



The life of Sir Richard Burton

Thomas Wright

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Book may have numerous typos, missing text, images, or index. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. 1906. Excerpt: ... Mohammed. Early next morning they rose, bathed, and made their way with the crowd to the Prophet's Mosque in order to worship at the huge bier-like erection called the Kaaba, and the adjacent semi-circular Hatim's wall. The famous Kaaba, which is in the middle of the great court-yard, looked at a distance like an enormous cube, covered with a black curtain, but its plan is really trapeziform. "There at last it lay," cries Burton, "the bourn of my long and weary pilgrimage, realising the plans and hopes of many and many a year,"--the Kaaba, the place of answered prayer, above which in the heaven of heavens Allah himself sits and draws his pen through people's sins. "The mirage of fancy invested the huge catafalque and its gloomy pall with peculiar charms." Of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain," or who pressed their beating hearts to the sacred black stone built into the Kaaba, none, thought Burton, felt for the moment a deeper emotion than he. But he had to confess the humbling truth that while theirs was the high feeling of religious enthusiasm, his was but the ecstasy of gratified pride. Bare-headed and footed and in company with Mohammed, he first proceeded to the holy well, Zem-Zem, said to be the same that was shown by God to Hagar."1 They found the water extremely unpleasant to the taste, and Burton noticed that nobody drank it without making a wry face. It was impossible at first to get near the Black Stone owing to the crush of pilgrims. However, they occupied the time in various prayers, blessed the Prophet, and kissed the finger tips of the right hand. They then made the seven Ashwat or circuits, and from time to time raised their hands to their ears, and exclaimed, "In the name of Allah, and Allah is omnipotent!" The circuits finished, it was deemed adv...

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