

The Guide-book: A Pictorial Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina

The Guide-book to Mecca⁽¹⁾

I have already⁽²⁾ stated the great rarity of this little pamphlet⁽³⁾. I only know of six copies in existence including that in my own library.⁽⁴⁾ There is no copy in the British Museum. The pamphlet was issued in 1865 (that is to say eight years after the appearance of the second edition of the *Pilgrimage*⁽⁵⁾) at the request of the Honorary Director of the Polytechnic Institute. It contains a short but clear account of the main rites connected with the pilgrimage. As is only natural further details can be found in *The Pilgrimage to Mecca*, but for the general reader who wants to get some idea of the chief ceremonies this little pamphlet is quite sufficient. In order not to repeat what I have already said I must again refer readers to my *Bibliography* (p. 44 etc.)⁽⁶⁾ where I give some account of the manner in which Burton made his famous pilgrimage, the exact position he holds in reference to other non-Moslem "pilgrims" and of the modern works published on the subject.

It is hard to say which was the most dangerous of his exploits--the journey to Mecca or that to [Harar](#). Burton once said that the chances of getting killed were greater on the journey to Harar, but I feel that his tremendous interest in the Pilgrimage may have tended to minimize the dangers which to any one less equipped in language, details of ceremonial and mind would have been a barrier too hard to overcome. The pamphlet consists of nine "stages" and a postscript.

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The Guide-book: A Pictorial Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.

by Richard F. Burton

Stage I: The Pilgrims Land at Jeddah.

We are about to describe one of the most important scenes in the Mohammedan's life. A pilgrimage to Mecca, followed by a visitation to Medina, are, under certain limitations, obligatory upon all true believers, and many who have led evil lives date their reformation from the first sight of the holy shrines.

There is little doubt that this pilgrimage, like all others, began with a mixture of commerce and religion: the latter element now predominates. In former years, when travelling was more difficult, the hadgee (Haji), or pilgrim, wore, after his return home, a green turban. The custom is now obsolete in the more civilized lands. Maids, wives, and widows go through the ceremonial enactments, and "O pilgrimess!" is the civil address to women of the lower orders in Egypt and other Moslem lands.

Jeddah, the port of Mecca, and the capital of the Tehama province, lying on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, is the favourite landing-place of pilgrims. It is a truly tropical picture. Above, a pitiless sun rains yellow fire through air as blue as the turquoise. Below, is an ultramarine sea, streaked emerald green, showing where shoal water overlies golden sand, and dotted with coral rocks that form the dreaded "Gateways of Jeddah." Between the two lies the thin line of red-yellow ground, utterly sterile, with here and there sandy downs and rocky, pointed hills--an iron land. The town is a long streak of dull-brown ruins and white houses glaring as twelfth-cakes. The material is coralline-limestone, and the habitations are oblong, like the old brick houses of England, but decorated with the picturesque alcoves and the huge hanging balconies of carved wood which the overland traveller sees for the first time at Malta. Jeddah is rudely fortified, and in 1817 it beat off thousands of wild Wahhabis or Arab Puritans.

Many European vessels lie off the port during pilgrimage time, and in these days there are steamers from India and Egypt. The native buildings are of immense variety, and motion is given to the scene by

canoes, fishing-boats, and catamarans, darting rapidly in all directions: their leg-of-mutton and gull-wing sails (often mere sheets) turned from white to tender blue and lustrous green by the dazzling reflection of the water, recall to memory a shoal of dolphins off the Cape of Good Hope.

The pilgrims also are a motley throng. The blue-eyed and red-haired Moslem from Moscow meets his swarthy Chinese-like brother from Java or Yun-nan. The fierce Albanian with peaky face, bristling mustachio, and hand on pistol-stock, swaggers by the bumpkin from Sind or the Hindostan man, cat-like with stealthy tread. There are handsome Syrians with pale faces and curly yellow beards; Jew-like Moroccans conspicuous for huge noses and rugged faces; ferocious looking Kurds and Afghans, dignified Osmanlis with Circassian features, and gentlemanly Constantinopolitans, all jostled by the mop-headed Somal of East Africa, and the wild black Takruri, whose burning desire to sight the holy shrines has hurried their painful steps across half the breadth of terrible Africa. The tall, well-bearded Persians, in conical lamb-skin caps, surmounting classical features, so like one another that all seem brothers, keep aloof from the crowd; they are heretics, and they have reason to fear the large quarter-staves carried by the local police. [\(7\)](#)

But these men, so different in appearance, almost all wear the same dress. Passing certain points on the coast they exchanged their normal garb for that called "Ihram," or "Mortification." [\(8\)](#) It is nothing but two cotton cloths, each six feet long by half that breadth, white with narrow red stripes and fringes; in fact, it is nearly the same as that adopted in our Anglo-Turkish baths. One of these sheets is thrown over the back, and, exposing the right arm and shoulder, is knotted at the side. The waist-cloth extends to the knee, and, tucked in at the middle, supports itself. All heads are bared to the rabid sun heat, and the insteps suffer severely.

Assuming this garb, the pilgrims recite:--

"Here am I! O Allah! Here am I!
No Sharer hast Thou--Here am I!
Verily the Praise and the Grace are Thine and the Empire;
No Sharer hast Thou--Here am I!"

The directors of the pilgrims' consciences now order them to avoid quarrels, bad language, and all immorality: they must religiously respect the sanctuary by sparing the trees, and by avoiding to take animal life; they may, however, slay, if necessary, the "five nuisances"--a crow, a kite, a rat, a scorpion, or a biting dog. They must abstain from perfumes,

washes, and cosmetics, from paring the nails, and from dyeing, shaving, plucking and cutting the hair; and, though they may take advantage of shade, and even defend themselves from the sun by upraising the hands, they must never cover the head. For each infraction of these ordinances they are ordered to sacrifice a sheep; and it is popularly said by Moslems that none but their Prophet ("Apostle" or "Messenger" is a better translation) was ever perfect in the intricacies of pilgrimage. It is copious and full of exceptions as the Arabic language itself.

The women do the same as the men: this alone disproves the world-wide calumny against Mohammedans--namely, that half humanity has no soul. and consequently no future. Pilgrimesses exchange the "lisam," that coquettish fold of muslin which veils instead of concealing the lower part of the face, for a hideous mask of split, dried, and plaited palm-leaves, pierced with "bull's-eyes" to admit the light. This "ugly" is worn, because during the ceremonies a woman's veil must not touch her features. The rest of the outer garment is a long white cotton sheet, covering the head, and falling to the heels. One can hardly help laughing when these strange figures first meet one's sight, and to judge from the shaking of their shoulders they are as much amused themselves.

Stage II: The Caravan March Across the Desert.

Few pilgrims endure the dreadful heat, the dust, and, worst of all, the Cologne-like odours of Jeddah. Most of them encamp on the plain behind the town after securing the services of a "circuit-man," so called because, besides serving as guide in religious matters generally, he daily puts the pilgrim through his seven obligatory perambulations round the house of Allah. He also collects cattle for the march, and is ready to provide the stranger with highly-priced bed and board in the sacred city.

Before leaving Jeddah, pilgrims perform a pious visitation. Outside the town lies, or is supposed to lie, no less a personage than "our mother Eve," whilst our first father reposes in a mosque near Mecca. The word Jeddah, in Arabic meaning "Grandmother," is popularly derived from this circumstance. Riding through a mass of foul huts and tattered coffee-sheds, we pass over the sandy plain to the north-east of the town, and find the doors of the precinct closed. As usual in holy places, it must be opened with a silver key.

"Our mother" is supposed to lie like a Mohammedan woman, sideways, fronting Mecca, with her head to the south, her feet northwards, and her right hand supporting her right cheek. Whitewashed and conspicuous to the voyager from afar is the dome opening to the west and covering a square stone planted upright, and fancifully carved to show where the

middle of the body lies. Having prayed there and at the head, where a few dwarf trees grow, pilgrims walk along the low walls which define the outlines of "our mother's" mortal remains. They are parallel, and about eighteen feet apart. As the "mother" measured one hundred and twenty paces from head to waist, and eighty from waist to heel, she must have presented a somewhat peculiar appearance. The archæologist will remember that the great idol of Jeddah in the days of Arab stone worship was a "long rock."

And now let us set out with the caravan, on its desert march of twenty hours between Jeddah and Mecca. There is danger on the road from lurking Bedouins, and, by order of government, pilgrims must journey in parties.

Striking is the appearance of these caravans as they thread their slow way over

"The golden desert glittering through
The subtle veil of beams,"

as the poet of the "Palm leaves" has it. The sky is terrible in its blinding beauty and pitiless splendours, while the simoom, or wind of the wild, caresses the cheek with the flaming breath of a lion. The filmy spray of sand, and the upseething of the atmosphere, the heat-reek and the dancing of the air upon the baked surface of the bright yellow soil, blending with the dazzling blue above, invests the horizon with a broad band of deep dark green, and blurs the gaunt figures of the camels, which at a distance resemble troops of gigantic birds. There are evidently eight degrees of pilgrims. The lowest walk propped with heavy staves: these are coffee-makers, sherbert-sellers, and tobacconists vending their goods, negroes from far Africa, and country folk driving flocks of sheep and goats with infinite clamour and gesticulation; here a shrieking woman or a lost child; there some moaning wretch ready to die, but yearning to breathe out his life in the sacred city. Then come the humble riders of laden camels, mules, and asses, which the Bedouin, who clings monkey-like to the hairy hump of his animal, despises, saying,

"Honourable to the rider is the riding of the horse
But the mule is a dishonour, and the donkey is a disgrace."

Respectable men mount dromedaries or blood camels, known by their small size, their fine limbs, and their large, deer-like eyes. The saddles have huge crimson sheep-skins between tall metal pommels, and these are girthed over fine saddle-bags, whose long tassels of bright worsted hang almost to the ground. Irregular soldiers mount picturesquely equipped "screws." Here and there rides some old Arab shaykh,

preceded by his varlets performing a war-dance, compared with which the bear's performance is grace itself; firing their duck-guns in the air or blowing powder into the naked legs of those before them, brandishing their swords, leaping frantically with bright-coloured rags floating in the wind, and tossing high their long spears tufted with ostrich- feathers. Women, children, and invalids of the poorer classes sit upon rags or carpets spread over the large boxes that form the camel's load: those a little better off use a short cot fastened cross-wise (shibriyah), and the richer ride in pairs, using panniers covered with an awning (shugduf), and made to resemble a miniature green tent, that sways and tosses upon the animal's back. Grandees use gorgeously painted litters [\(9\)](#) (takhtrawn), borne between camels or mules with scarlet and brass trappings, and they are accompanied by led horses. The vehicle regulates the pilgrim's expenses, which may vary from five pounds to as many thousands, and the pauper must live on alms.

It is a haggard land, this--a land of wild beasts and wilder men--a region whose very fountains murmur the warning words "Drink and away," instead of "Rest and be thankful." A sandy valley, in which the beasts sink to the fetlock, threads the peaky hills behind Jeddah. About half-way is a mass of reed huts and leaf-thatched hovels, called the boundary (El Haddah), where caravans halt for coffee and water. Here all unbelievers who intend to visit the sheriff or prince of Mecca at his country quarters in the Taif mountains must leave the direct road, lest their glances pollute the shrine. And here I may observe that though neither Koran nor Sultan enjoin the death of Jew or Christian intruding within the columns that note the sanctuary limits, nothing could save a European detected by the populace, or one who after pilgrimage declared himself an unbeliever. The Turkish and Arab authorities would do their best and fail. I mention this the more particularly as my friend, the learned Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, once proposed to attempt the sacred city in English garb--he would have been shot by the first Bedouin that met him. Another friend informs me that in 1860 a Jew, who refused to repeat the Moslem creed, was crucified by the bigoted and turbulent Meccans.

After "the boundary," we enter upon the Meccan plateau, which is now hard with gravelly clay, then covered with sand-heaps. And here I may observe that the popular idea of the desert being a "sandy sea," dotted with oases like islands, is rarely realized by the traveller. The wilds of Arabia and Africa are mostly plains of rock and of a hard clayey earth, which wants only water to become luxuriantly fertile. Our final rise is by a long flight of rough and broken stone steps, dangerous to the animals for whose convenience they were made: it is a comparatively modern

construction, ascribed to one of the ill-fated Barmecides. The pilgrims who try to arrive about midnight, pitch their tents on a plain or table-land outside the city, and with loud cries of "Here am I!" impatiently await the dawn. Many are the thanks to Allah, and mutual congratulations that their eyes are about to rest upon the edifice towards which every Mohammedan from his earliest days turns in prayer, and which long before the birth of Christianity was revered by the patriarchs of the East.

Stage III: The House of Allah at Mecca.

At dawn the pilgrims perform a ceremonial ablution, and with loud cries of "Here am I!" hasten to the house of Allah. Leaving the camp, they enter the main street of Mecca, leading to the greater "gate of security," near the north-eastern angle of the temple. This is the most venerable of the thirty-nine portals.

Crossing the threshold, they descend several steps, for the level of the temple is preserved, whilst the city has been raised by the decay of ages. The shape a large unroofed and irregular oblong, somewhat like the square of the Palais Royal, and measuring six hundred and twenty by five hundred feet. Each of the four sides has a colonnade, divided into aisles, four to the east and three elsewhere: these cloisters are composed of a forest of more than five hundred columns, between twenty and twenty-five feet high, and of every variety of shape and material. Surmounting each arch of the colonnade is a small dome, shaped like a half-orange: the temple wall is pinnacled, and at different points rise seven minarets, dating from distinct epochs. They are tall, quadrangular, or circular steeples, much slenderer than ours, and somewhat tawdrily banded with gaudy colours.

Near the middle of this area rises the far-famed Kaabah (meaning a cube, a square, a *maison carrée*), its funereal pall contrasting vividly with the sun-lit walls and the yellow precipices of the town. There it is at last--the bourne of long and weary travel-- realizing the plans and hopes of many and many a year. In my eyes the mirage medium of fancy invested the huge *catafalque* and its gloomy covering with peculiar charms. There were no marvels of hoar antiquity as in Egypt, no remains of graceful and harmonious beauty as in Greece and Italy, no barbaric gorgeousness as in the fanes of India and China. Yet the view was strange, unique; and how few of us have looked upon the celebrated shrine! I may truly say, that of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain, and who pressed their beating bosoms against the stones, none felt for a moment a deeper emotion than the pilgrim from the far

north.

The Kaabah, according to the Koran, is "certainly the first temple erected for mankind"; its prototype is supposed to be in heaven, built by angelic hands, with sheets of light, and Adam first founded the structure which we now view. It is nearly square, forty-five feet long, thirty-five feet broad, and about forty feet high, the roof having a cubit of depression from south-west to north-east. The material is a fine grey granite, in horizontal courses of irregular depth, mortared with excellent cement. All the building, except the roof, is mantled over with a dull black dress of silk and cotton made at Cairo, and annually renewed: the lower ends are looped up to preserve it from the people, and a horizontal band of bright gold thread, some two feet broad, runs round the building at two-thirds of its height, thus relieving its monotony. [\(10\)](#)

The world-famed "Black Stone" is inserted outside into the south-eastern angle of the Kaabah, between four and five feet from the ground and extending to an unknown depth. It is set in a broad circle of gold or gilt silver, and appears only through the central aperture, which is about seven inches in diameter. Round the sides is a reddish-brown cement, almost level with the metal disc and sloping down to the middle of the stone, which is about two inches lower: The true stone shows a black and slaggy surface, glossy and pitch-like, worn and polished by myriads of kisses. Moslems declare that when Allah made covenant with the souls about to animate the sons of Adam, the instrument was placed inside the Black Stone, which, once white as snow, changed colour by reason of our sins. Unbelievers opine the sacred corner-stone to be a common aërolite.

Nothing can be more simple than the interior of the Kaabah. The walls are covered with handsome red damask, flowered over with gold and tucked up six feet high out of the way of pilgrims' hands. The ceiling rests upon three cross-beams connecting the eastern and western walls, and these beams are supported by three posts of carved and ornamented aloes wood. Between the three pillars, and about nine feet from the ground, run metal bars, and hanging to them are many lamps said to be of gold.

At a distance of several yards the Kaabah is surrounded by an oval balustrade of thirty-one or thirty-two slender gilt pillars, between every two of which are suspended globe-lamps of white and green glass. The space thus inclosed is the circuit ground where pilgrims walk round the shrine. On the north-west end of the building is a dwarf semicircular wall, whose extremities are in a line with the sides of the Kaabah, and distant from it about five feet. Thus it leaves an opening to the sepulchre of Ishmael, whom Moslems regard as the eldest son and successor of

Abraham, in opposition to the Jews, who prefer the legitimate Isaac.

Besides the Kaabah, ten minor structures adorn the vast quadrangle. The most important is that which protects the holy well Zam Zam, [\(11\)](#) or "The murmuring," whose brackish waters gushed from the ground where the child Ishmael was shuffling his feet in the agonies of thirst. There are the "two domes" over the library and clock-room: the walls are vulgarly painted with bands of red, green, and yellow. Opposite the door of the Kaabah, which is six feet above the pavement, stands a short triangular staircase of carved wood, which is wheeled up on the rare days when the building is opened. Near it rises a slightly built and insulated round arch of cut stone, about fifteen feet wide by eighteen feet high: those who visit the shrine for the first time pass under it. There is a fine white marble pulpit with straight narrow stairs, leading to the preacher's post, which is surmounted by a small gilt and pointed steeple. Lastly, opposite the four sides of the Kaabah stand four ornamental pavilions with light sloping roofs resting on slender pillars: from these the representatives of the four orthodox schools direct their congregations in prayer.

Upon the granite pavement which, smooth as glass, surrounds the Kaabah, crowds of pilgrims, bareheaded and barefooted, despite the fires of day and the cold dews of night, perform the ceremony of "circuit," and suggest the idea of perpetual motion. New-comers at once proceed to the Black Stone, and, after a hard struggle, kiss it and exclaim, "In Allah's name, and Allah is Almighty!" Then they commence the usual seven rounds, three at a brisk gymnastic trot, and subsequently four at a leisurely pace. During this time the "circuit-man" (mutawwif), or guide, recites the proper prayer aloud, and the pilgrim repeats the words, which seem greatly to vary. Few Mohammedans contemplate the Kaabah for the first time without fear and awe: many faint from excess of emotion. There is a popular jest against fresh arrivals, that they generally ask the direction of prayer, although right before their eyes stands the building towards which they have turned in devotion ever since they began to pray.

Stage IV: Of Mohammed and His Vision in the Cave

Here it is necessary to offer a sketch of Mohammed the Lawgiver of Arabia, and the earlier part of his career, which led to the visit from which he dated his days of inspiration.

Mohammed was born at Mecca, on a Monday, and on the 13th day of a lunar month; but history cannot decide between May 569, and April 571, of our era. Moslem traditionists affirm that their Prophet was born on a

Monday, restored to its place the Black Stone on a *Monday*, assumed the prophetic office on a *Monday*, fled from Mecca on a *Monday*, reached Medina on a *Monday*, and died on a *Monday*.

Mohammed's parents were of the noble tribe of Koraysh, and his father, Abdallah, died whilst journeying to Syria, two months before his only son's birth. As was and still is the custom of Arab citizens, his mother, Aminah, placed him for some time under the charge of Halimah, a Bedouin woman, far from the noxious air of towns, and in the desert, where the genuine Arab character and language are best acquired. For his foster-nurse he ever retained a lively affection.

Having lost his mother at the age of six, Mohammed was adopted by a fond grandfather, Abd el Muttalib. When he was twelve years old, his uncle, Abu Talib, carried him on a commercial visit to Syria. He then took service with a wealthy widow of the same tribe, by name Khadijah, and he again travelled northwards in charge of her goods. Returning in his twenty-fifth year, he married her, although she was then forty lunar (or nearly thirty-nine solar) years old; and their union was blessed by several children, whereas his subsequent marriages were not. Mohammed left no son and successor.

Thus placed above worldly care, the future lawgiver of the Arabs was enabled to follow the bent of his mind--ascetic exercises and religious speculations. He achieved from his fellow-citizens the noble title of The Honest (*El Amim*), and, though not a man of importance, he was chosen to restore the Black Stone to its corner in the temple. It is recorded of him that throughout life he hated nothing more than lying--a remarkable trait amongst Asiatics and semi-barbarians.

Mohammed was about the middle size, muscular but not fat, of good figure and commanding presence. His head, unusually large, gave space for a broad and noble brow: he parted his thick black hair in the middle, and allowed it to fall below his ears in four locks. His face was oval, his features were handsome, and his countenance was unusually mild; his soft clear complexion was of a wheat-colour, fair for an Arab; his eyebrows, narrow and arched, were separated by a vein which was seen to throb in moments of emotion; his eyelids were almond-shaped, and his large eyes, intensely black and piercing, derived additional lustre from their long, dark lashes. His nose was high and slightly aquiline; his mouth somewhat wide, and his teeth were white and well-formed, with a separation between the two front incisors. His beard, rising from the cheek-bones, fell to his bosom and was two hands and two finger-breadths long, and he clipped, but did not shave his mustachio. He was remarkable for cleanliness; and he did not disdain the use of antimony to

the eyes, dye to the beard, and oil to the hair. He was fond of perfumes, and would not permit those who had eaten onions or garlic to enter his place of worship.

The Prophet's dress was a long-sleeved blouse, or shirt of white, red, yellow, or green cotton: he rejected silken cloths, spotted and figured fringes and fine mantles, which it "cloth not become the pious to wear." He was fond of the striped stuffs of Yemen; and in winter he used black woollen cloaks, which contrasted with the fairness of his skin. For great occasions he had a suit costing about four pounds, consisting of a loin-cloth tied round his waist and falling like a petticoat to his ankles, and a square sheet, thrown over the left shoulder, enwrapped the body and was fastened under the right arm. Abroad he wore a skull-cap, and a turban whose ends fell down to his neck; and in the house he tied a piece of cloth round his temples, leaving the crown of his head bare.

In living, Mohammed was an Arab--abstemious, and eating but one full meal a day: yet he discouraged mortification and superogatory fasting. He was fond of confectionery, and liked to drink milk or water sweetened with dates or honey: from his birth he never tasted fermented liquors; and distillation was not then known. He was kind to women, and never beat them; he frequently protected those who came to him for refuge; and the ladies of Medina exercised some influence on his legislation. He forbade his followers to chastise their wives; but, at the remonstrance of the stern disciplinarian, Umar, who said that without it women would have the upper hand, he allowed it in a modified way. Upon this a number of matrons came to his house and prevailed upon him to disapprove of their being ill-treated. He was kind to his servants, and he always freed his slaves.

In those days it was the habit of noble and pious Arabs, especially those of Mohammed's tribe, to make periodical "retreats" for silence and seclusion. Every family had its separate place, on a high conical hill, two or three miles from Mecca, known in books as Jebel Hira, or Hara, but now called Jebel Nur, or Mount of Light, because there the Lawgiver's mind was first illuminated. It is a wild spot. Eastward and southward, the vision is limited by abrupt hills. In the other direction there is a dreary landscape, with here and there a stunted acacia or a clump of brushwood, growing on rolling ground, where stony glens and white sandy valleys, most of them watercourses after the rare rain, separate rugged and barren grey, yellow, and black rocks.

Amidst such scenery, generally alone, but sometimes accompanied by his faithful wife, Mohammed used to retire for several days, staying till his provisions were exhausted; then he would return home, and either live

there for a while, or furnish himself with fresh supplies and return to his favourite cave.

The cave has been sketched by "Ali Bey el Abbasi"--a Spaniard named Badia, who visited the shrines and was afterwards poisoned. [\(12\)](#)

It lies in the declivities at the foot of Mount Nur, and a quarter of a league to the left of the road to Arafat. Burckhardt describes it as a "valley which extends in a northerly direction with easting, and terminated by the mountain (Jebel Nur)." In the rocky floor of a small building ruined by the Wahabys, a cleft is shown, about the size of a man in length and breadth. A little below this place is a small cabin in the red granite rock which forms the upper stratum of this mountain; it is called the "Cave of the Hira." Native annalists make it four yards long, and varying in width from three to nine feet.

In this cave Mohammed received what his followers hold to be his first revelation. The following is a popular account of the event, borrowed from Washington Irving's *Mahomet and His Successors*:--

"It was in the fortieth year of Mahomet's age when this famous revelation took place. Accounts are given of it by Moslem writers as if received from his own lips, and it is alluded to in certain passages of the Koran. He was passing, as was his wont, the month of Ramadan in the cavern of Mount Hara, endeavouring by fasting, prayer, and solitary meditation to elevate his thoughts to the contemplation of divine truth. It was on the night called by Arabs Al Kade, or the Divine Decree, a night in which, according to the Koran, angels descend to earth, and Gabriel brings down the decrees of Allah. During that night there is peace on earth, and a holy quiet reigns over all nature until the rising of the dawn.

"As Mahomet, in the silent watches of night, lay wrapped in his mantle, he heard a voice calling upon him: uncovering his head, a flood of light broke upon him of such intolerable splendour that he swooned away. On regaining his senses he beheld an angel in a human form, which, approaching from a distance, displayed a silken cloth, covered with written characters.

"'Read!' said the angel.

"'I know not how to read,'" replied Mahomet.

"'Read!' repeated the angel, 'in the name of the Lord who has created all things; who created man from a clot of blood. Read in the name of the Most High, who taught man the use of the pen; who sheds on his soul the ray of knowledge, and teaches him what before he knew not.'

"Upon this Mahomet instantly felt his understanding illumined with celestial light, and read what was written on the cloth; which contained the decrees of God, as afterwards promulgated in the Koran. When he had finished the perusal, the heavenly messenger announced, 'Oh, Mahomet! of a verity thou art the Prophet of Allah, and I am his angel Gabriel.'"

The legend is related with variants. That patient Oriental scholar, Dr. A. Sprenger (*Life of Mohammed*), draws the following from authentic sources. "In one of his visions he saw an angel, who said to him; 'Read!' He answered, 'I am not reading!' (more correctly, 'I am not of those who read'). The angel laid hold of him and squeezed him, until Mohammed succeeded in making an effort. Then he released him, and said again, 'Read!' This was repeated three times; and at length the angel said, 'Read (or recite) in the name of the Lord, who created man from naught but congealed blood; read (or recite), for thy Lord is beneficent. It is he who hath taught by the pen (i.e., has revealed the Scriptures); hath taught man what he knoweth not.'

"These sentences are considered to be the first revelations which Mohammed ever received, and are the initiatory words of Chapter xcvi. of the Koran, or Moslem Holy Writ, which means literally a gathering together, a reading, a book, the book.

According to the Koran, the inspiring spirit was "seen in the open horizon," that is to say, above the horizon where we see the sun about half an hour after it is risen, and therefore at a great distance. Subsequently it is supposed to have appeared in two forms--the heavenly, with six hundred wings, and the earthly, in human shape.

To conclude this notice of the Arab lawgiver's early career. In the angry days of the Rev. Humphrey Prideaux, Dean of Norwich, Mohammed was set down as a mere impostor. Followed a more moderate age, which endures to the present time, when biographers describe Mohammed as beginning with fanaticism and ending with imposture. I must differ from both; nor can I see, with Dr. Sprenger, any analogy between the "opening scene of Goethe's 'Faust,'" and the "crisis of Mohammed's struggles." The man was doubtless a fanatic: I cannot, however, detect in him a taint of fraud, which is essentially weak, whereas faith is naturally strong. "Falsehood hath vanished," said Mohammed himself; "for falsehood is evanescent." So his successor declared, "In sincerity is faithfulness, and in falsehood perfidy."

To me there appears a remarkable similarity between Mohammed and Swedenborg: both seem to have been born with that fine and peculiar

nervous temperament whose presentiments and visions assume the type of "second-sight." Thus in the case of the Arab Lawgiver I would explain the Dream of Heaven, from which, in after centuries, so many fond silly stories grew into a mass of splendid absurdity; thus the description of the unvisited Jerusalem; thus the extension of the universe to millions of miles beyond this earth--an anticipation, twelve centuries ago, of the wonders of the telescope.

Stage V: The Sermon on the Holy Hill of Arafat

The ceremonies of hajj, or pilgrimage, I may here preface, are performed on the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth day of the last month of the Arab lunar year, called the "Lord of Pilgrimage." At this time there is a great throb through the framework of Moslem society from Gibraltar to Japan, and those who cannot visit the shrines content themselves with prayer and sacrifice at home. As the year is lunar, the period revolves through the four seasons in thirty-three years; when I visited Mecca the rites began on September 12th and ended on September 14, 1853.

The pilgrimage ceremonies are evidently a commemoration of Abraham and his descendants. The faith practiced by that patriarch, when he issued from the Chaldæan, seems to have formed a religious standard in the mind of the Arab Lawgiver, who preferred Abraham before all prophets but himself.

The principal ceremony of pilgrimage is to be present at the sermon pronounced by the preacher on the holy hill of Arafat, distant six hours or twelve miles from Mecca. This performed, even in a state of insensibility, confers the rank of Hadgee (Haji) or pilgrim. To die on the wayside is martyrdom, saving all the pains and penalties of the tomb. I saw no less than five exhausted and emaciated beings drag themselves along the road to give up the ghost.

Arafat, meaning "recognition," owes its name and honour to a well-known legend. When our first parents were expelled from Paradise, which, according to Moslems, is in the first or lowest of the seven heavens, Adam descended at Ceylon, Eve upon Arafat. The former, seeking his wife, began a journey to which earth owes its present mottled appearance. Wherever the gigantic Adam placed his foot, a town arose in course of time. Wandering for many years, he came to this "Mount of Mercy," where Eve was ever calling upon his name: hence the hill is known as "recognition."

After visiting sundry spots of minor sanctity, such as the birthplace of Mohammed, the stone which gave him "Godspeed," and so forth,

pilgrims prepare for the ceremonies of Arafat. On the eighth day of the month from earliest dawn, the road is covered with white-robed votaries; some walk, others ride, and all are shouting "Here am I!" The scene, as usual in the East, is one of strange contrasts: Bedouins bestriding swift dromedaries, Turkish dignitaries on fine horses; the most picturesque beggars, and the most uninteresting soldiery.

Passing over "The Steep" (Akabah), an important spot in Arab history, they reach at noon "Muzdalifah," or The Approacher, known as the "Minaret without the Mosque," and thus distinguished from another neighbouring building, called the "Mosque without the Minaret." There is something striking in the appearance of the tall, solitary tower, springing from the desolate valley of gravel, flanked by precipices of yellow and tawny rock. No wonder that the old Arab conquerors loved to give the high-sounding name of this oratory to distant points in their wide empire.

Here, as we all halted for midday prayer, appeared the Damascus caravan. The "Mahmal," or complimentary riding-litter, sent annually from that city whose title is "Smile of the Prophet," no longer a framework as on the line of march, flashed in the sun all green and gold. Around the moving host of white-robed pilgrims hovered a crowd of Bedouins, mounted on swift dromedaries, and armed to the teeth; as their drapery floated in the wind, and their faces were half swathed and veiled, it was not always easy to distinguish the sex of the wild beings that urged their beasts to speed. These people often visit Arafat for blood-revenge; nothing can be more sacrilegious than murder at such a time; but they find the victim unprepared. The women are as unscrupulous and many of them are seen emulating the men in reckless riding, and striking with their sticks at every animal in their way.

Presently we passed between the "Two Signs," whitewashed pillars, or rather tall, thin walls, surmounted with pinnacles which mark the limits of the Arafat Plain. Here, in full sight of the holy hill, standing boldly out from the fair blue sky, and backed by the azure peaks of Taif, the pilgrim host raised loud cries of "Here am I!" They then sought quarters in the town of tents scattered over two or three miles of plain ground at the southern foot of the holy hill, and passed a noisy night of prayer. I estimated the total at fifty thousand of all sexes and ages--a sad falling off. The Arabs, however, believe that the numbers at Arafat cannot be counted, and that if less than six hundred thousand human beings stand on the Mount of Mercy, the angels descend and complete the proper amount. Even in the year of grace, 1853, my Moslem friends declared that one hundred and fifty thousand immortals were present in mortal shape.

Physically described, Arafat is a mass of coarse granite split into large blocks, rising abruptly to the height of one hundred and eighty or two hundred feet from the low gravelly plain, and separated by a sandy bale from the spurs of the Taif hills. The wall encircling it gives the barren eminence a somewhat artificial look, which is not diminished by the broad flight of steps winding up its southern face and the large stuccoed platform near the summit where the preacher delivers the "Sermon of the Standing."

On the next day (the ninth of the month) pilgrims visit, after ablution and prayer, sundry interesting places on the Mount of Mercy, and breakfast late, because night must fall before they eat again. From noon onwards the hum and murmur of the multitude wax louder, and people swarm about in all directions. A discharge of cannon about 3 p.m. announces that the ceremony of "standing" on the holy hill is about to begin. It is not, however, absolutely necessary to plant foot upon Arafat: it suffices to be within the recognized landmarks, and to sight from afar the form of the preacher sitting, after the manner of Mohammed, on his camel, and delivering the "Sermon of the Standing."

First in procession comes the retinue of the Sheriff or prince of Mecca. He is preceded by a cloud of mace-bearers, by horsemen of the desert carrying long spears, tufted with black ostrich feathers, by led horses--the proudest blood in Arabia--by a stalwart band of negro matchlock men and by five flags, red and green. The prince precedes his family and courtiers, riding a mule and wearing plain pilgrim clothes: the only sign of his rank is a large umbrella, green with gala embroidery, held over his head by a slave. The rear is brought up by a troop of Bedouins on horses and camels. The picturesque background to this picture is the granite hill, covered, where standing-room is to be found, with white-robed pilgrims, crying "Here am I" at the pitch of their voices, and violently waving the skirts of their gleaming garments.

Slowly the procession winds towards the Mount of Mercy. Exactly at the hour of afternoon prayers, the two "mahmal" or ornamental litters of Damascus and Cairo, take their station side by side on a platform in the lower part of the hill. A little above them stands the prince within hearing of the preacher. The pilgrims crowd up to the foot of the mount. The loud cries fall to a solemn silence, and the waving of white robes ceases.

Then the preacher begins the "Sermon of the Standing," which teaches the pilgrim his duty. At first it is spoken without interruption. Then loud Amens and volleys of "Here am I!" explode at uncertain intervals. At last

the breeze comes laden with a purgatorial chorus of sobs, shrieks, and cries. Even the Meccans, who, like the sons of other holy cities and places, are not much better than they should be, think it proper to be affected, and if unable to squeeze out a tear, hide their faces in the skirts of their garments.

Stage VI: Stoning the Great Devil

At sunset the preacher gives permission to depart, when the pilgrims rush down the Mount of Mercy with cries like trumpet blasts, and take the road towards Mecca. This part of the ceremony is called the "Hurrying from Arafat." Every man urges his beast to the utmost over the plain, bristling with tent-pegs and strewn with struck tents; pedestrians are trampled; litters are crushed and pedestrians [\(13\)](#) are overthrown; single combats with fists and sticks take place, and--it is soon dark after sunset--here a woman, there a child is lost. Briefly, it is a scene of chaotic confusion.

Most pilgrims arriving wearied at Muzdalifah, pitch tents and sleep there. Others pass the night near the Mosque of Muna, but baggage being in a dangerous place, they must keep guard over it. They take the opportunity to visit the Mosque El-khayf, built, according to some, upon the remains of Adam, whose head is at end of one long wall, and his feet at another, whilst a dome denoted his waist. Moslems believe that our first father's forehead originally brushed the skies, but his stature being found uncomfortable, it was dwarfed to one hundred and fifty feet.

The day after the sermon at Arafat (the tenth of the month) is the "Festival of the Sacrifice." It is the most solemn of the year, and it holds amongst Moslems the rank that Christmas Day claims from Christendom.

After performing the "Festival Prayers" at daybreak, pilgrims proceed to stone Satan's representative at the spot where in person he tempted successively Adam, Abraham, and Ishmael, who lapidated him as taught by the "Messenger of Revelation." The rite must not be deferred till after sunset, nor can it be safely performed before sunrise: the crowd of women met during the darker hours to stone the "devils," will, despite Oriental modesty, punish the masculine intruder severely.

On the previous day all the pilgrims brought from Muzdalifah seven pebbles about the size of beans; with these "washed in seven waters," and tied up in their cloths, they now proceed to the western end of the long straggling Muna village. It lies in a hot hollow adjacent to the barren Meccan valley, and distant about three miles from the city. At the western end of a single long street formed by mud and stone houses,

single and double storied, is the "Great Stoning," commonly called the "Great Devil," to distinguish it from two others, the "Central" and the "First." It is nothing but a whitewashed buttress of rude masonry about eight feet high by two and a half broad, placed against a rough stone wall at the Meccan entrance of the Muna village. Pilgrims approach within five paces of this pillar, and throw at it successively their seven pebbles, holding each one between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, either extended or shooting as a boy does a marble. At every cast they exclaim, "In the name of Allah, and Allah is almighty! In hatred to the fiend and to his shame (I do this)!" It is one of the local miracles that all pebbles thus flung return by spiritual agency whence they came.

As Satan was malicious enough to appear in a rugged lane some forty feet broad, the place is rendered dangerous by the crowd. On one side stand the "Devil's" wall and buttress, bristling with wild men and boys; opposite it is a row of barber's booths, and the space between swarms with pilgrims all struggling to get at the "Devil"; it would be easy to walk over the heads of the mob. Amongst them are horsemen urging their steeds, Bedouins on frightened camels, and the running footmen who break a way for their master by assault and battery. Pilgrims, therefore, congratulate themselves if they escape with trifling hurts. Some Moslem travellers assert, by way of miracle, that no man is ever killed during this "lapidation ceremony." I was assured by Meccans that fatal accidents are by no means rare. After throwing the seven stones the pilgrim returns to his ordinary garb. The barber places him upon an earthen bench in the open booth, shaves his head, trims his beard, and pares his nails, causing him to repeat these words, "I purpose throwing off my ceremonial attire, according to the practice of the Prophet--whom may Allah bless and preserve! O Allah, make unto me in every hair a light, a purity, and a generous reward! In the name of Allah, and Allah is almighty!" The barber then addresses him, "Pleasure to thee!" to which he responds, "Allah give thee pleasure!" And now the pilgrim can at once use a cloth to cover his head and slippers to defend his feet from fiery sun and hot soil: he may safely twirl his mustachios and stroke his beard--placid enjoyments of which he had been deprived by the ceremonial law.

The day ends with the sacrifice of an animal to commemorate the substitution in the Muna valley of a ram in lieu of Ishmael the father of the Arabs. Those who cannot afford the luxury must fast ten days. None but the prince and high dignitaries slaughter camels: these beasts are killed by thrusting a knife in the interval between the neck and the breast, on account of the thickness and hardness of the throat-muscles; their flesh is lawful to the Arabs, but not to the Hebrews. Oxen, sheep, and goats are turned with their faces towards the Kaabah and their

throats are cut, the sacrificer ejaculating, "In the name of Allah! Allah is almighty!" It is meritorious to give away the victim without eating any part of it, and thus thousands of poor pilgrims are enabled to regale themselves.

There is a terrible want of cleanliness in this sacrifice. Fifty or sixty thousand animals, some say one hundred thousand, are slain, cut up, and left unburied in this "Devil's Punchbowl." I leave the rest to the reader's imagination. Pilgrims generally pass in the Muna Valley the "days of flesh-drying" (namely, the 11th, the 12th, and the 13th), and on the two former, the Great, the Middle, and the Little Satan are again pelted. The other two standing miracles are, that beasts and birds cannot prey there, nor can flies settle upon provisions exposed in the markets. But animals are frightened away by the bustling crowds, and flies are found in myriads. The revolting scene, aided by a shade temperature of 120° Fahrenheit, has more than once caused a desolating pestilence at Mecca.

Stage VII: The Review of the Troops and March to Mecca

Mohammed was compelled by the fury of his foes to fly with about one hundred and fifty adherents, male and female, from Mecca, his birthplace. The date is variously given as June 16th, or July 16th, of A.D. 622, and initiates the Moslem era called Hegira (Hijrah), and meaning "Separation." He reached Medina, his death-place, on September 24th of the same year, and was favourably received. During the next seven years, the busiest of his life, which were passed in spreading his faith by persuasion and force, and in mortal conflict with his natal city, the "Preacher and Warner" showed a firm front and an unchanged faith in eventual victory. The apostle of the pen had now become the apostle of the sword. At length the Battle of Bedr began a career of victories which changed the destinies of the civilized world.

In the eighth year of his era (A.D. 630), Mohammed prepared an expedition to surprise Mecca. All the roads were stopped lest intelligence of his plans should come to the ears of his enemies. The secret, however, was near being discovered. Among the Meccan adherents was one Hatib, whose family remained behind. He wrote a letter revealing the project to the hostile Meccan chiefs, and entrusted it to Sara, a singing woman. She was pursued and arrested. When threatened, she drew the document from her hair. Hatib was pardoned by Mohammed when his comrades-in-arms would have cut off his head.

The Bedouins were summoned to a general review. Between eight

thousand and ten thousand armed men--a large force in those regions--assembled, and their black tents darkened the Medina Plain outside the city. Each tribe was marshalled under its own banner, which was borne by the bravest: it was often a dark mantle fastened to a spear and called the "Black Eagle," which some popular authors have understood literally. The necessity of defending his flocks and herds made the desert Arab an irregular soldier from his childhood. None excelled him in the use of the bow and arrow, the scimitar, or the long-tufted lance and shining spear, and he was excellent in the management of the horse and the fleet camel. A fierce nefarious race, this progeny of Ishmael gloried in predatory wars and in plundering caravans that refused to pay blackmail. Light, meagre, sinewy and active, Bedouins can endure great privations, hardships and fatigues, and during battle their nervous excitement borders on frenzy. The most accomplished in olden time were those who could write, swim and use the bow: their three great virtues--to be hospitable, generous and brave--won for them half the old world.

Their defensive armour consisted of steel, even silver, mail coats, either dark, or burnished bright, worn over scarlet and other coloured vests. The light troops fought with bows and slings; the heavy-armed used swords and lances. All delighted in fine weapons and gave them names. Thus they would call a bow "the strong"; swords, "the keen," or "the deadly," or "the lord of cleaving"; lances, "the dispenser," or "the destroyer." Similarly, they named their favourite chargers "the Prancer," or "the Neigher."

Umar had the charge of regulating the march of this army of auxiliaries or assistants (ansari), as they proudly called themselves. He led them by lonely mountain passes, prohibiting the sound of trumpet or drum. The secrecy and rapidity of the march were such that on the seventh or eighth day the army reached, without being discovered, a valley near the sacred city. It was nightfall when they silently pitched their tents, and presently by express command ten thousand watchfires blazed fear into the enemy's heart.

The army then passed through a narrow defile, the various tribes marching by in review order, with their different arms and ensigns. The equipment and discipline of the troops had greatly increased, and the Moslems had rapidly improved in the art and appliances of war. When Mohammed approached in the centre of a chosen guard armed at all points, and glittering with steel, the astonishment of his former enemies passed all bounds; they hurried to Mecca, advising the citizens to accept terms.

Meanwhile, Mohammed, who knew not what resistance might be

offered, carefully distributed his forces as he approached the city: while the main body marched directly forwards, strong detachments crowned the barren hills on both sides. He confided his own black banner to his favourite cousin and son-in-law, Ali, who commanded a large body of horse. Stringent orders enjoined all officers to practice the utmost forbearance except to those offering armed resistance. Overhearing Saad, one of his captains, singing, "To-day is the day of slaughter! There is no security this day for Mecca!" He took the standard of Medina from his hands and gave it to the offender's son, Kays, a man of huge stature, but a cooler commander. Mohammed himself brought up the rear, journeying slowly on account of the multitude that flocked around him, he was preceded by his black flag, rode his favourite she-camel, Al Kaswa ("whose ears are clipped"), and wore a scarlet garment and a sable turban, with the end hanging down to his shoulders.

Arrived at a hill near Mecca, Ali planted the sacred banner, and a tent was pitched for Mohammed. Here dismounting, he assumed the pilgrim garb. Casting however, a look on the plain, he saw with grief and anger the gleam of scimitars and lances under the fiery Khalid, the "sword of Allah," who commanded the left wing, in full career of carnage. The wild Bedouins, newly converted to the faith, had been galled by a flight of arrows from the citizens; whereupon the angry warrior charged into the thickest of them his troops pressed after him; they put the foe to flight, entered the gates of Mecca pell-mell with them, and nothing but the swift commands of Mohammed preserved the city from a general massacre. As it was, twenty-eight citizens were killed, and Khalid lost two soldiers. When Mohammed heard this he exclaimed: "That which the Lord decreeth is the best!"

The carnage stopped; Mohammed descended from the height and mounted his camel. The sun was rising as he entered, with the glory of a conqueror but in the garb and humility of a pilgrim, his native city, which for so many long years had abused, exiled, and rejected him. Repeating Koranic verses, prophetic of the event which he said had been revealed to him at Medina, he triumphed in the spirit of a religious zealot, not of a warrior. "Unto Allah," he said, "belong the hosts of heaven and earth, and Allah is mighty and wise. Now hath the Lord verified unto his messenger the vision wherein he said, 'Ye shall enter the holy house of Mecca in full security.'" He rejected all homage paid to himself, and any semblance of regal authority. "Why tremblest thou?" said he to a man who approached him timidly; "of what standest thou in awe? I am no king, but the son of a Koraysh woman who ate flesh dried in the sun!"

On this great occasion of his return, Mohammed purified the House of Allah from the abominations of idolatry, punished with death only four of

his most violent persecutors, and with singular moderation and magnanimity, pardoned all who threw themselves on his leniency. He sent forth his captains at the head of armed bands to destroy the idols set up by the several tribes in the adjoining towns and villages; and he spared no pains to convert their worshippers to Islam, the "safe faith."

The day which made Mohammed Lord of Mecca, practically decided his struggle for supremacy in Arabia. And thus Islam, relieved from internal difficulties, grew with the growth of a young giant.

Stage VIII: Medina--Native Drawing and European Sketch

After the ceremonies at Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammed, most newly-made pilgrims proceed to visit his tomb at Medina; many go by sea, taking ship at Jeddah. Those who prefer the land journey must hire their cattle and prepare for a hard march under a burning sun, over a wretched country, with brackish water, and full of thieves. Caravans are often fired upon by the wild clans which hold the hills immediately north of Mecca. The eastern, or "desert route," numbers eleven marches, with a total of about two hundred and fifty miles; the "Royal road," as it is called, hugs the coast, and both offer fair specimen of

"Infamous hills and sandy and perilous wilds."

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There is great excitement in the caravan on nearing Medina; it exchanges the "stony salt land" for the "country of date trees." Robust religious men enter reverently on foot. All break out in most poetical prayer: "O Allah! this is the sanctuary of the Prophet; make it to us a protection from hell-fire, and a refuge from eternal punishment! Oh, open the gates of thy mercy, and let us pass through them to the land of joy!" Others exclaim, "O Allah! bless the last of the prophets, the seat of prophecy, with blessings in number as the stars of heaven, and the waves of the sea, and the sands of the waste! Bless him, O Lord of might and majesty, as long as the cornfield and the date-grove continue to nourish mankind!" And again, "Live for ever, O most excellent of prophets! live in the shadow of happiness during the hours of night and the times of day, whilst the bird of the tamarisk (the dove) moaneth like the childless mother, whilst the west wind bloweth gently over the hills of Nejd, and the lightning flasheth bright in the firmament of the Hejaz!" The travellers now understand the full value of a phrase in the Moslem ritual, "And when his (the visitor's) eyes *fall upon the trees of Medina*, let him raise his voice and bless the Prophet with the choicest of

blessings!" In all the fair view spread before the wanderer's gaze, nothing is more striking, after the desolation through which he has passed, than the gardens and orchards about the town.

Madinat el Nabi, the "City of the Prophet," usually called by Moslems for brevity, El Medinah, or "the City," lies on the borders of the highland plateau that forms Central Arabia. The site is a gently shelving plain, bounded on the east by a thin line of low dark hills; northwards, by the ranges of Saur and Ohod, whilst to the south it lies open. Burckhardt found the water detestable--I thought it good; and the winter is long and rigorous. Hence the fair complexion of its inhabitants, who rival in turbulence and fanaticism their brethren of Mecca.

Nothing can be more useless than the views of Medina printed in our popular works. They are of the style "bird's-eye," and present a curious perspective. They despise distance like the pictorially audacious Chinese; the lava ridge in the foreground, for instance, appears to be two hundred yards instead of three or four miles distant from the town. They strip the place of its suburb, in order to show the walls and towers, omit the fort and the gardens to the north and south, enlarge the mosque twenty-fold for dignity, and make it occupy the whole centre of the area, instead of a small corner in the south-east quarter. They place, for symmetry, towers only at the angles of the walls, instead of all along the curtain, and they gather up and press into the same field all the venerable and interesting features of the country, those behind the artist's back, as well as what appears in front. Such are the Turkish lithographs. The East Indians make a truly Oriental mixture of ground plan and elevation, drawn with pen and ink, and brightened with the most vivid colours.

Medina consists of three parts--a town, a castle, and a large suburb. The population ranges from sixteen thousand to eighteen thousand, whereas Mecca numbers forty-five thousand souls. Mohammed's favourite city is an irregular oval, whose walls of granite and lava in regular layers cemented with lime are pierced with four gates. These are the Syrian, the Gate of Hospitality, the Friday, and the Egyptian; the two latter are fine massive buildings with double towers, like those of Arques, in Normandy, but painted with broad bands of red, yellow and other colours. Except the Prophet's mosque, there are few public buildings; there are only four caravanserais, and the markets are long lines of sheds thatched with scorched and blackened palm leaves. The streets are what they should always be in these torrid lands, deep, dark and narrow, in few places paved--a thing to be deprecated--and generally of black earth well watered, and trodden to hardness. The houses appear well built for the East, of squared stone, flat-roofed, double-storied, and enclosing spacious courtyards and small gardens with wells, where water

basins and date-trees "cool," as the Arabs say, "the owner's eyes." The latticed balconies are here general, and the windows are mere holes in the walls, with board shutters. The castle has stronger defences than the town, and inside a donjon tower, built upon a rock, bears proudly the banner of the Crescent and the Star; its whitewashed lines of wall render the fort a conspicuous object, and guns pointing in all directions, especially upon the town, make it appear a kind of Gibraltar to the Bedouins.

For some reason, many visitors take a fancy to Medina, and end their life there. Shaykh Nur, an East Indian lad who accompanied me, opined that it was a "very heavenly place."

Stage IX: The Death, Burial and Visitation of Mohammed

On his birthday, in the eleventh year of his mission (A.D. 632), and in the sixty-third year of his age, died Mohammed, the Arab lawgiver. His last illness began with a burning fever, accompanied by vertigo and violent headache: it is ascribed to the lurking effects of the poison administered to him by Zaynab, the revengeful Jewess of Khaybar. Finding his strength diminish he freed his slaves, and distributed among the poor all the money in the house.

On the morning of his death Mohammed prayed in the mosque. Exhausted by this effort, he lay down on his mat in the house of his favourite wife, Ayisha. She was still in her teens, and she nursed her aged husband with the tenderest anxiety; but in after life she turned out one of the worst of women. Sending in haste for her father Abubakr, who afterwards obtained the succession, she raised Mohammed's head, and placed it on her bosom, endeavouring to soothe his dying agonies. At that moment one of Ayisha's relatives entered, holding a green stick, used as a tooth-brush, and the Prophet's eye rested upon it. When offered to him he used it with ordinary vigour, and then put it down.

His strength now rapidly sank. He called for a pitcher of water, and wetted his face. Then gazing upwards for a time, with unmoved eyes, he ejaculated in a whisper, "O Allah, pardon me, and join me to the companionship on high!" Then at intervals: "Eternity in Paradise!"-- "Pardon!"--"Yes, the blessed companionship on high!" He stretched himself gently. Then all was still. His head grew heavy on Ayisha's breast. The lawgiver of Arabia was dead.

The sun had just passed the meridian, and it was only an hour or two since Mohammed had been seen praying in the mosque. It was no

wonder that his followers refused at first to believe him dead.

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Islam makes a careful distinction between pilgrimage to Mecca, the worship due to the Creator, and visitation to Medina, the reverence paid to the creature. Thus Mohammed said just before his death, "O Allah, cause not my tomb to become an object of idolatrous adoration! May Allah's wrath fall heavy upon the people who make the tombs of their prophets places of prayer!" The Wahhabis, or Puritans of Mohammedanism [\(14\)](#) abhor the idea of mortal intercession between man and his Maker: when in possession of Medina they flogged and fined the visitors who persisted in praying at the Prophet's tomb, and they tried, but in vain, to pull down the green dome.

The Prophet's mosque, as they call that which contains his remains, occupies the place of the earliest building. The site was a graveyard, shaded by dates: the first walls were of unbaked brick, and the trunks of the palm-trees recently felled supported the roof of date-leaf thatch. The present building is of cut stone, forming an oblong of four hundred and twenty by three hundred and forty feet. In the centre is a spacious uncovered court, containing the "garden of our Lady Fatima"; this is a plot of ground railed round, and bearing a lote-tree and a dozen date-palms. At the south-east angle, under a wooden roof supported by pillars of the same material, is the "Prophet's well," whose water is hard and brackish; and near it is the city academy, where, in the cool mornings and evenings, the young idea is taught to shout rather than to shoot. Around the court are four porches like the cloisters of an Italian monastery: they are arched to the front, and are supported inside by pillars of different shape and material, varying from fine porphyry to dirty plaster. When I visited Medina the northern porch was being rebuilt; it was to be called after Abd el Majid, the then reigning Sultan, and was intended to be the most splendid. The main colonnade, however, the sanctum containing all that is venerable in the building, embraces the whole length of the southern short wall, and is deeper than the other three by nearly treble the number of columns. It is also paved with handsome slabs of white marble and marquetry work, here and there covered with coarse matting, and above this by unclean carpets well worn by faithful feet.

To understand the tomb, a few preliminaries are necessary. Mohammed used to say, "In whatsoever spot a prophet dieth, there also should he be buried." Accordingly, his successor ordered the grave to be dug where the body was still lying in Ayisha's house--a custom still general in Western Africa. Ayisha lived there after his burial in an adjoining room,

partitioned off from the tomb.

All that the visitor sees is a detached tower in the south-eastern corner of the mosque, in size from fifty to fifty five feet square, and extending from floor to roof, where it is capped by a green dome, surmounted outside by a large gilt crescent springing from a series of globes. The material is metal filigree, painted a vivid grass-green, and relieved by brightly gilt or burnished brass-work, forming the long and graceful Arabic characters. On the south side, for greater honour, the railing is plated over in parts with silver, and silver letters are interlaced with it. Here are the three dwarf windows at which visitors offer their blessings: the most westerly fronts the tomb of the Prophet, the central that of Abubakr, and the easternmost that of Umar. They are holes half a foot square, and placed at eye's height from the ground: looking through them you see a curtain of green and white damask, the background of a narrow passage where lamps are hung. Behind the curtains are, we are told, inner walls of planking stone or unbaked brick, without any entrance, and forming the "hujrah," or chamber.

Inside this "chamber" are three tombs. The Prophet lies, or is supposed to lie, on his right side, the right palm supporting the right cheek, with the face fronting, as is still the Moslem custom, the Kaabah, or House of Allah, at Mecca--consequently his head lies to the west and his feet are to the east. Close behind him lies Abubakr, whose face looks at the Prophet's shoulder; and, lastly, Umar holds the same position with respect to Abubakr. This is the usual idea, but doctors differ. The vulgar story of the steel coffin, suspended in midair between two magnets, is explained by travellers in two ways. Some suppose it to have arisen from the rude ground-plan drawings sold to strangers, and mistaken by them for elevation. Others believe that the mass of rock popularly described as hanging unsupported in the mosque of Umar at Jerusalem, was confounded by Christians--who until very lately could not have seen either of these Moslem shrines--with the Prophet's tomb at Medina.

From the left of the late filigree tower runs a wall, pierced with four small doors that open into the southern aisle: the latter is called "the Illustrious Fronting," because it leads past the Prophet's face. In this barrier are sundry small erections; two beautiful mosaic niches, called after Mohammed and after Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent; and near them a pulpit, a graceful collection of slender columns, elegant tracery, and inscriptions admirably carved. Arrived at the western small door in the dwarf wall, the visitor enters the famed spot called "the Garden," after a saying of Mohammed, "Between my tomb and my pulpit is a garden of the gardens of Paradise." On the north and west sides it is not divided from the rest of the portico; on the south side rises the dwarf

wall, and on the east it is bounded by the west end of the filigree tower containing the tomb.

The "garden "is the most elaborate part of the mosque. Little can be said in its praise by day. It is a space of about eighty feet in length, tawdrily decorated to resemble vegetation: the carpets are flowered, and the pediments of the columns are cased with bright green tiles, and adorned to the height of a man with gaudy and unnatural growths in arabesque. It is disfigured by handsome branched candelabra of cut crystal--the work, I believe, of an English house, and given to the shrine by the late Abbas Pasha of Egypt. Its peculiar background, the filigree tower, looks more picturesque near than at a distance, where it suggests the idea of a gigantic bird-cage. The only really fine feature in the scene is the southern wall--a present from one of the Mameluke sultans. But at night the eye, dazzled by oil-lamps suspended from the roof, by huge wax candles, and by smaller illuminations falling upon crowds of visitors in handsome attire, with the richest and noblest of the city sitting in congregation to hear the services, becomes far less critical.

I will conclude this part of the subject with the supplications recited by the visitor, "with awe, and fear, and love," in the presence of the Prophet's remains. It has been repeated by many millions of Moslems, and many millions more will repeat it.

"Peace be with thee, O Prophet of Allah! and the mercy of Allah and his blessings! Peace be with thee, O Prophet of Allah! Peace be with thee, O Friend of Allah! Peace be with thee, O best of Allah's creation! Peace be with thee, O pure creature of Allah! Peace be with thee, O chief of Prophets! Peace be with thee, O Seal of the Prophets! Peace be with thee, O Prince of the Pious! Peace be with thee, O Prophet of the Lord of the (three) worlds! Peace be with thee and with thy family, and with thy pure wives! Peace be with thee, and with all thy companions! Peace be with thee, and with all the Prophets, and with those sent to preach Allah's word! Peace be with thee, and with all Allah's righteous worshippers! Peace be with thee, O thou Bringer of Glad Tidings! Peace be with thee, O Bearer of Threats! Peace be with thee, O thou Bright Lamp! Peace be with thee, O thou Prophet of Mercy! Peace be with thee, O Ruler of thy Faith! Peace be with thee, O Opener of Grief! Peace be with thee! and Allah bless thee! and Allah repay thee for us, O thou Prophet of Allah! the choicest of blessings with which he ever blessed Prophet! Allah bless thee as often as mentioners have mentioned thee, and forgetters have forgotten thee! and Allah bless thee among the first and the last, with the best, the highest, and the fullest of blessings ever bestowed on man, even as we escaped error by means of thee, and were made to see after Blindness, and after Ignorance were directed into the

Right Ways.

"I bear witness that there is no Allah, but Allah, and I testify that thou art his Servant, and his Prophet, and his faithful Follower, and Best Creature, and I bear witness, O Prophet of Allah, that thou hast delivered thy message, and discharged thy trust, and achieved thy Faith, and opened Grief, and published Proofs, and fought valiantly for thy Lord, and worshipped thy God till Certainty came to thee (i.e. to the hour of death), and we thy friends, O Prophet of Allah! appear before thee, Travellers from distant Lands and far Countries, through Dangers and Difficulties, in the Times of Darkness, and in the Hours of Day, longing to give thee thy Rights (i.e. to honour the Prophet by benediction and visitation), and to obtain the Blessings of shine Intercession, for our Sins have broken our Backs, and thou intercedest with the Healer. And Allah said, 'And though they have injured themselves, they came to thee, and begged thee to secure their Pardon, and they found God an Acceptor of Penitence, and full of Compassion.' O Prophet of Allah, intercession! intercession! intercession! O Allah, bless Mohammed and Mohammed's family, and give him Superiority and High Rank, even as thou didst promise him, and graciously allow us to conclude this Visitation. I deposit on this Spot, and near thee, O Prophet of God, my Everlasting profession (of faith) from this our Day, to the Day of Judgment, that there is no Ilah (i.e. god) but Allah, (i.e. the one God), and that our Lord Mohammed is his Servant, and his Prophet. Amen, O Lord of the (three) worlds!"

Postscript

And now we take leave of the Arab lawgiver. "It is difficult," writes the amiable and charitable Washington Irving, "to reconcile such ardent, persevering piety (as that of Mohammed) with an incessant system of blasphemous imposture; nor such pure and elevated and benignant precepts as are contained in the Koran, with a mind haunted by ignoble passions and devoted to the grovelling interests of mere mortality; and we find no other satisfactory mode of solving the enigma of his character and conduct than by supposing that the ray of mental hallucination, which flashed upon his enthusiastic spirit, during his religious ecstasies in the midnight cavern of Mount Hara, continued more or less to bewilder him with a species of monomania to the end of his career, and that he died in the delusive belief of his mission as a Prophet."

Moreover, I may add, Mohammed embodied the spirit of the age and the voice of the Arabian people. His faith was adopted by all his contemporaries, who for their talents and virtues must be recognized as the most distinguished of their nation, and who under all circumstances

made themselves the representatives of the noblest people of the East.
And thus it was that Islam became victorious.



[Return to Top Page](#)

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