

material, then, out of which Muhammad made Islam?

THE PRE-ISLAMIC ARAB.

No estimate of Muhammadanism is complete that does not include an analysis of the pre-Muhammadan Arab and his times. We can scarcely say "pre-Islamic Arab," for "Islam" and "Muslim" both antedate the prophet Muhammad. Yet this historic technicality being explained we shall speak of Muhammadanism as Islam.

The civilization of the Arabian peninsula, in the midst of which Muhammad was born, was unique. The nomadic Arab had few and simple wants. He fed on milk and dates and half-raw flesh, wrapped his person in a long sheet, and drove in the earth the pegs attached to which was the coarse canvas that constituted his only home. Cattle and camels and slaves were his precious things. His more settled life comprehended tillage and trade; but whether in tent or town the national characteristics were the same.

Frugal of food, rising "while birds reposed within their nests," he never failed of hospitality, and had a curse for himself if he gave "bark-flour" bread while wheat was in store. Kindness to neighbors, succor to prisoners and aid to the helpless were to be accorded before they could be solicited. Clean clothes, perfumed shoes, and hair scented with musk added to his personal attractions, while eloquence, humor and wit were always modified with forbearance. His horsemanship must indicate a childhood apprenticeship, and his bravery be tested with the wolf. Poetry was the vernacular of his daily life. Himself unblushingly licentious, his verse was correspondingly immoral. He gambled at favorite resorts, and sang and danced with female slaves. He robbed without misgiving, and murdered without remorse. He told his fortune by divination, used small stones for

charms, and sacrificed a pledged sheep on the fulfillment of his desires. Blood for blood was his measure of justice, and his national code of honor would not allow him to compound with a murderer without becoming an object of contempt. He loved his camel and his horse, and set the one free on the occurrence of various events, and raced with and bet on the other. The only trace of cruelty to either was his custom of tying a camel to the tomb of a deceased friend and suffering it to starve to death. War would arise on trivial cause. Women shouted warriors on in the fray, refusing to be wives if they flinched before the foe.

Wood, Yaghoos, Yaook, and other idols healed their sick, removed the pestilence, sustained their generations and received the people's adoration as they kissed their images, marched round them, or prostrated themselves before them, sacrificed the camel, or offered the first-born of their flocks, and the first fruits of their fields, at their shrines.

Some were Sabceans, worshipping the heavenly bodies and dedicating pagodas to deified planets and fixed stars. Seth and Enoch were their prophets. They prayed seven times a day to avert the malignant and to secure the propitious power of the stars.

Some were atheists, to whom the existence of man was precisely similar to that of plant or other animal. Others were deists, holding to no revelation but what was afforded in rock or river. Some revered the Kāba, and built imitations of it. All were superstitious. The air was the soul, and blood the breath; or the soul was an animalcule entering the body at birth and expanding till death, when it screeched around the grave till it was as big as an owl. Demons and evil spirits, good and bad genii, some half body, half spirit, haunted deserts and rivers in fantas-