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Jaganath and His Temple.

(“Daybreak.”)

Puri, on the east coast of Bengal, is a town of 22,000 inhabitants, and, though built on little fevery sandhills, stands so high in the religious estimation of the people that it is written of it: ‘Even Siva’ (one of the three great Hindu deities) ‘is unable to comprehend its glory; how feeble then the effort of mortal man!’ The surrounding district is the Holy Land of the Hindus—far more sacred to the Hindu soul than ever was Palestine to the Jew.

In this marvellously glorious city stands the great temple of Jaganath, the Lord of the World. The story of its origin is too

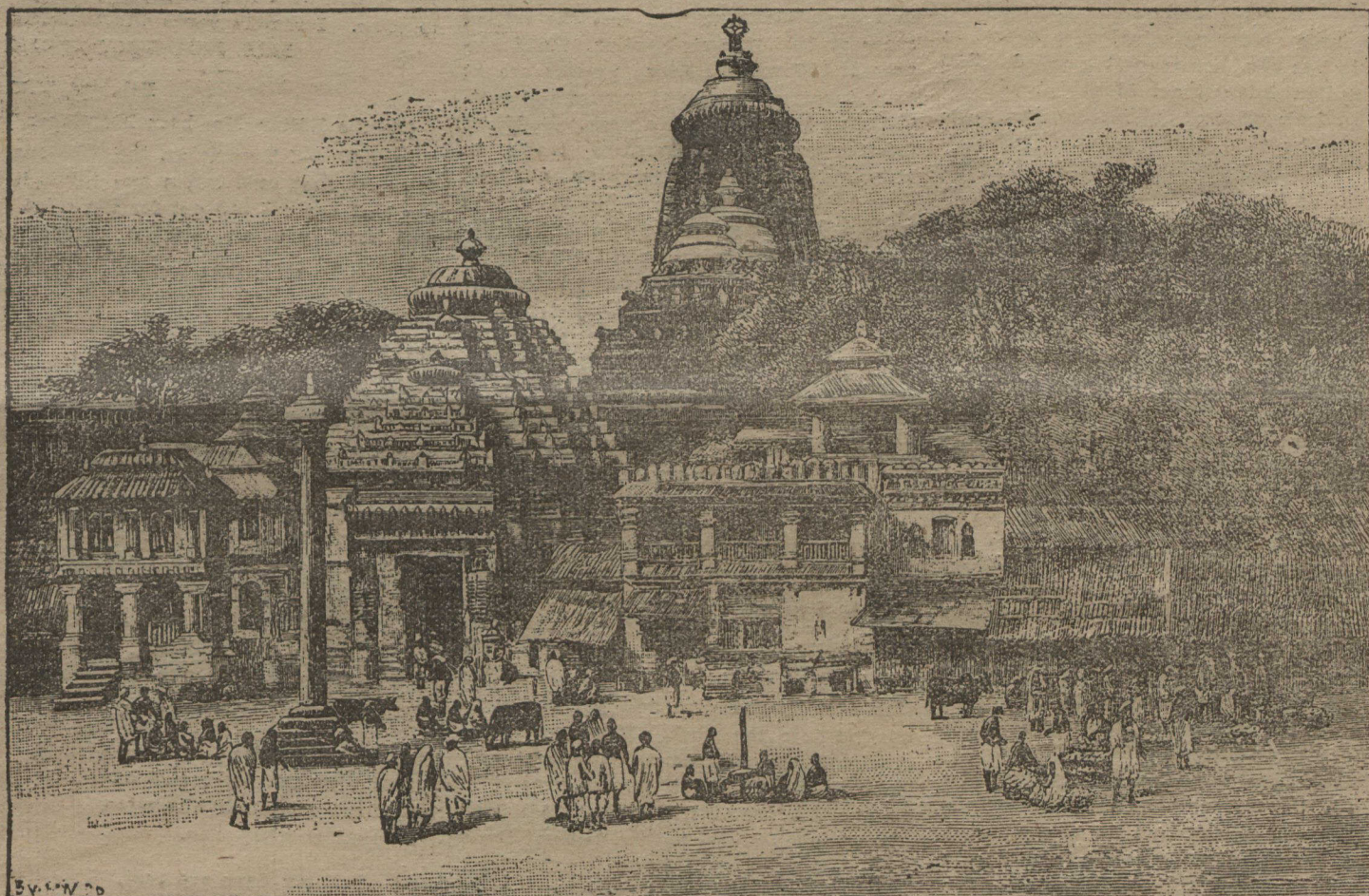
What a vast crowd of fanes to a false and soul-destroying faith—yet all more sacred to the Hindu than a church to the Christian.

Not only did this King, but all his successors, endow the great temple in all its relations richly. Large tracts of land were made over to the monasteries connected with it, yielding a rent of £27,000 a year, while for the temple upkeep itself further lands were given, producing a yearly income of £4,000, making together £31,000. This was the endowment when the territory came into the hands of the British, and it so continues to the present day.

But this is only a small part of the income to the institution. The pilgrims al-

in attendance on the idol itself, and the number of priests, temple-keepers, and pilgrim-guides amounts to 6,000. Counting all who directly or indirectly, men, women, and children, live by the service of this single god Jaganath in Puri, the figure stands at 20,000. Think of a kitchen big enough to cook food every day for 90,000 pilgrims alone, yet this is done within that sacred enclosure during the Car festival.

The variety of service and servants within the temple would satisfy the highest type of ritualist. Decorators of the idol, strewers of flowers around it, ‘priests of the wardrobe, bakers, cooks, guards, musicians, dancing-girls, torch-bearers,



TEMPLE OF JAGANATH—THE IDOL STANDS IN THE TALLEST.

long to be narrated here. Enough to say that a great calamity once befel the King of the region—he slew a Brahman—and his whole life henceforth was devoted to an atonement of his guilt. Jaganath appeared to him in a dream, and directed him to go to Puri and there worship him. He went, and after much thought, and prayer, and consultation, decided to build the temple as it now stands. It took fourteen years to build, and cost the King half a million sterling. It was finished in 1198, so that it is now 704 years old. Like most Hindu temples, it is conical, or sugar-loaf shaped, and it rises into the sky 192 feet. The sacred enclosure in which it stands is almost a square, surrounded by a wall twenty feet high, and is so large that it accommodates other temples to various deities, male and female, to the number of 120.

ways bring their gifts—the poorest give, often far beyond their ability—and starve themselves on their way home to do it, while the rich heap gold and silver and jewels on the idol’s seat, or spread out before it title-deeds conveying valuable lands to its service.

The famous Koh-i-noor diamond, now a crown jewel of England, was once bequeathed to Jaganath.

Taking together the various kinds of income, the total amount coming into the coffers of Jaganath is estimated at not less than £68,000 a year. And we never get rest from hearing of the poverty of India!

Some further idea of the magnitude of this vast establishment may be gathered from the number of persons employed in it various services. There are thirty-six orders and ninety-seven classes of priests

grooms, elephant-keepers, and artizans of every sort. There are distinct sets of servants to put the god to bed, to dress him, and to bathe him, and a special department keeps up the temple records.’

One, unaccustomed to heathenism as it is, is at a loss to imagine how intelligent human beings are capable of believing a piece of wood, well known to be only wood, to be or in any way represent deity. They would not admit that it is only wood. They say the deity Jaganath is in the wood, has been brought into it by the charm or spell of a priest, and remains in it a spirit unseen, and it is for this reason that they bow themselves before it. This is, no doubt, the theory, but practically the common people lose all sight of a spiritual element in the idol, and really worship it, and it alone; and the sight of a sacred