

ISLAM UNDER THE ARABS

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PREFACE.

I THINK the purpose of this book will be explained most easily by stating how it came to be written.

Any officer who has served in India with native troops must have perceived how genial and cordial are the relations among all ranks, from the commanding officer down to the private, so long as a regiment is on active service. The dangers and hardships which have to be endured by all, keep alive and strengthen the feeling of comradeship. But when the regiment returns into quarters this feeling dies away. It is not that the English officer is, at heart, less interested in the well-being of his men, but that there is no longer any object of interest common to both, outside of the mere routine of their profession. They have nothing to talk about. The native soldier knows nothing of English history or of anything that interests Englishmen ; and very few English officers know more of the men they command than that they are *called* Sikhs, Afghans, Ghorkhas, or Mahrattas. What these names signify—what was the history of those who bear them, in the past : what are the memories