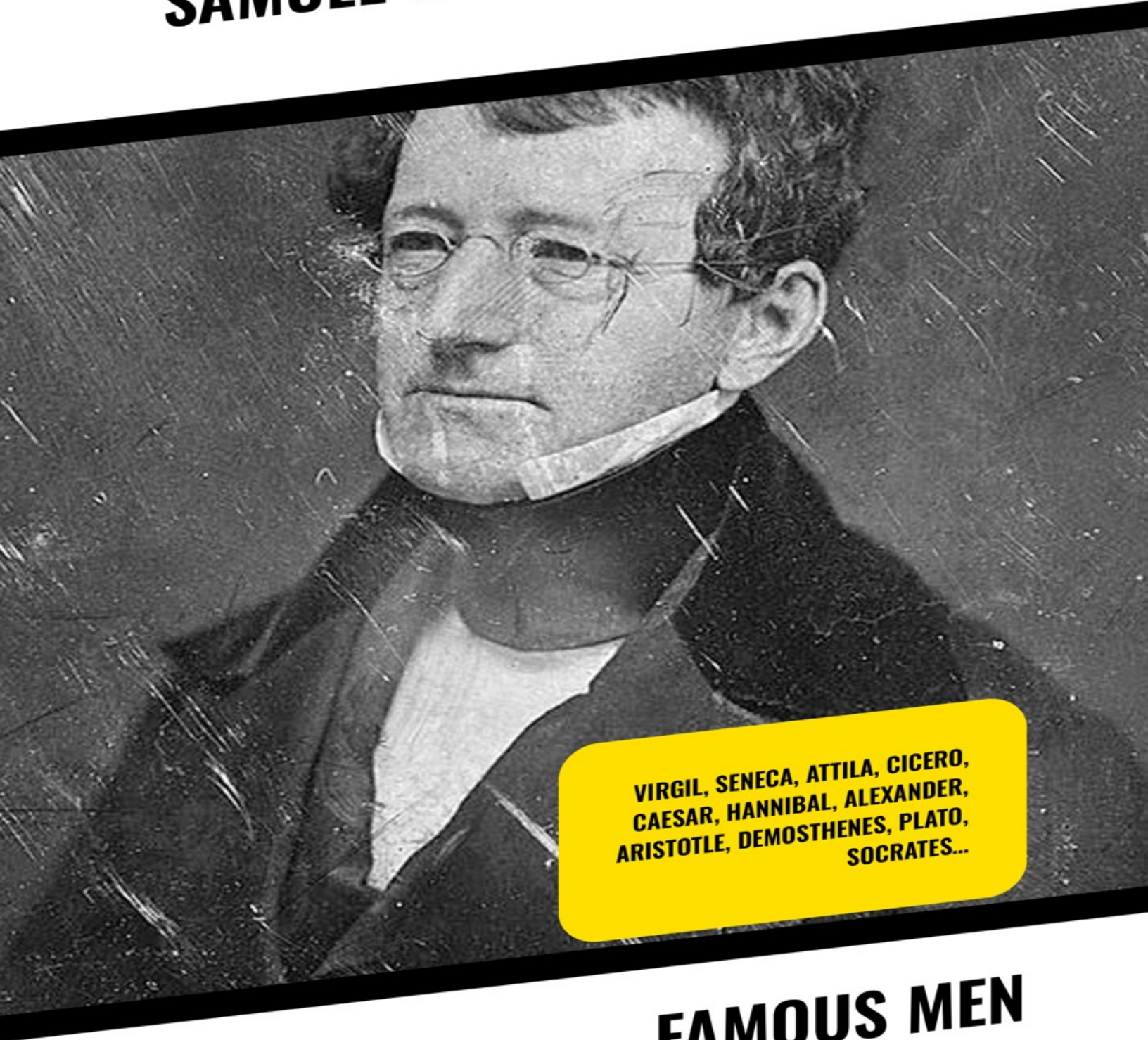




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# SAMUEL GRISWOLD GOODRICH



VIRGIL, SENECA, ATILA, CICERO,  
CAESAR, HANNIBAL, ALEXANDER,  
ARISTOTLE, DEMOSTHENES, PLATO,  
SOCRATES...

## FAMOUS MEN OF ANCIENT TIMES

**Samuel Griswold Goodrich**

# **Famous Men of Ancient Times**

**Virgil, Seneca, Attila, Cicero, Caesar, Hannibal,  
Alexander, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Plato, Socrates...**

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# Mohammed.

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This individual, who has exercised a greater influence upon the opinions of mankind than any other human being, save, perhaps, the Chinese philosopher Confucius, was born at Mecca, in Arabia, A. D. 570. He was the only son of Abdallah, of the noble line of Hashem and tribe of Koreish—descendants of Ishmael the reputed progenitor of the Arabian race.

The Koreishites were not only a commercial people, and rich by virtue of their operations in trade, but they were the hereditary guardians of the Caaba, or Kaaba, a heathen temple at Mecca. The custody of this sacred place, together with all the priestly offices, belonged to the ancestors of Mohammed.

The Mohammedan authors have embellished the birth of the prophet with a great variety of wonderful events, which are said to have attended his introduction into the world. One of these is, that the Persian sacred fire, kept in their temples, was at once extinguished over all Arabia, accompanied by the diffusion of an unwonted and beautiful light. But this and other marvels, we leave to the credulity of the prophet's followers.

Mohammed's father died early, and his son came under the guardianship of his uncle, Abu Taleb. He was a rich merchant, who was accustomed to visit the fairs of Damascus, Bagdad, and Bassora—three great and splendid cities, and Mohammed often accompanied him to these

places. In his twelfth year, Mohammed took part in an expedition against the wandering tribes that molested the trading caravans. Thus, by travelling from place to place, he acquired extensive knowledge, and, by being engaged in warlike enterprise, his imagination became inflamed with a love of adventure and military achievements. If we add to this, that he had naturally a love of solitude, with a constitutional tendency to religious abstraction; and if, moreover, we consider that in his childhood he had been accustomed to behold the wild exercises, the dark ceremonies, and hideous rites of the temple of Caaba—we shall at once see the elements of character, and the educational circumstances, which shaped out the extraordinary career of the founder of Islamism.

It appears that Mohammed was remarkable for mental endowments, even in his youth, for, in a religious conversation with a Nestorian monk, at Basra, he showed such knowledge and talent, that the monk remarked to his uncle, that great things might be expected of him. He was, however, attentive to business, and so completely obtained the confidence of his uncle, as a merchant, that he was recommended as a prudent and faithful young man, to Khadijah, a rich widow, who stood in need of an agent to transact her business and manage her affairs. In this capacity he was received, and so well did he discharge his duties, that he not only won the confidence of the widow, but finally obtained her hand in marriage. This event took place when he was about twenty-five years old, Khadijah being almost forty.

Mohammed was now rich, and, though he continued to carry on mercantile business, he often retired to a cave, called Heva, near Mecca, where he resided. He also performed several journeys to different parts of Arabia and Syria, taking particular pains to gather religious information, especially of learned Jews and Christians.

For some time, Mohammed, who lived happily with his wife, confided to her his visits to the cave Heva, professing to enjoy interviews with Heaven there, by means of dreams and trances, in which he met and conversed with the angel Gabriel. There is little doubt that his habits of religious retirement and gloomy reflection had unsettled his judgment, and that he now gave himself up to the guidance of an overwrought fancy. It is probable, therefore, that he believed these visions to be of divine inspiration; else, why should he first communicate them, as realities, to his wife?

Soon after this, he informed other members of his family of his visions, and, being now about forty years old, assumed with them, the character and profession of a prophet. Several of his friends, particularly his wife, and his cousin Ali, a young man of great energy of character, yielded to the evidence he gave of his divine mission. Having been silently occupied about three years in converting his nearest friends, he invited some of the most illustrious men of the family of Hashem to his house, and, after conjuring them to abandon their idolatry, for the worship of ONE GOD, he openly proclaimed his calling, and set forth, that, by the commands of Heaven, revealed through the angel Gabriel, he was prepared to impart to his

countrymen the most precious gift—the only means of future salvation.

Far from being convinced, the assembly was struck silent with mingled surprise and contempt. The young and enthusiastic Ali, alone, yielded to his pretences, and, falling at his feet, offered to attend him, in good or evil, for life or for death. Several of the more sober part of the assembly sought to dissuade Mohammed from his enterprise; but he replied with a lofty fervor, that if the sun were placed in his right hand, and the moon in his left, with power over the kingdoms they enlighten, he would not, should not, could not hesitate or waver in his course.

Inflamed by the opposition he met with among this assembly, Mohammed now went forth, and, wherever he could find crowds of people, there he announced his mission. In the temples, in the public squares, streets, and market-places, he addressed the people, laying claim to the prophetic character, and setting forth the duty of rejecting idolatry, for the worship of one God. The people were struck with his eloquence, his majesty of person, the beautiful imagery he presented to their minds, and the sublime sentiments he promulgated. Even the poet Lebid is said to have been converted by the wonderful beauty and elevation of the thoughts poured forth by the professed prophet. The people listened, and, though they felt the fire of his eloquence, still they were so wedded to their idolatries, that few were yet disposed to join him.

To aid in understanding the revolution wrought by Mohammed, it may be well to sketch the condition of the Arabians at that period. The original inhabitants of Arabia,



though all of one stock, and occupying a peninsula 1200 miles in length by 700 in width, had been, from time immemorial, divided into a variety of distinct tribes. These constituted petty communities or states, which, often changing, still left the people essentially the same. In the more elevated table lands, intersected by mountain ridges, with dreary wastes consisting of sandy plains, the people continued to pursue a roving life, living partly upon their flocks of camels, horses, and horned cattle, and partly upon the robbery of trading caravans of other tribes. The people of the plains, being near the water, settled in towns, cultivated the soil, and pursued commerce.

The various tribes were each governed by the oldest or most worthy sheik or nobleman. Their bards met once a year, at Okhad, holding a fair of thirty days, for the recitation of their productions. That which was declared to be the finest, was written in gold and suspended in the great temple of Mecca. This was almost the only common tie between the several states or tribes, for, although they nominally acknowledged an emir, or national chief, they had never been brought to act in one body.

The adoration of the Arabians consisted chiefly in the worship of the heavenly luminaries; but they had a great variety of deities, these being personifications of certain powers in nature, or passions in mankind. They were represented by idols of every variety of shape, which were gathered around the ancient temple of Caaba, at Mecca, a large square edifice, considered as the central point of religion, and the favorite seat of divinity. Their worship was attended with the most horrid rites and shocking

ceremonies: even children were sacrificed to the idols, and one of the tribes was accustomed to bury their daughters alive. Except that they fancied the souls of the departed to be transformed into owls, hovering in gloom around the grave, it does not appear that they had the least idea of a future state of existence.

Such was the state of religion among the native Arabians. Among the foreign settlers in the towns there were a few followers of the Greek and Roman philosophy; the Christians were never numerous. These latter were divided into a variety of sects, and those belonging to the Greek church, advocated monasteries, and were addicted to the worship of images, martyrs and relics. Some of these, even elevated the Virgin Mary into a deity, and addressed her as the third person in the Trinity.

Mohammed, while he no doubt looked with horror upon this state of things, having studied the Bible, and clearly comprehended its sublime revelation of one God, conceived the idea of uniting the people of his native land under a religion of which this fundamental principle should constitute the basis. His purpose was to crush idolatry, and restore the lost worship of the true God. How far he was sincere, and how far he was an impostor, we cannot venture to affirm. It is probable that he was a religious enthusiast, deceived by his own fancies, and, perhaps, really believing his own visions. At the outset of his career, it is likely that he acted in good faith, while he was himself deluded. When he had advanced so far as to see power and dominion offered to his grasp, it is probable that his integrity gave way, and

that thenceforward we are to consider him as under the alternate guidance of craft and fanaticism.

Several of the nobles citizens of Mecca were finally converted by Mohammed. Khadijah was now dead, and the prophet had married Ayesha, the daughter of Abubeker, a man of great influence, and who exercised it in favor of his son-in-law. Yet the new faith made little progress, and a persecution of its votaries arose, which drove them to Abyssinia, and caused Mohammed himself to fly for safety to Medina. This flight is called the Hegira, and, taking place in the year 622, is the epoch from which Mohammedan chronology is computed, as is ours from the birth of Christ.

At Medina, whither his tenets had been carried by pilgrims, Mohammed was received with open arms. He was met by an imposing procession, and invested at once with the regal and sacerdotal office. The people also offered him assistance in propagating his faith, even by force, if it should be required. From this moment, a vast field seems to have been opened to the mind of Mohammed. Hitherto, he may have been but a self-deceived enthusiast; but now, ambition appears to have taken at least partial possession of his bosom. His revelations at once assumed a higher tone. Hitherto he had chiefly inculcated the doctrine of one God, eternal, omnipotent, most powerful and most merciful, together with the practical duties of piety, prayer, charity, and pilgrimages. He now revealed, as a part of his new faith, the duty of making war, even with the sword, to propagate Islamism, and promised a sensual paradise to those who should fall in doing battle in its behalf. At the same time he announced that a settled fate or destiny hung over every

individual, which he could not by possibility alter, evade, or avert.

He now raised men, and proceeded, sword in hand, to force the acknowledgment of his pretensions. With alternate victory and defeat, he continued to prosecute his schemes, and at last fell upon the towns and castles of the peaceful and unwarlike Jews. These were soon taken and plundered. But the prophet paid dearly for his triumph. A Jewish female, at the town of Chaibar, gave him poison in some drink, and, though he survived, he never fully recovered from the effects of the dose.

Thus advancing with the tribes settled in his own country, the power of the ambitious apostle increased like the avalanche in its overwhelming descent. Mecca was conquered, and yielded as well to his faith as to his arms. He now made expeditions to Palestine and Syria, while his officers were making conquests in all directions. His power was soon so great, that he sent messages to the kings of Egypt, Persia, and Ethiopia, and the emperor of Constantinople, commanding them to acknowledge the divine law revealed through him.

At last, in the tenth year of the Hegira, he proceeded on a farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. The scene was imposing beyond description. He was attended by more than a hundred thousand of his followers, who paid him the greatest reverence. Everything in dress, equipage and imposing ceremony that could enhance the splendor of the pageant, and give it sanctity in the eyes of the people, was adopted. This was the last great event of his life.

Mohammed had now become too powerful to be resisted by force, but not too exalted to be troubled by competition. His own example in assuming the sacred character of an apostle and prophet, and the brilliant success which had attended him, gave a hint to others of the probable means of advancing themselves to a similar pitch of dignity and dominion. The spirit of emulation, therefore, raised up a fellow-prophet in the person of Moseilama, called to this day by the followers of Islam "the lying Moseilama," a descendant of the tribe of Honeifa, and a principal person in the province of Yemen.

This man headed an embassy sent by his tribe to Mohammed, in the ninth year of the Hegira, and then professed himself a Moslem; but on his return home, pondering on the nature of the new religion and the character and fortunes of its founder, the sacrilegious suggestion occurred to him, that by skilful management he might share with his countryman in the glory of a divine mission; and, accordingly, in the ensuing year he began to put his project in execution. He gave out that he, also, was a prophet sent of Heaven, having a joint commission with Mohammed to recall mankind from idolatry to the worship of the true God. He, moreover, aped his model so closely as to publish written revelations resembling the Koran, pretended to have been derived from the same source.

Having succeeded in gaining a considerable party, from the tribe of Honeifa, he at length began to put himself still more nearly upon a level with the prophet of Medina, and even went so far as to propose to Mohammed a partnership in his spiritual supremacy. His letter commenced thus: "From

Moseilama, the apostle of God, to Mohammed, the apostle of God. Now let the earth be half mine and half thine." But the latter, feeling himself too firmly established to stand in need of an associate, deigned to return him only the following reply: "From Mohammed, the apostle of God, to Moseilama, the liar. The earth is God's: he giveth the same for inheritance unto such of his servants as he pleaseth; and the happy issue shall attend those who fear him."

During the few months that Mohammed lived after this, Moseilama continued, on the whole, to gain ground, and became at length so formidable, as to occasion extreme anxiety to the prophet, now rapidly sinking under the effects of disease. An expedition, under the command of Caled, the "Sword of God," was ordered out to suppress the rival sect headed by the spurious apostle, and the bewildered imagination of Mohammed, in the moments of delirium, which now afflicted him, was frequently picturing to itself the results of the engagement between his faithful Moslems and these daring apostates.

The army of Caled returned victorious. Moseilama himself, and ten thousand of his followers, were left dead on the field; while the rest, convinced by the shining evidence of truth that gleamed from the swords of the conquerors, renounced their errors, and fell quietly back into the bosom of the Mohammedan church. Several other insurgents of similar pretences, but of minor consequence, were crushed in like manner in the early stages of their defection.

We have now reached the period at which the religion of Mohammed may be considered as having become permanently established. The conquest of Mecca and of the

Koreishites had been, in fact, the signal for the submission of the rest of Arabia; and though several of the petty tribes offered, for a time, the show of resistance to the prophet's arms, they were all eventually subdued. Between the taking of Mecca and the period of Mohammed's death, somewhat more than three years elapsed. In that short period he had destroyed the idols of Arabia; had extended his conquests to the borders of the Greek and Persian empires; had rendered his name formidable to those once mighty kingdoms; had tried his arms against the disciplined troops of the former, and defeated them in a desperate encounter at Muta.

His throne was now firmly established; and an impulse given to the Arabian nation, which induced them to invade, and enabled them to conquer, a large portion of the globe. India, Persia, the Greek empire, the whole of Asia Minor, Egypt, Barbary, and Spain, were eventually reduced by their victorious arms. Mohammed himself did not indeed live to see such mighty conquests achieved, but he commenced the train which resulted in this wide-spread dominion, and, before his death, had established over the whole of Arabia, and some parts of Asia, the religion which he had devised.

And now, having arrived at the sixty-third year of his age, and the tenth of the Hegira, A. D. 632, the fatal effects of the poison, which had been so long rankling in his veins, began to discover themselves more and more sensibly, and to operate with alarming virulence. Day by day, he visibly declined, and it was evident that his life was hastening to a close. For some time previous to the event, he was conscious of its approach, and is said to have viewed and awaited it with characteristic firmness. The third day before

his dissolution, he ordered himself to be carried to the mosque, that he might, for the last time, address his followers, and bestow upon them his parting prayers and benedictions. Being assisted to mount the pulpit, he edified his brethren by the pious tenor of his dying counsels, and in his own example taught a lesson of humility and penitence, such as we shall scarcely find inculcated in the precepts of the Koran.

"If there be any man," said the prophet, "whom I have unjustly scourged, I submit my own back to the lash of retaliation. Have I aspersed the reputation of any Mussulman? let him proclaim my fault in the face of the congregation. Has any one been despoiled of his goods? the little that I possess shall compensate the principal and the interest of the debt." "Yes," replied a voice from the crowd, "thou owest me three drachms of silver!" Mohammed heard the complaint, satisfied the demand, and thanked his creditor that he had accused him in this world, rather than at the day of judgment. He then set his slaves at liberty, seventeen men and eleven women; directed the order of his funeral; strove to allay the lamentations of his weeping friends, and waited the approach of death. He did not expressly nominate a successor, a step which would have prevented the altercations that afterwards came so near to crushing in its infancy the religion and the empire of the Saracens; but his appointment of Abubeker to supply his place in the function of public prayer, and the other services of the mosque, seemed to intimate indirectly the choice of the prophet. This ancient and faithful friend, accordingly, after much contention, became the first Caliph of the



Saracens, though his reign was closed by his death at the end of two years.

The death of Mohammed was hastened by the force of a burning fever, which deprived him at times of the use of reason. In one of these paroxysms of delirium, he demanded pen and paper, that he might compose or dictate a divine book. Omar, who was watching at his side, refused his request, lest the expiring prophet might dictate something which should supersede the Koran. Others, however, expressed a great desire that the book might be written; and so warm a dispute arose in the chamber of the apostle that he was forced to reprove their unbecoming vehemence. The writing was not performed, and many of his followers have mourned the loss of the sublime revelations which his dying visions might have bequeathed to them.

The favorite wife of the prophet, Ayesha, hung over her husband in his last moments, sustaining his drooping head upon her knee, as he lay stretched upon the carpet; watching with trembling anxiety his changing countenance, and listening to the last broken sounds of his voice. His disease, as it drew towards its termination, was attended at intervals with most excruciating pains, which he constantly ascribed to the fatal morsel taken at Chaibar; and as the mother of Bashar, his companion who had died upon the spot from the same cause, stood by his side, he exclaimed, "O mother of Bashar, the cords of my heart are now breaking of the food which I ate with your son at Chaibar." In his conversation with those around him, he mentioned it as a special prerogative granted to him, that the angel of death was not allowed to take his soul till he had respectfully

asked permission of him, and this permission he condescendingly granted. Recovering from a swoon into which the violence of his pains had thrown him, he raised his eyes towards the roof of the house, and with faltering accents exclaimed, "O God! pardon my sins. Yes, I come among my fellow-laborers on high!" His face was then sprinkled with water, by his own feeble hand, and shortly after he expired.

The city, and more especially the house of the prophet, became at once a scene of sorrowful but confused lamentation. Some of his followers could not believe that he was dead. "How can he be dead, our witness, our intercessor, our mediator with God? He is not dead. Like Moses and Jesus, he is wrapped in a holy trance, and speedily will he return to his faithful people." The evidence of sense was disregarded, and Omar, brandishing his scimitar, threatened to strike off the heads of the infidels who should affirm that the prophet was no more. The tumult was at length appeased, by the moderation of Abubeker. "Is it Mohammed," said he, "or the God of Mohammed, whom ye worship? The God of Mohammed liveth forever, but the apostle was a mortal like ourselves, and, according to his own prediction, he hath experienced the common fate of mortality."

The prophet's remains were deposited at Medina, in the very room where he breathed his last, the floor being removed to make way for his sepulchre, and a simple and unadorned monument was, some time after, erected over them. The house itself has long since mouldered, or been demolished, but the place of the prophet's interment is still

made conspicuous to the superstitious reverence of his disciples. The story of his relics being suspended in the air, by the power of loadstone in an iron coffin, and that too at Mecca, instead of Medina, is a mere idle fabrication. His tomb at the latter place has been visited by millions of pilgrims, and, from the authentic accounts of travellers who have visited both these holy cities in disguise, we learn that it is constructed of plain mason work, fixed without elevation upon the surface of the ground. The urn which encloses his body is protected by a trellis of iron, which no one is permitted to pass.

The Koran or Alkoran, meaning *the Book*, is a collection of all the various fragments which the prophet uttered during the period in which he professed to exercise the apostolic office. They were originally written on scattered leaves, but they were collected by Abubeker, two years after Mohammed's death. They are in the purest and most refined dialect of Arabia, and are distinguished by extraordinary graces of style.

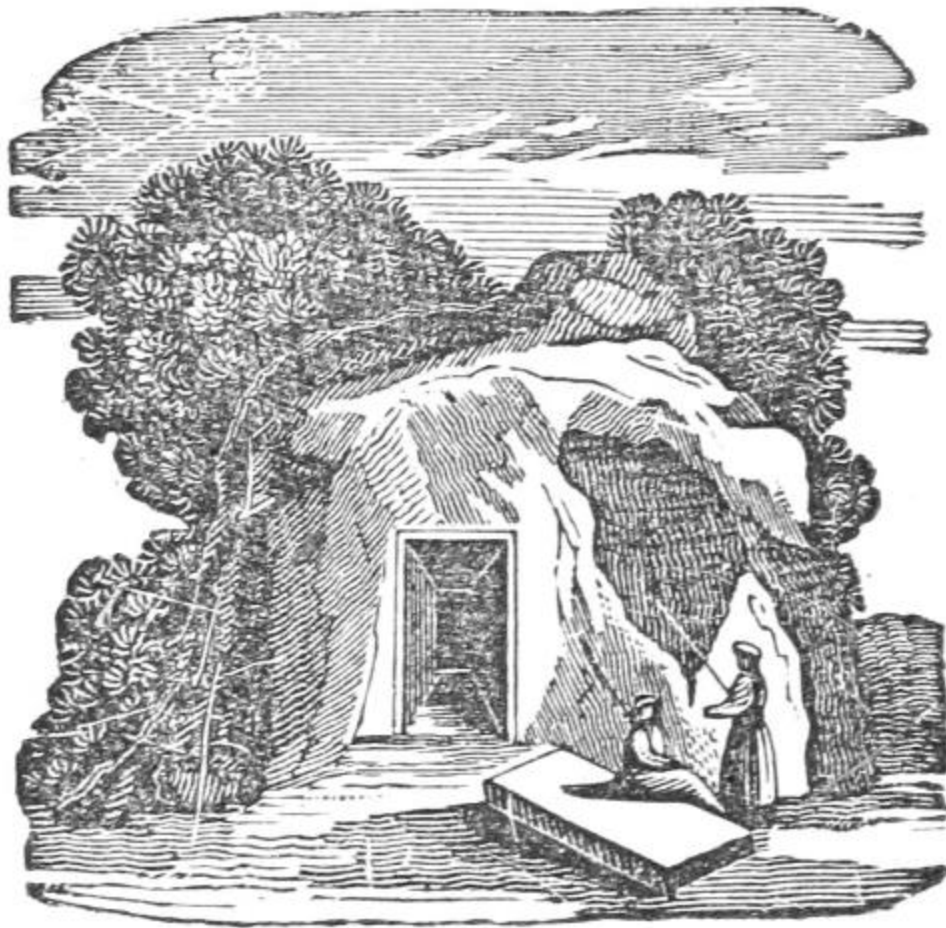
The Koran furnishes not only the divinity, but the civil law of the Mohammedans. It professes to contain the revelation of God's will by Gabriel to Mohammed, and through him to mankind. One of the books gives an account of the translation of the prophet by night to the third heaven, upon a winged animal, named Alborak, and resembling an ass, where he saw unutterable things. The great doctrines of the Koran, as before stated, are the existence of one supreme God, to whom alone adoration and obedience are due. It declares that the divine law was faithfully delivered by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Christ. It declares the

immortality of the soul of man, and the final judgment, and sets forth that the good are to dwell in everlasting bliss, amid shady and delicious groves, and attended by heavenly virgins. The hope of salvation is not confined to the Moslem, but is extended to all who believe in God and do good works. Sinners, particularly unbelievers, are to be driven about in a dark burning hell, forever.

The practical duties enjoined by the Koran, are the propagation of Islamism, and prayers directed to the temple of Mecca, at five different periods of the day, together with fasting, alms, religious ablutions, pilgrimages to Mecca, &c. It allows a man but four wives, though the prophet had seventeen, and it is curious to add that all were widows, save one. It strongly prohibits usury, gaming, wine and pork.

We cannot deny to Mohammed the possession of extraordinary genius. He was a man of great eloquence, and the master of a beautiful style of composition; and he possessed that majesty of person, which, united to his mental qualities, gave him great ascendancy over those who came into his presence. He lived in a dark age, amid a benighted people; yet, without the aids of education, he mastered the religious systems of the day, and took a broad and sagacious view of the moral and political condition of the people of Asia. He conceived the sublime idea of uniting, by one mighty truth, the broken fragments of his own nation, and the destruction of idolatry by the substitution of the worship of one God. It is true, that he sought to accomplish these ends by unlawful means—by imposture, and the bloody use of the sword; we must admit, also, that he was licentious and although we cannot fail to condemn

his character, we must acknowledge the splendor of his abilities and allow that while he imposed on his followers, he established a faith infinitely above Paganism, and sprinkled with many rays of light from the fountain of Divine Truth.





# **Belisarius.**

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This celebrated general, to whom the emperor Justinian is chiefly indebted for the glory of his reign, was a native of Germania, on the confines of Thrace, and was born about the year 505. It is probable that he was of noble descent, liberally educated, and a professor of the Christian faith. The first step in his military career was an appointment in the personal guard of Justinian, while that prince was yet heir apparent to the throne.

The Roman or Byzantine empire, at this period, embraced almost exactly the present territory of the Turkish dominions in Europe and Asia Minor, with the addition of Greece—Constantinople being its capital. Italy was held by the Goths; Corsica, Sardinia and Barbary in Africa, by the Vandals.

Justin I., an Illyrian peasant, having distinguished himself as a soldier, had become emperor. His education was of course neglected, and such was his ignorance, that his signature could only be obtained by means of a wooden case, which directed his pen through the four first letters of his name. From his accession, the chief administration of affairs devolved on Justinian, his nephew and intended heir, whom he was reluctantly compelled to raise from office to office, and at length to acknowledge as his partner on the throne. His death, after a languid reign of nine years and a life of nearly fourscore, left Justinian sole sovereign in name, as well as in fact.

In order to appreciate the life and actions of Belisarius, it is necessary to understand the character of the new emperor, during whose long reign his great exploits were performed. The first act of Justinian on ascending the throne, was to marry a dissolute actress, named Theodora, who, though licentious, avaricious, cruel and vindictive, soon acquired an almost complete control over him. His mind was essentially feeble and inconstant, and, though his Christian faith was doubtless sincere, it was less fruitful of virtues than of rites and forms. At his accession his treasury was full; but it was soon exhausted by his profuseness, and heavy taxes were imposed, offices put to sale, charities suppressed, private fortunes seized, and, in short, every act of rapacity, injustice and oppression, practised by his ministers, to support the wasteful magnificence of the court.

The troops of the empire at this period were by no means what they had been in the time of Scipio and Cæsar. They consisted, to a great extent, of foreign mercenaries, and were divided into squadrons according to their country; thus destroying all unity of feeling, and annihilating that national spirit which once made the Roman arms the terror of the world. These hired troops, which greatly outnumbered the native soldiers, marched under their own national banner, were commanded by their own officers, and usually followed their own military regulations. The inefficiency of such mingled and discordant forces, is obvious; yet it was under such a system that Belisarius entered upon his military career.

With a feeble and corrupt government, an ill-appointed and trustless army, the Roman empire was still surrounded



with powerful enemies. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a great nation in a condition of more complete debility and helplessness, than was the kingdom of the Cæsars, at the period in which Belisarius appears upon the active stage of life.

Kobad, king of Persia, after a long cessation of hostilities, renewed the war toward the close of Justin's reign, by the invasion of Iberia, which claimed the protection of the emperor. At this period, Belisarius, being about twenty years of age, had the command of a squadron of horse, and was engaged in some of the conflicts with the Persian forces, on the borders of Armenia. In conjunction with an officer named Sittas, he ravaged a large extent of territory, and brought back a considerable number of prisoners.

On a second incursion, however, they were less fortunate; for, being suddenly attacked by the Persian forces, they were entirely defeated. It appears that Belisarius incurred no blame, for he was soon after promoted to the post of governor of Dara, and the command of the forces stationed there. It was at this place that he chose Procopius, the historian, as his secretary, and who afterwards repaid his kindness by a vain attempt to brand his name with enduring infamy.

Soon after Belisarius obtained the command of Dara, Justinian came to the throne, and enjoined it upon his generals to strengthen the defences of the empire in that quarter. This was attempted, but the Persians baffled the effort. Belisarius was now appointed general of the East, being commander-in-chief of the whole line of the Asiatic frontier. Foreseeing that a formidable struggle was soon to

ensue, he applied himself to the raising and disciplining an army. He traversed the neighboring provinces in person, and at last succeeded in mustering five and twenty thousand men. These, however, were without discipline, and their spirit was depressed by the ill success that had long attended the Roman arms.

In this state of things, the news suddenly came, that 40,000 men, the flower of the Persian army, commanded by Firouz, was marching upon Dara. Confident of victory, the Persian general announced his approach, by the haughty message that a bath should be ready for him at Dara the next evening. Belisarius made no other reply than preparations for battle. Fortifying himself in the best manner he was able, he awaited the onset; exhorting his men, however, by every stimulating motive he could suggest, to do honor to the name and fame of Rome.

The battle began by a mutual discharge of arrows, so numerous as to darken the air. When the quivers were exhausted, they came to closer combat. The struggle was obstinate and bloody; and the Persians were already about to win the victory, when a body of horse, judiciously stationed behind a hill by Belisarius, rushed forward, and turned the tide of success. The Persians fled, and the triumph of Belisarius was complete. They left their royal standard upon the field of battle, with 8000 slain. This victory had a powerful effect, and decided the fate of the campaign.

The aged Kobad, who had conceived a profound contempt for the Romans, was greatly irritated by the defeat of his troops. He determined upon a still more

powerful effort, and the next season sent a formidable army to invade Syria. Belisarius, with a promptitude that astounded his enemy, proceeded to the defence of this province, and, with an inferior force, compelled the Persian army to retreat. Obligated at length, by his soldiers, against his own judgment, to give battle to the enemy, he suffered severely, and only avoided total defeat by the greatest coolness and address. Even the partial victory of the enemy was without advantage to them, for they were obliged to retreat, and abandon their enterprise. Soon after this event, Kobad died, in his eighty-third year, and his successor, Nushirvan, concluded a treaty of peace with Justinian.

The war being thus terminated, Belisarius took up his residence at Constantinople, and here became the second husband of Antonina, who, though the child of an actress, had contracted an exalted marriage on account of her beauty, and having filled a high office, enjoyed the rank and honors of a patrician. While thus raised above the dangerous profession of her mother, she still adhered to the morals of the stage. Though openly licentious, she obtained through her bold, decided, and intriguing character, aided by remarkable powers of fascination, a complete ascendancy over Belisarius. It is seldom that a man is great in all respects, and the weakness of the general whose history we are delineating, was exhibited in a blind and submissive attachment to this profligate woman.

A singular outbreak of popular violence occurred about this period, which stained the streets of Constantinople with blood, and threatened for a time to hurl Justinian from his throne. The fondness of the Romans for the amusements of

the circus, had in no degree abated. Indeed, as the gladiatorial combats had been suppressed, these games were frequented with redoubled ardor. The charioteers were distinguished by the various colors of red, white, blue, and green, intending to represent the four seasons. Those of each color, especially the blue and green, possessed numerous and devoted partisans, which became at last connected with civil and religious prejudices.

Justinian favored the Blues, who became for that reason the emblem of royalty; on the other hand, the Greens became the type of disaffection. Though these dangerous factions were denounced by the statutes, still, at the period of which we speak, each party were ready to lavish their fortunes, risk their lives, and brave the severest sentence of the laws, in support of their darling color. At the commencement of the year 532, by one of those sudden caprices which are often displayed by the populace, the two factions united, and turned their vengeance against Justinian. The prisons were forced, and the guards massacred. The city was then fired in various parts, the cathedral of St. Sophia, a part of the imperial palace, and a great number of public and private buildings, were wrapped in conflagration. The cry of "*Nika! Nika!*" Vanquish! Vanquish! ran through every part of the capital.

The principal citizens hurried to the opposite shore of the Bosphorus, and the emperor entrenched himself within his palace. In the mean time, Hypatius, nephew of the emperor Anastatius, was declared emperor by the rioters, and so formidable had the insurrection now become, that Justinian was ready to abdicate his crown. For the first and last time,

Theodora seemed worthy of the throne, for she withstood the pusillanimity of her husband, and, through her animated exhortations, it was determined to take the chance of victory or death.

Justinian's chief hope now rested on Belisarius. Assisted by Mundus, the governor of Illyria, who chanced to be in the capital, he now called upon the guards to rally in defence of the emperor; but these refused to obey him. Meanwhile, by another caprice the party of the Blues, becoming ashamed of their conduct, shrunk one by one away, and left Hypatius to be sustained by the Greens alone.

These were dismayed at seeing Belisarius, issuing with a few troops which he had collected, from the smoking ruins of the palace. Drawing his sword, and commanding his veterans to follow, he fell upon them like a thunderbolt. Mundus, with another division of soldiers, rushed upon them from the opposite direction. The insurgents were panic-struck, and dispersed in every quarter. Hypatius was dragged from the throne which he had ascended a few hours before, and was soon after executed in prison. The Blues now emerged from their concealment, and, falling upon their antagonists, glutted their merciless and ungovernable vengeance. No less than thirty thousand persons were slain in this fearful convulsion.

We must now turn our attention to Africa, in which the next exploits of Belisarius were performed. The northern portion of this part of the world, known to us by the merited by-word of Barbary, hardly retains a trace of the most formidable rival and opulent province of Rome. After the fall of Jugurtha, at the commencement of the second century, it

had enjoyed a long period of prosperity and peace—having escaped the sufferings which had fallen upon every other portion of the empire. The Africans in the fifth century were abounding in wealth, population, and resources. During the minority of Valentinian, Boniface was appointed governor of Africa. Deceived by Ætius into a belief of ingratitude on the part of the government at home, he determined upon resistance, and with this view, concluded a treaty with the Vandals in the southern portion of Spain.

These, embarking from Andalusia, whose name still denotes their former residence, landed at the opposite cape of Ceuta, A. D. 429. Their leader was the far-famed Genseric, one of the most able, but most lawless and bloody monarchs recorded in history. Of a middle stature, and lamed by a fall from his horse, his demeanor was thoughtful and silent; he was contemptuous of luxury, sudden in anger, and boundless in ambition. Yet his impetuosity was always guided and restrained by cunning. He well knew how to tempt the allegiance of a foreign nation, to cast the seeds of future discord, or to rear them to maturity.

The barbarians on their passage to Africa consisted of 50,000 fighting men, with a great crowd of women and children. Their progress through the African province was rapid and unopposed, till Boniface, discovering the artifices of Ætius, and the favorable disposition of the government of Rome, bitterly repented the effects of his hasty resentment. He now endeavored to withdraw his Vandal allies; but he found it less easy to allay, than it had been to raise, the storm. His proposals were haughtily rejected, and both parties had recourse to arms. Boniface was defeated, and in