

THE SUTTEE IN INDIA.

An Indian journal gives the following account of a suttee case which recently occurred in the Cawnpore district. "On April 15 the brother of a woman named Mussumat Rahusia, living at a village six miles from the police station of Sheela, in the Cawnpore district, brought the tidings that her husband, a Brahmin, Omel Tawarree, had lately died at Mhow. The widow showed great emotion; she broke the bangles from her wrists and shortly after began to cry. Sutt Ram, Sutt Ram, repeatedly, at short intervals, announcing her intention to sacrifice herself. The Pandit of the family being sent for, advised the test to be applied, viz., that her hand should be placed over a lighted lamp, to see if she could bear the pain. The lamp was brought, the widow herself placed her hand over the flame, and kept it there until it was blackened and blistered, declaring that she felt no pain. She was then declared worthy to perform the sacrifice. A large number of the neighbors assembled, and there appeared to have been a good deal of apprehension among them at this time as to the consequences which would ensue if the suttee should take place. The members of the woman's family declared that they would not allow it, as it was the 'Angrezi amul,' and the result might be serious to them. The matter was left undecided that day, though the widow herself never seemed to have faltered in her determination. The next morning some of the family started with the widow for Bithoor, for the purpose of performing funeral rites for the deceased husband, but the Pandit recalled them saying the day was inauspicious. The widow continued throughout the day to chant 'Sutt Ram, I will go and burn with my husband. Many people came to see her. Towards evening she addressed some Thakoor zemindars, and begged them to grant her the boon of a piece of land for the sacrifice. At last one of the Thakoors present appeared to be overcome by her solicitation, and said, 'Come, I'll give you a field, be the consequences what they may,' notwithstanding the protest of many present, who prophesied the danger of the proceedings. After this, however, less opposition was offered, and large numbers of people came to make their obeisance to the holy woman. It appears to have been understood this evening that the suttee would take place. The Thakoor who had come forward previously again declared his readiness to give a field, and hurried out to give orders for wood to be cut and carried to the spot. Several men gave their assistance in cutting and carrying wood, and as soon as a pyre was constructed, information was carried to the widow, who, after putting on jewels and other wise preparing herself, lost no time in proceeding at almost a running pace to the field, followed by a procession of some two or three hundred of the neighboring villagers—the males first, and women in the rear, succeeded by a band of village musicians, pressed into the service. On arriving at the field, the Suttee, as the woman is now called, mounted the pyre, on which she set herself cross-legged, and gave instructions that her son should set fire to it. The son, a youth about eighteen years of age, had brought a bundle of grass with which to set light to the wood, and as soon as his mother was prepared, he fired the grass. On the flames rising, the suttee half rose from her sitting posture, on seeing which the spectators murmured in dissatisfaction, but the woman immediately resumed her seat, and signed with her hand that she had no intention of evading the sacrifice. Shortly after some of the bystanders threw on more wood, the flames arose and surrounded the victim, and the sacrifice was consummated. The spectators then brought flowers and offerings of various kinds, and threw them on the embers and dispersed. The district superintendent, Mr. Goad, proceeded to the guilty village, where the villagers bolted their doors, and at first assumed a menacing attitude. He ultimately, however, succeeded not only in obtaining a full and true history of the case, but in arresting all the zemindars and others at all concerned. The chief offender, however, the widow's son, Bahadoor, who had actually kindled the funeral pile on which she was consumed, has absconded, and has, we believe, not yet been apprehended.

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