

DESCRIPTION
OF
A VIEW
OF
THE HOLY CITY
OF
BENARES,
AND THE
SACRED GANGES.

NOW EXHIBITING
AT
THE PANORAMA, LEICESTER SQUARE.

PAINTED BY THE PROPRIETOR,

ROBERT BURFORD,

FROM DRAWINGS TAKEN BY CAPTAIN ROBERT SMITH.

London :

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

1840.

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IN THE UPPER CIRCLE,
IS NOW OPEN,
A VIEW OF THE
PALACE AND GARDENS
OF
VERSAILLES,
ON
THE FÊTE OF ST. LOUIS.

Admittance, One Shilling.

BENARES, the most holy city of Hindostan, the seat of Brahminical learning, and the great sanctuary of Brahminical superstition, is not more remarkable for its antiquities, and the sanctity with which it has been invested, than for the singularity of its structures, its vast wealth, and its immense population. The city is situated on the left or northern bank of the Ganges, where that fine river is of considerable breadth, and where the sinuosity of the stream forms a magnificent semicircle, five or six miles in length; it stands on the external, and consequently the most elevated side of the curve, and stretches over nearly the whole extent, rising from the very edge of the water, to the crest of a high and gently sloping hill, forming a magnificent amphitheatre, and presenting an infinite and untiring variety, and an almost endless succession of interesting objects.

The Panorama is taken from the river near the centre of the semicircle, from whence the whole of the vast city is seen at a single glance. Innumerable temples, religious edifices, and pagodas of every size and form, scarcely two being alike, occupy the high banks, and in some cases even encroach upon the water; some are beautifully painted or gilt, others remain the colour of the stone; all have domes decorated in a singular and elaborate style of ornament; amongst them stands conspicuous the light and elegant mosque of Aurungzebe, with its tall and slender minarets, shooting high into the clear blue sky. The acclivity of the hill behind, is covered with buildings in various styles of architecture, from the vast stone mansions of the wealthy (some of which present considerable magnificence, others fronts so bare and lofty as to convey the idea of a prison or fortress, yet contrasting finely with the beautiful pagodas) to the mud hovels of the meanest Sudra, piled one above another in the most imposing confusion; turrets, battlements, round and pointed domes, and cupolas, the fancies of all ages, confused masses, intermixing with each other without plan or design, yet forming altogether an architectural display of the most striking and imposing nature, the effect of which is much heightened by Peepul and other trees, whose luxuriant foliage, intermixes with, and gives a fine relief to the heavy masses of masonry. One continued series of ghauts, prodigious flights of steps, in various styles, descending from the temples, line the immediate bank of the river, from which also many small and elegant pavilions appear to rise. As bathing constitutes one of the most important of the religious rites of the Hindoos, the ghauts are at all times covered by an immense multitude of persons, male and female, in great variety of costume; Brahmins are also seen under the shade of large umbrellas reciting prayers to the devout, or making offerings in the pavilions; and Fakeers and other devotees soliciting the charity of passers, by the exhibition of the most disgusting scenes of filth and wretchedness; these, together with persons approaching or leaving the ghauts, nobles with vast retinues, marriage processions, &c., give a pleasing and most picturesque effect to the scene, the whole of which, under the influence of a brilliant sunshine, being again reflected in the broad mirror of the Ganges, together with every turret, spire, and dome, with remarkable distinctness, forms an imposing *coup d'œil*. The sacred river is also crowded in every direction with the craft of various descriptions, that navigate its waters, all truly picturesque in form and effect, and harmonizing well with the

other features of the scene; large Budgerows, some coming from the north after visiting the upper provinces, gently gliding down with the stream, others from the vast emporiums of the south, being urged by many rowers, or tracked along the banks. Bolios of the rich natives dancing lightly on the rippling current, conveying parties of pleasure from ghaut to ghaut, and heavy ferry boats crossing from shore to shore, with motley groups of pilgrims, many of whom have performed toilsome journeys from the extreme points of the vast peninsula, and are seen gazing with enthusiasm on the temples they are about to enter, or returning fully recompensed for all the fatigue, privation, and suffering they have undergone, by their visit to the holy city. Curiously built cotton and baggage boats, with deeply laden clumsy native vessels, conveying traders fully engrossed with the cares of this world, and their merchandize, to the market which such an influx of strangers incessantly produces, fill up the foreground, and form such a scene, as certainly can be produced nowhere but on the banks of the Ganges, and in no part of these populous shores so well, as at the ghauts of the Holy Benares.

The opposite shore, principally a sand bank, low and level, projecting inwards between the horns of the half moon, is the great road from the south of Hindostan; parties of pilgrims, rajahs, and wealthy travellers, with camels, horses, and numerous suites of retainers, are seen approaching the ferries, or encamped in their vicinity, where they are bathing their elephants, performing various religious acts, or observing the ceremonies imposed by their castes; the whole completing a scene which for interest and beauty stands unrivalled.

Benares, according to universal report, is one of the most ancient of the cities of Hindostan; indeed, if the accounts of its antiquity may be depended on, it is, perhaps, one of the oldest in the world. (Major Rennel doubts its high antiquity, from the circumstance of its not having been mentioned by the Syrian ambassadors after the time of Alexander, and from its being unnoticed by Pliny.) It was formerly called Kasi, and probably received its present name when taken by the Sultan Mahmoud in 1017. According to the Hindoo cosmogony, it is a place of more than ordinary sanctity, standing, as they affirm, on a more stable foundation than any other part of the world; for whilst all other parts of the terrestrial globe rest only on Ananta, the thousand-headed serpent of eternity, Benares, and ten miles round it, is based upon the points of Sivas Trident, and is therefore proof against all casualties; it is consequently regarded with the same veneration by the Hindoos, that Mecca is by the Mahomedans, and considered to be the centre of all that is sacred, the focus of all that is wise, the fountain of all that is good, and the royal road to Heaven; the shortest residence within its precincts absolves all sins, and secures salvation.

The Hindoos deny that Benares was ever conquered by the Mahomedans; they allow that Aurungzebe overpowered them, destroyed their pagodas, and erected mosques in their places, but they say that they never lost their footing, and shortly regained the ascendancy. The city, together with the province, came into the possession of the British in 1775, since which it has been remarkable from being the scene of considerable slaughter in the revolt of the Zemeendar Cheyt Singh, an insurrection which nearly proved fatal to the English interests; and at a later period, for the murderous revolt of the Vizier Ali.

At the present time, Benares is a splendid and opulent commercial city, the capital of a large and populous district of the same name; its bazaars are filled with the richest goods, and there is a constant bustle of business in the streets. It is a great emporium for the shawls of the north, the diamonds of the south, and the muslins of Dacca and the eastern provinces: it has also considerable manufactories of silk, cotton, and fine wool, and is celebrated for the fine gold and silver brocades, known by the name of kincobs; whilst English hardware, and all the best manufactures of Europe, are thence exported to Bunderland, Nepaul, and other parts removed from the main channel of communication by the Ganges.

Benares, although strictly oriental, differs widely from all other cities of Hindostan; yet, as is the case with most of them, the interior falls far short of what the picturesque beauty of its appearance seems to promise: the streets are so narrow and winding, that much of the effect is destroyed which the bold irregularity of the high and stately buildings is otherwise calculated to produce. The houses in general are remarkably lofty, the better sort being rarely less than two, often six or seven stories in height; in the principal streets they stand contiguous, but without symmetry or arrangement, forming confused masses. They are built of a good white stone, or are chunamed to resemble it; many are coloured of a deep red, others are ornamented, in the most conspicuous parts, with paintings in gaudy colours. In the older portions of the city the buildings are of the most fantastic and curious description, exhibiting the ancient style of architecture in all its pomp and beauty of detail; below, they have arches in front with small shops; above, they have verandahs, galleries, projecting mullioned windows, turrets, balustrades, and broad overhanging eaves, supported by carved brackets, in the most ornamental and florid style. Most of the houses have flat roofs, on which the inhabitants almost live during a great part of the year. Many of the wealthy natives (and the merchants are mostly opulent) live in detached mansions of great size. Altogether the city is said to contain 12,000 houses of stone or brick, and 16,000 of less durable materials; at least 8000 are said to be inhabited by Brahmins who receive alms. The interior of the large houses are mostly similar; the massy door from the street opens into a small court; one large room occupies the front on each floor, having numerous windows outward, these exclusively belong to the men; on three sides of the court a covered gallery runs round each story, leading to small apartments, the Zenana, in which the females and their attendants are immured, without any outlet to the street whatever.

The pagodas are numerous, but generally small; their forms are not ungraceful, and many are covered with elaborate and beautiful carvings of animals, palm branches, &c. Amid much that is strange and fantastic there are numerous specimens of pure and elegant taste, and the richly sculptured ornaments which are lavished upon them give evidence of the skill and talents of the artists. They are mostly dedicated to Vishnu, Siva, or Mahadeva, and their wives.

The resident inhabitants of Benares are estimated at above 630,000, about one twelfth of whom are Mahomedans. Europeans are but few in number, and generally reside at Secrole. During the great religious festivals, the concourse of pilgrims and others that assemble from all parts almost exceeds belief; the Mahrattas alone are at times said to amount to

20,000, and from Thibet and the Burman empire they are equally numerous, yet the health of the city is rarely disturbed.

The Hindoos and Mahomedans keep themselves as perfectly distinct as if they were divided by a line; but as no very good understanding exists between them, it requires some vigilance on the part of the government to prevent frequent ruptures, which, however, do sometimes (as in 1809) occur, when sacred bulls are slain in the streets, and pigs slaughtered in the mosques.

As Benares has been considered from time immemorial by all castes the great seat of Hindoo piety, numerous princes, nobles, and rich devotees come from distant places in the decline of life, as well as all great men deposed or banished by political events, to wash out their sins in the sacred Ganges, and draw their last breath within its holy precincts. As these persons give away large sums in indiscriminate charity (some to the amount of 80000% or 90000% annually), it is not surprising that the hope of sharing in these pious distributions, brings from all quarters a prodigious number of religious mendicants of various denominations, who by making a trade of their religion, and working on the feelings of their fellows, earn a respectable maintenance. In fact the streets are literally lined with Yogees, Senasses, Fakeers, and other fanatics, who seem to rest their sole claim to heaven on their indecency and filth; some go entirely naked, and make themselves as hideous as possible, with chalk, cow dung, and matted locks; others present every conceivable deformity that disease and distorted limbs can produce, and some practise the most rigid austerities and bodily tortures, and place themselves for years in the most disgusting attitudes of penance; and it is astonishing the immense sums they thus levy to the honour of their gods.

The Hindoos are divided into four principal castes, which are again subdivided into many others; for the general purposes of civil life the castes appear to mix together when it suits their convenience, but they never intermarry, and scrupulously avoid eating in common. Hindoos, Mahomedans, and Parsees all wear the jamma, or long robe of cotton, crossed at the breast and tied round the middle by a scarf; the Hindoos fasten the robe on the left side, the Mahomedans on the right; the fineness of the materials, and the addition of gold and jewels, mark the relative ranks of the wearers: many of the lower classes wear only a piece of cloth round the loins, called a cummerband. The distinguishing badge of castes is a string tied round the shoulders, the number, form, colour, and order of the threads in which indicate the various orders, the lowest not wearing any. Certain marks on the forehead or face designate the principal sects; the followers of Vishnu marking the forehead with longitudinal, those of Siva with parallel lines of chunam or clay.

The females of high castes are handsome, their forms delicate and graceful, and their dresses superb, but they rarely quit the Zenana. The inferior castes are rather small of stature, and not very good looking, perhaps owing to the labour they undergo. They universally wear the cotton shallice, an immense scarf, which they arrange with classical grace; even the lowest orders wear armlets, bangles, ear-rings, and sometimes a jewel from the nose.

EXPLANATION.

No. 1.—*The Ganges.*

THE Ganges is a river that has from the remotest ages been especially consecrated to idolatry and superstition, but when its extent and usefulness, the fertility and abundance which it diffuses by its annual overflows, and the employment its navigation gives to thousands, is considered, it is not at all surprising that it became an object of devotion, amongst a nation whose vivid imaginations peopled all nature with divinities. The Hindoos worship the river by the title of Ganga, the daughter of the mountain Himavati, and the sister to Ooma, the spouse of Mahadeo; they hold it in the highest religious veneration, and believe that its waters have a virtue that will purify from every moral transgression, consequently every extravagance that the weakness of human nature can be guilty of, is here concentrated. What the Hindoos reckon the true Ganges, although not the most remote branch, is the Bhagirathi, which has been traced to an elevation on the Himalaya, 14,000 feet above the level of the sea, taking its course from under an immense mass of snow. From the number of tributary streams, it becomes, in less than 150 miles, a magnificent river. In its early course it falls with extreme velocity, but having reached the plain, it does not in fine weather exceed nine inches per mile, but during the rains, in July, August, and September, the rapidity of the current is increased in an amazing degree, and it rises on an average thirty-one feet; this, when accompanied by a north-west wind, sweeps with resistless fury every object that impedes its course, the river then assumes the appearance of a mighty ocean, and the waves, lashed to fury, rise mountains high; fresh channels are opened, where hitherto villages and cultivated fields have adorned the landscape, and dangerous sand banks are formed, where deep water before existed. This noble river is navigable for boats of a large size, nearly 1500 miles from its mouth, and the busy scene which it daily exhibits, together with the number and variety of the boats floating on its turbid water, is perhaps not exceeded by any other in the world. Every description of craft is seen, from the stately and highly ornamented Moah punkee, to the simple and unadorned canoe. In 1830, a steam boat first ascended, and occasioned much surprise to the natives of the upper provinces; similar attempts have since been made, but on account of the number and shifting of the sand banks, have always been attended with risk. The banks, during the whole course, present a constant succession of delightful objects, peculiarly arresting to the eye of a stranger, and it may be truly said, that there is scarcely another river where the scene is so varied and interesting. The immense numbers of fish of various kinds that swarm its waters, almost exceeds belief; many are of exceedingly good quality. Alligators abound in some parts, but are rarely seen at Benares. The usual width of that portion of the river seen in the view, is half a mile, but during the rainy season, the whole of the sand bank opposite the city is under water, and presents the appearance of a vast lake.

No. 2.—*Ali Bhaee's Ka Koté and Ghaut.*

A palace with a magnificent flight of steps to the water, belonging to the brother of Bajee Rao, the ex-Peishwa of the Deccan.

No. 3.—*Pagoda.*

This elegant Pagoda, which is of stone, finely ornamented, and painted a deep red, was erected at the expense of Ali Bhaee. Many of the Pagodas owe their foundation to similar acts of piety on the part of individuals, or to public subscriptions.

No. 5.—*Dusamere Ghaut.*

A very substantial and splendid Ghaut, the buildings are not, as is the case with many, merely embankments, faced with stone, to prevent the inroads of the river in the rainy season, but are comfortable, habitable houses, with cool retreats and fine gardens behind.

No. 6.—*Ruins of a Ghaut.*

Although the bank on which the city stands is very high, and is composed of a hard compact clay, yet many of the magnificent Ghauts, which line the shore, have nevertheless at times been swept away by the great swell and force of the current in the rainy period; but the pride and wealth of the inhabitants seldom permit them to remain long in ruins, the Ghauts are so essential to the comfort, and to the performance of the religious ceremonies of the people, that they are always kept in good repair.

No. 9.—*A Bolio.*

A pleasure boat; they vary in size, are commodious and pleasant, and are much used for short excursions, being fast and safe.

No. 10.—*Marriage Procession.*

Betrothment takes place amongst the Hindoos at a very early age, and is conducted with many religious ceremonies. When the time arrives at which the bridegroom claims the bride, or in other cases when the courting commences, there are certain rules and observances laid down, by which he must proceed. The marriage takes place at the house of the bride's father, and is conducted with much expense and show; after which the bride is taken home in all the state the bridegroom's means will allow, attended by music, &c. When he leaves home for this purpose, a cow is tied up in the principal apartment during his absence, the more it defiles the place the more it becomes consecrated, and consequently the more happy the newly married people. The various curious ceremonies performed, and the different oblations made, are too numerous to mention. By the concurrent testimony of ancient traditions and records still in existence, it is evident that the same manners and customs existed at least three thousand years back, as at the present time; amidst conquests more numerous perhaps than have visited any other country, the Hindoo has endured, unaltered, in his physical and social state, and no remarkable change has taken place in civil or religious observances; like a flexible reed he bends to the earth before every storm of conquest, but is as elastic as he is flexible; no sooner has it passed, than he is again erect and vigorous.

No. 11.—*Gelsine Ghaut.*

This very handsome building, which, with the turret and pavilions by which it is ornamented, forms so fine an object from the river, was also the work of a private individual; the beautiful façade is a mere fascia to the bank, on the top of which is a cool and pleasant garden,

No. 14.—*An Acacha.*

These boats are formed of a single piece, being generally scooped from the trunk of the Cotton Tree, they are of tolerable good size, and are used as ferry boats. The present one contains several pilgrims, accompanied by a Mahratta merchant, and a Brigbasis, or escort.

No. 15.—*Brahminy Bulls.*

These animals are held particularly sacred, being very tame and familiar; they are constantly wandering lazily about the streets, or lying across them, intercepting the passage. In compliance with the prejudices of the fanatic population, they must be treated in the gentlest manner, it being a mortal sin to strike them; they feed where they choose, helping themselves without ceremony from the fruiterers and pastry cooks' stalls, and devout persons take much delight in pampering them. Monkeys are also held sacred, and are in vast numbers.

No. 16.—*Native of Rank.*

The natives of rank seldom go abroad without being attended by a formidable train, of servants or retainers, Chobdars, Chauprassies, and Chattah Bearers, and others of various denominations.

No. 18.—*Shops for Eatables.*

The dukhauns or cooks' shops are very small, and entirely open in front, with a tattie of coarse grass, forming an awning to protect the shopkeeper and his goods from the weather. The naunbye, or cook, kneads his dough for bread, and prepares his rice, &c., in public. The shops and warehouses where the costly and beautiful manufactures of the country are sold, are in the narrow lanes and bazaars, but very little outward display is made.

No. 19.—*Dead Bodies.*

The waters of the Ganges are believed by the Hindoos to descend from above, and will therefore, purify from every stain the man who undergoes in them a perfect ablution; to die on the banks, washed by the stream, or in its waters, is a secure passport to heaven. Those who are within a moderate distance, when they approach their end, are therefore brought by their relatives or friends, on a sort of litter, or bed, called a charpoy, formed by a rude frame of matting, stretched over four bamboos, this being placed on the margin of the stream, so as to touch the water, the holy mud from the river is placed on the breast, and crammed into the mouth, nostrils, and ears; in some cases they are even taken from the bed, and partly immersed in the stream; prayers are repeated, and they then remain exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, perhaps for days, until death releases them; for as the Hindoo once taken to the holy river, is, in the eye of their law, considered dead, should he recover, he becomes an outcast from his family and society; so it sometimes occurs, that if he does not die soon, in

their anxiety to secure his eternal happiness, they piously choke him with the holy mud, or drown him in the sacred water. When the friends are satisfied that the object of their spiritual concern is really dead, and sometimes before, they push the frail frame of mortality, are seen floating down in various stages of decomposition, with birds of prey perched upon them, glutting their ravenous appetites; and are looked upon by the natives with apathy or indifference. Hundreds of rash devotees, also, to secure their eternal welfare, yield themselves a willing sacrifice to the waves, whilst others, in like manner, devote their offspring.

No. 20.—*Pagoda of Siva.*

Siva is the Deity most worshipped in Benares; his names are very numerous, and his characteristics different; sometimes he is represented as a silver-coloured man, with five faces, having three eyes in each, being clothed in a tiger's skin, and seated on a lotus. Sometimes with one head, three eyes, and a half moon on his forehead, and seated on the bull Nundi, whose effigy may be seen amongst the sculptured ornaments of the present Pagoda, the number of his hands vary from one to thirty-two, but the form under which he is most generally worshipped is that of the Lingam, a smooth black stone, almost in the shape of a sugar loaf, with a rude representation of the Yoni, projecting from its base. The most holy temple in Benares (not seen in the view) possesses the celebrated Lingam, believed to be the petrefaction of the god himself, which is regarded with great veneration, and of which there are said to be at least a million copies in the city.

No. 23.—*Pagoda of Siva.*

An extremely handsome Pagoda, very much ornamented with fine carving, and painted a deep yellow; by its side is one of the small Pagodas (which are very numerous in the city) erected by private individuals, who maintain a Brahmin to say prayers and make oblations in them, to propitiate the gods in their favour.

No. 24.—*Bajee Rao's Ka Koté.*

A new palace erected by the ex-peishwa of the Deccan, whose usual residence was at Bittoor; but being a rigid Hindoo, he erected the palace for his use during his numerous visits to Benares to perform his devotions, at the various shrines.

No. 28.—*Pagoda of Siva.*

Siva is frequently styled the Indian Neptune; the Trident seen at the top of this and other Pagodas, being one of his emblems; he is also called Mahâ Kâla the great destroyer.

No. 32.—*Mosque of Aurungzebe.*

The Jumma Musjid, a fine and majestic building, was erected by the intolerant and bigoted Aurungzebe, immediately after his conquest of Benares; with the materials, and on the site, of one of the most holy temples, dedicated to Maha-deve, which he had destroyed for the purpose. It is a conspicuous building, standing on a commanding point of land; it has very little ornament, and in some parts appears never to have been finished. The slender and beautiful Minarets which tower with proud superiority above the surrounding Pagodas, are said to be 232 feet in height. In order to mortify the Hindoos, Aurungzebe with the meanness of a narrow and bigoted mind, caused his licentious soldiers daily to ascend the roof of the Mosque, to gaze into the interior courts of the houses, and at the bathers at the sacred ghauts, thus cruelly invading their privacy, and interrupting their daily devotions, which the proud conqueror took every opportunity of making the object of his ridicule.

No. 33.—*A Moahpunkee.*

These elegant boats are very long and narrow, sometimes extending to 100 feet, and not being more than eight or nine broad; the heads and sterns are shaped into the resemblance of peacocks, snakes, or other animals, painted, gilt, and varnished with the hues and splendour of enamel; towards the sterns gilt pillars support richly embroidered awnings, and the rowers, frequently forty in number, are splendidly clad; the boat represented belonged to the Nawab of Moordashabed.

No. 34.—*Raj Ghaut.*

This Ghaut, not being considered a sacred one, is the usual place where boats trading, or carrying passengers to or from the upper provinces, legow, or make fast for the night; no persons being permitted to cook provisions at the sacred ghauts.

No. 35.—*Great Pagoda of the Hindoo Trinity.*

Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, the creator, preserver, and destroyer, form the Trimurti, or Hindoo triad. They are sometimes identified with each other, and represented by one body with three heads, at others they appear as distinct beings. The Trimurti is

acknowledged and worshipped by almost all the sects and castes of Hindoos, as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of all things, under the mysterious trilateral name, Aum, Om. At this point a deep nullah or creek runs up to the European settlement, and the cantonments of the company's troops at Secrole, four miles from the city.

No. 36.—Cook Boat.

The budgerow is generally accompanied by a cook and baggage-boat, the cook-boat is for the accommodation of the kitchen, where the various meals are dressed for the passengers; when ready, a signal is made, they pull alongside, and the breakfast or dinner is handed into the budgerow. When the meal is finished, the fragments, as they will not keep, are thrown overboard. The native boatmen, who never eat on board, wait until the boat legows for the night before they dress their frugal meal on shore.

No. 37.—Baggage Boat.

Baggage boats necessarily accompany the budgerows, as from the length of the voyage to the upper stations (frequently more than three months) it becomes necessary to lay in considerable stores, which, with articles of furniture, palanquins, &c., would require more space than that vessel could conveniently afford. These boats are of a dangerous description, crazy, and ill appointed, therefore accidents frequently occur.

No. 42.—Garlands of Flowers.

The broad expanse of the river appears at times to be almost converted into a flower garden, so numerous are the beautiful offerings which the worshippers of the deity of the stream throw into it. Small cocoa nut boats, garlanded by flowers, with a small lamp or candle burning in them, may at all times be seen, but on particular festivals they are so numerous, that they appear to cover the surface; every wave brings with it clusters and coronets of the largest, gayest, and most beautiful flowers, rich and luxuriant bunches of the sacred lotus, float in quick succession down the glittering current; large yellow, scarlet, and white flowers, disposed in fanciful forms, pay an equal tribute, and the prows of the native vessels navigating the stream, are garlanded by long wreaths of the most beautiful of the productions of Flora.

No. 44.—A Bolio Legowing.

Few persons venture to navigate the river after sunset, from the dangerous nature of the sand-banks, shoals, and other obstructions, as well as from the increased expense, for it would be necessary to have a double set of boatmen, the ordinary number being insufficient for extra duty. No sooner is the boat legowed or made fast, than the greatest activity prevails, the crew disembark, fires are kindled, and the various messes are prepared, the religious prejudices of the Hindoos not permitting them to cook or eat on board.

No. 45.—A Dacca Pulwar.

Large and very clumsy-looking vessels; they are nearly flat bottomed, sides rather high, sterns particularly so, and carry large square sails. They are used for the carriage of cotton and other bulky materials, the weight of which does not bear any proportion to their size.

No. 46.—Tents.

The large double poled tents of the wealthy make a very handsome appearance, being profusely ornamented with scarlet cloth, in various fanciful patterns; the interiors are divided into numerous apartments, lined with gay patterned chintz, rich carpets cover the floors, chandeliers hang from the roofs, and they are furnished with all the luxuries of a settled home. The cooking for both men and animals is all performed in the open air, at numerous fires for the different castes; round some the turbaned heads of attendants are seen preparing their master's meal, at others scantily clothed followers are cooking their vegetable stews; in one part cakes, called chupatties, are preparing for the elephants, in another, smoking messes of kaarie for the dogs; some groups are sleeping, some singing, or playing the tom tom.

No. 47.—Palace and Fort of Ramnugghur.

About three miles from the city; they belong to the Rajah of Benares, a prince who, although bereft of the power exercised by his ancestors, retains his title and a revenue adequate to the support of his diminished rank. The fort was erected by Bulwint Singh, together with a small town adjoining. An extensive garden, laid out in the Dutch style, also a pagoda, commodious baths for the Rajah's women, and a magnificent tank, were constructed by his son, the unfortunate Cheyte Singh.

No. 49.—Native Smoking a Hubble Bubble.

This simple apparatus is a cocoa nut filled with water, in every respect like the kuleean, excepting that the smoke is at once inhaled from the hole in the side, without the aid of a reed.

No. 50.—A Patella.

These boats are often preferred to Budgerows, particularly in the dry season, as being nearly flat-bottomed, they draw but little water, and are less liable to accidents. When the cabins are lined with a kind of mat made of fine straw, called Sirkee, and well thatched, they are very comfortable and commodious.

No. 51.—Native smoking a Kuleean.

This is a common kind of Hookah used by the lower classes; it is sometimes made of a cocoa nut, but more frequently of brass; being filled with water, two reeds are passed into it, one from the top, the other from the side; through the latter the smoke is inhaled, after passing through the water; the former is surmounted by a small cup to contain the tobacco, and a little piece of lighted charcoal.

No. 52.—Procession of a Rajah.

The march of a native prince is a pageant on a very magnificent scale, altogether a scene of barbaric splendour, which can only be witnessed in an Asiatic country. Elephants in splendid trappings, with howdahs of silver and gold, camels, studs of horses, and guards of mounted Suwars; in fact, the number of attendants, and the glittering wealth displayed, realises the tales and legends of oriental magnificence.

No. 55.—A Paunchway.

A passage boat. They are usually about twenty feet long, and flat bottomed, to escape the numerous shoals; they have decks fore and aft, and have a thatched roof over the centre, supported on poles of bamboo, the sides being closed by a number of very neatly contrived mats, which overlay each other, and may be propped up to admit light or air. The interior is divided, in the same manner, into two or three cabins; the mast is of bamboo, and they carry large square sails, stretched on pliant bamboo yards; the sails of mat or canvass, are generally very ragged, and of but little use; the men usually stand to the oars, and put forth great strength to work them.

No. 56.—A Budgerow.

A Budgerow, although it presents a heavy and rather clumsy appearance, is rather picturesque, and not altogether inelegant. They vary in size according to the condition of their owners, some are as much as sixty feet in length, and have from twelve to twenty oars; the sterns are very high, even twelve feet from the water; in the centre they are broad, and quite sharp forward. The lower deck is lofty, and forms a range of apartments, consisting of a sitting and bed rooms, with an enclosed verandah in front; the apartments are surrounded on all sides by ghil-mills, or venetians, which exclude the sun by day, and admit the air by night, and on the whole are very commodious and comfortable. The upper deck, or roof, is the resort of the crew, servants, goats, dogs, and other live stock. In front of the cabins the deck is very small, affording room only for the rowers, and the Gooleer, who continually sounds the depth of the water by means of a long oar; at the stern, on a high platform, stands the helmsman, who steers with a huge and ill-formed paddle, or rudder, extending eight or nine feet from the boat. There is one mast, on which, when the wind will admit, one or two square sails are hoisted, by means of which the vessel goes with considerable rapidity; but they are ill calculated to go near the wind, and are dangerous from their great weight behind. At times, when the wind is adverse, and the current strong, the men are obliged to resort to the tedious process of tracking, and are frequently not able to drag the vessel more than a couple of miles in the course of a long and fatiguing day's work; poling is common, and when the water is shallow, the men often get into the mud, and push the craft forward. In descending they are at times borne along with extreme velocity, and should they strike anything, destruction is inevitable, the boat sinks at once, and the passengers and crew have but small chance of escape.

No. 57.—Pagoda.

Some of the larger pagodas, or temples, on the banks of the river, are of considerable strength, in order that they may successfully resist the great power of the current in the rainy season; in the present building, the Vizier Ali, the deposed Nabob of Oude, attempted to defend himself, after the cruel murder of Mr. Cherry, the company's resident at Benares, Mr. Graham, and others; finding the post, however, untenable, he crossed the river, and being shortly taken, he, after a confinement of seventeen years, died in Calcutta, in 1817.

No. 58.—Pagoda.

Although the pagodas are very numerous, yet they are rarely large; it is remarkable that so holy a place as Benares, does not boast a single specimen of those magnificent

temples, which, in other parts of India, convey so grand an idea of the vast conceptions of their founders, and fill the imagination with awe and wonder. Here they appear to owe their celebrity more to their reputed sanctity, and the consequent number of pilgrims from all parts that flock to them, than to any superiority in their size or architecture; they are mostly small, and are confusedly crowded with ornaments. In the sculpturing of some, however, the Hindoo chisel has, perhaps, seldom been surpassed, the light and airy foliage and volutes, and the infinite variety of the subjects, vie at once with Italian art and Gothic fancy, to which at times they bear a remarkable resemblance; all those on the banks of the river, have ghauts descending to the water, which gives them a magnificent appearance; the roofs are generally vaulted with brickwork; and have oblong, square, or sugar-loaf domes, raised in an ingenious manner, and handsomely decorated. The interior generally forms a court, surrounded by a cloister; the floor is strewn by flowers and cow dung, and plentifully deluged with holy water from the Ganges, in which brahmins, devotees, bulls, cows, and monkeys, promiscuously paddle about. The sanctuary contains statues of the deity, before whom are spread offerings of fruit, rice, ghee, and kedgerree pots of the Ganges water; and some loud toned gongs, or tom toms. In some, a few brahmins and dancing girls reside. Near the temples are to be found mendicants in vast numbers, quite naked, employed in rolling sacred earth into small balls, on each of which they stick a single grain of rice, for the Hindoos to offer as a sacrifice to the Ganges. It takes about fifteen days to go through the business of praying and making offerings, accompanied, of course, by money to the priests; on the first day the pilgrim bathes in the holy well of Munkernika, afterwards, each day in the Ganges. Every stage, and principal act in the life of a Hindoo, has its ceremony; prayers, oblations, and ablutions, are constantly and copiously mixed up with the ordinary routine of life; even the time and manner of eating, and the sort of food, are regulated with strictness. So many prayers and acts of devotion have to be gone through, and the language of the sacred book is so obscure, that a man requires to be always consulting a brahmin, to find out whether he be sinning or not, or to know if he may undertake anything new.

No. 59.—*Ghaut.*

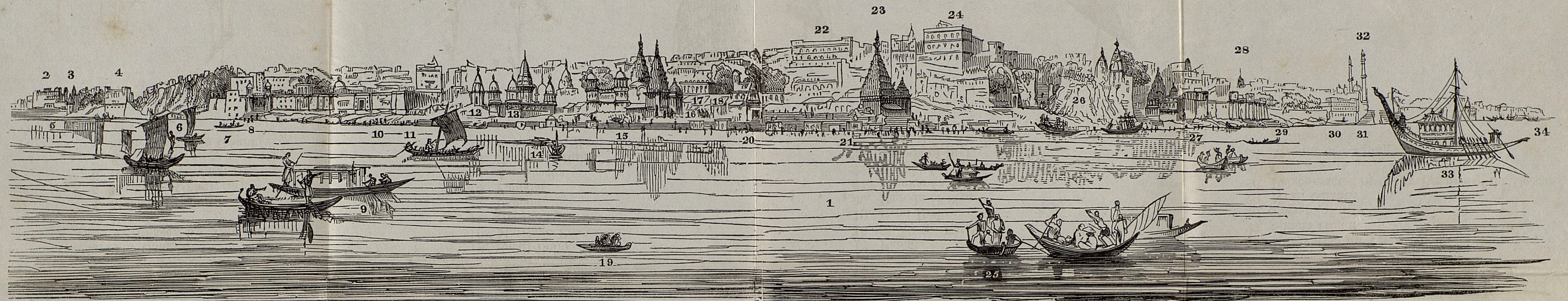
The noble flights of steps called Ghauts, are all built of stone, and are of very solid workmanship, that they may resist the torrents that occasionally beat against them. As the banks are in many places above thirty feet in height, the flights are composed of a great number of steps, which, with the terraces, balustrades, and little pavilions by which they are flanked, exhibit considerable architectural elegance, and much diversity of appearance. Most of them have been erected by pious devotees, or by the charitable contributions of the wealthy, for the benefit of the people. As repeated ablutions is a principal rite enjoined by the Hindoo religion, more particularly in a sacred river, of which the Ganges is the principal, the whole of the inhabitants bathe, at least, once in each day, and the ghauts are crowded from early daylight until the sun becomes too powerful, and men, women, and children, pour down from the streets and lanes, in every variety of costume, forming an interesting and pleasing scene. Bathing is by no means a hasty ceremony, nor is it indeed wholly religious, the devout, the indifferent, and the profane, alike enjoy it, and follow their occupations of praying, washing, or luxuriously making a bodily gratification of a religious ceremony at the same time. The women are in nearly as great numbers as the men, and have not separate ghauts, but as they always bathe with some of their clothes on, this promiscuous assemblage of the sexes is conducted with the strictest delicacy and decorum. Both sexes stand up to the waist or neck in the water, occasionally dipping their heads beneath, but rarely swimming, some carry small brass vessels, which they fill and pour over their heads at least twenty times, without pausing. Before each ablution certain prayers are necessary, and others are repeated whilst in the water. On the piers, many Brahmins are seated under the shade of Chattahs, expounding the sacred books aloud, to a mingled audience seated around them on mats. On the steps may also be seen pious young women, with elegantly formed vessels on their heads, which they carry with inimitable ease and grace, which, having filled with the sacred water, they are conveying as offerings to some of the temples.

LONDON

PRINTED BY T. BRETTCELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

WDC 86/446

A Description of A VIEW of THE HOLY CITY of BENARES, AND THE SACRED RIVER GANGES, now exhibiting at the PANORAMA, LEICESTER SQUARE.

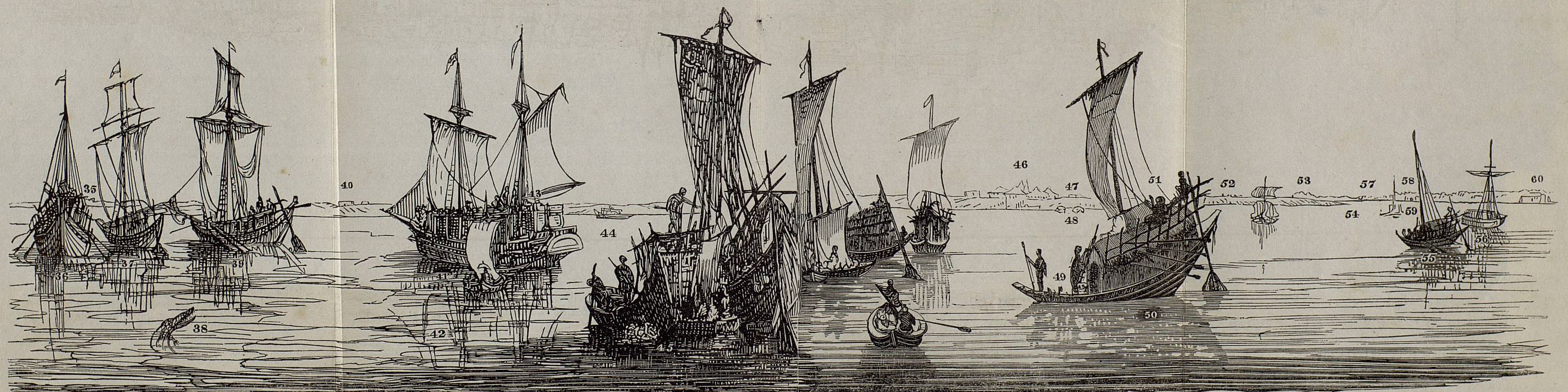


1. The Ganges.
2. Ali Bhaee's Ka Kotê and Ghaut.
3. Pagoda.
4. Marmusil Ghaut.
5. Dusamere Ghaut.
6. Ruins of a Ghaut.
7. Ferry Boat.
8. Sulta Davy's Ka Ghaut.

9. Small Bolio.
10. Marriage Procession.
11. Gelsine Ghaut.
12. Pagoda.
13. Pagoda.
14. An Acacha.
15. Brahminy Bulls.
16. A Native of Rank.

17. Pagoda.
18. Shops for Eatables.
19. Dead Bodies.
20. Pagoda of Siva.
21. Munkanka Ghaut.
22. House of Baboo Gosine, a Merchant.
23. Pagoda of Siva.
24. Bajee Rao's Ka Kotê.
25. Pilgrims.

26. Excavation for a new Ghaut.
27. Suncta Ghaut.
28. Pagoda of Siva.
29. Nyah Ghaut.
30. Palace erected by the ex-Peishwa of the Deccan.
31. Chor Ghaut.
32. Mosque of Aurungzebe.
33. A Moahpunkee.
34. Raj Ghaut.



35. Great Pagoda of the Hindoo Trinity.
36. Cook Boat.
37. Baggage Boat.
38. Crocodile.
39. A Budgerow.
40. A Brick Kiln.

41. A Pinnace.
42. Garlands of Flowers.
43. Preparing the Hookah.
44. A Bolio Legowing.
45. A Dacca Pulwar.
46. Tents.

47. Palace and Fort of Ramnugghur.
48. Elephants Bathing.
49. Native smoking a Hubble Bubble.
50. A Patella.
51. Native smoking a Kuleean.
52. Procession of a Rajah.
53. Cotton Boat.

54. Ferry.
55. A Paunchway.
56. A Budgerow.
57. Pagoda.
58. Pagoda.
59. Ghaut.