

# HOME AND SCHOOL.

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## Mahommedan at Prayer.

DR. THOMSON in "The Land and the Book," thus describes the Mahommedan manner of prayer:—

See those men on that elevated terrace. One has spread his cloak, others their Persian rugs toward the south. They are Moslems, preparing to say prayers—perform them rather, in this most public place, and in the midst of all this noise and confusion. Let us stop and watch the ceremony as it goes on. That man next us raises his open hands till the thumbs touch the ears, exclaiming aloud, *Allah-hu-akbar*—"God is great." After uttering mentally a few short petitions, the hands are brought down and folded together near the girdle, while he recites the first chapter of the Koran, and two or three other brief passages from the same book. And now he bends forward, rests his hands upon his knees, and repeats three times a formula of praise to "God most great." Then, standing erect, he cries *Allah-hu-akbar*, as at the beginning. Then see him drop upon his knees, and bend forward until his nose and forehead touch the ground, directly between his expanded hands. This he repeats three times, muttering all the while the same short formulas of prayer and praise. The next move will bring him to his knees, and then, settling back upon his heels, he will mumble over various small petitions, with sundry grunts and exclamations, according to taste and habit. He has now gone through one regular *Rek'ah*; and, standing up as at the first, and on exactly the same spot, he will perform a second, and even a third, if specially devout, with precisely the same genuflections.

They seem to be wholly absorbed in their devotions, and manifest a power of isolation and abstraction quite surprising.

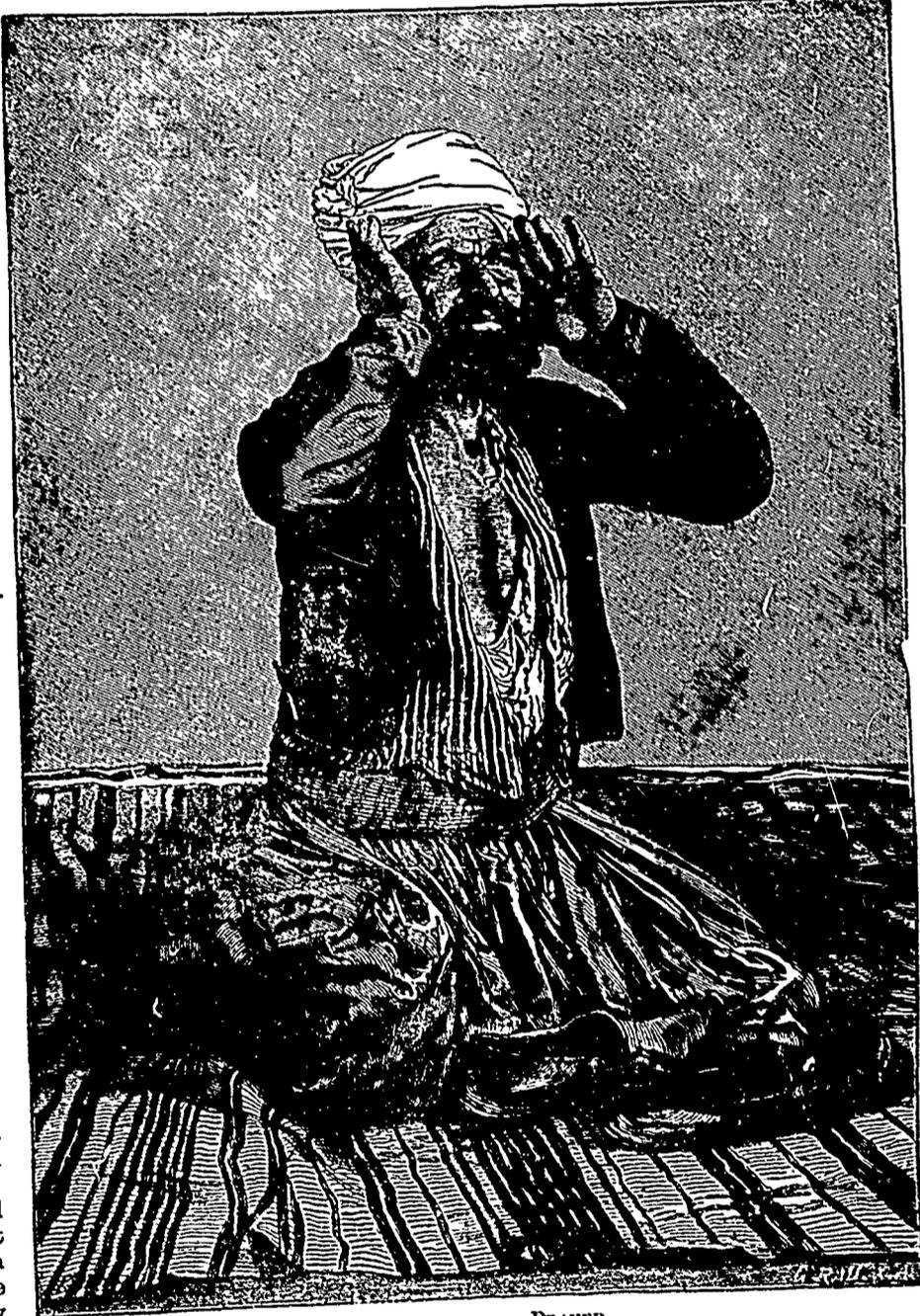
That is the result of habit and education; small children imitate it to perfection. There is certainly an air of great solemnity in their mode of worship, and when performed by a large assembly in the mosques, or by a detachment of soldiers in concert, guided in their genuflections by an *Imam* or *dervish*, who sings the service, it is quite impressive. I have seen it admirably enacted by moonlight, on the wild banks of the *Orontes*, in the plain of *Hamath*, and the scene was something more than romantic. But,

alas! it was by as villainous a set of robbers as could be found, even in that lawless region.

You think, then, that this solemn ceremony is mere hollow-hearted hypocrisy!

They are rather afraid of any one who is especially given to prayer—their prayers, I mean. They have a proverb to this effect: "If your neighbour has made the pilgrimage to Mecca once, watch him; if twice avoid his society;

premises! One who looks merely at the surface, or who is very charitable, or very indifferent, may connect this out-of-door, formal praying toward Mecca with the venerable custom of the pious Israelite turning toward the temple in Jerusalem, when, like Daniel in Babylon, he made his supplications unto his God. I think it probable that Mohammed, or the Arabs before him, borrowed this custom from the Jews; and, to this extent, there is a relation between them. But the enlightened Christian, who has learned that neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father, who is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth—such a one, I say, will be reminded rather of those who loved to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men. And they will remember with solemnity the admonition of our Lord, When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are—either as to place, attitude, motive, or form—in public to be seen of men, using vain repetitions as these men before us do. They are obliged to repeat some expressions thirty times; others many hundred times.



MAHOMMEDAN AT PRAYER.

Not exactly that; at least not necessarily so, nor in all cases. I would be glad to believe there was ordinarily any corresponding moral and religious feeling connected with this exterior manifestation of devotion. The Moslems themselves, however, have no such idea.

if three times, move into another street." And, certainly, no one acquainted with the people will feel his confidence in an individual increased by the fact that he is particularly devout.

What opposite conclusions different persons can and do draw from the same

## Sammy Hicks and His Pipe.

It is said of that good man, Sammy Hicks, the Macclesfield blacksmith, that "as he understood the words of the Lord Jesus, it was quite enough for him to see the path of duty steadfastly to travel in it." An instance of this feature of his character was exhibited in his sudden abandonment of tobacco. One day he gave sixpence to a poor widow. She blessed him and could hardly find words enough with which to express her thanks. He said to himself, "Well, if sixpence makes that poor creature so happy, oh how many sixpences I have spent in filling my mouth with tobacco!"

He made a vow instantly never to let a pipe enter his lips again. Soon afterwards he was taken very ill, and a doctor said to him, "Mr. Hicks, you must resume your pipe."

"I will not," he replied.

"Then," said the doctor, "if you do not you will not live."

"Bless the Lord, then," said Sammy, "I shall go to heaven. I have made a vow to the Lord that the pipe shall never enter my mouth again, and it never shall." Sammy Hicks kept his vow, and lived to be an old man.—*Rev. T. E. Thorsby.*