

Ghats, platforms and piers are alive with pilgrims from every part of India, in every variety of costume, and every stage of dress, grouped under huge straw umbrellas, sitting at the feet of some learned mahant or preacher and gazing at holy ascetics, jostled by sacred bulls, crowding in and out of the water, drying themselves with towels, prostrate at the margin telling beads. Crows, kites, pigeons and parrots circle round the heads of this kaleidoscopic crowd. Up and down the ghats, all day



BURNING GHAT, BENARES.

long, but especially in the morning, stream the endless course of pilgrims, ragged tramps, aged crones, horrible beggars, hawkers, Brahman priests, sacred bulls and cows, Hindu preachers, wealthy rajahs or bankers in gay palanquins, fakirs, pariah dogs, and scoffing globe-trotters from Europe and America.

A pathetic feature of this jostling, bellowing crowd is the large number of tottering aged women, with scanty white locks, coming out of the cold river, crawling feebly up the steep steps with their wet clothes clinging to their poor shivering lean

