

P R E F A C E.

THAT a competent knowledge of the *Kor-ân* is indispensable as an introduction to the study of Arabic literature will be admitted by all who have advanced beyond the rudiments of the language. From the purity of its style and elegance of its diction it has come to be considered as the standard of Arabic even by those who have no belief in its pretensions to a divine origin, while so great is its authority among the followers of *Mohammad*, that it would be difficult to name a work by any Mussulman writer which does not abound in allusions to its precepts or in quotations from its pages.

It is not to be expected that all the transcendent excellencies and miraculous beauties discovered in the *Kor-ân* by its commentators and others should immediately unveil themselves to our cold and unsympathizing gaze; beauties there are, many and great; ideas highly poetical are clothed in rich and appropriate language, which not unfrequently rises to a sublimity far beyond the reach of any translation; but it is unfortunately the case that many of those graces which present themselves to the admiration of the finished scholar are but so many stumbling-blocks in the way of the beginner; the marvellous conciseness which adds so greatly to the force and energy of its expressions cannot fail to perplex him, while the frequent use of the ellipse leaves in his mind a feeling of vagueness not altogether out of character in a work of its oracular and *soi-disant* prophetic nature.

It has been the privilege of the *Kor-ân* rather to impose its own laws upon grammar than to accept them from other sources; and as it was written originally without vowel points, it is not surprising that a good deal of difficulty has been experienced in framing rules to meet the various readings that have thence crept in.

The following pages have been compiled in the hope that they may prove of service to the beginner in mastering some of the difficulties to which I have referred; they will be found to contain much, which to the more advanced student may appear trivial or unnecessary, but which will not be without value if it lighten the labours of those for whose use the book is principally designed; it has no claim to originality, it merely presents to the reader in a succinct form that which the writer has culled for his benefit from the works of others.

The edition of the *Kor-ân* which I have chosen for my text is that by *Fluegel*, printed at *Leipzig* in 1834; the *Concordance* by the same author has been my sheet-anchor throughout. Each word will be found under its verbal root; where none exists it must be looked for in its alphabetical place; so also in the case of