I HERE propose to treat of the Social Condition which The Nights discloses, of Al-Islam at the earlier period of its development, concerning the position of women and about the pornology of the great Saga-book.

A.--Al-Islam.

A splendid and glorious life was that of Baghdad in the days of the mighty Caliph, \{NOTE: For further praises of his poetry and eloquence see the extracts from Fakhr al-Din of Rayy (an annalist of the sixteenth century A.D.) in De Sacy’s Chrestomathie Arabe, vol. i.\} when the Capital had towered to the zenith of grandeur and was already trembling and tottering to the fall. The centre of human civilisation, which was then confined to Greece and Arabia, and the metropolis of an Empire exceeding in extent the widest limits of Rome, it was essentially a city of pleasure, a Paris of the ixth century. The "Palace of Peace" (Dár al-Salám), worthy successor of Babylon and Nineveh, which had outrivalled Damascus, the "Smile of the Prophet," and Kufah, the successor of Hira and the magnificent creation of Caliph Omar, possessed unrivalled advantages of site and climate. The Tigris-Euphrates Valley, where the fabled Garden of Eden has been placed, in early ages succeeded the Nile-Valley as a great centre of human development; and the prerogative of a central and commanding position still promises it, even in the present state of decay and desolation under the unspeakable Turk, a magnificent future, \{After this had been written I received "Babylonien, das reichste Land in der Vorzeit und das lohnendste Kolonisationsfeld für die Gegenwart," by my learned friend Dr. Aloys Sprenger, Heidelberg, 1886.\} when railways and canals shall connect it with Europe. The city of palaces and government offices, hotels and pavilions, mosques and colleges, kiosks and squares, bazars and markets, pleasure grounds and orchards, adorned with all the graceful charms which Saracenic architecture had borrowed from the Byzantines, lay couched upon the banks of the Dijlah-Hiddekel under a sky of marvellous purity and in a climate which makes mere life a "Kayf"--the luxury of tranquil enjoyment. It was surrounded by far-extending suburbs, like Rusáfah on the Eastern side and villages like Baturanjah, dear to the votaries of pleasure; and with the roar of a gigantic capital mingled the hum of prayer, the trilling of birds, the thrilling of harp and lute, the shrilling of pipes, the witching strains of the professional Almah, and the minstrel's lay.

The population of Baghdad must have been enormous when the smallest number of her sons who fell victims to Huláku Khan in 1258 was estimated at eight hundred thousand, while other authorities more than double the terrible "butcher's bill." Her policy and polity were unique. A well-regulated routine of
tribute and taxation, personally inspected by the Caliph; a network of waterways, canaux d'arrosage; a
noble system of highways, provided with viaducts, bridges and caravanserais, and a postal service of
mounted couriers enabled it to collect as in a reservoir the wealth of the outer world. The facilities for
education were upon the most extended scale; large sums, from private as well as public sources, were
allotted to Mosques, each of which, by the admirable rule of Al-Islam, was expected to contain a
school: these establishments were richly endowed and stocked with professors collected from every
land between Khorasan and Marocco; {NOTE: The first school for Arabic literature was opened by Ibn Abbas,
who lectured to multitudes in a valley near Meccah; this rude beginning was followed by public teaching in the great
Mosque of Damascus. For the rise of the "Madrasah," Academy or College, see Introduct. to Ibn Khallikan pp.
xxvii-xxxii.} and immense libraries {NOTE: When Ibn Abbád the Sáhib (Wazir) was invited to visit one of the
Samanides, he refused, one reason being that he would require 400 camels to carry only his books.} attracted the
learned of all nations. It was a golden age for poets and panegyrists, koranists and literati, preachers and
rhetoricians, physicians and scientists who, besides receiving high salaries and fabulous presents, were
treated with all the honours of Chinese Mandarins; and, like these, the humblest Moslem--fisherman or
artizan--could aspire through knowledge or savoir faire to the highest offices of the Empire. The effect
was a grafting of Egyptian, and old Mesopotamian, of Persian and Græco-Latin fruits, by long Time
deteriorated, upon the strong young stock of Arab genius; and the result, as usual after such imping,
was a shoot of exceptional luxuriance and vitality. The educational establishments devoted themselves
to the three main objects recognised by the Moslem world, Theology, Civil Law and Belles Lettres; and
a multitude of trained Councillors enabled the ruling powers to establish and enlarge that complicated
machinery of government, at once concentrated and decentralized, a despotism often fatal to the
wealthy great but never neglecting the interests of the humbler lieges, which forms the beau ideal of
Oriental administration. Under the Chancellors of the Empire the Kazis administered law and order,
justice and equity; and from their decisions the poorest subject, Moslem or miscreant, could claim with
the general approval of the lieges, access and appeal to the Caliph who, as Imam or Antistes of the
Faith was High President of a Court of Cassation.

Under wise administration Agriculture and Commerce, the twin pillars of national prosperity,
necessarily flourished. A scientific canalisation, with irrigation-works inherited from the ancients, made
the Mesopotamian Valley a rival of Kemi the Black Land, and rendered cultivation a certainty of profit,
not a mere speculation, as it must ever be to those who perforse rely upon the fickle rains of Heaven.
The remains of extensive mines prove that this source of public wealth was not neglected; navigation
laws encouraged transit and traffic; and ordinances for the fisheries aimed at developing a branch of
industry which is still backward even during the sixth century. Most substantial encouragement was
given to trade and commerce, to manufactures and handicrafts, by the flood of gold which poured in
from all parts of earth; by the presence of a splendid and luxurious court, and by the call for new arts
and industries which such a civilisation would necessitate. The crafts were distributed into guilds and
syndicates under their respective chiefs, whom the government did not "govern too much" these
Shahbandars, Mukaddams and Nakibs regulated the several trades, rewarded the industrious, punished
the fraudulent and were personally answerable, as we still see at Cairo, for the conduct of their
constituents. Public order, the sine qua non of stability and progress, was preserved, first, by the
satisfaction of the lieges who, despite their characteristic turbulence, had few if any grievances; and,
secondly, by a well-directed and efficient police, an engine of statecraft which in the West seems most
difficult to perfect. In the East, however, the Wali or Chief Commissioner can reckon more or less
upon the unsalaried assistance of society: the cities are divided into quarters shut off one from other by
night, and every Moslem is expected, by his law and religion, to keep watch upon his neighbours, to
report their delinquencies and, if necessary, himself to carry out the penal code. But in difficult cases
the guardians of the peace were assisted by a body of private detectives, women as well as men: these
were called Tawwábún = the Penitents, because like our Bow-street runners, they had given up an even
less respectable calling. Their adventures still delight the vulgar, as did the Newgate Calendar of past
generations; and to this class we owe the Tales of Calamity Ahmad, Dahlah the Wily One, Saladin with
the Three Chiefs of Police (vol. iv. 271), and Al-Malik al-Záhir with the Sixteen Constables (Bresl. Edit.
xi. pp. 321-99). Here and in many other places we also see the origin of that "picaresque" literature
which arose in Spain and overran Europe; and which begat Le Moyen de Parvenir. {NOTE: This
"Salmagondis" by Francois Beroalde de Verville was afterwards worked by Tabarin, the pseudo-Bruscambille d'Aubigné
and Sorel.}

I need say no more on this heading, the civilisation of Baghdad contrasting with the barbarism of
Europe then Germanic, The Nights itself being the best expositor. On the other hand the action of
the state-religion upon the state, the condition of Al-Islam during the reign of Al-Rashid, its declension
from the primitive creed and its relation to Christianity and Christendom, require a somewhat extended
notice. In offering the following observations it is only fair to declare my standpoints.

1. All forms of "faith," that is, belief in things unseen, not subject to the senses, and therefore unknown
and (in our present stage of development) unknowable, are temporary and transitory: no religion
hitherto promulgated amongst men shows any prospect of being final or otherwise than finite.

2. Religious ideas, which are necessarily limited, may all be traced home to the old seat of science and
art, creeds and polity in the Nile-Valley and to this day they retain the clearest signs of their origin.

3. All so-called "revealed" religions consist mainly of three portions, a cosmogony more or less
mythical, a history more or less falsified and a moral code more or less pure.

Al-Islam, it has been said, is essentially a fighting faith and never shows to full advantage save in the
field. The exceeding luxury of a wealthy capital, the debauchery and variety of vices which would spring
up therein, naturally as weeds in a rich fallow, and the cosmopolitan views which suggest themselves in
a meeting-place of nations, were sore trials to the primitive simplicity of the "Religion of Resignation"--
-the saving faith. Harun and his cousin-wife, as has been shown, were orthodox and even fanatical; but
the Barmecides were strongly suspected of heretical leanings; and while the many-headed showed itself,
as usual, violent, and ready to do battle about an Azan-call, the learned, who sooner or later leaven the
masses, were profoundly dissatisfied with the dryness and barrenness of Mohammed's creed, so
acceptable to the vulgar, and were devising a series of schisms and innovations.

In the Tale of Tawaddud (vol. v. 189) the reader has seen a fairly extended catechism of the Creed
(Dín), the ceremonial observances (Mazhab) and the apostolic practices (Sunnat) of the Shafi'i school
which, with minor modifications, applies to the other three orthodox. Europe has by this time clean
forgotten some tricks of her former bigotry, such as "Mawmet" (an idol!) and "Mahommerie"
(mummery),

{NOTE: I prefer this derivation to Strutt's adopted by the popular, "mumm is said to be derived from the Danish word
mumme, or monument Dutch (Germ. = larva), and signifies disguise in a mask, hence a mummer." In the Promptorium
Parvulorum we have "Mummynge, mussacio, vel mussatus": it was a pantomime in dumb show, e.g. "I mumme in a
mummynge;" "Let us go mumme (mummer) to nyghte in women's apparayle." "Mask" and "Mascarade," for persona,
larva or wizard, also derive, I have noted, from an Arabic word--Maskharah.}

a place of Moslem worship: educated men no longer speak with Ockley of the "great impostor
Mahomet," nor believe with the learned and violent Dr. Prideaux that he was foolish and wicked
enough to dispossess "certain poor orphans, the sons of an inferior artificer" (the Banú Najjár!). A host
of books has attempted, though hardly with success, to enlighten popular ignorance upon a crucial
point; namely, that the Founder of Al-Islam, like the Founder of Christianity, never pretended to
establish a new religion. His claims, indeed, were limited to purging the "School of Nazareth" of the dross of ages and of the manifold abuses with which long use had infected its early constitution: hence to the unprejudiced observer his reformation seems to have brought it nearer the primitive and original doctrine than any subsequent attempts, especially the Judaizing tendencies of the so-called "Protestant" churches. The Meccan Apostle preached that the Hanafiyyah or orthodox belief, which he subsequently named Al-Islam, was first taught by Allah, in all its purity and perfection, to Adam and consigned to certain inspired volumes now lost; and that this primal Holy Writ received additions in the days of his descendants Shís (Seth) and Idris (Enoch?), the founder of the Sabian (not "Sabæan") faith. Here, therefore, Al-Islam at once avoided the deplorable assumption of the Hebrews and the Christians,—an error which has been so injurious to their science and their progress,—of placing their "first man" in circa. B. C. 4000 or somewhat subsequent to the building of the Pyramids: the Pre-Adamite doctrine has been preached with but scant success in Christendom. Peyrère, a French Calvinist, published (A.D. 1655) his "Præadamitæ, sive exercitatio supra versibus 12, 13, 14, cap. v. Epist. Paul. ad Romanos," contending that Adam was called the first man because with him the law began. It brewed a storm of wrath and the author was fortunate to escape with only imprisonment; races and dynasties of the Moslems remove a great stumbling-block and square with the anthropological views of the present day. In process of time, when the Adamite religion demanded a restoration and a supplement, its pristine virtue was revived, restored and further developed by the books communicated to Abraham, whose dispensation thus takes the place of the Hebrew Noah and his Noachide. In due time the Torah, or Pentateuch, superseded and abrogated the Abrahamic dispensation; the "Zabúr" of David (a book not confined to the Psalms) reformed the Torah; the Injíl or Evangel reformed the Zabur and was itself purified, quickened and perfected by the Koran which means κατ'έξοχην the Reading or the Recital. Hence Locke, with many others, held Moslems to be unorthodox, that is, anti-Trinitarian Christians who believe in the Immaculate Conception, in the Ascension and in the divine mission of Jesus; and when Priestley affirmed that "Jesus was sent from God," all Moslems do the same. Thus they are, in the main point of doctrine connected with the Deity, Simply Arians as opposed to Athanasians. History proves that the former was the earlier faith which, though formally condemned in A. D. 325 by Constantine's Council of Nice, {NOTE: According to Socrates the verdict was followed by a free fight of the Bishop-voters over the word "consubstantiality."} overspread the Orient beginning with Eastern Europe, where Ulphilas converted the Goths; which extended into Africa, with the Vandals, claimed a victim or martyr as late as in the sixteenth century {NOTE: Servetus burnt (in A.D. 1553 for publishing his Arian tractate) by Calvin, whom half-educated Roman Catholics in England firmly believe to have been a pederast. This arose, I suppose, from his meddling with Rabelais who, in return for the good joke Rabie la'sus, presented a better anagram, "Jan (a pimp or cuckold) Cul" (Calvinus).} and has by no means died out in this our day.

The Talmud had been completed a full century before Mohammed's time and the Evangel had been translated into Arabic; moreover travel and converse with his Jewish and Christian friends and companions must have convinced the Meccan Apostle that Christianity was calling as loudly for reform as Judaism had done.

{NOTE: There is no more immoral work than the "Old Testament." Its deity is an ancient Hebrew of the worst type, who condones, permits or commands every sin in the Decalogue to a Jewish patriarch, quâ patriarch. He orders Abraham to murder his son and allows Jacob to swindle his brother; Moses to slaughter an Egyptian and the Jews to plunder and spoil a whole people, after inflicting upon them a series of plagues which would be the height of atrocity if the tale were true. The nations of Canaan are then extirpated. Eben, for treacherously disembowelling King Eglon, is made judge over Israel. Jael is blessed above women (Joshua v. 24) for vilely murdering a sleeping guest; the horrid deeds of Judith and Esther are made examples to mankind; and David, after an adultery and a homicide which deserved ignominious death, is suffered to massacre a host of his enemies cutting some in two with saws and axes and putting others into brick-kilns. For obscenity and impurity we have the tales of Onan and Tamar, Lat and his daughters, Amnon and his fair sister (2 Sam. xiii.), Absalom and his father's concubines, the "wife of whoredoms" of Hosea and, capping all, the Song of
Solomon. For the horrors forbidden to the Jews, who, therefore, must have practised them, see Levit. viii. 24; xii. 5; xvii. 7; xviii. 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17, 21, 23, and xxx. 3. For mere filth what can be fouler than 1st Kings xviii. 27; Tobias ii. 11; Esther xiv. 2; Eccles. xxii. 2; Isaiah xxxvi. 12; Jeremiah iv. 5, and (Ezekiel iv. 12-15), where the Lord changes human ordure into "Cow-chips! Ce qui excuse Dieu", said Henri Beyle, c'est qu'il n'existe pas,—I add, as man has made him.

An exaggerated Trinitarianism or rather Tritheism, a "Fourth Person" and Saint-worship had virtually dethroned the Deity; whilst Mariolatry had made the faith a religio muliebris, and superstition had drawn from its horrid fecundity an incredible number of heresies and monstrous absurdities. Even ecclesiastic writers draw the gloomiest pictures of the Christian Church in the fourth and seventh centuries, and one declares that the "Kingdom of Heaven had become a Hell." Egypt, distracted by the blood-thirsty religious wars of Copt and Greek, had been covered with hermitages by a gens aeterna of semi-maniacal superstition. Syria, ever "ferocious of heresies," had allowed many of her finest tracts to be monopolised by monasteries and nunneries. {NOTE: It was the same in England before the "Reformation," and in France where, during our days, a returned priesthood collected in a few years "Peter-pence" to the tune of five hundred millions of francs. And these men wonder at being turned out!} After many a tentative measure Mohammed seems to have built his edifice upon two bases, the unity of the Godhead and the priesthood of the paterfamilias. He abolished for ever the "sacerdos alter Christus" whose existence, as some one acutely said, is the best proof of Christianity, and whom all know to be its weakest point. The Moslem family, however humble, was to be the model in miniature of the State, and every father in Al-Islam was made priest and pontiff in his own house, able unaided to marry himself, to circumcise (to baptise as it were) his children, to instruct them in the law and canonically to bury himself (vol. viii. 22). Ritual, properly so called, there was none; congregational prayers were merely those of the individual en masse, and the only admitted approach to a sacerdotal order were the Olema or scholars learned in the legistic and the Mullah or schoolmaster. By thus abolishing the priesthood Mohammed reconciled ancient with modern wisdom. "Scito dominum," said Cato, "pro totâ familiâ rem divinam facere": "No priest at a birth, no priest at a marriage, no priest at a death," is the aspiration of the present Rationalistic School.

The Meccan Apostle wisely retained the compulsory sacrament of circumcision and the ceremonial ablutions of the Mosaic law; and the five daily prayers not only diverted man's thoughts from the world but tended to keep his body pure. These two institutions had been practised throughout life by the Founder of Christianity; but the followers who had never seen him, abolished them for purposes evidently political and propagandist. By ignoring the truth that cleanliness is next to godliness they paved the way for such saints as Simon Stylites and Sabba who, like the lowest Hindu orders of ascetics, made filth a concomitant and an evidence of piety: even now English Catholic girls are at times forbidden by Italian priests a frequent use of the bath as a signpost to the sin of "luxury." Mohammed would have accepted the morals contained in the Sermon on the Mount much more readily than did the Jews from whom its matter was borrowed. {NOTE: Deutsch on the Talmud: Quarterly Review, 1867.} He did something to abolish the use of wine, which in the East means only its abuse; and he denounced games of chance, well knowing that the excitable races of sub-tropical climates cannot play with patience, fairness or moderation. He set aside certain sums for charity to be paid by every Believer and he was the first to establish a poor-rate (Zakát): thus he avoided the shame and scandal of mendicancy which, beginning in the Catholic countries of Southern Europe, extends to Syria and as far East as Christianity is found. By these and other measures of the same import he made the ideal Moslem's life physically clean, moderate and temperate.

But Mohammed, the "master mind of the age," had, we must own, a "genuine prophetic power, a sinking of self in the Divine, not distinguishable in kind from the inspiration of the Hebrew prophets," especially in that puritanical and pharisaic narrowness which, with characteristic simplicity, can see no
good outside its own petty pale. He had insight as well as outsight, and the two taught him that personal and external reformation were mean matters compared with elevating the inner man. In the "purer Faith," which he was commissioned to abrogate and to quicken, he found two vital defects equally fatal to its energy and to its longevity. These were (and are) its egoism and its degradation of humanity. Thus it cannot be a "pleroma": it needs a Higher Law. {NOTE: Evidently. Its cosmogony is a myth read literally; its history is, for the most part, a highly immoral distortion, and its ethics are those of the Talmudic Hebrews. It has done good work in its time; but now it shows only decay and decrepitude in the place of vigour and progress. It is dying hard, but it is dying of the slow poison of science.} As Judaism promised the good Jew all manner of temporal blessings, issue, riches, wealth, honour, power, length of days, so Christianity offered the good Christian, as a bribe to lead a godly life, personal salvation and a future state of happiness, in fact, the Kingdom of Heaven, with an alternative threat of Hell. It never rose to the height of the Hindu Brahmans and Lao-Tse (the "Ancient Teacher"); of Zeno the Stoic and his disciples the noble Pharisees {NOTE: These Hebrew Stoics would justly charge the Founder of Christianity with preaching a more popular and practical doctrine, but a degradation from their own far higher and more ideal standard.} who believed and preached that Virtue is its own reward. It never dared to say, "Do good for Good's sake;"

{NOTE: Dr. Theodore Christlieb ("Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," Edinburgh: Clark, 1874) can even now write:--"So then the 'full age' to which humanity is at present supposed to have attained, consists in man's doing good purely for goodness sake! Who sees not the hollowness of this bombastic talk. That man has yet to be born whose practice will be regulated by this insipid theory (dieser grauen Theorie). What is the idea of goodness per se? * * * The abstract idea of goodness is not an effectual motive for well-doing" (p. 104). My only comment is c'est ignoble! His Reverence acts the part of Satan in Holy Writ, "Does Job serve God for naught?" Compare this selfish, irreligious, and immoral view with Philo Judæus (On the Allegory of the Sacred Laws, cap. lviii.), to measure the extent of the fall from Pharisaism to Christianity. And the latter is still infected with the "bribe-and-threat doctrine:" I once immensely scandalised a Consular Chaplain by quoting the noble belief of the ancients, and it was some days before he could recover mental equanimity. The degradation is now inbred.}

even now it does not declare with Cicero, "The sum of all is that what is right should be sought for its own sake, because it is right, and not because it is enacted." It does not even now venture to say with Philo Judæus, "The good man seeks the day for the sake of the day, and the light for the light's sake; and he labours to acquire what is good for the sake of the good itself, and not of anything else." So far for the egotism, naïve and unconscious, of Christianity, whose burden is, "Do good to escape Hell and gain Heaven."

A no less defect in the "School of Galilee" is its low view of human nature. Adopting as sober and authentic history an Osirian-Hebrew myth which Philo and a host of Rabbis explain away, each after his own fashion, Christianity dwells, lovingly as it were, upon the "Fall" of man {NOTE: Of the doctrine of the Fall the heretic Marcion wrote: "The Deity must either be deficient in goodness if he willed, in prescience if he did not foresee, or in power if he did not prevent it."} and seems to revel in the contemptible condition to which "original sin" condemned him; thus grovelling before God ad majorem Dei gloriam. To such a point was and is this carried that the Synod of Dort declared, Infantes infidelium morientes in infantiâ reprobatos esse statuimus; nay, many of the orthodox still hold a Christian babe dying unbaptised to be unfit for a higher existence, and some have even created a "limbo" expressly to domicile the innocents "of whom is the kingdom of Heaven." Here, if any where, the cloven foot shows itself and teaches us that the only solid stratum underlying priestcraft is one composed of £ s. d.

And I never can now believe it, my Lord! (Bishop) we come to this earth
Ready damned, with the seeds of evil sown quite so thick at our birth,
We ask, can infatuation or hypocrisy—for it must be the one or the other—go farther? But the Adamical myth is opposed to all our modern studies. The deeper we dig into the Earth's "crust," the lower are the specimens of human remains which occur; and hitherto not a single "find" has come to revive the faded glories of Adam the goodliest man of men since born (!)

His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.

Thus Christianity, admitting, like Judaism, its own saints and santons, utterly ignores the progress of humanity, perhaps the only belief in which the wise man can take unmingled satisfaction. Both have proposed an originally perfect being with hyacinthine locks, from whose type all the subsequent humans are degradations physical and moral. We on the other hand hold, from the evidence of our senses, that early man was a savage very little superior to the brute; that during man's millions of years upon earth there has been a gradual advance towards perfection, at times irregular and even retrograde, but in the main progressive; and that a comparison of man in the sixteenth century with the caveman {NOTE: This is the answer to those who contend with much truth that the moderns are by no means superior to the ancients of Europe; they look at the results of only 3000 years instead of 30,000 or 300,000.} affords us the means of measuring past progress and of calculating the future of humanity.

Mahommed was far from rising to the moral heights of the ancient sages: he did nothing to abate the egotism of Christianity; he even exaggerated the pleasures of its Heaven and the horrors of its Hell. On the other hand he did much to exalt human nature. He passed over the "Fall" with a light hand; he made man superior to the angels; he encouraged his fellow-creatures to be great and good by dwelling upon their nobler not their meaner side; he acknowledged, even in this world, the perfectability of mankind, including womankind, and in proposing the loftiest ideal he acted unconsciously upon the grand dictum of chivalry—Honneur oblige. {NOTE: As a maxim the saying is attributed to the Duc de Lévis, but it is much older.} His prophets were mostly faultless men; and, if the "Pure of Allah" sinned, he "sinned against himself." Lastly, he made Allah predetermine the career and fortunes, not only of empires, but of every created being; thus inculcating sympathy and tolerance of others, which is true humanity, and a proud resignation to evil as to good fortune. This is the doctrine which teaches the vulgar Moslem a dignity observed even by the "blind traveller," and which enables him to display a moderation, a fortitude, and a self-command rare enough amongst the followers of the "purer creed."

Christian historians explain variously the portentous rise of Al-Islam and its marvellous spread over vast regions, not only of pagans and idolators but of Christians. Prideaux disingenuously suggests that it "seems to have been purposely raised up by God, to be a scourge to the Christian Church for not living in accordance with their most holy religion." The popular excuse is by the free use of the sword; this, however, is mere ignorance in Mohammed's day and early Al-Islam only actual fighters were slain: {NOTE: There are a few, but only a few, frightful exceptions to this rule, especially in the case of Khalid bin Walid, the Sword of Allah, and his ferocious friend, Darar ibn al-Azwar. But their cruel excesses were loudly blamed by the Moslems, and Caliph Omar only obeyed the popular voice in superseding the fierce and furious Khalid by the mild and merciful Abú Obaydah;} the rest were allowed to pay the Jizyah, or capitation tax, and to become tributaries, enjoying almost all the privileges of Moslems. But even had forcible conversion been most systematically practised, it would have afforded an insufficient explanation of the phenomenal rise of an empire which covered more ground in eighty years than Rome had gained in eight hundred. During so short a time the grand revival of Monotheism had consolidated into a mighty nation, despite their eternal blood-feuds, the scattered Arab tribes; a six-years' campaign had conquered Syria, and a lustre or two utterly overthrew Persia, humbled the Græco-Roman, subdued Egypt and extended the Faith along northern Africa. as far as the Atlantic. Within three generations the Copts of Nile-land had formally cast out Christianity, and the same was the case with Syria, the cradle of the Nazarene, and
Mesopotamia, one of his strongholds, although both were backed by all the remaining power of the Byzantine empire. Northwestern Africa, which had rejected the idolatro-philosophic system of pagan and imperial Rome, and had accepted, after lukewarm fashion, the Arian Christianity imported by the Vandals, and the "Nicene mystery of the Trinity," hailed with enthusiasm the doctrines of the Koran and has never ceased to be most zealous in its Islam. And while Mohammedanism speedily reduced the limits of Christendom by one-third, while throughout the Arabian, Saracenic and Turkish invasions whole Christian peoples embraced the monotheistic faith, there are hardly any instances of defection from the new creed and, with the exception of Spain and Sicily, it has never been suppressed in any land where once it took root. Even now, when Mohammedanism no longer wields the sword, it is spreading over wide regions in China, in the Indian Archipelago, and especially in Western and Central Africa, propagated only by self-educated individuals, trading travellers, while Christianity makes no progress and cannot exist on the Dark Continent without strong support from Government. Nor can we explain this honourable reception by the "licentiousness" ignorantly attributed to Al-Islam, one of the most severely moral of institutions; or by the allurements of polygamy and concubinage, slavery, {NOTE: This too when St. Paul sends the Christian slave Onesimus back to his unbelieving (?) master, Philemon; which in Al-Islam would have created a scandal.} and a "wholly sensual Paradise" devoted to eating, drinking {NOTE: This too when the Founder of Christianity talks of "Eating and drinking at his table!" (Luke xxii. 29.) My notes have often touched upon this invertebrate prejudice, the result, like the soul-less woman of Al-Islam, of ad captandum, pious fraud. "No soul knoweth what joy of the eyes is reserved for the good in recompense for their works" (Koran xxxii. 17) is surely as "spiritual" as St. Paul (1 Cor. ii., 9). Some lies, however, are very long-lived, especially those begotten by self-interest.} and the pleasures of the sixth sense. The true and simple explanation is that this grand Reformation of Christianity was urgently wanted when it appeared, that it suited the people better than the creed which it superseded and that it has not ceased to be sufficient for their requirements, social, sexual and vital. As the practical Orientalist, Dr. Leitner, well observes from his own experience, "The Mohammedan religion can adapt itself better than any other and has adapted itself to circumstances and to the needs of the various races which profess it, in accordance with the spirit of the age." {NOTE: I have elsewhere noted its strict conservatism which, however, it shares with all Eastern faiths in the East. But progress, not quietism, is the principle which governs humanity and it is favoured by events of most different nature. In Egypt the rule of Mohammed Ali the Great and in Syria the Massacre of Damascus (1860) have greatly modified the constitution of Al-Islam throughout the nearer East.} Hence, I add, its wide diffusion and its impregnable position. "The dead hand, stiff and motionless," is a forcible simile for the present condition of Al-Islam; but it results from limited and imperfect observation and it fails in the sine qua non of similes and metaphors, a foundation of fact.

I cannot quit this subject without a passing reference to an admirably written passage in Mr. Palgrave's travels {NOTE: Chapt. viii. "Narrative of a Year's journey through Central and Eastern Arabia," London, Macmillan, 1865.} which is essentially unfair to Al-Islam. The author has had ample opportunities of comparing creeds: of Jewish blood and born a Protestant, he became a Catholic and a Jesuit (Père Michel Cohen) {NOTE: The Soc. Jesu has, I believe, a traditional conviction that converts of Israelitic blood bring only misfortune to the Order.} in a Syrian convent; he crossed Arabia as a good Moslem and he finally returned to his premier amour, Anglicanism. But his picturesque depreciation of Mohammedanism, which has found due appreciation in more than one popular volume, {NOTE: I especially allude to an able but most superficial book, the "Ten Great Religions" by James F. Clarke (Boston, Osgood, 1876), which caricatures and exaggerates the false portraiture of Mr. Palgrave. The writer's admission that, "Something is always gained by learning what the believers in a system have to say in its behalf," clearly shows us the man we have to deal with and the "depths of his self-consciousness."} is a notable specimen of special pleading, of the ad captandum in its modern and least honest form. The writer begins by assuming the arid and barren Wahhabi-ism, which he had personally studied, as a fair expression of the Saving Faith. What should we say to a Moslem traveller who would make the Calvinism of the sourest Covenanter, model, genuine and ancient Christianity? What would sensible Moslems say to these propositions of Professor Maccovius and the
Synod of Dort:—Good works are an obstacle to salvation. God does by no means will the salvation of all men: he does will sin and he destines men to sin, as sin? What would they think of the Inadmissible Grace, the Perseverance of the Elect, the Supralapsarian and the Sublapsarian and, finally, of a Deity the author of man's existence, temptation and fall, who deliberately pre-ordains sin and ruin? "Father Cohen" carries out into the regions of the extreme his strictures on the one grand vitalising idea of AI-Islam, "There is no god but God;" {NOTE: But how could the Arabist write such hideous grammar as "La Ilâh illâ Allâh" for "Lá ilâha (accus.) ill' Allah"?} and his deduction concerning the Pantheism of Force sounds unreal and unsound, compared with the sensible remarks upon the same subject by Dr. Badger {NOTE: p. 996 "Muhammad" in vol. iii. Dictionary of Christian Biography. See also the illustration of the Mohammedan Creed, etc., from Al-Ghazâli introduced (pp. 72-77) into Bell and Sons' "History of the Saracens" by Simon Ockley, B.D. (London, 1878). I regret that some Orientalist did not correct the proofs: everybody will not detect "Al-La'uh al-Mahfúz" (the Guarded Tablet) in "Allahub bo'nhelphboud" (p. 171); and this but a pinch out of a camel-load,} who sees the abstruseness of the doctrine and does not care to include it in hard and fast lines or to subject it to mere logical analysis. Upon the subject of "predestination" Mr. Palgrave quotes, not from the Koran, but from the Ahadis or Traditional Sayings of the Apostle; but what importance attaches to a legend in the Mischnah, or Oral Law, of the Hebrews utterly ignored by the Written Law? He joins the many in complaining that even the mention of "the love of God" is absent from Mohammed's theology, burking the fact that it never occurs in the Jewish scriptures and that the genius of Arabic, like Hebrew, does not admit the expression: worse still, he keeps from his reader such Koranic passages as, to quote no other, "Allah loveth you and will forgive your sins" (iii. 29). He pities Allah for having "no son, companion or counsellor" and, of course, he must equally commiserate Jehovah. Finally his views of the lifelessness of Al-Islam are directly opposed to the opinions of Dr. Leitner and the experience of all who have lived in Moslem lands. Such are the ingenious but not ingenuous distortions of the doctrine and does not care to include it in hard and fast lines or to subject it to mere logical analysis. Upon the subject of "predestination" Mr. Palgrave quotes, not from the Koran, but from the Ahadis or Traditional Sayings of the Apostle; but what importance attaches to a legend in the Mischnah, or Oral Law, of the Hebrews utterly ignored by the Written Law? He joins the many in complaining that even the mention of "the love of God" is absent from Mohammed's theology, burking the fact that it never occurs in the Jewish scriptures and that the genius of Arabic, like Hebrew, does not admit the expression: worse still, he keeps from his reader such Koranic passages as, to quote no other, "Allah loveth you and will forgive your sins" (iii. 29). He pities Allah for having "no son, companion or counsellor" and, of course, he must equally commiserate Jehovah. Finally his views of the lifelessness of Al-Islam are directly opposed to the opinions of Dr. Leitner and the experience of all who have lived in Moslem lands. Such are the ingenious but not ingenuous distortions of fact, the fine instances of the pathetic fallacy, and the noteworthy illustrations of the falsehood of extremes, which have engendered "Mohammedanism a Relapse: the worst form of Monotheism,"

{NOTE: The word should have been Arianism. This "heresy" of the early Christians was much aided by the "Discipline of the Secret," supposed to be of apostolic origin, which concealed from neophytes, catechumens and penitents all the higher mysteries, like the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Metastoicheiosis (transubstantiation), the Real Presence, the Eucharist and the Seven Sacraments; when Arnobius could ask, Quid Deo cum vino est? and when Justin, fearing the charge of Polytheism, could expressly declare the inferior nature of the Son to the Father. Hence the creed was appropriately called Symbol, i.e., Sign of the Secret. This "mental reservation" lasted till the Edict of Toleration, issued by Constantine in the fourth century, held Christianity secure when divulging her "mysteries"; and it allowed Arianism to become the popular creed.}

and which have been eagerly seized upon and further deformed by the authors of popular books, that is, volumes written by those who know little for those who know less.

In Al-Rashid's day a mighty change had passed over the primitive simplicity of Al-Islam, the change to which faiths and creeds, like races and empires and all things sublunary, are subject. The proximity of Persia and the close intercourse with the Graeco-Romans had polished and greatly modified the physiognomy of the rugged old belief: all manner of metaphysical subtleties had cropped up, with the usual disintegrating effect, and some of these threatened even the unity of the Godhead. Musaylimah and Karmat had left traces of their handiwork: the Mutazilites (separatists or secessors) actively propagated their doctrine of a created and temporal Koran. The Khárijí or Ibázi, who rejects and reviles Abú Turáb (Caliph Ali), contended passionately with the Shi'ah who reviles and rejects the other three "Successors;" and these sectarians, favoured by the learned, and by the Abbasides in their jealous hatred of the Ommiades, went to the extreme length of the Ali-Iláhi—the God-makers of Ali—whilst the Dahrí and the Zindík, the Mundanist and the Agnostic, proposed to sweep away the whole edifice. The
neo-Platonism and Gnosticism which had not essentially affected Christendom, {NOTE: The Gnostics played rather a fantastic role in Christianity with their Demiurge, their Æonogony, their Æons by syzygies or couples, their Maio and Sabscho and their beatified bride of Jesus, Sophia Achamoth; and some of them descended to absolute absurdities; e.g., the Tascodrugite and the Pattalorinchte who during prayers placed their fingers upon their noses or in their mouths, &c., reading Psalm cxli. 3.} found in Al-Islam a rich fallow and gained strength and luxuriance by the solid materialism and conservatism of its basis. Such were a few of the distracting and resolving influences which Time had brought to bear upon the True Believer and which, after some half a dozen generations, had separated the several schisms by a wider breach than that which yawns between Orthodox, Romanist and Lutheran. Nor was this scandal in Al-Islam abated until the Tartar sword applied to it the sharpest remedy.