

of life, and to occupy myself first with what was most important. I therefore finally determined to divide my lexicon into two Books: the first to contain all the classical words and significations commonly known to the learned among the Arabs: the other, those that are of rare occurrence and not commonly known. And I have made such subdivisions as will enable the purchaser of a copy to bind it in the manner that he may deem most convenient: in two volumes, or in four, or in eight; each to consist of a portion of Book I. with the corresponding portion of Book II.; or so that all the words in Book I. of which the roots commence with one letter may be immediately followed by the words in Book II. of which the roots commence with the same letter. The Second Book will be small in comparison with the First, of which the Part to be first published (‡ to † inclusive) will form about one eighth. In order that it may be possible to bind the whole work in two volumes, I have chosen for it a thin paper.

Nearly twenty years have now elapsed since I commenced this work. Had I foreseen that the whole labour of the composition must fall upon me or the project be abandoned, and had I also foreseen the length of time that it would require of me, unaided, I should certainly not have had the courage to undertake it. I had hoped that I should have at least one coadjutor: and I continued to hope for some years that such might be the case; but by no one have I been aided in the least degree, except, occasionally, in discussions of difficult points, by the sheykh Ibráheem Ed-Dasookee; who has written the results of some of these discussions on the margins of pages of my copy of the *Táj el-'Aroos*, generally in his own words, but often in words dictated by me. For seven years, in Cairo, I prosecuted my task on each of the work-days of the week, after an early breakfast, until within an hour of midnight, with few and short intervals of rest, (often with no interruption but that of a few minutes at a time for a meal, and half an hour for exercise,) except on rare occasions when I was stopped by illness, and once when I devoted three days to a last visit to the Pyramids: I seldom allowed myself to receive a visiter except on Friday, the Sabbath and leisure-day of the Muslims: and more than once I passed a quarter of a year without going out of my house. But I must not be supposed to claim much credit for the exercise of self-denial with respect to the pleasures of society; for during those seven years passed in Cairo, I had my wife and sister and the latter's two sons residing with me. Nor would I here make mention of the severe labour which this work has cost me but for the purpose of guarding against the imputation of my having been wanting in energy or industry. To convey a due idea of the difficulties of my task would be impossible. While mainly composing from the *Táj el-'Aroos*, I have often had before me, or by my side, eight or ten other lexicons, (presenting three different arrangements of the roots, and all of them differing in the order, or rather disorder, of the words explained,) requiring to be consulted at the same time. And frequently more than a day's study has been necessary to enable me thoroughly to understand a single passage: for the strict rules of Arabic lexicology demand that every explanation be given as nearly as possible in the words in which some person of authority has transmitted it; and many explanations perfectly intelligible when they were first given became less and less so in succeeding ages, and at length quite unintelligible to the most learned of living Arabs. Even Ibn-Seedeḥ often confesses, in the *Mohkam*, his inability to understand an explanation or some other statement that he has transmitted. Many explanations, moreover, present instances of what is termed *تَسَامُح*; and instances of a worse kind of license, termed *تَسَاهُل*, are not of unfrequent occurrence: by the former term is meant a deficiency in what an author writes relying upon the understanding of the reader; and by the latter term, a deficiency in what he writes *without* relying upon the reader's knowledge. Often, two synonymous words are used to explain each other. Numerous cases of this kind occur in the *Kámoos*: such, for instance, are *حُجَّة* and *بُرْهَان* and *سَاوَرَة* and *وَأْتَبَة* and *أَعْتَقَدَ*, and *تَلَوَّجَ* and *تَلَجَّنَ*: and in these cases I have not always found the information that I required by referring to other lexicons. More frequently, in lieu of an explanation, we find merely the word *مَعْرُوفٌ*, meaning "well known:" and in a very large proportion of such cases, what was once "well known" has long ceased to be so. Still more frequently, significations are only indicated by the context: in many instances, as clearly as they could be expressed by any words of explanation: but in many other instances, very obscurely. Many words are rendered by others which are not elsewhere explained in the same lexicon; many, by words meant to be understood in senses not elsewhere explained in that lexicon; many, by words meant to be understood in tropical senses; and many, by words meant to be understood in post-classical senses. In these last cases, I have often found in my knowledge of modern Arabic a solution of a difficulty: but without great caution, such knowledge would