal and wisdom of the Board and its agents, and gratifying to the church; and while these operations are far behind the ability of the church and perhaps behind our advancement in some other things, they come from the spirit of the gospel, and are destined, as the gospel prospers, to a vast enlargement. While the same is true of the other Boards of our church, we would here offer a few hints concerning the ground of our system of Domestic Missions, for the sake of the bearing of our remarks on the nature and extent of our work.

thoroughly reorganised, and prelacy became the order of the day. We are thus brought to

The Third Period, extending from the council of Nice to that of Trent, when the absolute power of the papacy and the priesthood obtained the positive sanction of ecclesiastical law, and assumed a form which can never be modified or amended, but must continue unchanged until the Lord comes to consume it with the spirit of his mouth.

We have thus given as fully as the limits of this article will permit, the arguments by which the able author of this volume sustains his position that the only genuine letters of Ignatius are those found in the Syriac translation, and that they are there given in their purest form. Some of the statements in regard to the early development of episcopacy are perhaps questionable; but his main point, that the genuine Ignatius is only to be found in the Syriac version, we believe he has triumphantly established. We feel sure that every candid reader, of whatever party, will agree with us in this opinion. There can be no longer any reasonable doubt as to what Ignatius wrote, and what he did not write; and if our prelatie friends really possess the veneration for the fathers of which they boast so much, they will no longer quote the worthless forgeries of one whose very name has sunk into oblivion, as if they were the genuine testimonies of the venerable pastor of Antioch.

ART. V.—*The Calcutta Review.*

THIS is a quarterly publication equal in size and not inferior in ability and interest to its compeers of Edinburgh and London. It was commenced May 1844. The advertisement prefixed to the first number states "that the object of the work is simply to bring together such useful information, and propagate such sound opinions, relating to Indian affairs, as will, it is hoped conduce, in some small measure, directly or indirectly, to the amelioration of the condition of the people." Its success exceeded the expectations of its projectors. Of many numbers a second and even a third edition has been published. For some

time the editorial supervision has been in the hands of Dr. Duff. The work is not designed to be religious, and the object of that distinguished missionary in devoting to it a portion of his valuable time, is to preserve it from any bias hostile to Christianity, and to direct its powerful influence, as far as allowable, to support of every measure which tends to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. Having recently received nearly a complete set of this Review, we have been looking through its pages with much interest. While thus employed our attention was arrested by an account, scattered through various numbers, of a people of whom we before had scarcely heard. These accounts we have extracted, persuaded they will interest our readers as much as they have us.

When early in 1836, the British first ascended the Ghats of Goomsur, the scene presented to their view was as grand as it was unexpected. It was in reality the discovery of a previously unknown and unexplored territory, a previously unknown and undescribed people. Beyond the mere fact of the existence of the hills, and of a wild people, called the KHONDS, who were said to inhabit them, little or nothing seemed to be antecedently known. "Goomsur is included in Orissa; which though now only a British province was anciently a great kingdom. In the year 1787, this country was invaded by the Mahrattas, who, as every where else, carried destruction and desolation in their train. But in the strange revolution of empires, in the year 1804, the country of Orissa fell under the sway of imperial Britain, and the last vestige of the Mahratta sovereignty was extinguished. Orissa is geographically divided into three districts, the maritime, subalpine, and alpine. The Khonds who inhabit this country, appear to be the descendants of the original inhabitants of India, and may be described as in a semi-barbarous state of society. Their government is patriarchal; and the tribes independent of each other, except that in war they are united against their enemies. They are of a good size, well formed, and athletic; but their dress is very scanty. The occasion which brought this people to the knowledge of the British was, the Goomsur war. Goomsur had long been one of the British tributaries; and the people of this province had long held certain relations to the Khonds, of which, until this time the British were entirely ignorant. In the prosecution of

this war the insurgents were pursued by the British troops into the Ghats, where the Khonds had their residence; and thus some knowledge of this hitherto unknown people was obtained. Various reports of the character, customs, and religious rites of this strange people have been given by different persons sent into their country; but the person who has given by far the most full and satisfactory account of them is Captain Macpherson; from whose several reports much of the information which we shall now attempt to communicate has been derived.

Their language, which contains many original words, has a mixture of the languages spoken in the plains. But, as they have no writings, and their pronunciation is deeply guttural, it has been found difficult precisely to ascertain its idioms and affinities.

Their social relations are rather loose and irregular; and the bond of marriage is very readily dissolved; but their manners are not in so degraded a state as among many savage nations. Mothers of children are much respected; and the women are consulted in all matters of importance.

In noticing this people, our main object is to furnish our readers with some account of a horrible practice, which from time immemorial has existed among them; and still exists, after all the efforts which have been made for its extirpation. It is the custom, at a certain season of the year, of offering up human victims to a certain goddess, with a view of obtaining good crops; for they entertain the persuasion, that unless they by this sacrifice appeased this deity, the earth would remain barren and produce nothing for the subsistence of man.

Before we proceed to give a particular account of this revolting rite of their religion, it may be proper to inform the reader, that female infanticide, so prevalent in several districts of Western India, is also extensively practised among the Khonds. Captain Macpherson informs us, that in some of the tribes, "The life of no female child is spared, unless it be a first-born; or when the head of a tribe wishes to form connections with some other tribe by intermarriages." The infants are destroyed by being exposed in the jungle ravines immediately after their birth; and he found many villages without a single female child.

Female infanticide has, however, no relation to their religion;

nor does it proceed, as in China, from the fear of starvation, but owes its origin to pride, or avarice. Marriage with them is neither with members of the same tribe, nor with foreigners, but between the different tribes of the same people; and fearing that advantageous matches for their daughters cannot be obtained, they take care to remove them out of the way. And as costly presents are expected from the father of the bride, it may be supposed, that avarice also may have an influence in keeping up this cruel custom.

We shall now give a particular account of their human sacrifices, which constitute an important part of the religion of this people:

“The earth-goddess being the principal divinity of the Khonds, her worship is that which engrosses the largest share of public attention. It is, moreover, that which in itself is most deeply fraught with tragic interest; inasmuch as its central point consists in the offering of human sacrifices. Of the origin of this sanguinary rite, the only reasonable tradition among the Khonds is the following: ‘The earth,’ say they, ‘was originally a crude and unstable mass, unfit for cultivation, or for the convenient habitation of man. Then,’ said the earth-goddess, ‘let human blood be spilt upon me,’ and a child was sacrificed. The soil became forthwith firm, and productive, and the deity ordained that man should repeat the rite and live. Human sacrifices to the earth-goddess are either *public* or *private*. Those intended for a tribe or village are considered necessary when any principal crop is put into the ground; and a harvest offering is nearly as indispensable as the spring sacrifice; and between these, according to the appearance of the year, several sacrifices are considered necessary. Again, should the health of the people be affected by prevalent disease, or other calamities be experienced, the earth-goddess must be appeased. Also, when any calamity befalls the head of the tribe, the occasion calls for a repetition of these sacrifices. Private sacrifices are made when any remarkable calamity is experienced by any family, if they are able to procure a human victim; otherwise, they bring a goat, whose ear is cut off, and cast bleeding on the earth—a pledge which must be redeemed with human blood, within the year. It will be evident, from what has been said, that the number of victims will be variable, in different

years, according to the circumstances mentioned: it is, however, commonly so great as to be appalling to the feelings of humanity. In one small valley, two miles long and three quarters broad, our author found seven victims, whose sacrifice was prevented only by the proximity of the British army, but which was to take place immediately after their departure.

“These unhappy victims are known in the Khond language under the designation of ‘Merias.’ They do not commonly consist of native Khonds, but are provided by a class of Hindu procurers, called ‘Panwas,’ who purchase them without difficulty upon false pretences, or kidnap them from the poorer classes of Hindus, in the low country. Their price is determined by the demand, varying from fifty to one hundred *lives*; that is, of living animals, sheep, goats, &c. A few are always kept in reserve, in each district, to meet sudden demands for atonement. Victims of either sex are equally acceptable to the earth-goddess; children, whose age precludes a knowledge of their condition, are preferred. In all cases the victim must be *bought with a price*—an unbought life being an abomination to the deity. The ‘Meria’ is brought to the village, or place where the sacrifice is to be made, blindfolded—and, if an adult, is confined with fetters; but if a child, is permitted freely to run about, and is welcomed at every threshold. In all cases they are received as *consecrated persons*. Sometimes they are permitted to grow from childhood to maturity, without any knowledge of their destiny. All arrangements connected with the ceremony of human sacrifices are conducted by the patriarch of the tribe or village, with the aid of the priest: the divine command is communicated by the latter, as he pretends to receive it in visions; and he may demand a victim, at any time, when no visible signs of divine displeasure are apparent. These sacrifices are generally attended by multitudes of people, as no one is excluded from being present. Persons of both sexes are indiscriminately allowed to be present, and the festival commonly lasts three days, during which all manner of licentiousness is prevalent. The first of these days is spent in feasting and obscene riot; on the second, the victim is washed and dressed in a new garment, and led forth to the ‘Meria’ grave, in a procession, accompanied with music and dancing. Hymns to the deity are also prepared and sung. The grave is in the midst

of a clump of trees in the vicinity of the village, near a stream of water. It is avoided by the Khonds, under the impression that it is haunted. In the midst of the trees, a stake is struck into the ground, at the foot of which the victim is seated, and fastened with his back to it. He is then anointed with oil, ghee and turmeric, and dressed with flowers; and during the day, a species of veneration is paid to the victim, which can scarcely be distinguished from worship. There is now a great struggle, especially with the women, to obtain the least relic of the victim, such as the turmeric with which he was anointed, and even his very spittle. On the third morning the victim is refreshed with a little milk and sago; when the licentious feast is renewed. The proper place for the sacrifice having been discovered the previous night, by piercing the ground with long sticks, in the dark, the first deep chink is considered as the spot which will be agreeable to the goddess. As the victim must not be bound when he suffers, and must not show any resistance, it is common to break the bones of the arms and of the legs, in several places. The priest, assisted by the elders of the village, now takes the branch of a green tree, which having split for several feet, they place the victim within the cleft. They wrap round it cords, by which the parts of the cleft tree are forced as near together as they can be made to come. The signal is now given, by the priest inflicting a slight wound with an axe, when, with maddening fury, the promiscuous crowd rush upon the victim with stunning shouts and pealing music, wildly exclaiming, 'We bought you with a price, and no sin rests on us.' They now tear his flesh to pieces from the bones. The horrid rite is now consummated, and every one returns with his bloody relics to his place; and for three days after the sacrifice, not a word is spoken, but all communication must be by signs; and no visits are received from strangers. At the termination of this period, a buffalo is sacrificed, after which their tongues are unloosed." The above is the description of this inhuman rite given by Captain Macpherson, but from the statements of others, there is reason to think, that the ceremonies accompanying these sacrifices, are considerably various, as practised by different tribes.

As Goomsur lies within the limits of the Madras government, Mr. Russell, their agent, made the first report to them

respecting the practice of offering up human sacrifices. He was of opinion that it would not be vain to attempt to put an end to the inhuman rite, by the application of force; for which he assigned several weighty reasons. He advised, however, that every effort should be made to rescue the victims, kept in reserve for sacrifice.

The Madras Government took up the subject seriously, and expressed regret that it was not practicable to put an end to the abominable custom at once; but adopting Mr. Russell's views, that the suppression of the practice must be by a slow process, they issued an order to the officer in command, in that district, to collect information on the subject—to endeavour to obtain as great an insight as he could into the feelings and opinions of the different classes of the people respecting it—to cultivate personal intercourse with the chiefs—and to exert his influence to convince them of the heinousness and folly of the practice—and to hold out every inducement, consistent with the public interest, to the Khonds, to enter as *Peons*, or otherwise, into the service of the Government. M. Arbuthnot, the officer then in authority in that region, upon inquiry, found that human sacrifices were offered, especially in the most inaccessible parts of the hill-country—and that the suppression of the revolting custom must be a work of difficulty and time.

As it was received by the Khonds as an important religious rite, it was evident, that it would not be proper to attempt to punish them for it as a crime, until pains were taken to enlighten them as to its iniquity; but as those who supplied the victims, by purchasing or kidnapping them, were not Khonds; and were not influenced by religious but mercenary, motives, it was judged, that they ought to be considered the culprits, who might at once be subjected to punishment, as far as they could be detected. Accordingly, efforts were made to rescue the victims; and the first person who was successful in this work was Captain Millar, of the British regular army. He was so happy as to rescue from a cruel death no less than twenty-nine innocent persons. But it was found extremely difficult to convict any of those engaged in providing the victims, for want of that kind of evidence which the law required. Captain Millar, in his report, says, that the prevention of the practice by force, for a time, could not but have a beneficial effect. For, as the deluded

people labour under the persuasion, that unless these sacrifices were offered, the earth would produce nothing, and they would all perish for want of the means of subsistence, if they had the opportunity of observing that the crops were not ruined nor diminished, in consequence of the omission of these sacrifices, they would more readily be induced to give them up. And as these sacrifices are usually offered in the month of January, when the country is healthy, this would remove one great objection to the employment of a military force.

Captain Campbell, however, also an officer of the British army, in a letter of nearly the same date with that of Captain Millar, expresses very different opinions. He is opposed to any resort to coercion; and proposes the following plan: "I purpose," says he, "with your sanction," addressing himself to the Government, "to ascend the Ghats, with a considerable portion of the armed peons under my command, accompanied by fifty men of the seventeenth regiment, and call together the most influential men among the Khonds—endeavouring to convince them of the barbarity and inutility of the sacrifice, explaining to them our abhorrence and utter detestation of the practice; at the same time, ordering them to bring to me all the victims in their possession. And, if I cannot otherwise obtain them, I ask *permission* to purchase them at the prices they cost the Khonds; and at the same time, to use such threats, as I may think advisable to gain the object in view, both for the present and the future. If my efforts prove successful, I shall be able to deprive the parties engaged in the barbarous traffic of obtaining victims; who from the information I can gather are for the most part inhabitants of the low country; and thus gain the power of striking at one source of the evil by immediately securing the parties concerned."

On the 15th of January, 1832, the subject of these reports was taken up by the Madras Government; and the plan proposed by Captain Campbell was preferred; for, as to the supposed effect of seeing a district flourishing when no human victims were sacrificed, the experiment had been tried in the case of the district of *Degi*; but the example had been without effect. That part of Capt. Campbell's plan, however, which related to the purchase of the victims, was not adopted, as being peculiarly liable to abuse.

Capt. Campbell having received the permission which he requested, in January, 1838, proceeded into the country of the Khonds; and having called together the heads of the several tribes, he explained to them that the British government would no longer suffer the sacrifice of human victims among them. He then peremptorily ordered that they should bring all the "merias" in their possession to him. They, at first, denied that they had any such persons among them. But he had ascertained, beforehand, the names of several chiefs who had "merias" in their possession, and also from whom they had been purchased. Finding that they could not come at the truth, they delivered up *one hundred meriah children*. He then exacted from them a promise, that "meriah pujah" should henceforth be at an end. He concludes his report by saying, "I have every reason to believe, that the public performance of the Meriah Pujah in the Goomsur Maliahs is at an end."

It had before this time been believed, that the Khonds themselves were never sacrificed; but it was now satisfactorily ascertained, that all classes, whether Khonds, Hindus, Musselmans; whether old or young, male or female, might become the subjects of this sacrifice. Of course, however, when they could purchase victims from the plains, they preferred it to sacrificing their own people.

A serious question now arose, respecting the disposal of these *devoted* children. Mr. Russell with the views of a generous and enlightened statesman, recommended to the government, that they should be brought up and educated at the public expense. Captain Campbell ordered a building to be prepared for them, and proposed, that they should be brought up to labour and be furnished with necessary clothing.

In a report from Lieutenant Hill, the following information is given of the prevalence of the revolting custom of human sacrifices, in another district. "The information I obtained," says he, "regarding human sacrifices, leads me to believe, that the practice of that barbarous rite obtains to a far greater extent than is commonly supposed; and that the Khond Maliah of Goomsur forms but a very small portion of the country over which the custom prevails. One grand sacrifice said to have taken place, twelve years since, on occasion of the rajah of Bustar setting off to visit the rajah of Nagpore, is termed the *great sac-*

rifice; when, I understand, twenty-seven full grown men were immolated. I have good reason for thinking that in the tribe of Chinua Kimmedy alone, not less than two hundred children are kept for sacrifice! Upwards of one hundred, as is well known, have been given up, this year, in Goomsur; but many more still remain there. With these data to calculate from, it is fearful to contemplate the possible number of intended victims now in captivity among the Khonds."

Lieutenant Hill concludes his report with some very sensible and weighty remarks, respecting the best method of putting an end to this horrible practice. He thinks, considering the nature of the localities of these tribes, settled on and among the Ghats, and the little success which can attend persecution on account of religion, that it is very doubtful whether a resort to force is expedient. And yet when it is considered, that the exercise of coercion in the case of the THUGGS; an associated band of murderers, has been attended with the most salutary consequences; and that savage men can scarcely ever be induced to relinquish the most absurd sacred rites, received from their forefathers, there does appear a necessity for a military intervention, and this would not require a great force; a single company of regular troops, he is of opinion, would be sufficient to keep in awe any number of the Khonds.

Mr. Bannerman, the chief officer of Ganjam, under whose direction Lieut. Hill had acted, now determined to go into the country of the Khonds himself, about the time when human sacrifices were usually offered. The government approved of his purpose, and supplied him with four elephants and a guard, and all other things requisite to facilitate his journey. Of this visit he has furnished an interesting narrative; from which we extract the following particulars. He informs us, that he arrived at a certain village, where a victim was about to be offered, before the inhabitants had any knowledge of his approach. "The preparations for the ceremony appeared to have been completed. The entrance into the hamlet,—which was in the form of a square,—had been newly fitted up with wicker works, and in the centre close to the rude village idol, had been erected a bamboo pole about forty feet high, on the top of which was an effigy in the shape of a bird, with peacock's feathers." The Khonds immediately fled, but after some demur

the victim was given up to him, a young woman from the plains of Chinna Kimmedy. After a while, some of the elders and chiefs were induced to approach and communicate with him. To the arguments alleged to show the heinous nature of the crime of putting a fellow creature to death, for the folly of supposing that any good could accrue from such a sacrifice, the answer was, that they were not tributary to us, and had a right to observe a custom which had been handed down in their nation from time immemorial, and which, if neglected, would cause the earth to be entirely unproductive; that the victims had been fairly purchased with a price, and that they did not wish to have their right to do as they pleased, in this case, interfered with. Mr. Bannerman finding argument unavailing against the ignorance and strong prejudices of this people, thought it prudent to retrace his steps; but for his own security, he kept several of the chiefs as hostages, that through their influence he might be enabled to rescue other victims who might be in the neighboring villages. Accordingly, he succeeded in obtaining nine "Merias," who were intended for sacrifice, in the surrounding country.

Mr. Bannerman proposes to the Government the sending a detachment of troops through the country, about the time of celebrating the *Tanki* sacrifice; not with a view to coerce the inhabitants, but he is persuaded that the presence of such a detachment in the country would prevent these cruel sacrifices. "It is fearful," says he, "to contemplate the extent of human misery resulting from the practice of this execrable rite; for, independent of the number of Merias annually sacrificed—and there is reason to believe the number far greater than could readily be credited—it gives rise, with all its attendant evils, to kidnapping the unfortunate inhabitants of the plain, who are decoyed into the hills by a set of infamous wretches, who carry on a profitable traffic in the blood of their fellow men. The agents engaged in these odious dealings are, for the most part, of the Panwa, or Dobango, or other base tribes, through whom the intercourse with the low country is chiefly carried on; and who, without remorse, barter their unhappy captives for saffron, wax, and other products of the hills. The guilt of these heartless miscreants appears to be even of a deeper die than that of the African slave-traders; and their motives are of the most

base and sordid kind; so that their infamous conduct does not admit of any palliation. The barbarous and ignorant Khonds, on the other hand, are conscious of no crime in performing what they regard as a sacred duty, in celebrating the *Tanki* festival. The perversion of the human intellect, that can regard the cruel death of a fellow creature as a sacrifice acceptable in the sight of the Deity, is indeed strange. The agents, through whose means the Khonds are supplied with these victims, are the proper objects of condign punishment. But from the circumstances of the ease, it has been found almost impossible to obtain legal evidence against these guilty culprits."

The Government were well pleased with the course pursued by Mr. Bannerman, and thought it much to his credit, that he had succeeded in rescuing nine victims from a cruel death, without coercion, and without involving the country in any collision with these tribes. And they entered fully into his plan of sending a detachment of troops into the country, to overawe the inhabitants, and to prevent the cruel sacrifices offered by them.

Captain Campbell, who contemporaneously with Mr. Bannerman, had visited another portion of the country of the Khonds, says, that he obtained certain information but of eleven instances of the sacrifice of Merias among the tribes which he visited; and these they pretended had died a natural death. The chiefs came forward with a request, that they might be permitted to offer one sacrifice for each tribe, every year; but did not seem to be much disappointed at receiving a refusal. He asked the opinion of their rulers, called Bisayes, who, though they have been brought up among the Khonds, are not of them; and who entertain a great abhorrence of this abominable custom. Their judgment was, that a proclamation of Government, forbidding the practice on severe penalties, would be effectual. And Captain Campbell gives it as his own opinion, "that unless we address ourselves to their fears, as well as their better feelings, our steps for the suppression of the '*Meria Pujah*,' will be slow indeed, and perhaps wholly nugatory." For two years nothing more was done, when Major Campbell again entered the country of the Khonds, with the view of preventing the celebration of the *Tanki* festival. He found that twenty-four victims had been sold to them within the last twelve months. Six of these were delivered to him; and he

secured two or three of the guilty agents who supplied these victims, against whom he expected to obtain such evidence as would be sufficient to effect their condemnation.

Lieutenant Hill, in a report to Mr. Bannerman, represented the southern tribes as being in a state of great excitement; so that he considered it inexpedient, while among them, to allude to the subject. From credible sources of information, he learned that parents had been known to sell their children, not only to the Panwas, but to the Khonds themselves; and that the price at which they were valued, was no more than four or five rupees, by the head. And from data, in his possession, Lieut. Hill calculated that the number of victims sacrificed in the forty *Mutahs*, or villages of the Khonds, in one year, could not be fewer than two hundred and forty!

The subject engaged not only the attention of the Government of Madras, but the Governor General with his Council, was deeply interested in the plans proposed for the eradication of this execrable rite; but all seemed to be convinced that it would require much time and patient effort, to eradicate an evil so inveterate, and believed by the people to be so essential to their very existence.

The object was never lost sight of by the agents of Government; but though the sacrifice of human beings was not so public as formerly, yet there was too much evidence that the practice was not abandoned.

For six years not much was heard respecting this matter. About this time a new actor appeared in opposition to the Merias, Colonel Ouseley, agent of the Governor General. In 1844, he succeeded in rescuing two lads, and restored them to their friends. He obtained information, that on some occasions, when they could not obtain Merias, they gave up their aged fathers and mothers for sacrifice. And that to escape detection from the Government, they at once killed and buried the *Merias*. The feelings of the Colonel were much excited by the information received; and he determined to march into the midst of the country of the Khonds, as being fully persuaded that nothing but intimidation would produce any effect, to prevent the continuance of the revolting sacrifice. He was for marching a large body of dragoons and infantry, and inflicting con-dign punishment on all who were engaged in these shameful

sacrifices. The Colonel, in a subsequent report, mentioned a chief who would be happy to enter the country, and who could soon point out hundreds of these poor Merias. That these sacrificial rites were common, he knew, from personally conversing with the people on the borders—not only the chiefs, but the poorer classes. He said that he was fully aware that many obstacles would be placed in the way of all inquiries, and that opposition would be made by the Zemindars, to every step taken to put down the practice; nevertheless, he believed, that in one season, either by conciliation or force, he would be able to subdue those who made resistance to his plans. He was persuaded that without force nothing effectual could be done. Of the same opinion was Lieutenant Hicks; but he shows, in his judicious report, the great difficulties which surrounded the subject. “The destitution and poverty of the Khonds,” he observes, “is very great. They are possessed of little or no property; and on the approach of our troops would fly to their fastnesses, where it would be in vain to pursue them. And I am persuaded,” says he, “that three-fourths of the Khonds would offer a mad and blind resistance to our demands, under the idea that they were merely fighting for their country, independence and tribe. It, therefore, seems probable, that a coercive undertaking, to be effective, must be a protracted one; and this is the strong objection to the application of force, until all other measures have failed; for troops detained in the country would prevent the cultivation of the lands, and keep the people shut up in their fastnesses. To this should be added the notorious insalubrity of the climate, which would prove more destructive than the sword of the enemy.”

Upon the energetic representation of Mr. Mills to the Government, Lieutenant Hicks was appointed his assistant, and was deputed by him to go into the country of the Khonds, to obtain information on several points; and to ascertain from an actual survey of the state of affairs what would be the wisest plan of proceeding, effectually to suppress the deplorable evil which was so inveterate. Lieutenant Hicks was unable to set off on his mission at the best season of the year, to be in that unhealthy country. However, he went, and was successful, not only in obtaining much useful information, but in rescuing twenty-five intended victims from a cruel death. He also had

influence to induce twenty-six of the Khond Sindars, or Chiefs, to enter into a written engagement to abstain from the horrid rites practised by their respective tribes. Moreover, a kidnapper, or dealer in stolen children, was arrested, and sent to the proper tribunal, for trial. Still, the joy at this partial success was tempered by the consideration, that all the *Merias* were not given up; and that all the Sindars had not entered into the engagement mentioned; and what was more discouraging, there was much reason to fear, that those who had given their pledge would not be faithful in keeping their engagements. He himself mentions one remarkable case, in which a certain Sindar promised Mr. Ricketts that he would relinquish the rite and do all in his power to dissuade the people from sacrificing human victims. Upon which Mr. Ricketts presented him with a horse, some money, and other articles; but no sooner had this man reached his home, than he sacrificed several unfortunate victims.

To all arguments employed by Mr. Hicks, to show the enormity of the evil, and how strongly it was reprobated by the Government, the only answer was, that the "sacrifice was a ceremony practised by their progenitors." After the fullest examination, and after using every conciliatory effort and argument, Mr. Hicks concludes, by saying, "I am firmly convinced, in my own mind, that, sooner or later, force must be resorted to, as no other motives than those of a coercive nature, will effectually check its continuance."

Mr. Mills, in forwarding Lieutenant Hicks's report, passed a very high eulogium on his assistant; whose conduct met also with the full approbation of the Government.

In the year 1845, Mr. Hicks was again sent with an armed force into the country of the Khonds. He assembled their chiefs, and again represented to them the strong displeasure of the Government to this inhuman rite; but they denied that it was now practised by their people; and he failed of getting into his hands any of the victims; which, however, he still believed were concealed among them.

All the attempts to suppress the inhuman rite of the *Meria* sacrifice having been frustrated, the Government determined to appoint a suitable person to go into the country, not in a hostile manner, but for the benevolent purpose of promoting trade

between the several tribes, and also between the ghats and the low country; and who should have it as an object to obtain information respecting the facts in regard to this practice, and to suggest and carry into effect prudent measures for its abolition. For this important mission, Captain Macpherson, who made the first report respecting the offering of human sacrifices, was selected; and a man in all respects better qualified could not have been found. He was fully persuaded that all attempts to suppress the rite by force would be ineffectual; and that it could only be accomplished gradually, and by slow degrees. Captain Macpherson took up his residence in the country of the Khonds, accompanied by such a military force as was thought necessary. But soon disease invaded his camp, and carried off a large number of his men; and very few of them escaped the diseases of this deleterious climate.

Our limits do not admit of our exhibiting the plan of Captain Macpherson in detail; but his object was to begin at the foundation of their social system, and to improve the mode of administering justice, which, he observed, was very imperfect among these tribes. His views and sentiments respecting the best method of removing not only this revolting rite, but many other evils, appear to be wise and practicable, and have met with the entire approbation of the Government, and all judicious persons. But as his well devised plan of operation has been, for the present, frustrated by the deleterious character of the climate; and as a considerable time will be required to test the efficacy of the measures which may be adopted, it will be unnecessary, at present, to enter into any further details respecting his operations. In justice, however, to Captain Macpherson, it is proper to remark, that justice and humanity characterised all his measures. And finding his powers too limited, he took a journey to Calcutta, to get them enlarged. One of his measures, which is an evidence of his wisdom, was, to introduce education among the savage tribes; as believing that the inhuman superstitions of the people could never be radically removed, in any other way. We are only surprised to find nothing said in all these reports respecting the efficacy of the gospel, above all other means, to cure evils of this kind.

It has already been noticed that female infanticide is customary among the Khonds, but practised on principles entirely

different from those which govern the *Meria* sacrifice. Pride and avarice seem to be the sources of this deplorable evil: it has no respect, as was before observed, to religion. It was also mentioned, that the same practice is prevalent, to an alarming degree, in several districts of Rajahputana, in Western India.

Before closing this article, we judge it expedient to bring to view some of the facts which have been fully ascertained, in relation to this inhuman custom. These are derived from an interesting article in the second number of the *Calcutta Review*.

In 1800, Mr. Duncan, then Governor of Bombay, learned that in a certain tribe of Rajputs, "the birth of a daughter was considered disgraceful—that new-born daughters were accordingly put to death." Again, in 1804, he incidentally learned from a conversation with a daughter of one of the princes of Gujrat, "that in Corsti of Jahriga Rajputs they did not bring up their daughters, but put them to death at their birth," and this was the established practice.

These disclosures had such an influence on the benevolent mind of Mr. Duncan, that he was led to institute further inquiries in regard to this matter; and prosecuting his inquiries, he had the happiness to find an able coadjutor, in that distinguished philanthropist, Colonel Walker. "In 1808, he commenced his inquiries with a vigour, an energy, and an earnestness as untiring in the pursuit, as they were successful in the issue. This investigation opened up views of the extent of the criminal practice of a startling and appalling magnitude." It was found that in the tribe, before mentioned, the practice was general. There might be seven or eight families who preserved alive their daughters; but as a general thing, they were put to death as soon as born; and not in this tribe only, but through the whole province of Gujarat. And it was ascertained, that in the few cases in which they were preserved, the motive was not parental affection, but some superstitious notion connected with the doctrine of metempsychosis which made them averse to taking away the life of any animal.

Colonel Walker, in the absence of a census, was unable to ascertain the number of infants destroyed in one year, in this single tribe; but according to the report of natives best acquainted with the country, the number of families amounted to 125,000, and the number of female infants put to death in one

year to 20,000. This number he thought to be greatly exaggerated, but supposing the number to be only one-half of this, what a waste of human life, if we take into view the fact, that the practice has prevailed from time immemorial!

The information given to the public by Colonel Walker, on this melancholy subject, had nearly fallen into oblivion, when Mr. Wilkinson laid open the full extent of the evil. As several persons, among the rest Sir J. Malcom, had published the opinion, that the practice of infanticide had in a great measure, ceased, except in the families of the rajahs, Mr. Wilkinson determined to make a thorough investigation into the facts of the case. And he instituted a careful inquiry into the proportion of males and females in a number of tribes; and the result is truly appalling. In one tribe the proportion was 113 to 16; in a second, 240 to 96; in a third, 131 to 61; in a fourth, 14 to 4; in a fifth, 39 to 7; in a sixth, 20 to 7; in a seventh, 70 to 32. Now, it is known that the number of males and females born, is nearly equal; it will follow from a comparison of the foregoing numbers, that at least 77 per cent. of all the females born are destroyed; for the aggregate proportion of the sexes in the tribes referred to is 632 males to 225 females, or in round numbers *two-thirds* destroyed, and one-third preserved alive!

Nor was the practice confined solely to the Rajputs: Mr. Wilkinson ascertained that a chief among the Sikhs had destroyed all his daughters; and that the Minas, a savage tribe who inhabited the mountains, were addicted to the horrid practice. Of eleven of their villages he obtained an accurate census; from which it appeared that the number of males was 369 and of the females, according to this census, 82; or more than three-fourths of the whole must have been destroyed. In one village, there were only 4 girls to 44 boys; in another, 4 girls to 58 boys; and in a third, with a large number of boys, *no girls at all*;—the inhabitants freely confessing that *they had destroyed every girl born in the village.*

We have seen the extent of this appalling practice of female infanticide, it is a natural inquiry in what way it is carried into effect, commonly, it is said, by starvation. When a daughter is born, there is no greeting or rejoicing; often the child is killed before its father is made acquainted with its birth.

Sometimes, he issues an order for the destruction of the infant; but if he is silent, it is inferred that he wishes it done. Women of rank have their servants to whom the perpetration of the criminal act is committed. But the parents appear to have no conscience of any crime: they give no evidence of the least feeling of remorse. It may be asked, whether the mothers have no natural affection for their offspring, which is so manifest even in brutes? Often, it is said, they do intercede for the preservation of their female offspring, and when spared, they manifest as strong parental feelings as other people; but the fact is, *that gross and perverted notions of religion* possess a power over superstitious minds, to suppress or counteract the strongest feeling of natural affection.

Our object in collecting and exhibiting the above facts, is not merely to gratify curiosity, by making known the customs of people now living upon earth; but, chiefly, with the view of showing the deep depravity and wretched degradation of our fallen nature, when left to its own evil devices and corrupt imaginations. The vain theories and false statements of a certain school of philosophers respecting the innocence of human nature, when left to itself, and uncorrupted by the vices of civilization, are refuted by every accurate history of any savage people; and their vices and moral degradation far exceed all our previous conceptions. The further our inquiries are extended, the more wretched and abominable does man appear.

And finally, we present these facts to the Christian public, and ask every reader of every condition, whether there is not a solemn obligation resting on every one to make greater exertions than ever to rescue his miserable fellow-creatures from the deplorable condition in which they are sunk. And if it be inquired, what can we do, the answer is, send them the gospel. Send them the living preacher. Establish among them schools of Christian learning. Give more liberally of your substance to promote this object; and pray more earnestly for the conversion of the world.