

SAINTS OF ISLAM.

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Saints of Islam.

PREFACE.

The following pages are intended to give briefly some of the main features of the religious philosophy of Islam along with a brief account of some of the interesting events of the lives of three of its great Saints. A few of the sentiments ascribed to these saints have been rendered freely into English in order to bring out the spirit of the thought clearly which a literal rendering too often is hardly able to convey, and these thoughts have been compared to similar sentiments of other eminent Oriental thinkers. I have selected the three lives from three different periods in order to survey briefly the development of some of the political events and to a small extent the literary advancement effected by the Moham-medans in the course of these periods.

As the interesting events of the lives of great persons great in their moral character and greatness of mind, whether they be of the Christian faith or of any other, are generally found to be interesting and instructive, as such lives contain those strange realities of human life which appeal to the human mind and are instructive to the understanding of human nature; and as there has been of late a keen and growing interest in the literature of the East among the Christian public I have ventured to lay before them the lives of these Muslim saints. Perhaps the title of this book would suggest to some minds the narration of miraculous deeds, of mighty dragons blown out of life by the mere blow of a breath and wild beasts charmed into obedience by simple words of command; or it might suggest perhaps the discussion of subtle metaphysical questions and a vain endeavour to solve the dark mysteries of human life; but instead of finding these if the reader finds in these lives some lessons of true philosophy; if he realizes the truth of these lines —