

**STUDIES IN A
MOSQUE.
[LONDON-1883]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649715374

Studies in a Mosque. [London-1883] by Stanley Lane-Poole

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STANLEY LANE-POOLE

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BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE,
LAURÉAT DE L'INSTITUT DE FRANCE.

LONDON:
W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE.
PUBLISHERS TO THE INDIA OFFICE.

1883.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE, S.W.

PREFACE.

A COMMON subject binds these essays together; they all treat of Islām in its manifold phases, from its birth at Mekka to its apotheosis in the Persian Miracle Play; even the Sabians may be called, in a sense, a Korānic sect. It is true the treatment is slight, and many important developments of the Mohammadan religion are scarcely touched upon; but the essays were written not for the learned but for the general reader, and I believe he will pardon the lack of elaboration. If my words bring a few more workers to the great field here sketched out, and induce a wider interest in the religion which still keeps its hold upon so vast a number of our fellow subjects, the republication of these essays will be abundantly justified.

The chapters on the Korān, the Persian Miracle Play, and the Sabians, are reprinted by permission from the *Edinburgh Review*; that on an Eastern Reformation from the *Saturday Review*; while the first three appeared in my introduction to Lane's "Selections from the Kur-ān," and are republished with Messrs. Trübner's kind consent. The chapter on the Brotherhood of Purity appears for the first time.

S. L.-P.

CAIRO, Feb. 1883.

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STUDIES IN A MOSQUE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARABS BEFORE ISLAM.

Oh, our manhood's prime vigour! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver
shock

Of the plunge in the pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold-dust divine,
And the locust flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of
wine,

And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!

—Saul.

BETWEEN Egypt and Assyria, jostled by each but yielding to neither, lay a strange country, unknown save at its marches even to its neighbours, dwelt-in by a people that held itself aloof from all the earth—a people whom the great empires of the ancient world in vain essayed to conquer, against whom the power of Persia,