

## HEATHEN SUPERSTITION.

*From the Methodist Magazine.*

Last Sabbath, (writes our Indian Missionary) I was conversing with my little flock, about the feeling which exists among all nations, that some atonement for sin is necessary. I related to them what my three sons had seen, as they returned with me from Hurdwar. A Fakeer\* was observed by the road side, preparing something extraordinary; which, having never been observed before, excited a curiosity to draw near and examine his employment. He had several Hindoo pilgrims round him, who assisted in preparing the wretched devotee for some horrible penance, to which he had, of his own accord, bound himself, in order, as he thought, to wash away the guilt of some crime which he had committed long ago. His attendants literally worshipped him, kissing his feet, calling him God, and begging for his blessing. A large fire was kindled under the extended branch of an old tree. To this branch the Fakeer fastened two strong ropes, having at the lower end of each of them a stuffed noose, into which he put his feet, and thus hanging with his head downward over the fire, a third rope was fixed at some distance towards the end of the branch, by which he succeeded with one hand to set himself in a swinging motion, backward and forward, through the smoke and flaming fire, which was kept blazing, by a constant supply of fuel, administered by some of his followers. With the other hand he counted a string of beads, a certain number of times, so as to ascertain when the four hours came to an end, for which he doomed himself daily to endure this exercise for twelve years, nine of which are nearly expired. A narrow bandage is over his eyes, and another over his mouth, to guard against being suffocated by the smoke. By this means he says he shall atone for the guilt of his

---

\*The Fakeers are a race of men in India who are thought by the people to be very holy. They wander about from place to place, living on charity, and subjecting themselves to penance for their sins.