

for the love of (such a god)!" Then he takes another knife and sticks it through his other arm, and takes a third knife and runs it into his belly, and so on until he kills himself outright. And when he is dead his kinsfolk take the body and burn it with a joyful celebration.⁸ Many of the women also, when their husbands die and are placed on the pile to be burnt, do burn themselves along with the bodies. And such women as do this have great praise from all.⁹

The people are Idolaters, and many of them worship the ox, because (say they) it is a creature of such excellence. They would not eat beef for anything in the world, nor would they on any account kill an ox. But there is another class of people who are called *Govy*, and these are very glad to eat beef, though they dare not kill the animal. Howbeit if an ox dies, naturally or otherwise, then they eat him.¹⁰

And let me tell you, the people of this country have a custom of rubbing their houses all over with cow-dung.¹¹ Moreover all of them, great and small, King and Barons included, do sit upon the ground only, and the reason they give is that this is the most honourable way to sit, because we all spring from the Earth and to the Earth we must return; so no one can pay the Earth too much honour, and no one ought to despise it.

And about that race of *Govis*, I should tell you that nothing on earth would induce them to enter the place where Messer St. Thomas is—I mean where his body lies, which is in a certain city of the province of Maabar. Indeed, were even 20 or 30 men to lay hold of one of these *Govis* and to try to hold him in the place where the Body of the Blessed Apostle of Jesus Christ lies buried, they could not do it! Such is the influence of the Saint; for it was by people of this generation that he was slain, as you shall presently hear.¹²