

them, has disfigured and well nigh destroyed the true notion of God, which all men in some shape are believed to possess, has degraded them to the lowest depths, and has rendered them unfit alike for this world and for the next. Idolatry is a demon—an incarnation of all evil—but, nevertheless, as bewitching and seductive as a Siren. It ensnares the depraved heart, coils around it like a serpent, transfixes it with its deadly fangs and finally stings it to death. Idolatry has, for many centuries, drunk the life-blood of the Hindu with insatiate thirst, has covered with its pollutions the fair and fertile soil of India, has drenched the land with its poisoned waters, and has rendered its inhabitants as godless as it was possible for them to become. But to return to the city of Benares, and its temples. Benares, in spite of all its wretchedness and fanaticism, is a splendid, wealthy and commercial city, the bazaars are filled with the richest goods and there is a constant bustle of business in all the principal streets. It is a great commercial emporium for the shawls of the north, the diamonds of the south, and the muslins of Dacca, and the eastern provinces; and it has considerable manufactures of silk, cotton, and fine wool, as well as of gold and silver lace; while English hardware, swords, shields, and and spears from Lucknow, and the finer manufactures of Europe, are imported to Gorrickpoor, Nepaul, and other tracts removed from the main channel of communication by the Ganges. The population of the city and suburbs, exclusive of the military cantonment, is returned at 183,491, of which number 147,082 are Hindus, and 36,400 Mahomedans; and during religious festivals the concourse of people from all parts is immense. Yet the city, notwithstanding its crowded population and narrow streets, is not unhealthy; which is probably owing to its dry situation on a high rocky bank, sloping towards the river, and to the frequent ablutions and temperate habits of the people. There are but few Europeans in Benares, a Judge, Collector, Regis-

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