

RECORDS OF THE
INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES
OF INDIA

DURING THE
MUTINY OF 1857

INCLUDING
*CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SUPREME GOVERNMENT,
DEHLI, CAWNPORE, AND OTHER PLACES*

PRESERVED BY, AND NOW ARRANGED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF

SIR WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.S.I., D.C.L.

THEN IN CHARGE OF THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT, AND SUBSEQUENTLY
• LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR, NORTH-WEST PROVINCES

EDITED BY WILLIAM COLDSTREAM, B.A., I.C.S.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET
1902

CCXCVIII.

MEMORANDUM, DRAWN UP AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, OF ENQUIRIES INTO THE ALLEGED DISHONOUR OF EUROPEAN FEMALES AT THE TIME OF THE MUTINIES.— SUBMITTED 30TH DECEMBER 1857.

(This Memorandum is written at other end of MSS. Vol. III. from that which contains foregoing (Fourth) Series.)

AGRA, 30th December 1857.

MY LORD,—I have now the honour to submit the result of the enquiries I have instituted in compliance with your Lordship's wishes, expressed in the Private Secretary's letter dated the 17th December last.

I might have replied sooner, but I deemed that your Lordship would be desirous that the area of investigation should be as wide as possible, and to secure this object involved some little delay.

I propose despatching this by Cossid to-day, and a duplicate similarly to-morrow. I also propose sending a copy of my Memorandum, with the original enclosures for your Lordship's satisfaction, by Bombay, unless (as I have reason to hope) a regular and safe post be immediately opened between this and Cawnpore.

I venture to believe that your Lordship will view the result, substantiated generally by the opinions now submitted, as satisfactory. A melancholy satisfaction indeed it is;—but yet such as may be calculated to lighten many a heart bowed down with a grief which the thought of simple death even in its cruellest form would not occasion.—I remain, Your Lordship's faithful servant,

W. MUIR.

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. LORD CANNING,
Governor-General.

MEMORANDUM CONTAINING THE RESULT OF ENQUIRIES MADE BY DESIRE OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL INTO THE RUMOURS OF EUROPEAN FEMALES HAVING BEEN DISHONoured DURING THE LATE MUTINIES.

ON receipt of His Lordship's instructions to submit any evidence I might be able to obtain as to the credibility of the statements current regarding the dishonour of English women during the late disturbances, I immediately addressed such officers as appeared to me likely to possess the widest and most accurate information on the subject.

Attached to this Memorandum is a copy of the opinions which I have collected. I might have waited for others, but these are quite sufficient.

1. E. A. Reade, Esq., Member S.B.R., N.W.P.
2. F. Williams, Esq., Commr., Meerut.
3. Major G. W. Williams, Supt. Cant. Police.
4. Rev. T. C. Smyth, Chaplain, Meerut.
5. C. B. Saunders, Esq., Commr., Delhi.
6. C. B. Thornhill, Esq., Offg. Secy. to Govt. N.W.P.
7. R. Alexander, Esq., Commr., Rohilkhund.
8. A. H. Cocks, Esq., Special Commr., Allygurh.

I proceed to notice the several statements in detail.

I.—The long service and great experience of Mr. E. A. Reade will add peculiar weight with His Lordship to his opinion. Mr. Reade has been in constant communication with the best informed natives of this city; he has also been in correspondence with people of other quarters, and has had ample opportunity for enquiring into the evidence which has from time to time been received from the scenes of the various tragedies. His deliberate opinion is that the stories of dishonour done to European females are generally false.

This conclusion he finds on the unvarying statement of eye-witnesses of the massacres. He adds as a supplementary reason, that the colour of European females is repugnant to the Oriental taste, and that crimes of the nature alluded to never have been perpetrated, even when there was full opportunity for their perpetration. I do not myself allow the natives of this country credit for dislike or insensibility towards the European complexion, and, even if admitted, it might not prove a conclusive argument in the present question; because it is apparently one of the current theories that dishonour was done, not to gratify passion, but to inflict shame and degradation upon the English name.

But the object of the Mutineers was, I believe, not so much to disgrace our name as to wipe out all trace of Europeans, and of everything connected with foreign rule.

In the massacres perpetrated with this object the demon of cruelty was let loose, and barbarity in every inhuman shape indulged. The set of passions, however, called into play was, I conceive, distinct from those which would have tempted to the commission of the suspected practices. There was cold and heartless bloodthirstiness, at the farthest remove from the lust of desiré.

As there was, therefore, no dishonour committed on principle, with the view of inflicting disgrace, so likewise, as it appears to me, there was no dishonour done from passion.

Mr. Reade has mentioned the singular absence of this kind of crime in past times. But it has, I believe, been greatly owing to the awe with which Europeans have always been regarded by the natives of India. This awe, it is true, was rudely violated when the rebels ventured on their work of wholesale murder. But I apprehend that it still, at the very moment of the massacres, operated to chill and repress the idea of any familiar approach. I speak of the general native feeling, without venturing to assert that there may not *possibly* have been exceptions.

I have thought it right to add so much on my own part, because the remarks of Mr. Reade appeared open to some variety of opinion on the two points I have alluded to.

II.—The second letter is from Mr. F. Williams, Commr. of Meerut. He was present as Judge at the outbreak there, and has had the best possible means, both then and afterwards, for reaching the truth. His evidence is decisively against the commission of any act of female dishonour.

The case of horrid mutilation, after death, of a pregnant lady, noticed by Mr. Williams, may serve, perhaps, to explain the manner in which the painful rumours of violation gained currency. Such diabolical outrage to the human frame hardly bears to be narrated. Words fail to express the shocking nature of the barbarity. But the very veiling of the transaction by the remark (a likely one in ordinary correspondence), that it is too horrible to be mentioned, would naturally lead the reader to the conclusion that the dishonour was of the worst character, and that the poor victims had been abandoned to the brutalities of lust as well as to the last cruelties of a fiendish rage.

I believe that the most of the stories—those which are not wanton fabrications—must have grown up in this manner. The

instance of the half-caste girl referred to in Mr. Williams' post-script is not one of the kind contemplated in the investigation directed by His Lordship.

III.—Major G. W. Williams, Superintendent of Police Battalions, from his long connection with the Cantonment Police, his residence of some months at Meerut after the outbreak, and his employment in that district with the Volunteer Horse, is peculiarly qualified to give an opinion which may be relied on. His testimony, founded as well on the evidence of competent witnesses, as on the universal impression amongst the natives, is that there was no dishonour done to our females at the breaking out of disturbances anywhere.

It will be remarked that Major Williams' evidence extends to the massacres at Futtehgurh and Cawnpore. The enquiries which he has been prosecuting at the request of Government into the conduct of the native officials here have brought him into contact with numerous persons able to give evidence on the subject.

IV.—I requested Major Williams to procure a written statement from the Rev. T. C. Smyth, M.A., as he was said to know of some cases of the kind. But the deliberate opinion of Mr. Smyth, who has been in the most favourable position for sifting the evidence, is that no females were violated at Meerut.

V.—The report of Mr. Saunders, Offg. Commr. and Agent to the Lt.-Governor at Delhi, is most complete and decisive, that neither at Meerut nor Delhi was murder preceded by dishonour. Like Mr. Williams, it will be observed he thinks it possible that some women of colour may have been forced to sacrifice their honour to save their lives; but this is mentioned only as a possible case.

The evidence of Ramchunder is valuable. He is one of the Christians baptized a few years ago at Delhi by Mr. Jennings, is an accomplished mathematician, and was Professor in the Delhi College. He was present in the City during the massacre, and is therefore in every respect a most competent witness as to the nature of the proceedings.

VI.—Although Mr. C. B. Thornhill's views are already known to His Lordship, I thought that it would be satisfactory to have a further recorded expression of them. Mr. Thornhill's position, officiating as the Secretary to Government, and the numerous enquiries which he has personally directed with the purpose of ascertaining the fate of near relatives, render his authority second to no other. He states truly that Hindoos, except of the

lowest grades, would have become outcasts had they perpetrated this offence. Neither would Mahomedans have done so in the unconcealed manner which has been supposed at home. Such procedure would have been repugnant to the feelings and habits of the country, and would have required strong and direct evidence to have secured any credence:—while Mr. Thornhill shows that there is absolutely none. It must, however, be admitted that there is nothing in the habits or tenets of the Musulman population which would prevent them from taking females seized at the general outbreak to their homes with sinister designs. By the Mahomedan law, captives taken in war are not lawful to the captors till the expiry of at least a month and a half. But since the Mahomedans have set their laws, human and divine, at nought throughout the rebellion, it is not to be expected that those laws would have checked them even to the observance of that period.

While, however, there is nothing to have prevented the Mahomedans from carrying off women, whom they intended to preserve alive, to their harems, all the evidence yet obtained is entirely opposed to the supposition that ladies of English blood were anywhere reserved for that disgrace. There may have been instances in which females of colour have been forcibly subjected, or, to save their lives, have consented to such treatment.

Mr. Alexander's communication, numbered VII., refers to one or two cases supposed of this nature. But it must be remembered that, as regards Rohilkhund, the evidence cannot be complete or satisfactory till our reoccupation of the Province.

There is one point, however, on which His Lordship may rest assured, viz., that wherever females, whether English or Eurasian, have been taken into the Mehals of natives, the fact cannot remain concealed. All such cases will, as soon as we re-enter the locality in power, be susceptible of full enquiry and proof.

VIII.—The note of Mr. A. H. Cocks (I have extracted from it all that relates to the subject) contains no direct evidence excepting his belief that at Futtehgurh and Hissar no licentious insult was offered, and a statement of the general opinion that at Delhi the ladies and children were simply massacred. No stress need be laid on the boast of the Mutineers; even if correctly stated, it may have been an impudent and idle defiance, and anyhow, until closely enquired into, it can carry no weight. Mere hearsay has so often turned out unfounded, or founded upon something bearing quite another construction, that it cannot be received in this paper at any value.

In respect of Jhansi, there is evidence, direct and indirect, that there was there no dishonour done to the women. The same is the case with Cawnpoor,—the solitary exception being the story regarding Miss Wheeler, the truth of which can be best sifted by Mr. Sherer on the spot.

My own views have been, perhaps, sufficiently stated in the foregoing remarks. But His Lordship may desire a more distinct expression of them.

My connection with the Intelligence Department at the Headquarters of the Govt. of Agra has brought me, during the past six months, into contact with messengers and spies from all parts of the country. I gladly add my testimony that nothing has come to my knowledge which would in the smallest degree support any of the tales of dishonour current in our public prints. Direct evidence, wherever procurable, has been steadily and consistently against them. The people—those who must know had there been cases of outraged honour, and would have told us—uniformly deny that such things were ever perpetrated or thought of. The understanding of the people on this point (if, as I believe, we have correctly apprehended it) cannot be wrong.

That there may not have possibly been exceptional instances it would be hazardous to assert, until the occupation of the whole country, and complete re-establishment of our power, shall have given us the entire command of all available evidence. Judging, however, from the great accumulation of negative evidence, supported as it also is in many important points by direct and positive proof, it may safely be asserted that there are fair grounds for believing that violation before murder was in no case committed; and that, if women of colour have anywhere been carried off and dishonoured, such cases must be rare and peculiar, and have occurred under circumstances which in all likelihood will hereafter be explained.

It is necessary, in conclusion, to remark that this Memorandum applies specially to the N.W.P., including Bundelkhand and Oudh: to those tracts, namely, where the mutinies were the most fatal, and the ensuing anarchy the most widespread and disastrous. They apply indirectly to the mutinies in all other quarters, so far as intelligence regarding them has reached us.

For the stations from Cawnpoor downwards, His Lordship will probably be able to collect evidence, more complete and circumstantial than we can obtain, from the Officers on the spot.

W. MUIR.

AGRA, 30th Decr. 1857.

I. MEMORANDUM BY MR. E. A. READE, SENIOR MEMBER,
SUDDER BOARD OF REVENUE, N.W.P.

I AM of opinion that the stories of violation, by the Mutineers and their associates in crime, of English females at Cawnpoor and elsewhere are generally false, and that this aggravation of horror has existed only in exceptional cases.

I formed this opinion on these grounds:—

1. That the native informants who have come to the Fort of Agra have fully detailed the sanguinary atrocities as they saw them or heard them described by others, but have not mentioned violation, and their negative answers to the question have rather indicated surprise at the question being put.

2. The first written account received here was from an East Indian who had escaped before the entrenchments at Cawnpoor were attacked, who was not an eye-witness of subsequent scenes, and wrote from hearsay. This class is apt to indulge in a prurient imagination.

3. The natives of India, both Hindoos and Mahomedans (and the latter are much Hindooised in their habits and notions), have a repugnance to sexual connection with European females. During thirty years of Indian experience the only instances that have come to my knowledge have been a few cases of voluptuaries sated with Oriental beauty seeking for variety. If it were otherwise, would not Indian gold easily procure from England and France any number of fallen creatures?

4. Let any one reflect how many young girls without any escort or protection have travelled alone in palankeens from Calcutta to Delhi; or, again, call to mind cases where such travellers on boats have been attacked and plundered in former days, and yet I cannot recollect any instance of violation of European females, either by their attendants or by robbers. Fanaticism and idolatry are equally cruel, but Indian lust is almost always the lust of bloodshed and plunder only.

E. A. READE.

AGRA, 2nd December 1857.

II. FROM MR. FLEETWOOD WILLIAMS, COMMISSIONER,
MEERUT, TO MR. MUIR.

MEERUT, December 3rd, 1857.

I NEVER heard any sort of mention of European females having been violated here, at Meerut.

The horrid work here was executed in such a hurry, and in such a bloodthirsty spirit, that I believe the taking of life at once was all that was thought of. There was most frightful mutilation here. One poor lady who was advanced in pregnancy was ripped open, the child taken out, and was found put round the poor lady's neck. But, as far as I can ascertain, violation was not added to the other atrocities here as regards Europeans.

At Secundrabad, in the Boolundshahur District, the poor native women suffered the utmost wickedness of savages in this respect. According to all accounts, except the few killed here on the 10th of May, Europeans have been most mercifully preserved from all evil in this Division, with the exception of two officers killed by their men. But don't forget Cawnpoor.

F. WILLIAMS.

MEERUT, Dec. 3, 1857.

P.S.—There was one Eurasian girl found in the Boolundshahur District coming with a native, but there was no finding out who she was, and she objected to being rescued from her situation.

III. MEMORANDUM BY MAJOR G. W. WILLIAMS, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE BATTALIONS.

MEERUT, 23rd Dec. 1857.

MY DEAR MUIR,—You must have already heard from Mr. Saunders; as he told me he had written to you, and that he knew of no proved cases at Delhi or elsewhere to justify the prevalent opinion of our poor helpless ladies having been dishonoured.

To every one from whom I thought it likely I could procure information on this painful subject, especially to witnesses from Futtehgurh and Cawnpoor, I have put the question, and have been invariably answered in the negative, and most decidedly. I believe the native idea is as strongly against the opinion as, strange to say, the papers are positive in asserting it. Mr. Smyth's letter is conclusive as regards Meerut, where dishonour is supposed to have been offered. But the dead, it would seem, were only grossly insulted. The enquiry I am now making will, I trust, clear up the whole of the Meerut affair of the 10th May.

G. W. WILLIAMS.

IV. FROM THE REVEREND T. C. SMYTH, TO MAJOR G. W. WILLIAMS.

MEERUT, December 16, 1857.

MY DEAR MAJOR WILLIAMS,—Since receiving your letter of the 11th instant I have made enquiries in several quarters as to the painful subject upon which you write. I have learned from several unquestionable sources that the bodies of females murdered at Meerut on the 10th May were brutally insulted *after death*; but I cannot discover a single case in which it is clearly proved that violation was actually perpetrated. I am now of opinion that no females were violated at Meerut.

The statements which appear in the English newspapers regarding the atrocities perpetrated by the rebels here and elsewhere are, in many instances, grossly exaggerated, as in the case of Riding-master Langdale's child of the 3rd Cavalry, who was actually killed with one blow of a tulwar while sleeping on the charpoy; whereas she is stated to have been cut in pieces by little and little, with every refinement of gradual torture.

The Sirdhanah Nuns were also mentioned in an English paper as having escaped to "a valley in Thibet," instead of which they were housed from June till early in September within the walls of the Rifle Hospital.

THOMAS SMYTH.

V. FROM MR. C. B. SAUNDERS, OFFG. COMMISSIONER AND AGENT LIEUTT.-GOVERNOR, TO MR. MUIR.

DELHI, Decr. 17, 1857.

MY DEAR MUIR,—With reference to the enquiry which Lord Canning's Private Secretary has desired you to make, I would beg to state that I believe there is no reason whatsoever to suppose that the European ladies and girls massacred either at Meerut or Delhi were violated or outraged before death put an end to their sufferings. I have taken considerable pains to ascertain whether there is any foundation for the tales which have obtained publication in the public prints regarding violence having been offered to poor Miss Jennings and Miss Clifford, and am perfectly satisfied that there is no ground whatever for the supposition that they were in any way ill-treated before death. Every account which I have received confirms the fact that they were at once killed by the Palace rabble and others, who rushed up into the quarters of the Commandant of the Palace Guards and there and then massacred the whole party assembled. Articles like that which I return, and which appeared in a

Bombay paper purporting to have been communicated from Umritsur, are in my opinion most dastardly and unwarrantable. I much wonder at an editor having allowed such a statement to have found room in his paper, calculated, as it was, to harrow the feelings of relatives and to do no earthly good, but, on the contrary, much evil by hounding on our troops and officials to what I cannot but term an unholy and unchristian thirst for vengeance.

I have before written to Sir John Lawrence on the subject of the atrocious tales which obtained currency in the papers regarding poor Miss Jennings and her companion, and was glad to find in the last *Lahore Chronicle* an authoritative contradiction to the rumours. The atrocities which have been committed during the rebellion have been quite sufficiently appalling without the need of any exaggeration, which the papers of the "blood and scalp" school have deemed necessary to introduce, with a view to inflame the feelings of our countrymen and turn them into fiends. Poor Wigram Clifford, who was killed at Sonah, was very much distressed by hearing from England tales of his sister having been for days saved and kept in the King's harem, and for which there was no possible foundation.

As you say, there may have been rare and exceptional cases in which ladies at other stations have been ill-treated, and possibly some half-caste women may yet be alive who have been obliged to sacrifice their honour, but I doubt much if there have been many such.

I have spoken to Ramchunder on the subject, and he tells me that the only instance which came to his knowledge of any women having been ill-treated in any way at Delhi was when one of the 3rd Cavalry troopers insultingly patted the cheeks of some poor creature at Durayogunge, on which her husband shot the man, and both husband and wife were immediately killed by the bystanders.

C. B. SAUNDERS.

Decr. 1857.

VI. MR. C. B. THORNHILL, OFFG. SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
N.W.P., TO MR. MUIR.

AGRA, December 26, 1857.

MY DEAR MUIR,—I am very glad that my note to Dr. Kay has caused an enquiry into the foundation upon which the numerous reports of violation of English women are based.

My own attention was first drawn to the question in consequence of a letter referring to the barbarous murder of a lady in Meerut having been amplified, by the persons to whom it was addressed, into a case of violation previous to murder.

The writer had no intention of conveying such an impression, and I thought it probable that many other letters, similarly worded in general and equally comprehensive terms, might have produced a like result, and I have therefore endeavoured to trace the reports to their source whenever I had an opportunity, and I have invariably found that no sort of evidence existed which in any way substantiated them.

We all know that Hindoos would regard connection with a Christian as involving loss of caste, and that the feelings of Mahomedans would lead them to veil such act with the closest secrecy. It is also contrary to human nature to believe that promiscuous intercourse could have occurred in the public manner which is supposed.

Again, who have described these occurrences? All the European sufferers were massacred, and the natives most positively deny their existence in fact. I feel, therefore, little doubt that the more this painful subject is brought under close enquiry, the more satisfactory will be the evidence that our country-women have not suffered that last insult which would have rendered their awful death, if possible, more horrible, and have caused additional anguish to their relatives and to their country.

C. B. THORNHILL.

VII. FROM MR. R. ALEXANDER, COMMISSIONER, ROHILKHUND,
TO MR. MUIR.

NYNEE TAL, Decr. 21, 1857.

MY DEAR MUIR,—It is not possible to give a complete or satisfactory answer to the question put in your letter of the 5th Decr. (which I have only just received, the dak having been interrupted) until I go down to the plains.

I have heard only of two cases which I look on as *credible*. In the one, a son of Mujeedooddeen Ahmed Khan (a Mujjoo) of Moradabad, who is stated to have violated a child of one of the Moradabad victims, and afterwards to have caused her death, was the guilty actor. In the other, Meerun, one of the Naumuhallea Syuds of Bareilly, has detained and, it is supposed, has defiled, a child of one of the clerks (Mr. Fanthome, a Eurasian). When

we go down, the truth and particulars of other cases will come out, I believe. But in those cases I think it not (?) unlikely that the victims may also be produced. With the exception of that one case at Moradabad, I have not heard of any such horrible case as that of violation preceding murder; but I am inclined to believe that women or girls have been taken to Zenanahs.

The Hindoos have suffered in this way wherever the Mahomedan rabble soldiery have had their sway.

R. ALEXANDER.

VIII. EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MR. A. H. COCKS, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF ALLYGURH, TO MR. MUIR, DATED MYNPOORIE, 29 DECR. 1857.

ABOUT the alleged violation of our country-women, I wrote that I had felt a distaste to make enquiries on the subject from natives, especially as at Allygurh nothing of the kind had occurred. I had, however, heard officers who had been at Delhi express their opinion that in most instances the poor ladies and children had been killed at once; although one Mutineer had at his execution boasted of his guilt in this particular. At Cawnpoor we can hardly hope that the captives escaped violation. At Futtehgurh I believe the rule to have been instantaneous death. I have never heard particulars of Jhansi, but at Hissar there was also no brutality committed in addition to murder.

AGRA, 5th January 1858.

MY LORD,—In reference to my letter of the 30th ultimo, I beg to submit the following additional statement.

I requested Major Macpherson to ascertain for me freely what the views of Dinkur Rao upon the subject of my memorandum were.

In respect to all other places but Cawnpoor, there was no doubt but that my memorandum distinctly indicated the sense prevalent at Gwalior. The case of the Gwalior ladies is a good sample of the general feeling. They were as much in the power of the soldiery as the ladies anywhere else, and were far from escaping insult and cruel treatment, insomuch that swords were

MEMO. ON TREATMENT OF EUROPEAN FEMALES 379

presented at their throats to extract even their wedding rings. Yet the shadow of an attempt at their honour there was not.

But regarding Cawnpoor, a man who came to the Durbar from that place certainly led Scindia and Dinkur Rao to the conclusion that during their confinement some of our women were taken by the Sowars to their houses; and the impression left upon the mind of Scindia and his able and discerning Minister is that at Cawnpoor licentious insult was offered. It becomes now a matter of greater consequence even than before to probe the truth of these suspicions. It may be that they are unfounded, for other evidence is opposed to them.

If otherwise, the Nana's name will, if possible, be rendered still blacker and more vile by the stigma of encouraging an atrocity elsewhere unknown.

Should your Lordship make any use of my memorandum already submitted, I would beg the addition of the following postscript.

Postscript, 5th January 1858.—There are points connected with the long detention of the Nana's victims which render Cawnpoor a peculiar case, and may cast a suspicion on the treatment of the prisoners there;—certainly (so far as present evidence goes) attaching to no other quarter. I would recommend further particular enquiry there.

I remain, your Lordship's faithful servant,

W. MUIR.

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. LORD CANNING,
Governor-General.