

of the following paper. No one who begins to read it will leave it unfinished. Our missionary friends help us to see the heathen as they are.

Omitting an account of the journey from Lohiana, and many other details, let me present some of the scenes witnessed one evening at the Mela of Jwalamukhi last year. The city of Jwalamukhi is in the eastern part of the Panjab, situated at the foot of one of the ranges of the grand Himalaya chain of mountains. The city takes its name from the shrine, and the shrine is called Jwala-mukh—Mouth of Flame—from the fact that thin, lambent flames of burning gas issue from the mountain side. The Hindus say and believe that these flames are but the manifestation of one of their most popular goddesses. Here they have built a temple enclosing the Devi, and here millions present their offerings. It is given out by the Priests, and believed by the people, that no combustible material will burn in this flame. But this is wisely accompanied with a proviso that the material must be brought in contact with the flame *involuntarily, undesignedly*.—Countless numbers of absurd and contradictory stories about this manifestation of gas receive full credence by this poor, deluded people.

The scenes of one evening are sufficient to show how much the gospel is needed to humanize, elevate, enlighten and save. Other means have all brought forth miserable fruits. Imagine the multitudes gathered here, thickly covering a vast area, swaying to and fro, a living sea of humanity, and the noise of mingled murmuring and roaring, like the noise of many waters. As the day draws to a close the shadows come down from the mountains and the darkness gathers around the multitudes. Then here and there and everywhere throughout the vast assemblage the Fakirs light their little lamps in imitation of Jwala Ji, ring their bells and gather their circles of deluded followers. It might seem that such a vast multitude of human beings in various costume, with the robed priest's twinkling lamps, tinkling bells, and devout circles, would appear grand, but all other feelings are lost except sadness and disgust. The folly and blasphemous wickedness is so very, very palpable!—Approaching one of the lights we see a Fakir in a long robe, with a bell in his hand, which he rings as he sings and gesticulates, ever and anon bowing to the lamp which represents, or rather is, (through

the miraculous power of the priests) the goddess. The people sitting around in a circle, bow and chime in with a chorus. A poor, wretched-looking votary who has just joined the circle presents a few pice to the flame of the lamp, placing them upon the lamp-stand, from which they are conveyed to the Fakir's pocket. The Fakir mumbles over a prayer for the benefit of the offerer, at the close of which all the circle shout "Victory to Devi," and bow their foreheads to the ground.

At another place we find a large company gathered around a Fakir who has a large lamp in each hand. Hideous music is kept up by some musicians. The Fakir dances, whirls around on one foot, balances the lamps on his fingers, waves them to and fro, and singing, applies the flame to a sheet stretched over head without burning it. The people murmur inwardly "Is it not a god?"—and they are robbed of their pice by imposture.

A little distance further on, a Fakir is dressing and ornamenting a boy like a girl. Having completed all the arrangements, the music strikes up, a burning lamp is placed in the hand of another boy no disguise—and the newly-made girl begins to dance and bow and twist about. Then the boy with the lamp moves around the dancing one, presenting the flame to his face as gracefully as possible; and the simple people sitting by gaze with stupid, superstitious wonder at the pantomimic representation of some of the deeds of the gods.

Ascending some steps to a kind of platform on the side of the mountain, we behold a kind of shrine. Before it is a burning lamp, on one side sit the musicians, ringing bells, striking cymbals and singing. Two Fakirs profess to be filled with the spirit of the Devi and to have the power of divination and giving oracles. One had been overpowered by the spirit of Devi and now stood motionless with his hands bound. Coming to himself a little, his hands were loosed. He then took his long iron tongs, with short bits of iron like lashes at one end, and beat himself terribly over the back until he wrought himself into a high state of fervour, then bowing before the flame, gazed at it for some time with a fixed, stupid stare, until suddenly he gave a shriek and a jump, and he was dispossessed of the Devi. The surrounding multitude cried, "Victory to Devi." The other, who had long, matted, dirty hair, and his almost naked body smeared with some kind of mixture, had placed him-