

MOHAMMEDAN LEARNING.

A very creditable book on *Promotion of Learning in India During Muhammadan Rule* (by *Muhammadans*) has been written by a Mohammedan, Narendra Nath Law, M.A., B.L. of Calcutta University and author of *Studies in Ancient Hindu Polity*. Mr. H. Beveridge, retired from the Indian Civil Service, writes a foreword in which he says:

Mr. Law is to be congratulated upon the successful accomplishment of a laborious and important task, which will be a substantial contribution to the history of India. The value of the book has been considerably heightened by the interesting illustrations which he has been at such pains to bring together from a variety of sources."

The book is published by Longmans, Green and Company, and is an admirable example of the bookmaker's art. We reproduce the frontispiece as frontispiece of our present issue. The college at Bidar is thus described in Meadow Taylor's *History of India*:

"The noble college of Mahmūd Gāwā in the city of Bidar was perhaps the grandest completed work of the period. It consisted of a spacious square with arches all round it, of two stories, divided into convenient rooms. The minarets at each corner of the front were upwards of 100 feet high, and also the front itself, covered with enamel tiles, on which were flowers on blue, yellow and red grounds and sentences of the Qur'an in large kūfic letters, the effect of which was at once chaste and superb."

The explosion which wrecked the beautiful structure is related by Briggs in a note to the work of Ferishta (a Mohammedan historian of the sixteenth century) as follows:

"After the capture of Bidar by Aurangzib, in the latter end of the seventeenth century, this splendid range of buildings was appropriated to the double purpose of a powder-magazine and barrack for a body of cavalry, when by accident, the powder, exploding, destroyed the greater part of the edifice, causing dreadful havoc around. Sufficient of the work remains, however, even at the present day, to afford some notion of its magnificence and beauty. The outline of the square, and some of the apartments, are yet entire, and one of the minarets is still standing. It is more than 100 feet in height, ornamented with tablets, on which sentences of the Qur'an in white letters, 3 feet in length, standing forth on a ground of green and gold, still exhibits to the spectator a good sample of what this superb edifice once was. The college is one of the many beautiful remains of the grandeur of the Bahmani and Burid dynasties, which flourished at Bidar; and they render a visit to that city an object of lively interest to all travelers, but particularly to those who may peruse this history."

Mr. Law adds: "The explosion is by some attributed to an exasperated soldier, who, in order to avenge himself upon a comrade with whom he was quarreling, cast the burning *guls* from his *chilam* into a powder cell. Thevenot, the traveler, gives a different account. According to him, a faithful commander of the place took his stand in the college along with his army, and refused to submit to Aurangzib. When, however, a breach was made in the wall and signal given for the assault, then suddenly by the fall of a rocket or by the order of the commander, who preferred death to subjection, the magazine blew up at a moment when the roof was covered with the garrison who had assembled there for selling themselves as dearly as possible."