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### JUGGERNAUT'S TEMPLE, PURI, INDIA

THE GREAT HINDOO SHRINE whither annually flock thousands of pilgrims to catch a glance of their god, Juggernaut, as he is drawn through the streets by a thousand sweating devotees.

## The Car of Juggernaut

*India's Great Religious Festival as Seen by a European*

By F. Yeats-Brown

From the *Spectator*, London Liberal Weekly

**J**AGANATH is an earless, legless block of wood, about a yard high, smothered in tinsel and brocade, decked in immense pearls and rubies. Above the glitter, his painted mouth looks suitably cruel. People still sometimes throw themselves under his car when it is harnessed to three thousand pilgrims at his festival at Puri, but not often. When the police are not looking, and where the press of pilgrims is thick, some poor widow may go to her bliss under his sixteen wheels (her relations may even give her a little push toward heaven), but on the whole

life is safer than it used to be and the police more efficient.

For uncounted centuries Jaganath has been the symbol of the oldest living faith and the adored of millions. A hundred *devadasis* dance in his honor. He has a score of elephants to attend him. The revenue of his temple is kingly, and he has two locked cellars which are knee-deep in jewels. No white man except Lord Curzon has ever seen them or penetrated to his inner shrine. When he rides in his car, on his day of days, escorted by his brother Balarama and sister Sub-

hadra, surrounded by his priests and worshiped by his people, he goes on such a tide of human love and faith as we in the West may never see.

**L**OVE and faith are miracles whether they inform single minds or multitudes. But the thing which passes unseen at the altar or in some hand clasp becomes so visible and so vivid when it takes place at Puri simultaneously in the minds and hearts of two hundred thousand people, that it stuns the senses. One can only stammer about it. Some

day psychologists may be able to explain how the *pandars* (who have given a verb to our language) influence the crowd; how the priests, elephants, flowers, bangles, and heat combine into a single emotional complex. As for me, I shall only try to take a morning out of my life and put it into a page of print, without analysis.

We are at the Lion Gate, then, in the Temple Square of Puri, in a roped-off inclosure containing privileged spectators and the cars of Jaganath, Subhadra, Balarama. The cars are cottages on wheels, several stories high, beflagged and betinseled, with a central room for the god. On the front platform sit gilt idols of the drivers, with elbows and wrists in regular coaching style. Ropes thick as a man's wrist lie coiled below the cars, to each of which will be harnessed a thousand pilgrims. The car of Jaganath has three such traces, the others two. Outside our inclosure — where we stand with priests, pundits, retainues of rajahs, police officials, the Temple manager — squats the huge concourse of the people of Brahma. Only the *pandars* remain erect, fanning their flock with fly-whisks, sprinkling it with holy water, explaining to it the proceedings, for many of the pilgrims are strangers from far places, and ignorant.

WHEN the Lord Krishna was meditating with legs crossed in the lotus posture here at Puri, they tell their charges, a hunter mistook the upturned sole of his left foot for part of a deer, and shot him. Before dying, Krishna forgave the hunter; then he abandoned his mortal body and it became transformed into Jaganath, Lord of the World, symbol of the godhead. Soon he will emerge from the shrine where he has lived for ages, on his yearly pilgrimage to his consort, Lakshmi, at the Garden Temple four miles away.

Already there is a stir at the Lion Gate, for the sister of the Lord of the World is coming. The *pandars* tell the pilgrims, and the pilgrims lift up their voices. The *pandars* join hands in worship. The pilgrims join theirs. The *pandars* sprinkle and fan the squatting hosts and there is a seething and a crying. The voice of the crowd is like the purr of a tremendous tiger. The palanquin of

Subhadra arrives on the shoulders of a hundred priests, preceded by another hundred walking backwards.

TWO hours pass, but Time is an illusion of Siva, destroyer of Forms. The square is packed to suffocation. The sun peeps in and out, raising the temperature to 100° F., and then blanketing us in clouds. Balarama has come, but still the Lord of the World delays.

Now at last the backward-moving priests appear for the third time, and with them come elephants like castles on a checkerboard of brown bodies and white clothes, and waving white *chowris*, and wild braceleted arms. Jaganath has a peacock fan bigger than the Pope's, and his conchs are stranger than the silver trumpets of Saint Peter's. A throng seems to be fighting round him. The sun blazes over pandemonium. The ropes are broken. Hot bodies surge by me and over me to the car of Jaganath. Priests and *pandars* try to beat them down with rolls of matting, but good-humoredly, for this always happens. The people will not be denied touch with the deity.

Through these ecstasies and agonies Jaganath is borne to his seat. With each step taken the peacock plumes come forward. Through the tumult one can hear a rhythm, as if the fan kept time to a chant. Jaganath is ready to go where Lakshmi waits.

NOW an odd thing happens, which I wish the Simon Commission could see. A British police officer, sweating and disheveled in his khaki, appears before the car. His duty is to see that the god reaches the garden of his desire. It is a ticklish business, for Jaganath is so holy that he cannot be moved backward, even an inch. Should his car take a slant across the square and butt against a house, the house must come down.

The Superintendent of Police directs the human horses with a whistle. A thousand men are clustered on each rope. When the Superintendent sounds a blast they take the strain, and the traces stretch and stretch, like pieces of elastic. Slowly, smoothly, the sixteen wheels revolve. Everywhere between them, above, below, on every side, men and women and children are clinging and crying and trampling and fainting. A glimpse of

Jaganath is fertility to the barren, heart's ease to the sad, sons and kine to the householder.

Nearby, a temple elephant, with forehead of gold and the red eye of Siva painted on it, stands very thoughtfully. He has seen this show a hundred times. Pilgrims salute him, touching his trappings of cloth of gold and then their foreheads. They give him money, putting annas and even rupees into his trunk, which he swings up lazily to a mahout almost as *blasé* as himself. Not quite, however, for the mahout has only seen the show fifty times.

The crowd is mad with delight. Showers of marigold, jasmine, and money fall on the car. The elephant sways on his soft feet and blinks, not cynically, but with a very wistful wonder. The life of India flows by him, turbid, frenzied, yet wrapped in its own inscrutable mysteries. Why does it grovel before Jaganath, when the *rishis* rejected idolatry several thousand years ago? The elephant seems to share my feelings. Neither he nor I know how it is that the blind have been made to see by Jaganath, and the dumb to speak.

DO YOU doubt it? If you have seen these people of Puri and caught a little of the spirit of that far-off shore, you will know that wonders still walk this earth. Everything is possible here, but comprehension is not easy for those whose nurture has been different, whose climate is kind, whose traditions are concerned with conquest of races or environment.

The Indian, like our early saints, is interested, not in machines, but in the souls of men. In his mind germinated *bhakti marga*, whose light rejoiced all Christendom when it passed through the crystal of Saint Francis. It was an Indian also (Sankara) whose principles of meditation must surely have inspired Loyola. To-day we are further from the ages of faith, but it would be the commonest of vulgar errors to believe that guns and engines have won us a moral as well as material superiority over 'simpler' minds. The two cultures have much to give each other, but to bridge the gap between them will require an imagination that can stretch like the ropes of Jaganath's car.

# As Others See Us

*American Policies, Politics, and People in the Searchlight of Foreign Criticism*

## AMERICAN STATESMEN IN EUROPEAN EYES

RECENTLY Mussolini had occasion to write a letter to General Cavallero who was retiring from the Ministry of War to devote himself to the manufacture of armaments. Mussolini thanked him in advance for his expected services in the latter field where 'much remains to be done; in spite of a certain Mr. Kellogg.' The *Berliner Tageblatt* (Berlin independent daily), with gentle irony, adds its tacit comment by headlining the dictator's statement. From such rapier thrusts in our direction we turn uncomfortably to the friendly gesture of the *London Observer* (Conservative weekly) which has pleasant things to say about Ambassador Houghton: 'The American Ambassador holds what is now the most important diplomatic office of its kind in any capital. Whether for our own sakes or for his, we cannot pretend to be sorry that he missed election to the Senate in the recent campaign. At this juncture in the world's business Providence evidently had another opinion of where the biggest work was to do; Mr. Houghton does not wear his heart upon his sleeve, and it is possible that his reserve has sometimes been misunderstood. But it is simply true to say that in this country the longer we know him the better we like him; and we venture to think it not improbable that he feels the corresponding idea about us. Mr. Houghton's return to his embassy is one asset.'

## WHAT IS THE AMERICAN SPIRIT?

ONE would not suppose that Mexican and British opinions on the mentality of Americans would have much in common. Yet there is a curious resemblance between the following view of *El Universal* (Mexico City independent

daily): 'The infantile optimism of the Yankee is fundamentally negative; he flees rather than pursues; his optimism is fed with sensations — films of adventure with a happy ending, boxing, tragedies given a hundred columns in the press on the one hand, and the jazz orchestra with its accompanying bacchic dance on the other,' and the reaction of St. John Ervine to his American experi-

mechanical devices. He is the Great Peptoniser. Two or three years ago the secretary of a woman's club wrote to me in London. She said that the members wished to study drama during the coming winter, and would I be good enough to tell her the name of a good book on the subject? During the preceding winter they had studied music, and during the winter which preceded that one they had studied philosophy. I told her of the names of a number of books, and added that I was interested to observe that her society devoted three or four months to the study of music and philosophy. In our effete country, men devoted their lives to the study of one of these subjects! . . . Life is too easy for people here, and money, when it comes, comes too quickly and too bountifully. It may be that America is about to enter on a period of great flowering. On several occasions in *The Observer* I have stated that America seems to me to be in the same state of exuberance and fervor that England was in when Shakespeare was a boy. I have described Mr. Eugene O'Neill as the Marlowe of America, and on the whole I still believe that to be a true description, although I know of no man of genius who suffers from such grotesque lapses as Mr. O'Neill. Out of this ferment of vivid lives something superlatively great must presently emerge, and it may be that a boy is now playing in some village of America who is destined to be America's Shakespeare. The stuff is here waiting to be distilled into poetry. The young alchemist will find richness all round him.



Notenkraaker, Amsterdam

I. H. S.

A DUTCH JIBE at American armaments, titled 'In hoc signo vinces,' and reflecting Dutch opinion on the American cruiser bill.

ences and personal contacts as dramatic critic for the *New York World*. Writing in the *London Observer*, Mr. Ervine says:

On the one hand, there are the generosity and responsiveness to idealism of America, and the indubitably beautiful architecture. On the other hand, there is the mob-mood, the timid gregariousness, the fear of individuality and the terrible impatience with prolonged effort. The desire for culture is keen, but it does not cause many people to devote their lives to its pursuit. The American wants quick results. Quick, quick, quick. He does not write a letter when he can telephone — his telephone service is fine, his postal service is awful — and he is daft about telegrams. He is becoming hysterical about speed, and childlike about

## THE ABSURDITY OF ANTI-EVOLUTION LAWS

EUROPE in general and England in particular have been slow to recover from amazement and grief at the American attitude toward the realities of science. The *Manchester Guardian* (British liberal weekly) shakes an admonishing finger and talks of a 'reductio ad absurdum' in American thought: —

The law which was passed to preserve the school children of Arkansas from the contamination of Darwinian biology seems likely to save them the trouble of acquiring much other useful knowledge. It is illegal in Arkansas to let any child into the secret that he is either 'descended or ascended from a lower order of animals.' An inquiring