

and from its contents the volume of the Koran was afterwards compiled. The first collection and arrangement of these prophetic relics, more precious than the scattered leaves of all the Sybils, was made by Abubeker, but the whole was afterwards revised and new modelled by Othman, who left the entire volume of the Koran in the order in which we now have it.

Mohammed's first reception by the mass of his fellow-citizens of Mecca was scarcely more hopeful than it had been among his kindred. His alleged divine messages, especially when they assumed a tone of reprehension and reproach towards his countrymen, for their idolatry, obstinacy, and perverseness, were met with indignant scoffs and railings. Some called him a magician and a sorcerer; others, a silly retailer of old fables; and others directly charged him with being a liar and an impostor. The reader will be amused and interested by the insertion of a few out of the scores of allusions, with which the Koran abounds, to the profane and contemptuous treatment shown towards the prophet at this time. "The Meccans say, O thou, to whom the admonition (the Koran) hath been sent down, thou art certainly possessed with a devil: wouldst not thou have come unto us with an attendance of angels if thou hadst spoken the truth? Answer, We send not down the angels but on a just occasion." "Verily I have permitted these Meccans and their fathers to live in prosperity, till the truth should come unto them, and a manifest apostle: but now the truth is come unto them, they say, this is a piece of sorcery; and we believe not therein. And they say, Had this Koran been sent down unto some great man in either of the two cities, we would have received it." "The time of giving up their account draweth nigh unto the people of Mecca. No admonition cometh unto them from their Lord, but when they hear it they turn it to sport. They say, the Koran is a confused heap of dreams: nay, he hath forged it." "And the unbelievers say, this Koran is no other than a forgery which he hath contrived; and other people have assisted him therein: but they utter an unjust thing and a falsehood. They also say, These are fables of the ancients, which he hath caused to be written down; and they are dictated unto him morning and evening. Say, He hath revealed it who knoweth the secrets in heaven and earth. And they say, What kind of apostle is this? He eateth food, and walketh in the streets as we do. The ungodly also say, Ye follow no other than a man who is distracted." "When our evident signs are rehearsed unto them, the unbelievers say of the truth, This is a manifest piece of sorcery. Will they say, Mohammed hath forged it? Answer, If I have forged it, verily, ye will not obtain for me any favour from God: he well knoweth the injurious language which ye utter concerning it.—I follow no other than what is revealed unto me; neither am I any more than a public warner."

But these stiff-necked idolaters were plainly taught that they were not to promise themselves impunity in thus pouring contempt upon the testimony of an authorized legate of heaven. The Most High himself was brought in confirming by an oath the truth of his prophet's mission. "I