

no law to impose the like on him ; but he, if he likes, can take another wife.¹ It is also customary there for the women to drink wine and not the men. The women also have their foreheads shaven, whilst the men shave not the beard.² And there be many other marvellous and beastly customs which 'tis just as well not to write.

18. Concerning the kingdom of Mobar, where lieth the body of
St. Thomas.

From this realm 'tis a journey of ten days to another realm which is called MOBAR,³ and this is very great, and hath

¹ Mr. Elphinstone says: "The practice of Suttee is by no means universal in India. It never occurs to the south of the River Kishna." But this absolute statement certainly conveys an erroneous impression. Marco Polo states the practice of Southern India just as Odoric does, whilst in 1580, Gasparo Balbi, an accurate and unimaginative traveller, describes with seeming truth a suttee which he witnessed at Negapatam, and speaks of the custom as common. In the middle of the seventeenth century, P. Vincenzo, the Procurator-General of the Carmelites, says it was especially common in Canara; whilst he was told that on the death of the Naik of Madura 11,000 women had offered themselves to the flames! These 11,000 suttees may have been as mythical as the 11,000 virgins of Cologne, but they prove the practice. And in the beginning of the last century it continued to be extremely prevalent in that region. P. Martin, in a letter from Marawar (or Ramnad, opposite Ceylon), dated in 1713, mentions three cases then recent, in which respectively forty-five, seventeen, and twelve women had performed suttee on the death of the husbands, princes of that state. The widow of the Raja of Trichinopoly, being left pregnant, burnt herself after delivery. (Elphinstone's *H. of India*, p. 190; *M. Polo*, iii, 20; *Viaggio di Gasparo Balbi*, f. 83; *P. Vincenzo*, p. 322; *Lettres Edifiantes*, ed. Lyon, 1819, vii, 73, 75.) Suttees still occur in spite of our prohibition, and not very unfrequently, both in our own territory and in the native states.

Ramusio quotes Propertius on suttee. I borrow a few lines, showing how familiar this still-enduring Indian practice was to the Romans nineteen hundred years ago:—

————— Uxorum fuis stat pia turba comis;
Et certamen habet lædi, quæ viva sequatur
Conjugium; pudor est non licuisse mori.
Ardent victrices, et flammæ pectora præbent,
Imponuntque suis ora perusta viris.

² This reasonable reading is from Venni's originals only. I have overlooked it in the Appendix, where the strange readings of other copies will be seen (p. xiv, and note 9).

³ The Coromandel region; see note to Jordanus, p. 19. It is possible