

army of the Asuras, even as fire consumes in a moment a heap of straw and fuel."

The next encounter was with the chief of the demons, Mahishásura himself. He advanced furious with rage, assuming different forms, now an elephant, now a buffaloe. The goddess fought him with the aid of her lion. She called up her energies by copious drink, and, laughing with reddened eyes, railed at him, thus ; " Roar, roar, thou fool, while I drink my wine. The gods will presently roar in turn on my slaying thee." She then sprang upon him and after a short struggle cut off his head.

This struggle of the goddess with Mahishásura is annually commemorated in Bengal at the festival called the Durgá-pújá. The goddess is there represented with ten arms, trampling upon the demon, who is also attacked by her lion, and wounded in the chest by her spear. She has also laid hold of him by the hair, and is about to chop off his head.

The most popular commemoration of this event takes place in the autumn about the time of the equinox, and if the practice may be supposed to be eight hundred or a thousand years old, it is not inconceivable that it was originally fixed *at the equinox*, though the *precession* has since made it a few days later. The calculation of the day depends however on a certain lunar day. But it can never be earlier than the seventh of A'swin, which is about the time of our present equinox, nor can it be more than a month later than that date

The idea of the possible connection of the Durgá-pújá with the equinox is suggested by the fact that there is a corresponding festival about the time of the vernal equinox too, in which, though it is not so popular as the