

FIVE YEARS IN INDIA;

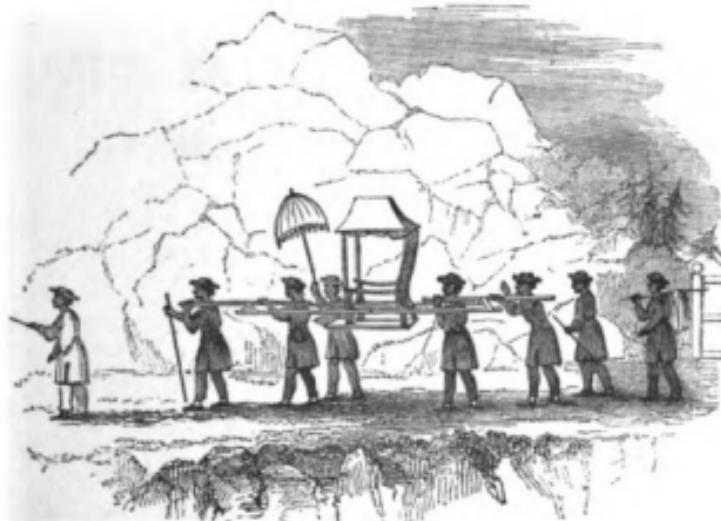
COMPRISING

A NARRATIVE OF TRAVELS IN THE PRESIDENCY OF BENGAL,
A VISIT TO THE COURT OF RUNJEET SING,
A RESIDENCE IN THE HIMALAYAH MOUNTAINS, AN ACCOUNT OF
THE LATE EXPEDITION TO CABUL AND AFGHANISTAN,
VOYAGE DOWN THE INDUS,
AND JOURNEY OVERLAND TO ENGLAND.

BY

HENRY EDWARD FANE, Esq.

LATE AIDE-DE-CAMP TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN INDIA.



Travelling in the Himalayas.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER III.

Arrival off the Holy City, Benares—Sagacity of the Elephants—A City of Gold—Chunar—Curious Indian Fort—Alahabad—Grand Balls—Amateur Theatricals—Public Dinners—March Resumed—Futtehpore—Cawnpore—Grand Review—A British Camp in India.

OCTOBER 14th. — The General inspected three of the regiments stationed at this place; the prettiest and best - managed brigade I have seen in India. In the afternoon, the whole of us started on seven elephants to see the Holy City, which is certainly the best worth examination of any thing I have yet seen in the East. The streets are so narrow that it is almost impossible to penetrate them on elephants, and as it was, we were obliged continually to dismount and get into tom-

jons (a kind of open sedan-chair), and let the animals go round.

The houses are, many of them, six stories high, built of stone, each story containing one family, and many covered with execrable paintings of Hindoo gods and worthies of different kinds. In some of the streets the houses on either side come so close as to be united by galleries, and in almost all a good jumper would clear the street with ease. It was wonderful to see how the elephants managed to avoid treading on some of the people, in spite of the immense crowd around them.

The close packing of this place must be extraordinary, as from the top of the mosque (built by Aurungzebe) the city does not appear to extend above a mile any way; and yet it is said to contain a population of 650,000 inhabitants. This mosque was built on the site of one of the most revered temples of the Hindoos, by the great Mogul, for the purpose of mortifying the Hindoos, and was con-

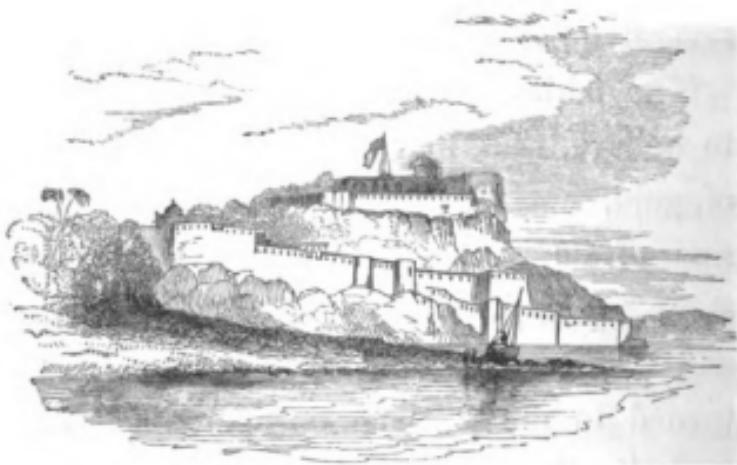
sidered a terrible sacrilege ; but they have now built a temple on the other side of the way, into which they say the god has betaken himself.

Benares is by far the richest city in India, and carries on a very extensive trade with all parts of the Continent, particularly in silks and brocades (commonly called keankabs), which are superb, but very expensive. The European part of the town is small, and stationed at Secoli, several miles from the city.

The faithful Hindoos believe, or ought to believe, that Benares was formerly built of gold, but that in consequence of the sins of its inhabitants it was turned to stone. I suppose they are getting worse and worse, for great part of it is now turned to mud ! The town is considered so holy, that if *even* a Christian were to die here he would most likely go to their heaven.

Benares is about 460 miles by land from Calcutta, and 565 by Moorshedabad.

October 15th.—Went through part of the town again this morning, and started afterwards for Chunar, which has an old Indian fort well worth seeing, in which there are some state prisoners confined. It is garrisoned by two companies of N. I. and a detachment of Invalids and Artillery, and commands a considerable prospect towards Benares. The sketch here given is the fort taken from the anchorage.



Fortress of Chunar.

October 19th.—Came to an anchor off Mr. F.'s bungalow, at Alahabad. Passed a guard of honour waiting peaceably in the

heat of the sun for the General, whose faces looked rather long than otherwise at finding they had had their labour for nothing ; which, however, could not be helped, as Sir H. intended going on to his brother's house, instead of stopping at the usual landing-place. Alahabad, or rather many of the European houses, are beautifully situated on the banks of the river, which here joins the Jumna ; and the picturesque fort at the confluence forms a fine finish to the landscape.

The house is comfortable, but we do not live there, tents being pitched in the compound. The quiet of a civilian's house and home was sadly disturbed by our arrival ; for, in place of a solitary *hurkàru* (or messenger) seated at the door, or a single quiet visitor, now might be seen visitors at all hours ; orderlies without end ; Adjutant-generals, Quarter-master-generals, and all the *attachés* to an Indian Commander-in-chief ; besides some twenty tents, numerous horses, and all our attendants,

placed in the “compound,” or field before the house.

On one of the days we remained, a Mahratta princess staying here sent two rhinoceroses to fight before Sir Henry, who (the rhinoceroses) after punching each other on the head for some time, at last got angry one with the other. The blows got harder and harder, until at last one of the parties thinking he had had enough, turned tail, and ran at the top of his speed through a thick hedge into Mrs. F.’s flower-garden; where again gaining courage, he faced his opponent, who had followed him: the punching again commenced, and by the time the two brutes could be separated, the place of the garden, or the colour of the flowers, were both most difficult to discover.

October 22d.—A grand public ball, given by the station to the General; most pleasant and agreeable, and much larger than I expected, but rather too great a preponderance of the male sex—a common failing in the Indian ball-rooms. The