

Koh-i-Núr diamond, now one of the Crown jewels of England, to Jagannáth.

The immediate attendants on the god are divided into 36 orders and 97 classes, at the head of whom is the Rájá of Khurdhá, the representative of the ancient royal house of Orissa, who takes upon himself the lowly office of sweeper to Jagannáth. Decorators of the idol, priests of the wardrobe, cooks, dancing-girls, grooms, and artisans of every sort, follow. A special department keeps up the temple records, and affords a literary asylum to a few learned men.

*The Temple.*—The sacred enclosure is nearly in the form of a square, 652 feet long, and 630 broad. The interior is protected from profane eyes by a massive stone wall 20 feet high. Within rise about 120 temples, dedicated to the various forms in which the Hindu mind has imagined its god. But the great pagoda is the one dedicated to Jagannáth. Its conical tower rises like an elaborately carved sugar-loaf, 192 feet high, black with time, and surmounted by the mystic wheel and flag of Vishnu. Outside the principal entrance, or Lion Gate, in the square where the pilgrims chiefly throng, is an exquisite monolithic pillar which stood for centuries before the Temple of the Sun, twenty miles up the coast. The temple of Jagannáth consists of 4 chambers, communicating with each other, viz.—the Hall of Offerings; the Pillared Hall for the musicians and dancing-girls; the Hall of Audience; and, lastly, the Sanctuary itself, containing rude images of Jagannáth, his brother Balabhadra, and his sister Subhadrá. Jagannáth is represented without arms. The service of the temple consists partly in a daily round of oblations, and partly in sumptuous ceremonials at stated periods throughout the year. The offerings are bloodless; but, nevertheless, within the sacred enclosure is a shrine to Bimalá, the 'stainless' queen of the All-Destroyer, who is annually adored with bloody sacrifices. Twenty-four festivals are held, consisting chiefly of Vishnuite commemorations, but freely admitting the ceremonials of other sects. At the Red Powder Festival, Vishnu and Siva enjoy equal honours; in the festival of the slaughter of the deadly cobra-de-capello (Kálí damana), the familiar of Siva and his queen, the supremacy of Vishnu is declared.

But the Car Festival is the great event of the year. It takes place in June or July, and for weeks beforehand the whole District is in a ferment. The great car is 45 feet in height and 35 feet square, and is supported on 16 wheels of 7 feet diameter. The brother and sister of Jagannáth have separate cars a few feet smaller. When the sacred images are at length brought forth and placed upon their chariots, thousands fall on their knees and bow their foreheads in the dust. The vast multitude shouts with one throat, and, surging back-

wards and forwards, drags the wheeled edifices down the broad streets towards the country-house of lord Jagannáth. Music strikes up before and behind, drums beat, cymbals clash, the priests harangue from the cars, or shout a sort of fescennine medley enlivened with broad allusions and coarse gestures, which are received with roars of laughter by the crowd.

The distance from the temple to the country-house is less than a mile; but the wheels sink deep into the sand, and the journey takes several days. After hours of severe toil and wild excitement in the tropical sun, a reaction necessarily follows. The zeal of the pilgrims flags before the garden-house is reached; and the cars, deserted by the devotees, are dragged along by the professional pullers with deep-drawn grunts and groans. These men, 4200 in number, are peasants from the neighbouring fiscal divisions, who generally manage to live at free quarters in Puri during the festival. Once arrived at the country-house, the enthusiasm subsides. The pilgrims drop exhausted upon the burning sand of the sacred street, or block up the lanes with their prostrate bodies. When they have slept off their excitement, they rise refreshed and ready for another of the strong religious stimulants of the season. Lord Jagannáth is left to get back to his temple as best he can, and but for the professional car-pullers, would inevitably be left at his country-house.

In a closely-packed, eager throng of a hundred thousand men and women, many of them unaccustomed to exposure or labour, and all of them tugging and straining at the cars to the utmost under a blazing sun, deaths must occasionally occur. There have, doubtless, been instances of pilgrims throwing themselves under the wheels in a frenzy of religious excitement; but such instances have always been rare, and are now almost unknown. At one time, several people were killed or injured every year, but these were almost invariably the result of accidental trampling. The few cases of suicide that did occur were for the most part those of diseased and miserable objects, who took this means to put themselves out of pain. The official returns place this beyond doubt. Nothing, indeed, could be more opposed to the spirit of Vishnu-worship than self-immolation. Accidental death within the temple renders the whole place unclean. The copious literature of the sect of Chaitanya makes no allusion to self-sacrifice, and contains no passage that could be twisted into a sanction for it.

The temple of Jagannáth, that *colluvio religionum*, in which every creed obtained an asylum, and in which every sect can find its god, now closes its gates against the low-caste population. Speaking generally, only those are excluded who retain the flesh-eating and animal-life-destroying propensities of the aboriginal tribes; wine-sellers, sweepers, skimmers, corpse-bearers, are also shut out.