

ished by Islam, but that death was not so terrible as the living death of thousands of the Arab women who have lived since the reign of the 'merciful' prophet, nor was its effect upon society in general so demoralizing. In the 'time of ignorance,' that is time before Mohammed, women often occupied positions of honor. There were celebrated poetesses and we read of Arab queens ruling their tribes.

"Such a state of things does not exist to-day, but the woman's influence, though never recognized by the men, is nevertheless indirectly a potent factor, but never of a broadening or uplifting character. To have been long regarded as naturally evil has had a degrading influence. Mohammedan classical writers have done their best to revile womanhood. 'May Allah never bless womankind' is a quotation from one of them.

"Moslem literature, it is true, exhibits isolated glimpses of a worthier estimation of womanhood, but the later view, which comes more and more into prevalence, is the only one which finds its expression in the sacred tradition, which represents hell as full of women, and refuses to acknowledge in its women, apart from rare exceptions, either reason or religion, in poems which refer all the evil in the world to the woman as its root, in proverbs which represent a careful education of girls as mere waste.

"When the learned ones ascribe such characteristics to women, is it any wonder that they have come to regard themselves as mere beasts of burden?