

## REFORM MOVEMENTS IN THE NEAR EAST

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“**T**HE whole fabric of Islam remains precisely as the prophet left it, neither taken from nor added to—his work alone. As the faith issued from the lips of Mohammed or was embodied in his daily life, even so it lived, and still lives, the religion of more than a hundred and seventy millions of our race. ‘This day,’ as he said at the Farewell Pilgrimage, ‘I have perfected your religion unto you;’ and for weal or woe, thus perfect and complete, it has ever since remained.” Thus closes Sir William Muir’s “Mohammed and Islam,” and we all bow to his authority on matters of Islam.

Such a system seems to leave no place for reformation. Its author considered it perfect and so his followers have considered it perfect. It has virtually remained without reform during all these centuries at Cairo, the citadel of its strength, at Constantinople the seat of the caliphate, at Damascus from which it rules Syria, as well as in the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, and in the cities along the coast of North Africa. But despite its claims and its history, both at Cairo and Constantinople, as well as in all the other regions bordering on the Great Sea, reform is in the air.

Reform in the air is not very tangible, it is hard to see, to touch, to take hold of. As long as the air is still, its effect may not be very perceptible. Its presence can scarcely be known. But the air is always in contact