

"His heart," adds the writer of this account, "seemed full of joy, and a sweet, smiling cheerfulness was on his face. Since that time, Molapo and his wife have continued bright ornaments of the profession they have made."—*Juv. Mis. Magazine.*

The Fatal Fire-Dance.

Lately, writes a missionary in India, I had an opportunity of seeing the wretched folly of the heathen, in a way not generally known. It was a Fire-Dance.

In certain cases, a married woman, if she has made a vow to the goddess Bagavati, fulfils her vow by having the ceremony performed. A woman had taken this vow; and, in the evening, when a large crowd of people were gathered together, the dancer made his appearance amidst shouts and music. Having smeared his body with some stuff to protect his flesh from the fire, he put on a netted garment, and then fastened over it a certain kind of leaf. When this was done, he rolled a quantity of cloth around himself, and fastened it well to his body and limbs. Thus protected against the flames, his clothes are anointed with oil, and set on fire; and as soon as the flames began to burn brightly, he began to dance. The crowd around did the same, and by songs and cries increased the uproar. After the fire had burned some time, and when it was likely to reach his body, the friends of the fire-dancer threw water upon him to put it out. But, on the other hand, the relations of the woman, who had to fulfil her vow, poured more oil upon the burning body, that the fire might continue to burn. This contest was kept up almost the whole night, and the poor hireling of such wickedness and folly with difficulty escapes with his life.

This dangerous dance was observed by many Hindoo boys, who were so pleased with it, that they agreed to amuse themselves in a similar way. Accordingly, several of them met in a solitary spot, and one of them consent-

ed to be the fire-dancer; his companions smeared him all over with mud, and they fastened round his body withered palm leaves. Upon this they began to dance and shout, all delighted with the sport.

This play was carried on for some time without danger; but, one day, as they were enjoying the sport, a person said to them:—"Your play is not perfect, it wants the fire, and the boy in the palm leaves must be made to burn." This pleased them all, and a boy went to the mother of the one who was acting the fire-dancer, and asked for a light. Not knowing the purpose for which he wanted it, she let him take a firebrand from the hearth. Highly pleased, the boy returned with his prize, when all of them rejoiced that their sport would now be perfect; and, without delay, the poor little dancer was set on fire, with the brand from the house of his own mother. The boy of course instantly felt the heat, as he had no protection from it; and he began to scream and dance about in torture. The other boys, heartily pleased with his shouts and capering, and not thinking of his pain, screamed and danced with him. Soon the cries of the burning boy became more wild and piercing, and he entreated his playfellows to put out the fire. They, however, supposing that he was in sport, drowned his shrieks with louder noises; but in a few moments, the burning boy fell to the ground. His companions gathered around him, and now for the first time, they saw that the flames had consumed his flesh. It was too late to save him, and after a little while he died in agony; nothing was left of him but a heap of ashes, and the shout of mirth was changed into the cry of terror.

Now, dear readers, there is something to be learned from this story, besides the folly and wickedness of the heathen. You have been often told that it is a dangerous thing to play with fire; but it is much more dangerous to take pleasure in sin. Many of you live