

General Articles.

INDIA.

BURNING OF WIDOWS.

Extract of a letter from Cuttack, April 15.—“A few days ago I witnessed a suttee. The deceased was a Bengalee, named Ram Koomar; he died worth 5,000 rupees ready money, and left a beautiful young widow, about 19 years of age. Two of the man's brothers felt the possession of this cash an object sufficiently important to induce them to attempt the removal of the young creature, their only obstacle; nor had they much difficulty in succeeding, for under the influence of grief for her irreparable loss, and aided by the superstitious hopes and fears excited by the Bramans, she soon declared she would become a suttee with her husband's corpse. Application was made to the magistrate, who, upon inquiry, discovered that the widow was deeply intoxicated, refused his permission, and directed the body to be burnt, hoping to prevent the immolation. The relatives, however, were not thus to be foiled in their attempt, and appealed to the Commissioner, who handed the appeal to the Sudder Dewannee in Calcutta. Fifteen or sixteen days elapsed before any decision was received; during which time, all the interest that had been excited in the public mind had quite subsided. We hoped that the Court, by neglecting the affair, would second the humane attempt of the Magistrate to save the poor creature doomed to death, but we hoped in vain; for, at the expiration of the above mentioned period, an official document was received, directing that the sacrifice should take place. It is not easy to conceive the joy which the blood-thirsty relatives manifested at this triumph, or the praises which they ascribed to the higher authorities, as “the nourishers of their religion,”—“the friends of the gods.” Having received these orders, the time and place were soon fixed upon. About half-past four o'clock I repaired to the place, the bed of the Cuingung river, where I found the poor woman surrounded by her inhuman murderers, and supported by her old nurse. At her feet stood three or four pots of water—also a small copper vessel, containing water and a red flower; and she was surrounded by an immense crowd of spectators. I placed myself as near her as I could, not to come in contact with the vessels or her clothes, (native fashion) and began to dissuade her from her purpose. Her attendants were highly indignant at me, and, on a hint being given her, she turned away her head. The arrival of the Judge was the signal for preparation. He asked her if it were her desire to burn: she replied “Yes.” “Then,” said he, “I cannot hinder you longer;” and “hurree-bol” rent the air. The officiating Brahman now began to read his formulas. This was soon over, and they led the victim to the pile. Here they collected round her, some whispering, some encouraging, and others impregnating the clothes, hair, &c. with rosin and oil; and some again were busy impregnating a quantity of flax with rosin, and such things. She was led several times around her pile of death, the Brahman pronouncing blessings before her, and by her appearance she evidently thought herself blessed. Having completed her perambulations, all her attendants were ordered to leave her, when she deliberately turned towards the pile, and, walking in, laid herself down, and waited the devouring flames. The relatives asked permission to throw some wood on the woman, but the Judge refused. The next near relative now stepped to the pile's mouth, and having read an incantation, to relieve his soul from sin, he lighted a wisp of straw, and walked once round the pile with it, and then buried it, all flaming, under the flax and straw at the head of the pile inside, just before the victim's face, and in a moment the whole was enveloped in flames. We now looked for an attempt to escape; but no—while the fire devoured her beautiful head of hair, she shook her head, and again laid it down; soon I saw her raise her legs in the agonies of death, then lower them, and all was over. Inhaling the smoke into her lungs, she was suffocated very soon. The scene now impoverishes all description. The horrid joy of the relatives, the fire, the tormented victim, the shouts and music of the multitude, all conspired to impress my mind with the idea that certainly this was hell. I made my way out of the crowd, and ran home.”

MILITARY EXECUTION.

(Extract of a letter from an officer of the 28th Regiment of Foot, at Corfu, dated 1st of January 1829.)
The day but one after our arrival here, the whole garrison was ordered out to witness the execution of a private

of the Royal Military Sappers and Miners. He was sentenced by a Court Martial to be shot until dead, for having struck a Serjeant of that Corps with a piece of wood, and thereby endangering his life, so much that the Serjeant did not recover sufficiently to give his evidence for some months. Several Soldiers in this garrison had, for offences of a similar nature, received the same sentence during the last year or two, but none of these had been carried into execution; they were, I believe, all transported for life. Sir Frederick Adam, was determined to make an example of this man, as the crime was becoming common; and he had before attempted to drown an officer, but escaped without punishment. At 7 o'clock on the morning of the execution, the whole garrison marched out into the outer ditch, where they were drawn up as well as the nature of the ground would admit; it was altogether a most awful and impressive spectacle; the whole of the ramparts were planted with sentries; the troops formed three sides and a considerable part of a fourth side of a square, and in the centre of the half vacant side the grave was dug; after waiting some time, the band of the 51st, with muffled drums, were heard at a distance, playing the “Dead March;” from this time it was half an hour before the band appeared; then came six men bearing the coffin, and after them followed the prisoner, with the Chaplain by his side, and surrounded by his guards, and handcuffed; he moved forward with firmness, though he appeared to be quite unconscious of every thing around him; he walked along the three sides of the square, and the coffin having been placed near the grave, he was required to kneel upon it, when the Brigade Major advanced into the centre of the square, and read aloud the proceedings of the Court. As soon as this was ended the prisoner had a handkerchief tied over his eyes, after which the guard was withdrawn, and the Chaplain continued praying with him, gradually raising his voice as he retired a few paces, that the poor fellow might not be aware that the last preparations were so nearly concluded, when upon a given signal, fifteen men of his corps advanced a few paces, and fired, when the body fell back, and gave no further symptoms of vitality, not even the motion of a limb; as soon as he had fallen, fifteen more men stepped forward and fired at him as he lay to all appearance dead upon the ground; after this all the Regiment marched past the dead body which appeared dreadfully disfigured.

BRAZIL.

[OFFICIAL.]

Rio De Janeiro, Jan. 2.—On the 21st of December, at 11 in the forenoon, His Majesty was pleased to receive at the Palace of Boa Vista, in presence of the Court, the Portuguese Deputation, consisting of the Conde de Sabugal and Don Joaquim Antonio de Magalhães, the former of whom had the honour to address His Majesty in the following speech:—

“Sire,—The Portuguese, faithful to your Majesty and to their oath, venture to address your Majesty, on whose greatness and justice they have built the most flattering and well founded hopes.

“These wishes are expressed in the representation which we humbly and respectfully place in the Royal and imperial hands of your Majesty, and are as conformable to the glory and real interest of your Majesty and of your august daughter (for which these Portuguese have risked every thing,) as honourable to those who formed them, and will immortalize the Sovereign who listens to them.

“May your Majesty then deign to receive them, and to listen favourably to the supplications of the loyal Portuguese.

“The firm hand which founded the empire will know how to maintain legitimacy and the charter.

“The wisdom which distinguishes all the resolutions of your Majesty will know how to choose the fittest means that the splendour of your glory may not be in any way obscured, and such as may be the most suitable to the two nations, whose destinies Providence has committed to your Majesty's care, in the state of independence in which they now are and in which they hope to be always maintained. For the Portuguese, Sire, esteeming the Brazilian nation, can never ask of it any thing contrary to its real interest and its honour.

“Let the voice of a legitimate Sovereign, Sire, be heard in Europe, and then the loyal Portuguese, the Allies of the Crown of Portugal, and the friends of legitimacy, will fly whither honor and duty call them; then the august daughter of so great a Monarch will adorn the Lusitanian Throne, and your Majesty's name will excite the admiration of the world, and of future generations.”

His Imperial Majesty, combining in his exalted policy, the interests of the two nations, and his glory, was pleased to reply as follows:—

“Consulting the interests of the two nations of Brazil and Portugal, in order not to endanger their mutual independence, which I shall firmly maintain, I have resolved to act in such a manner as shall show to the whole world my resolution to fight for the rights of my daughter, your Queen, and to enter into no compromise with the Usurper of the Portuguese throne.”—*Diário Fluminense.*

Great-Britain.

HOUSE OF LORDS, April 3.

The adjourned debate on the motion for the second reading of the Roman Catholic relief bill was resumed.

The Archbishop of York said, that after the fullest attention and most mature deliberation, he grieved to say, he could not support the present bill. The securities which it proposed were not sufficient to allay his fears for the Protestant Church in Ireland.

The Bishop of Durham owned, that after the best consideration he had been enabled to give the Bill, he could not bring himself to think that such a measure as was now before their Lordships could be carried without much danger to the church.

The Duke of Sussex supported the bill in a long speech, in the course of which a slight misunderstanding arose between him and Lord Kenyon, which ended in the Royal Duke apologizing for the mistake which he had committed.

The Lord Chancellor addressed the house at extraordinary length. He defended his character from the aspersions which had been thrown upon it; supported the measure as imperatively necessary for the pacification of Ireland; showed that the constitution of 1688 was no bar to the present bill; and declared his firm and decided opinion, that the dangers which some persons thought they saw in concession were merely imaginary.

The Earl of Falmouth opposed the bill, and twitted the noble and learned Lord with a sudden change of opinion on this question.

The Duke of Wellington having given a short explanation, the question was put by the Lord Chancellor, and the decision was pronounced to be in the affirmative, when

Lord Goderich rose and supported the measure at considerable length.

The Earl of Mansfield opposed it, characterizing it as a monument of our folly, and a bitter legacy to our posterity.

The Marquis of Anglesey supported the bill in an able speech. He viewed the question in three points of view, politically, religiously, and militarily. With respect to the political view of the question, he said, that the moment the bill was passed, he should consider the regeneration of Ireland complete. Ireland wanted repose, which she had for several months enjoyed. The consequence was, that her goals were empty, her police idle, and her military unoccupied. This bill would make such a state of things permanent. Tranquillity would produce prosperity; British capital would flow into Ireland: the poor would find employment; and the absentees would return. With respect to the religious view of the question, he maintained, that the Irish Church was now in danger, but that the passing of this bill would strengthen it in the minds of the people, and would better maintain its security than all the penal enactments which the utmost ingenuity of legislation could devise. Then, with respect to the military view of the question, the noble Marquis spoke as follows:—“There is no man acquainted with the state of Ireland who will not agree with me, when I state, that in a time of profound peace, under the exclusive laws, 25,000 men is but a scanty garrison for Ireland. In the event of war, or even of the rumour of war, that would be an improvident government which did not immediately add a force of 15,000 men to the previous military force: 40,000 men, I should say, would be barely sufficient, under such circumstances. I say that there is a nucleus of mischief for the disaffected of that country in America. I say that there is a focus of insurrection for it always existing in France. I will suppose that we are absolutely at war, and that there is a combination of the powers of Europe, no very unlikely contingency, against us. I then say, that it would be madness in any administration not to throw 70,000 men immediately into Ireland. Take, now, another view of the subject. Suppose this bill to be passed into law by this day month; declare war if you like the next day; and I assert that you