CHAPTER VI

Image of the Orient in Emma Roberts’s Prose Writings
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This chapter aims to explore the image of the Orient in Emma Roberts's prose writings. Like the poems of her collection, *Oriental Scenes, Dramatic Sketches and Tales, with Other Poems* (1830), some of her prose works, namely *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (1837), *The East India Voyage* (1839), and *An Overland Journey Through France and Egypt to Bombay* (1841) contain the impressions and perceptions which she had during her visit to various parts of the Orient. The image of Orient in the first volume of her prose work, entitled *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (1837) has been analysed below.

In the purview of this chapter I have tried to explore Roberts's interest in the culture, antiquities, religions and other social aspects of the exotic British India. I have listed those British military stations which she had visited during her decade long stay in India, and explained her observations, impressions and experiences. Let us turn first to her representation of the following Indian cities:

Calcutta

Calcutta (now known as Kolkata) is one of the metropolitan cities of India. It is situated on the eastern valley of Hooghly river which "at all periods of the year presents a broad surface of sparkling water" and passes "through a richly wooded country, clothed with eternal verdure, and interspersed with stately buildings" (Roberts 1). At present, this city is the capital of West Bengal, an Indian state. It is
popularly known as ‘The City of Palaces’ which James Atkinson (1780-1852) used as an epithet as the title of his collection of poems.

Roberts begins her description of Calcutta with reference to the architectural style of its buildings. She asserts that Calcutta houses numerous buildings of various architectural patterns. She notes that buildings of Calcutta are quite large. She portrays the architectural styles of the buildings in the following excerpt:

The houses for the most part are either entirely detached from each other, or connected only by long range of terraces, surmounted, like the flat roofs of the houses, with balustrades. The greater number of these mansions have pillared verandahs extending the whole way up, sometimes to the height of three stories, besides a large portico in front; and these clusters of columns, long colonnades, and lofty gateways, have a very imposing effect, especially when intermingled with forest trees and flowering shrubs (2).

She describes that the floors of these buildings are “covered with fine matting, and the walls are adorned with sconces having glass shades to them, some containing two, and others three lights” (5). She talks of various kinds of furniture – sofas, chairs, tables, etc. which are made of exotic wood and furnished beautifully in these buildings, a little away from the walls. She emphasizes that most of these buildings were occupied by the European officers. She points out that some of these buildings have fallen in a dilapidated condition with the passages of time.

Roberts then turns her attention to the “mud hut, or rows of native hovels, constructed of mats, thatch, and bamboos” (2). She notes that the native people of moderate income occupy these less posh dwellings. She describes that these native dwellings lay out beautifully to the outer walls of the palaces of Calcutta. She
suggests that although these houses are not superior to the rudest wigwams, they are in a good condition.

Roberts appreciates the loftiness of the apartments of Calcutta. Most of the apartments are illuminated by the flames of coco-nut oil lamps at the fall of evening. She portrays a charming evening scene which "consists of the bright floods issuing from innumerable lamps in the houses of the rich, when, all the windows being open, the radiance is thrown across the neighbouring roads" (5).

Roberts represents the native poor Bengali servants, with their hospitable nature. She notes the appearance of these servants in white dress. She describes that the European visitors are "instantaneously surrounded by persons who offer their services, both as domestics and purveyors" (3). She points out how these servants arrange for comfortable houses for the foreign travelers, and take care of them and their luggage with full security. She adds that these servants possess a strong moral sense, and show their loving respect and good conduct towards the overseas tourists.

Roberts talks of another group of Bengali people, known as travelling agents. She draws that these agents show their keen interest in terms of guiding the English travelers and in talking with them in English language. She points out that among all the agents, only the circars (also known as Sarkar) seem to speak fluently in English language with the European travellers.

Roberts declares that there are certain divisions in the caste system of Bengali Hindu people. She notes that although the Bengali people possess humble nature, they believe in class divisions. She depicts an instance how the people of "higher orders of domestics look down upon their more humble brethren; their refusal to eat or smoke with them, or to touch anything that has been defiled by their hands" (7).
Cawnpore

Roberts draws a graphical presentation of Cawnpore (presently known as Kanpur), an Indian city which stands on the right bank of the Ganges river, and presently holds an important position as a city of industrial and administrative unit in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Roberts represents this city with the tag of one of the important Mofussil stations of India.

Roberts focuses her attention first on the garrison of Kanpur. She states that this garrison acts as headquarter of the Kanpur during the British rule. She notes that this garrison comprises "a European regiment of dragoons, and one of native cavalry; several battalions of artillery, horse, and foot; one King's, and three Company's regiments of infantry; a major-general in command; and the numerous staff attached to the head-quarters of a large district" (36). This garrison provides homely facilities to the Company's civil servants, namely collectors and judges.

Roberts turns her attention to some cutchu (Urdu word used for a mud-walled) houses of Cawnpore. She describes that these houses are comparatively big and accommodate many persons at a time for living. She points out that these houses are well lit by the oil lamps at evenings, thus adding exotic beauty to the locale.

Roberts provides also the description of the bungalows of Kanpur. She praises the architectural style of these bungalows. She portrays the plans and architectural features of these bungalows in the following lines:

The plans of bungalows are various, but the most common consist of three centre rooms; those opening on the front and back verandah being smaller than the one occupying the interior, which is called the hall; these rooms
communicate with three others, much narrower on each side, and at the four corners are bathing rooms, taken off the verandah, which stretches all round. The centre, and largest room, has only the borrowed lights permitted by eight, ten, or twelve doors leading out of the surrounding apartments: these rooms are always open, but some degree of privacy is obtained by a curtain attached to each, of a sort of gauze-work, formed of bamboo split very fine, and coloured green; these also serve to keep out the flies, while they admit air and all the light considered necessary by an Anglo-Indian (38).

She notes that like the palaces of Calcutta, the floors of these bungalows are covered with matting and the settringee (known as shatranji or sitrangee in Urdu for a cotton carpet). She states that these bungalows are beautifully furnished with chairs, tables, and sofa of valuable wood, and cushions and coverings of damask. These bungalows are repaired every three years by replacing the old chunam (Hindi word signifying a white powdery substance which is used for colouring houses in the Orient) of the floor.

The gardens of Kanpur are cultivated during the cold season. These gardens produce almost all types of European vegetables. The grapes, mangoes, guavas, limes, melons, custard-apples, oranges, peaches, plantains, etc. are remarkable production of these gardens. The gardens of Kanpur abound also in some fabulous exotic trees.

Roberts speaks of two other places – the race course and the theatre – which stand in the middle of the cantonments of Kanpur. The architectural style of these places resembles with an overgrown barn. The race course was crowded with carriages of different models at evenings while the theatre acted as a source of entertainment for the European residents as well as the native Indians. The high
ranked officers came to the theatre in attractive dress, along with well-dressed ladies, and enjoyed the performances of the native actors. She presents an interesting scene of carriages and servants observed outside the theatre:

Outside of the theatre, the carriages and servants in waiting form a singular scene; palanquins, buggies, and vehicles of all descriptions are brought into requisition; half the attendants compose themselves to sleep, while the other half are smoking; but when summoned, they vie with their brethren in London in creating bustle and confusion, each thinking his own honour implicated in keeping up the consequences of his master (45).

Roberts highlights another traditional custom that is celebrated at the assembly rooms of Kanpur. She asserts that the settled European residents celebrated a party “with a supper and ball at the neighbouring assembly rooms” (45) after the end of a play. She notes that the native khidmutgars (in Urdu, this word is generally applied for household servants) kept themselves standing behind the chairs of the guests at the evening party, and serve them with plates, knives, forks and glasses at the time of supper. She points out that almost all the invited guests felt delighted with the services of the khidmutgars. She takes a note of another cultural program – dance party – which the professional actors perform after the end of the supper. She reports that the saibs (Urdu title which is placed after a respected person’s name or designation) were extremely delighted with the performances of the hired native professional singers and dancers.

Roberts describes another town, Mirzapore (presently known as Mirzapur), an Indian city which is situated between Benarcs and Allahabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh. She highlights the significance of the city with its large production of
carpets. She notes that although this city supplies large amount of carpets, it fails to
compete with the carpets of Turkey in terms of quality. However, she overrates its
supplementary production of thick and warm garments which the native Indians wear
throughout the year.

Berhampore

Berhampore, another important British military station “is situated on the left
bank of Hooghly river, in the fair and fertile province of Bengal, and is arrayed with
the utmost splendour of foliage; the flowering trees attaining a gigantic size, and the
more common offspring of the forest, the banian, tamarind, neem, peepul and
bamboo, occurring in greater profusion, and seeming to riot in richer luxuriance”
(Roberts 80). Roberts begins her description of this city with the quarters of the
European officers. The quarters of this station are built in the architectural pattern of
the palaces of Calcutta, and most of them are puckha (known as pakka in Urdu to
signify baked materials). She notes the presence of a parade ground enclosing to the
grand square of the cantonment. The “stately houses, belonging to civilians and other
permanent residents, arise in tasteful and convenient spots in the neighbourhood,
giving to the whole station an air of grandeur and importance not usually found in
garrisons” (Roberts 80).

Roberts comments also on some negative aspects of Berhampore. The
drainage system was in a very bad state prior to East India Company’s rule over
Berhampore. Many “ditches and stagnant pools, those fruitful sources of malaria”
(81) could be seen outside the regiments of Berhampore. The European residents who
live in such environment cannot keep themselves away from the “diseases which were
generated by sudden transitions from heat to cold” (Roberts 81). She notes that even
the sudden outbreak of cholera becomes “peculiarly destructive to the European community” (82).

Roberts depicts the fashionable life-style of those European ladies who resided at the quarters of Berhampore with their husbands, fathers, brothers or other relatives. These ladies choose to wear the dresses of latest European fashions. These ladies make habit of at least a short journey to various quarters of other regiments of European officers. They assemble on the banks of the Hooghly river to observe some cultural rituals performed by the native people.

Roberts then turns her attention to the silk industry of Berhampore launched by the East India Company. The silk factory of this station produces “the bandana handkerchiefs so much prized in England, together with taffetas and washing silks, which are however deficient both in gloss and substance, and very inferior to the productions of other looms, either belonging to the eastern world or to European states” (88). Silks of Berhampore are beautifully furnished with ivory, and figures of men and animals. This city exports a variety of silks to Delhi and enjoys much demand of silks in England’s markets.

Roberts depicts some cultural ceremonies which were popular during the reign of the nawabs (known in Urdu, an honorific title given to the “administrator of a province and commander of the Indian army” (Brewer 874)) of Murshidabad (now a district of west Bengal). She speaks of nautch (nach in Hindi refers to a traditional Indian dance) which the professional actors of Berhampore performed with great pomp. She describes that a number of European residents living in Berhampore were invited to enjoy this nautch party. The Europeans rejoiced themselves with having a glass of wine while the native Muslims take cherry-juice instead of wine which is
strictly forbidden in Islam. She adds that the cherry-juice becomes not only the favourite beverage of the Muslims but also of the Hindus and "even the lofty-minded Rajpoots, the strictest followers of Brahma" (94).

Roberts adds to her description of Berhampore a view of the Bhagarathi (now spelled as Bhagirathi) river. The banks of this river "is very wide, spreading itself over a vast extent of low ground, and forming beautiful creeks and bays shadowed with the bending branches of the bamboo and other graceful trees" (Roberts 95). The banks of this river are well lighted in the evening on the occasion of Bhearer (known as Bera in Bengali for a cultural festival which the Bengali people celebrate with fervor in the fifth month of the Bengali calendar). Meer Jaffeer Khan (1691-1765), the nawab of the Murshidabad, accompanies with his peers "magnificently clad in gold and silver brocade, studded with jewels" (Roberts 95) to visit and enjoy this festival. She presents a charming sight of the barges which appear on the breast of the river in the evening:

The prows of these gay and gilded barges are shaped into the resemblance of animals, and painted and varnished with all the hues and splendour of enamel; at the stern, gilt pillars support richly-embroidered canopies, and the rowers are splendidly clad in white and scarlet (94).

Long boats "skim like bright-plumed birds the surface of the sparkling water" (Roberts 94). A troop of beautiful maidens launch "a great number of little boats into the river, of coco-nut garlanded with flowers, and gleaming with a lamp, whose flickering flame each viewed with anxious hope of happy augury" (Roberts 95). She notes that the palace-like Bhearer is "preceded by thousands of small lamps, which
cover the surface of the water, each wreathed with a chaplet of flowers” (96). She thus projects the cultural life of the native place.

Roberts traces Krisnagur (presently called as Krishnanagar), a civil station which stands on the banks of the Jellinghy (now spelled as Jalangi) river in the state of West Bengal. This station acts as the centre place for producing superior kind of muslins during the East India Company’s rule. She appreciates the fine quality of the muslin of Krisnagur in the following passage:

These muslins have the commendation – a strong one to some persons – of being high priced. The piece, which is more than enough for one dress but not sufficient for two, is of twenty rupees. The patterns are elegant, but are only printed in a single colour; and as Indian muslin, though nearly driven out of the market by steam and spinning-jennies, is still highly prized, it might be advantageous to an English shopkeeper to keep a stock on hand for the benefit of the ladies of Calcutta” (90).

Patna

Patna, another important city of India stands on the right bank of the Ganges river in the state of Bihar. Roberts reports the following view of this city:

Patna, though it does not contain any single building of great celebrity or peculiar beauty, is rich in the remains of Moosulman splendour, and its appearance from the river is highly picturesque. The houses of the wealthy classes, which are very numerous, are handsome buildings, flat-roofed, and surrounded by carved balustrades (130). She notes the presence of some other houses which are occupied by the middle class families. She depicts thus the topography of Patna: “peepul trees, broad ghauts, the
remains of Gothic gateways of dark red stone (which possess a truly feudal air), and
the numerous temples devoted to Hindoo and Moosulman worship” (131). She
focuses her attention also on the shops of the hukeems (in Urdu this word denotes a
physician) which are beautifully “furnished, in the primitive style, with herbs of
various kinds” (141).

Roberts amplifies her description of Patna with a brief account of Bankipore, a
city comprising central part of Patna. This place has dense population, and is known
for its rich exotic culture. This city supplies coloured drawings of the feathered tribes.
She points out its high production of vegetables of various kinds. She describes it as a
centre for intellectual activities. The civilians of this station had “the opportunity of
seeing and entertaining all travellers of consequences proceeding up or down the
river, and their appointments were comparatively liberal and they were enabled to
keep up a portion of the ancient hospitality” (Roberts 132-133).

Another sub-military station, Dinapore stands on the banks of the Son river in
the state of Bihar. This station provides training and housing facilities for the army
officials. Roberts states that the cantonments of this station were the only places
where “the performances of the military bands in the evening attract the whole
population to the spot, affording a cheerful place of assembly” (135).

Roberts highlights Islamic culture of Patna with reference to the festival of
Mohurrum. Muslims of Patna celebrate this ceremony annually in the memory of two
grandsons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) – Hassan (625-670) and Hussain (626-
680). Muslims beat their breast with hands during this festival and lament over the
loss of their martyrs. She depicts a negative image of these followers for “being far
more fanatic and intolerant than their brethren of Bengal, who have sadly degenerated
from the true faith, and are given to pay homage at idol shrines” (137).
Roberts presents Patna as a business hub, producing table-linen and wax-candles. Patna "possesses very expert workmen in every department of mechanical art; among the minor branches are bird-cages, constructed with great ingenuity and even elegance; the frames of some being delicately inlaid with ivory, while the wires of others are strung with coloured beads" (139). She notes the availability of opium which the nawabs of Patna and others take to maintain their social status. The poor natives of Patna catch birds from hilly areas and sell them throughout India.

Roberts brings out the importance of Patna with its fertile soil which produces rice and vegetables of various types in large amount. She notes that potatoes hold the first position among all the cultivated vegetables, and have a considerable demand in terms of native consumption. She appreciates the quality of rice of Patna, for the London traders declare the rice of Patna as "the grain of superior quality" (139).

Roberts shares an evening experience of Patna. She describes that the streets of Patna abound in an interesting sights of various Oriental carriages, namely palkees (Urdu word for a sedan chair), taunjohns (in Hindi this word signifies a carriage drawn by the horse) and rhuts (known as rath in Hindi for the chariots used by the Hindus for any religious ceremony). She states that these Oriental carriages are drawn by the native poor males. Chokeydars (Urdu word to refer to lower ranked servants guarding household property at night) appear on streets with their loud voices. She notes the presence of "the incessant vociferation of fakeers stationed at the corners of the streets" (142). Shops, temples, palaces and other buildings of Patna enhance the beauty of the evening scene:

The shops are all lighted up, and as the evening advances, the dusky buildings which rear themselves against a dark blue sky studded with innumerable stars, have a solemn and imposing appearance; much that is paltry and sordid is
obscured in deep shadow, and only the more prominent objects are revealed to the eye. Patna at this time assumes a gorgeous aspect, presenting a succession of temples and palaces worthy to have been the abodes of the luxurious Moghuls (Roberts 142-43).

Roberts depicts an annual fair which takes place in the cold season at Hadgeepore (now known as Hajipur), a town located on the left bank of the Ganges river in the state of Bihar. She offers details of this fair in the following passage:

Rich carpets are spread over the setringlyes which cover the floor, and small chandeliers are suspended from the roofs. The walls are hung with some gay patterned chintz, and the sideboards glitter with plate. No privations are felt by the dwellers under canvas; the repasts being equally well served in the midst of a sandy waste as in the kitchen attached to a magnificent mansion (145).

This fair attracts the attention of both the natives and European people with its fancy balls and private theatres. She notes the availability of some rich productions this fair – shawls, pearls, gold ornaments, and precious stones – which catch the attention of the visitors. She draws an amazing scene of this fair in which some groups of the native servants “sleeping, some smoking, others singing and beating the tim-tom, while gaily dressed ladies are alighting from their carriages, and entering the tents already illuminated for the evening” (145). She talks also about some food dishes: chupatties (in Hindi for unleavened bread), kaarie (known as curry in English for a saucy dish), roast, boils, grills and stews.

Roberts draws attention also to the ‘Deegah Farm’ of Patna. She notes that this farm was occupied by William Havell (1782-1857), an English artist who came to India and “made his living by painting portraits of East India Company officials and Army officers, as well as landscapes” (qtd in Martins 81). This farm keeps all sorts of
domestic animals of European and English breed in stock. Havell’s warehouses contain various types of articles in an elegant order. In these warehouses “jewellery and millinery, chins, glass, hardware, European bird-cages and bird-seed, saddlery, ornamental furniture” (148) etc are arranged with an extreme order. She appreciates Havell’s thoughtful skills in terms of his dealing with wild animals and in shipping at Hooghly river and collecting mango and hilsa-fish. She notes also the surrounding gardens of this farm where fabulous fruit trees and vegetables grow in abundance. The native mallees (Hindi word for gardeners) work in these gardens “under the superintendence of Dutch and Chinese gardeners, men of science and practical knowledge” (Roberts 149).

Benares

Benares (called also as Banaras, Varanasi, or Kashi) is another Indian city which stands on the banks of the Ganges river in the state of Uttar Pradesh and is known as the seat of Hindu rituals and Sanskrit learning. Roberts speaks of “the singularity of its structure, its vast wealth, and immense population” (170).

Roberts commences her description of Benares with its ghauts (known as ghat in Hindi for the steps of river). Many temples are built up on the banks of the river and “backed by tall mansions seven stories in height, and interspersed with Gothic gateways, towers, and arches, (all profusely covered with ornaments,) balconies, verandahs, battlements, mullioned windows, balustrades, turrets, cupolas, and round and pointed domes” (171). She draws a pictorial scene which is created on the sparkling waters of the river by the images of temples, mosques, palaces, trees, and other buildings of the city.
Roberts provides a detailed account of the varied architectural patterns of palaces, temples, and other buildings of Benares. She appreciates the architectural styles of the buildings in the following passage:

The usual style of building in Benares ensures the strictest privacy to the female portion of the family. The massy door from the street opens into a small court-yard, surrounded on all sides by high walls; one large apartment occupies the whole of the front, in every story; these rooms, which are airy, and well supplied with windows and verandahs overlooking the street are exclusively occupied by the gentlemen of the house. On each floor, a covered gallery runs round three sides of the court-yard, leading to small chambers, or rather cells, where the women and their attendants are immured (182-183).

She points to numerous temples of different shapes and sizes of the city built in honour of several Hindu deities and venerated by the Hindu worshippers. The architectural patterns of the buildings and temples fell into a dilapidated condition during the reign of Arungzebe (1618-1707), the 6th and the last emperor of the Mughal Empire of India who conquered this city and commanded the Muslim architects to bring about changes in the architectural style of the whole city. She alludes to the minarets of the mosques which rank amid the wonders of the city and symbolically represent the presence of Islam in the city. She adds that these minarets of the mosques possess lofty spires which “shoot up into the golden sky from a dense cluster of buildings, crowning the barbaric pomp below with graceful beauty” (171).

Roberts reports some religious practices of the Hindu devotees there: how the pious Hindus assemble on banks of the Ganges river and offer flowers in the water of the river. These Hindus take a holy bath in this river in order to cleanse their sins.
Roberts describes the *bazars* (Urdu term for market) which are located in the interior region of Benares. These bazaars abound in various types of shops – namely tailors’, copper-smiths’ and others selling shawls, muslins, *scarfs* (Persian word used to refer a veil worn by women to cover the head or face), *puggree* (Urdu word for turban), *kincoab* (Sanskrit word to denote an ornament made of gold or brass), *joomka* (in Urdu, the term stands for earrings), etc. These bazaars are much crowded, with hustle and bustle all day. She draws a sharp contrast between these bazaars of Benares with those of other cities of India at day-break:

Benares, at day-break, presents less of animated life than any other city of the same magnitude and extent: a few sweepers only appear in the streets; all the houses are shut up, and give no sign of the multitudes who swarm within. The shops are closely barricaded, the usual mode of fastening them being by a strong chain attached by a large padlock to a staple beneath the threshold. At this early hour, the streets are very clean, and the air of the city is much cooler and fresher than might be expected from its denseness and population. Its zoological inhabitants are up and abroad with the first glean of the sun; the *brahminee* bulls perambulate the streets, monkeys spring from cornice to cornice, and flights of pigeons and parroquets dart from the parapets in every direction. As soon as it is broad day, the priests repair to the temples, and devotees are seen conveying the sacred water from the Ganges to the several shrines. At the doors of the pagodas, persons are stationed with baskets of flowers for sale. Long rosaries of scarlet, white, or yellow blossoms, seem to be in the greatest request, and are purchased by the pious as offerings to their gods: the pavements of the temples are strewed with these floral treasures, the only pleasing ceremonial connected with Hindoo worship (176-77).
Roberts depicts some Hindu festivals of Benares. She describes that the Rajah of Benares celebrates the hoolee (holi in Hindi which signifies a Hindu festival held in the 11th month of Hindu calendar) with the native Hindus and the families of the civil and military officers in perfection at the palace of Ramnaghur. Rose baskets are substituted for the powdered mhindee (a tropical shrub whose leaves are used as a hair dye) and all the guests feel extremely delighted with the taste and courtesy of the Rajah during this cultural festival. She shifts her attention to the nautch, a cultural tradition which the rajah organizes for entertaining the guests and other natives. She notes that the guests feel sometimes tired with long performance while the "natives never appear to be weary of the evolutions of their favourites, and will sit with exemplary patience, from nightfall until daybreak, gazing upon the successive sets of dancers, who relieve each other throughout the night" (188-189). She speaks of another traditional Hindu festival, duwalle (dewali signifies a festival of lights which the Hindus celebrate in honour of their goddess of wealth, Lakshmi). She asserts that this festival is celebrated "at Benares with the greatest splendor, and its magnificence is heightened by the situation of the city on the bank of the river, and the singular outlines of the buildings" (193). She notes that the chiraugs (the term stands for lights) of various shapes and sizes are put on the edge of palaces, temples and other buildings in a systematic range on the occasion of this festival, and are well lighted on the dark night. She portrays the charming scene of this festival in the following lines:

The city appears like the creation of the fire-king, the view from the water affording the most superb and romantic spectacle imaginable, - a scene of fairy splendor, far too brilliant for description. Europeans embark in boats to enjoy the gorgeous pageant from the river; all the vessels are lighted up, and
the buildings in the distance, covered with innumerable lamps, shine out in radiant beauty (194).

She notes that the natives celebrate this festival annually in order to continue their good fortune. She points out that the gamblers “try their luck, and if they should be successful, pursue their fortune with redoubled confidence” (194) on the eve of this festival. Even thieves, “anxious to secure an abundant supply of booty, labour diligently on this evening in their vocation; while others eat, drink, and are merry, in order that they may spend the ensuing period joyously” (194).

Roberts points also to the sectarian conflicts between the Benares Muslims and Hindus. Muslims slaughter bulls on the streets while the Hindus slay pigs and throw the flesh of these pigs into the precincts of the mosques, thus raising conflicts among them. She represents also Benares as the destination of religious beggars: “some of these are distinguished only by their disgusting filth, an indispensable mark of sanctity; while others attain a wretched pre-eminence by the frightful tortures which they inflict upon themselves” (196-197).

Roberts describes also ‘Secrole’, a military and civil station in the close vicinity of Benares. She notes that the garrison of this ‘Secrole’ consists of “about three native regiments, and a small train of artillery” (175). She describes that the ‘Secrole’ possesses some mansions of exotic character, housing some European travelers and artists. She makes a reference to Daniell (1769-1837), an English artist whose drawings exhibit a pictorial representation of the surrounding groves of the ‘Secrole’. She mentions some Muslim tombs which are scattered beyond the ‘Secrole’. She claims that these tombs underscore “the vast increase of the followers of a foreign creed in the sacred birth-place of Brahma, and the desecration of this holy
spot is made still more apparent by the carcasses of animals hung up, in defense of the brahmins, in butchers’ shops” (176).

Allahabad

Allahabad, another important city of India, is situated on the banks of Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers in the southern part of Uttar Pradesh. It is known as ‘the abode of God’, a term which came into existence during the reign of the Mughal emperors of India. Roberts alludes to the Mughal emperors: “who have left memorials of their splendour in a fortress once unequalled in beauty” (245). She states that the city presently has only a few achievements of the Mughal emperors and few Muslim residents. She adds that the city is a holy place for the Hindus in India.

Roberts points to the bungalows in Allahabad which were built in the Anglo-Indian architecture during the British rule in India. Most of these bungalows were occupied by the British officers and were surrounded by fabulous exotic gardens. She speaks of garrisons which were connected to these bungalows, and of the bazar behind these bungalows. The British officers collected ‘the tolls and dues’ from this bazar. She draws attention also to the remote fallow lands which the native ryuts (in Hindi, this term stands for farmers) transformed into rich cultivated lands.

Roberts highlights chief attraction of Allahabad with a fort located on the bank of the Yamuna river. This fort was constructed in Oriental style during the East India Company’s control over this city. She comments on the architectural patterns of this fort in the following passage:

The principal entrance of this fort is landward...A suite of apartments commands a splendid view of the Jamuna, with its craggy heights and wild
sandy shores. From the balcony a singular scene is obtained… The spectator looks down upon a grove of mango-trees, flanking a fine esplanade, and peopled with innumerable ring-necked parrots, which, as the sun glances upon their vivid plumage, dart in and out of the branches like coruscations of emerald light (255-256).

The interior of this fort is beautifully carved with various Oriental designs. Numerous birds of exotic breed make their nest with small leaves and straws in the cornices of this fort.

Roberts informs that at the time of her visit there was no theatre at Allahabad. She suggests that only ‘a billiard-table’ acted as a chief source of entertainment for the gentlemen of the city. She emphasizes that this ‘billiard-table’ appeared to be “the resort of all the idlers of the station” (259). She brings out the significance of the book club of this city which “furnishes the more studious with the floating literature of the day” (259).

Roberts speaks of Allahabad with its supply of various products to other stations of India. She notes that a large amount of cotton of Allahabad was exported to Calcutta via the Yamuna river. She points to other products Allahabad – indigo, sugar etc – which were shipped to Calcutta market.

Monghyr

Roberts makes a brief note on Monghyr, another British military station located on the southern bank of the Ganges river in the state of Bihar. This station possesses relics of numerous forts and other buildings, and stretches with vast rocky
plains. The importance of this station is the presence of the tomb of Peer Shah Lohauni who is widely worshipped by both the Muslims and Hindus of this town.

Monghyr acts as the centre of workhouse of various accessories. She praises the workmen of this place for their skill in manufacturing all necessary accessories. She notes that “the workmen possess considerable skill, and construct palanquins, European carriages, and furniture, in a very creditable manner” (296). This town enjoys reputation for manufacturing the shoes of both the natives and Europeans. The tailors of this station mend the army-clothes with great art. She takes also a note of the blacksmiths of this station who “work up steel and iron into a great variety of forms: these goods are coarse, and not of the very best description; but they are useful, especially to the natives, and remarkably cheap” (296).

The bazars of Monghyr abound with culinary and other utensils. She describes that “tea-kettles, tea-trays, toasting-forks, saucepans” (297), etc. are some remarkable culinary vessels which both the Muslim and Hindu natives buy from these bazars. Almost all kinds of food commodities are largely cultivated in the fertile banks of the Ganges and brought for sale in these markets. These bazars supply “the variety of the commodities and gay costumes of the people” (Roberts 298).

Roberts provides an account of the large fort of Monghyr. This fort was constructed on the bank of the Ganges during the British rule. She commends the architectural pattern of this fort: “Within the walls there is a plain of considerable extent, sprinkled with some majestic trees, and having two large tanks of water, the most considerable covering a couple of acres” (299). This fort affords the European soldiers and officers with royal facilities. However, this fort “has not, like Allahabad, been ever modernized, or adapted to the prevailing system of warfare” (Roberts 299).
Roberts describes Monghyr as a place of religious excursion. She mentions Seeta-coond and Jungheera which are other interesting places of Monghyr. Seeta-coond is a holy Hindu pilgrimage site with its springs and temples. She points to the presence of the springs on the “gently-rising hills and rocky ledges” (300) of the landscape, a few miles away from Monghyr. European pilgrims “generally take themselves with several dozens of bottles of water from Seeta-coond” during their return to England. Hindus consider the water of these springs to be sacred. Brahmins settle themselves in the surroundings of the springs. Seeta-coond “elevations are infested with tigers, and travelers compelled to tread their labyrinths encounter great risks” (Roberts 302). Jungheera, another important pilgrimage site is located in the neighbourhood of Monghyr. The pious Hindus take this place to be the habitation of many Hindu deities. She mentions a religious custom which the Hindus practise by paying “their homage at the shrine of Narayan, an idol of great celebrity at this place, whose figure, besides being preserved in one of the pagodas, is sculptured upon several parts of the rock, together with those of Vishnu, Seeva, and Sirooj” (309). She portrays another traditional rite which is performed by the native girls who carry “a small tray of brass, on which spices, fragrant flowers, and slices of the coco-nut are laid, intended for the altar of Mahadeva or some equally-venerated object of their worship” (315).

Roberts concludes her description of Monghyr with a note on the nature of the native people. She depicts the good qualities of the natives. These natives never participate in any kind of crime which is frequently committed in other parts of the country.

Oude
Oude (now known as Awadh) is another significant British province in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Roberts unfolds her description of this province with reference to its fertile plains which are watered by a number of streams, and seem to be “exceedingly productive, affording rich crops of every sort of grain, cotton, sugar, indigo, opium, and all the most valuable products” (342). She illustrates her description with a precise note on Lucknow, the capital city of Oude, which stands on the banks of the Goomtee river, a tributary of the Ganges river. Lucknow has “a splendid assemblage of minarets, cupolas, pinnacles, towers, turrets, and lofty arched gateways, through which, with many windings, the river glides, while the whole of this bright confusion of palace and temple, is shadowed and interspersed with the rich foliage of trees of gigantic growth and redundant luxuriance” (Roberts 346).

Roberts divides Lucknow into three quarters: the first quarter spreads with narrow, frowsy and inconvenient streets and “is chiefly appropriated to the mercantile community attached to the court and the residency” (347). This quarter is much more crowded than the other two quarters. Almost every corner of this quarter echoes with stentorian voices of the faqueers (Urdu word generally used to refer to beggars) at the fall of evening. The second quarter was promoted under the patronage of Saadut Ali (1752-1814), the fifth nawab of Oude. This quarter has its “many palace and palace-like mansions, belonging to the king, and occupied by the members of his family and the officers of his household” (347). She draws attention to Delkusha which is built in mere styles of the Greco-Moorish architecture and adorned with European furnishings. Other mansions of the quarter have their Oriental features. She notes the chowk (Urdu word for an open area with a market) and other markets in this quarter. The third quarter with its “numerous splendid buildings, mosques, and royal residences” (348), was constructed during the reign of Asaf-ud-Daula (1748-1797),
the nawab of Oude who transferred the capital from Faizabad to Lucknow. The Nobut Khana (Urdu word for a guardhouse) is situated near the outer gate of the royal palace. She speaks of the bowlee (a well) which is situated at the centre of the nearby garden of the palace. She says that the Sungee Dalaun (a stone building) adds the Oriental touch to the royal palace. She draws also a beautiful account of the mosques, temples, zenana (Urdu word to refer to the women quarter of a house) and other buildings attached to the royal residences.

Roberts praises the etiquettes of the court during the coronation ceremony of the king of Oude. The king appears in the court with a jewel-crown which “is a perfect constellation of gems, and overshadowed by plumes of the bird of paradise” (366), and in a regal dress which is embroidered with the strings of gems, diamonds, rubies, emeralds etc. The “king gives his portrait set in diamonds to the ambassadors and other persons of rank, this distinction being also bestowed upon the aide-de-camps, and officers who have accepted situations of equal honour at the court” (Roberts 366). A native servant stands on either side of the throne and waves the fan made of peacock’s feathers. Other high rank officials stand on the left side of the throne. She points out that large masses salute the king with salaams (the Muslim custom of salutation) and the “prime-minister stands beside the king to receive the nuzzurs (Persian word used to signify a tribute or present) in the coronation ceremony. The king stands up to take “from the hands of a person in waiting certain necklaces composed of silver ribbon, ingeniously plaited, which offer a cheap mode of conferring distinction”, and thus the investiture is completed.

Roberts remarks on an important characteristic of Lucknow with a note on the Muslim festival, Bukra Eade (the festival of sacrifice in the last month of the Islamic calendar). The Muslims of this province celebrate this festival at the Idgah (a place
where Muslims offer their prayers of Eid). The Muslims commemorate this festival by sacrificing “particular animals, camels, sheep, goats, kids, or lambs, according to each person’s means” (369). She notes that the upper class Muslim “supplies their indigent brethren with goats and sheep for the sacrifice” (370).

Apart from the above listed Indian cities, Roberts shares her interest in three modes of travelling – “by dak (post), by marching, and by water in a pinnace or budgerow” (154) – which she had experienced during her stay in India. She points out that a dak travel happened generally in the hot and dry season. She notes that in “a dak journey, the traveler must apply to the postmaster of the place of his residence to furnish him with relays of bearers to a given point” (156). She provides more information of the dak travelling in the following lines:

Three or four days’ notice is usually required to enable the dak-master to apprise the public functionaries of the different villages of the demand for bearers: the traveler must be provided with his own palanquin, and his own banghies (boxes), ropes, and bamboos (156).

She describes that the European officers marched various cantonments to rejoin their corps through the plains and jungles of India in the cold season. Prior to march from an old cantonment to a new one, the officers sold the accumulations of furniture, except the necessary ones, “to procure funds to meet the expenses of a removal, or to lessen them by abridging the number of conveyances” (104) to the other British residents at a very lower rate of auction. She underscores good conducts of the lower class Indian servants who took care of these officers and managed a new settlement for them with full responsibility. She draws a view on the Indian families who preferred to take a journey on rivers by boats in the rainy season. She points out that
the rivers played its role both as a medium of travelling and commercial purpose in her time.

To sum up, Roberts produces a perfect copy of what the Orient and India in particular appeared to her microscopic eyes in the first volume of her *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* (1837). She fairly records the Indian cities with reference to manifold architectural patterns. She captures the social, cultural, religious, and other conventional traditions, beliefs and customs which both the European officers and Indian people followed in her day.
References


