

**THE WORLD'S EPOCH-
MAKERS. MUHAMMAD
AND HIS POWER**

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The World's epoch-makers. Muhammad and his power by P. De Lacy Johnstone

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P. DE LACY JOHNSTONE

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OLIPHANT SMEATON

Muhammad and
His Power

By P. De Lacy Johnstone, M.A.(Oxon.), M.R.A.S.

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By

P. De Lacy^v Johnstone, M.A.(Oxon.), M.R.A.S.
(Of H.M.B.C.S., retired)

"The faith which he preached is compounded of an eternal truth and a necessary fiction: That there is only one God, and that Mahomet is the Prophet of God."

Gibbon.

New York. Charles Scribner's Sons

1901

PREFACE



So much has been written, and so much learning and study devoted to the history of Muhammad and the religious and political power which he founded, and which now, after thirteen centuries, seems—as a religion—not less firmly established than ever it was, that one who approaches the subject to-day cannot hope to do much more than sift and select from the labours of those who have gone before him. The struggle of Christianity with the forces of Islām began within five years of the Flight from Mecca, but the study of its documents and the history of its rise and progress (that is, of course, by those who are outside its pale) has been the growth of the last century and a half. In our own country the strength and, scarcely less, the weaknesses of the founder and of the system have roused the admiration of Gibbon and Carlyle, have been the object of profound study by such scholars and administrators as Edward Lane and Sir William Muir, and have been the goal of travellers like Richard Burton and Gifford Palgrave, Burkhardt and Carsten Niebuhr. In this, as in most other domains of knowledge, German scholars have done great work: the names of Sprenger and Weil, Nöldeke and Kremer, are specially to be honoured; while the great work of

Caussin de Perceval, and the masterly though short book of St. Hilaire, are witness to the debt which we owe in these studies to France also. To one book I am myself under particular obligation—Hughes's *Dictionary of Islām*, a work of great grasp and deep learning, not only embodying the substance of the most important work of his predecessors, but also instinct with that familiarity with his theme which can only be got by a life spent among Muhammadans, together with wide study of their literature and modes of thought. Having thus made a general acknowledgment of the sources of the present work, it will not be necessary to burden my pages with particular references, and the reader will readily excuse me from making them. One part of the field of inquiry still lies imperfectly worked, the relation of Islām to Judaism, which was made a reproach to Muhammad by his unbelieving countrymen: it is to be hoped that some day we shall have exhaustive treatment of the subject, on the lines already drawn by those brilliant Jewish scholars, Deutsch and Geiger. The earlier chapters of the book give a sketch of the land, the people, and the conditions in which the Prophet arose, for he was an Arab of the Arabs; in the latest is shown how his successors prosecuted his work, and some account is given of that wonderful Qurān which is the Charter of Islām.

The following short list of books, easily accessible in our own language, will give the student sound knowledge of my whole subject, and will guide him to the best original authorities, if he desire to consult them:—

Sir W. Muir's *Life of Mahomet and Early Caliphate*

(Smith & Elder); Hughes, *Dictionary of Islām* (Allen); Sell's *Faith of Islām* (Trübner); Lane's *Selections from the Kurān* (Trübner) and *Modern Egyptians* (Murray); Burton's *Pilgrimage to Al-Medina and Meccah* (Tylston & Edwards), and W. G. Palgrave's *Central and Eastern Arabia* (Macmillan); Koelle's *Muhammad and Muhammadanism* (Longmans); Palmer's *Qurān* (Clarendon Press) and Sale's *Koran*, the latter of which is still in many respects unsurpassed. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* articles ARABIA (Palgrave), and MUHAMMAD, etc. (Nöldeke), are also very valuable.

The portrait of Muhammad, gathered from the Traditions (p. 148), is taken almost exactly from Deutsch's *Essay on Islām*: Mr. Poole had already used it before me.

The passages from the *Qurān* are taken, by permission of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, from Professor Palmer's version. I am also greatly indebted to Sir C. J. Lyall for leave to make extracts from his *Ancient Arabian Poetry* (pp. 20-24).