

THE SWORD OF ISLAM

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P R E F A C E

SOME years ago I published a work entitled *Half-hours with Muhammad*. The edition has been exhausted, and, under the advice of those who have followed its fortunes with uniform kindness and friendly feeling, I have determined, in revising it, to enlarge somewhat the scope of the volume by the addition of several chapters, which it is hoped will lend additional interest to an attempt to popularise an all-important page of Oriental history.

It is obvious that the enlargement of the volume necessitates a change of title, inasmuch as, although the Prophet of Arabia must ever remain the central figure in any work treating of the Religion which he founded, yet it would be altogether unreasonable to give to a publication dealing with many phases of the history of Islam a name indicating that it was confined to a life of Muhammad.

To this brief explanation it is only necessary to add that no attempt has been made to solve the many vexed questions which come to the front at every turn. The volume is intended rather for the

general reader than the scholar, who will find little in the accompanying pages that is new; in fact, in many cases, information is given in the very words of authors who dealt with the subject years ago. In a book of this nature much use has naturally been made of previous work. I regret that it has not been possible to make individual acknowledgment in every case. The merit of the work—if merit it possesses—is that the subject has been treated in a way suitable, it is hoped, for general information. At a time when the East with its bright imagery and ever-varying romance is gradually arousing the attention of the less emotional West, it has been thought advisable to enter the lists with an endeavour to awaken interest in the history of a religion and its followers—no inconsiderable number of whom bow the knee of submission to the Emperor of India. For nearly half a century destiny has linked me with the East, and I shall be more than repaid for any labour bestowed on the present volume if, haply, readers of the hour cast an eye of favour upon a work the interest of which centres in Eastern lands and Eastern peoples.

A. N. WOLLASTON.

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THE SWORD OF ISLAM

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF ARABIA PRIOR TO THE TIME OF
MUHAMMAD. B.C. 2000-A.D. 570

BETWEEN the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf lies a triangular continent, arid and well-nigh waterless, save where the fertility of an occasional flood lends to the scene the freshness and charm of an oasis in the desert. Wild, desolate, bleak, dreary, and monotonous, the sandy region of Arabia presents but few features to command interest; yet this land, so unattractive in its nature, so uninteresting in its aspect, has played an all-important part in the history of the world, for it can claim high honour and distinction as the birthplace of the Prophet of Islam—a genius who, whatever may be the verdict of posterity in regard to his “mission,” has had a more potent influence on the destinies of mankind than has been vouchsafed to any son of Adam who has left footprints on the sands of time.

The peninsula was divided by the Greeks and

Romans into three portions—Arabia Felix, Arabia Petræa, and Arabia Deserta; but, according to Mr Badger, “this nomenclature is unknown to the Arabs themselves—‘Barru’l-Arab,’ or ‘the Land of the Arabs,’ is the name given by them to the peninsula generally. The other divisions are the ‘Al-Hijaz,’ which comprises Arabia Petræa and several of its adjacent territories; ‘Al-Yaman,’ including Arabia Felix, and the country forming the south-west extremity of the kingdom; and ‘Najd’ (literally high land), which may be termed Central Arabia.”

“The first peopling of Arabia,” says Sir William Muir, “is a subject on which we may in vain look for any light from the tradition of Arabia itself.” There are, however, grounds for supposing that some descendants of Kush, the son of Ham, migrated to that country, where they ultimately became merged into the general mass of the community. These were followed by the offspring of Joktan, a descendant of Shem, a people who settled in the north of the land, while the kindred of Peleg, the brother of the last-named, established their tents in Mesopotamia. This latter individual was the ancestor of Abraham and Nahor his brother, from which two patriarchs descended five great branches of settlers:—(1) The Ishmaelites, who inhabited the land from the northern extremity of the Red Sea, towards the mouth of the Euphrates. Amongst their branches were the well-known Nabathians—destined in after years to occupy a commanding position in Northern Arabia—and the Kedarenes, whose history was so famous in the annals of Arabia that the term eventually came to be

applied by the Jews to the Bedouins in general. (2) The Keturahites, who are known to posterity as settlers in the great desert in the north of Arabia. They derive their name from Ketura, who bore to Abraham six sons, all of whom migrated during the lifetime of their father. The tribe included, too, the familiar name of the Midianites, the offspring of the fourth of these last-mentioned sons. (3) The Edomites, as their name implies, the descendants of Esau. (4) The Nahorites, so called because their founders, Uz and Buz, were sons of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. (5) The Moabites and Ammonites, descended from the sons of Lot, Abraham's brother's son. These last-mentioned tribes extended still further north in the region of the Dead Sea.

For twenty centuries these peoples and nations "lived, moved, and had their being"; yet but little is recorded as to their history.

"Our knowledge of the race" (the quotation is again from Sir W. Muir's masterly Essay), "is confined to the casual accounts of the few border tribes which came in contact with the Jewish and Roman Governments, and to an occasional glimpse, as in the case of the Queen of Sheba and the Roman expedition, into the interior. We may not, however, doubt that, during the five-and-twenty centuries which elapsed between Abraham and Muhammad, the mutual relations of the Arab tribes were undergoing an uninterrupted succession of the revolutions and changes to which human society, especially when broken up into numerous independent fragments, is always exposed. Some of the tribes, like the Horims of old, were extirpated; others, as the Amalekites of Petra, driven from their original seats; some migrated to distant settlements, or merged into more extensive and commanding bodies; while intermarriage, conquest, and phylarchical revolution united races of different origin, and severed those sprung from a common stock. But of such changes, excepting in one or two of the border tribes, we have hardly any record."

It will suffice for present purposes to state generally that there was in the south-west of Arabia a dynasty founded by Kahtan, which flourished in Yaman between the years 800 B.C. and 500 B.C., from whom was descended Abd Shams Saba the Great, the founder of the city which gave its name to the Sabians. This chieftain was in turn the progenitor of Himyar and Kahlan, from whom the whole Arab-speaking race are supposed to have sprung. The descendants of the former patriarch founded their homes chiefly in towns, and led a fixed and settled mode of life, while their kinsmen, having a migratory instinct, chose the unsettled and wandering existence which has throughout all ages been the delight of the children of the desert.

As regards the north of Arabia, there were two kingdoms known as Hira and Ghassan, both of which states owed their origin to the spirit of migration which, from various causes, led to a general movement of the Yaman tribes to more genial and flourishing spots around the valley of the Euphrates. The former city was founded about the year A.D. 200, and soon assumed such a prominence and splendour as to lend to its ruler the proud title of "Prince of Hira." For more than 300 years this dynasty exercised a powerful influence in the affairs of Arabia; but, exposed to attacks of the Romans on the one side, and the Persians on the other, it needed but the destruction of time to lay in the dust a Government of which the glory would have been quenched in the stream of Oblivion, had its traditions not been handed down by the poets and men of letters who in its palmy days used to flock to the Court of Hira. The decline

and fall of the dynasty in question is so romantic as to merit a few passing words.

Towards the close of the sixth century the sceptre of Hira was in the hands of Noman the Fifth. This sovereign had been educated by Adi, one of the most renowned poets of the day, who, on the termination of this important duty, betook himself to the Court of Persia, where he received the post of Arabic Secretary to the reigning monarch.

"In A.D. 581," thus states Sir W. Muir, "he was despatched on a specific embassy to Constantinople, and entrusted with a rich present for the Emperor Tiberius. He travelled back by the imperial relays of horses, and by a route calculated to convey the largest idea of the power and resources of the Roman Empire. On his return to Medain, or Ctesiphon, he obtained leave of absence to revisit Hira, where he was received by the prince and the people with triumphant acclamation. On this occasion he met, at the Church of Tuma, Hind, the granddaughter of the reigning prince, Mundzir the Fourth, and daughter of his own pupil Noman. As the damsel partook of the Sacrament, Adi caught a glimpse of her, and became enamoured. His passion was reciprocated, and though she was scarce eleven years old, they were united in marriage."

Years rolled on, and we find the beautiful Hind, charming as she was, secluded and buried to the world in a convent, whither she had retired consequent on the murder of her husband by order of his former pupil, the faithless Noman. She lived, however, to witness a terrible retribution at the hands of fate, for the blood-stained assassin, some years subsequent to the crime which tarnished his fair name, was deposed by a conquering army which invaded his territories, laid waste his possessions, and put the sovereign to death.

The fate of Noman was striking and remark-

able:—Zaid, the son of Adi, bent upon revenging the death of his father, hit upon a method as “singular as it proved successful.” The story is told by Sir W. Muir.

“He pictured in warm colours the charms of the women of Hira before the King of Persia, who readily adopted the suggestion that some of the fair relatives of his vassal might well adorn the royal harem. An embassy charged with this errand was despatched to Noman, who, surprised and alarmed by the demand, expressed aloud his wonder that the Monarch of Persia was not satisfied with the antelope beauties of his own land. The term was equivocal, and Noman was denounced as having insulted the females of Persia by likening them to cows! The wrath of the Chosroes fell heavily upon his ungallant vassal, and he fled from Hira. After vainly wandering in search of allies among the Arab tribes, he left his arms in the custody of Hani, a chief of the Bani Bakr, and in despair delivered himself up to the King of Persia. The unfortunate prince was passed in mockery between two long rows of lovely girls splendidly attired, and by each was taunted with the question, whether *she* was a Persian *cow*? He was cast into prison, and there died or was murdered. Thus ended the Lakhmite Dynasty in the year A.D. 605, having lasted for the long space of 327 years.”

The Princess Hind retired to a convent; and after the lapse of many years, when she was upwards of ninety years of age, the Muhammadan Commander in Iraq, for political motives, demanded her hand in marriage. The answer betokened that time had neither dimmed the clearness of her perception, nor quenched the pride of her noble birth, for she at once scorned the union, the object of which was clearly recognised. “If it were my youth or my beauty” (such were the words of the haughty dame) “that dictated the proposal, I should not refuse; but your desire is that you may say, ‘The kingdom of Noman, and with it his

daughter, have passed into my hands.' Is not that your thought?" So the high-spirited matron refused to quit the cloister for the throne, and passed in retirement the short remaining period of her long and chequered career.

The government of Hira then passed into the hands of a chieftain of the tribe of Tay, who had rendered good service to the King of Persia; but the Arabs, indignant at the murder of Noman, began to show signs of disaffection, by plundering and pillaging the Iranian villages in their neighbourhood. Various expedients were adopted by the "King of Kings" to put a stop to these raids, but in vain, and at length a vast army was sent to crush the rebellion. The danger which pressed upon the Arabs caused them to flock from all parts of the country to a spot called Zu-kar, under the standard of a warrior by name Hantzala, who had by common consent been chosen to lead them on to victory or death. The battle was fierce and bloody: nor, indeed, could it have been otherwise, seeing that the Arabs, fighting as they were for national independence, were maddened to desperation; and history, too, relates that, lest there should be signs of wavering on the part of any faint-hearted son of the desert, their commander, previous to the commencement of hostilities, severed with his own hand the girths of the camels on which were seated his wife and the other women of his tribe—an indication that, as defeat would involve captivity and dishonour, the struggle was deadly, the contest mortal. Victory alternated from hour to hour, but nothing could for long resist the desperate efforts of the lion-hearted

Arabs, and in the end the Persian army had to succumb to the onslaughts of their conquering rivals. This battle, so momentous in its results, occurred in A.D. 611, just at the time Muhammad had commenced his prophetic career; and thus it chanced that the prophet of Arabia, instead of finding a united race subject to the strong hand of the Monarch of Persia, met with an agglomeration of tribes who, rendering but half-hearted allegiance to a satrap holding nominal sway in the kingdom of Hira, were, in reality, independent of all control. The advantage which this altered condition of affairs afforded to the founder of the Muhammadan faith is too striking to pass unnoticed, for on the memorable battle-day of Zu-kar Islam tottered in the balance.

The Ghassanide kingdom, situated on the western side of the Syrian desert, was founded about the year A.D. 120 by a body of Arabs who migrated from Yaman. Pursuing their journey northward, they pitched their tents near a fountain of the name of Ghassan, where they remained for a period sufficiently lengthened to cause their race to be known by the name of the auspicious spring which supplied them with the one great necessary of life in the parched plains of a sandy desert. Towards the close of the third century they had so successfully established themselves, that the Byzantine authorities recognised their chief, Thalaba by name, as "Phylarch," or King of the Ghassanides; but having no fixed seat of government, each successive prince chose his own capital, and the history of the dynasty is confused, perplexing, and uncertain. The Phylarchs, however, appear to have had intimate relations

with the Byzantine Court, by whom, towards the middle of the sixth century, the title of king was bestowed upon the faithful Ghassanide ally, who had at that time rendered assistance to the Emperor Justinian against his enemies the Persians. This honour the newly-created sovereign subsequently requited by beguiling the Byzantines to destruction in the glare of a pestilential sun, while he betook himself elsewhere on the supposed errand of foiling the plans of the Monarch of Persia—an act of treachery and deceit which secured for himself the booty of a rich tract of country. Towards the close of the sixth century the glory of the Ghassanide dynasty was on the wane, and Sir W. Muir draws attention to the significant fact that, as observed by a Muslim writer, their decadence “was preparing the way for the glories of the Arabian Prophet”—a truth which was verified by the circumstance that in A.D. 637, Jabala VI., the last of the race, embraced Islam and joined the standard of the Faithful, though his zeal for the new religion which he had adopted was evanescent, and he retired to Constantinople as a renegade from Muhammadism to ponder in the leisure of obscurity over the marvellous and rapid spread of the doctrines which he had cast aside as beneath the notice of a Ghassanide monarch!

Mention has been made of the Prophet of Arabia, but before proceeding to sketch his singular and interesting career, it will be necessary to refer to the origin and ancestry of the tribe from which he sprang.

When Hagar was cast forth by the Patriarch Abraham, she journeyed the wilderness with her son

Ishmael in search of water; the lad, too young to endure the fatigue of wandering about with his mother—so runs the Eastern legend—was left alone for a while in the valley of Mecca—alone in the mighty solitude of an Eastern waste! Crying and sobbing, the hapless child's screams served but to increase his fear and anger; so he betook himself to the infantile freak of kicking. Just at this moment his mother returned, having wandered in the frenzy of despair to and fro between the little hill of Marwa and that of Safa, seeking water to quench the agonies of thirst, which threatened to destroy alike herself and the offspring which was the solace of her life. What was her astonishment to find, under the feet of the peevish and terrified lad, a stream of water, which bubbled up at the very spot where he had kicked the ground. Nor was the store of wonders as yet exhausted, for we are told that a tribe, supposed to be the Amalekites, who happened to be in the vicinity, whither they had been attracted by a flight of birds hovering over the place, came to the spot, and, finding the spring, at once settled in the locality. With them Ishmael remained till he was seven years of age, when his father Abraham, following the commands of God, went forth to a mountain to sacrifice his son. In vain did the arch-fiend—who on this occasion assumed the form of a human being—endeavour to dissuade the Patriarch from his purpose, and thereby cause him to manifest distrust in the mercy of his Almighty Creator. The "friend of God," as he is called in the East, was firm to his purpose to sacrifice his son; but as he lifted up his hand to slay the hapless youth, an angel from heaven

darted forth and bade him desist. The Patriarch had shown his willingness to obey the mandates of the Lord of Creation, even when it involved the loss of a beloved son : enough ! so a ram was offered up as a sacrifice in place of the lad. In due course Ishmael took unto himself a wife from amongst the maidens of the Amalekites. About this time two tribes from Yaman, known respectively in the annals of Arabia as the people of Jorhom and Katura, appeared in the regions where the Amalekites were settled. The latter, while endeavouring, though not with much success, to oppose the new comers, chanced to be harassed by a plague of ants, and in sore distress were eventually forced to succumb to their more fortunate rivals, to whom Ishmael, probably of necessity, transferred his allegiance. It so happened that, during the casual absence of her husband from home, the wife of this young chieftain committed an act of inhospitality in reference to her father-in-law, Abraham ; whereupon the latter, enraged at a proceeding which, amongst Eastern nations, is considered an offence of the blackest dye, persuaded his son to divorce the luckless lady, and take to himself a spouse from amongst the strangers who had succeeded to power. So it was that the daughter of the Jorhom chief graced the tent of Ishmael the son of the desert. On the occasion of one of his visits, the Patriarch Abraham, in company with his son, erected the Kaba at Mecca, and re-established the ancient rites of pilgrimage on the sacred spot.

“After the death of Ishmael, and his son Nabit,” thus writes Sir W. Muir, “the management of the Temple devolved on

Modad, the Jorhom chief, who held the impôts of the northern or upper part of Mecca, while Samayda, the Katura chief, held the southern. But a quarrel having arisen between the two tribes, the Bani Jorhom, aided by the descendants of Ishmael, expelled the Bani Katura, who joined and were lost amongst the Amalekites. From this point (which the juxtaposition with Ishmael would make at least 2000 years anterior to Muhammad) to Adnan, who lived a little before the Christian era, the legend is blank; and although the ready pen of the traditionists has filled up the space by a list of Muhammad's progenitors, derived from Jewish sources, yet Muhammad himself never traced his pedigree higher than Adnan, and declared that all who went further back were guilty of fabrication and falsehood."

Adnan, who is supposed to have flourished B.C. 130, left two sons, Madd and Akk, whose numerous offspring spread by degrees throughout the whole extent of the peninsula. Passing over an interval of rather less than three centuries, during which various chiefs appeared on the scene—some known to fame as the founders of families, others lost in the maze of obscurity which surrounds the annals of the period—the pen of the historian narrates that A.D. 134 gave birth to a chieftain, Nazr by name, the grandfather of Fihir (born A.D. 200), which latter was surnamed "Quraish"—an appellation to which the events of subsequent years have given the significance which attaches to aught which concerns the ancestry of the Prophet of Arabia. As to the derivation of the term, a variety of conjectures have been hazarded. Some are of opinion that the word signifies "noble," while others, admitting this, consider that it was originally a proper name, to which circumstance the meaning in question, which it afterwards came to possess, owes its origin. Then, again, on the other hand, there are reasons for supposing

that Nazr had a guide called Quraish, whence that chieftain's caravan was termed the "Caravan of Quraish," till at length the appellation gradually attached to himself. Another surmise is that the term is taken from a fish bearing that name, or from "Qursh," a word signifying "a high-bred camel." Lastly, others refer it to a root which signifies trade. Towards the close of the second century a body of Azdites pitched their tents near Mecca, whereupon the Jorhomites, who up to that time had retained their supremacy, endeavoured to expel the unwelcome settlers; but success did not meet their efforts, and the intruders took up their abode permanently in this region. After awhile some of the victors migrated towards Syria, and the rest, known in history as the Bani Khoza (the remnant), combining with some neighbouring tribes, attacked the Jorhomites, and drove them out of the country.

While these struggles were going on in one locality, the Maddites, the ancestors of the Quraish, were engaged in an attempt to oust some further adventurers belonging to the Khozaite tribe, who had endeavoured to obtain a footing between Mecca and Tayif. They were successful, and thereupon a grand contest for the charge of the Kaba ensued between them and the Azdite tribes, who had expelled the Jorhomites. The children of Nazr gained the victory, the fruits of which, however, after a brief interval, were snatched from them by the Bani Khoza, who are said to have retained the government of Mecca for upwards of two centuries.

Such continued to be the position of parties till the beginning of the fifth century, by which time the

Quraish had so greatly advanced in numbers and power as to rival their Khozaite rulers. It was reserved for Qussai (the progenitor of Muhammad) to assert the right of his tribe to the guardianship of the Kaba, and the government of Mecca. The outline of his romantic story is as follows:—Kilab, the fifth in descent from Fihir Quraish, died leaving two sons, Zohra and Zaid; the former grown up, the latter, who was born about A.D. 400, being but an infant. The widow of the deceased chieftain married a man of the Bani Ozra tribe, and followed him with the lad Zaid to her new home in the highlands south of Syria, where she gave birth to another son called Riza. When Zaid grew up he was called “Qussai,” because of the separation from his father’s house; but at last, learning the noble rank of his ancestry, he resolved to return to Mecca, and travelled thither with a company of the Ozra pilgrims. At Mecca he was recognised by his brother Zohra, and at once received into the position which his birth entitled him to hold. Qussai was a man of commanding person and of an energetic and ambitious temper. He was treated with great distinction by Holail the Khozaite king, who gave him his daughter Hobba in marriage, and permitted him—or rather perhaps his wife—to assume the immediate management of the Kaba, and some functions attaching to the government of the city. On the death of the benefactor who had bestowed on him power and position, Qussai, now possessing four grown-up sons, and himself being a man of wealth and influence, perceived his opportunity, and having canvassed among the Quraish for support, bound them together

in a secret league. Further, as the Khozaites are said to have outnumbered the latter tribe, he wrote to his brother Riza to aid him at the ensuing pilgrimage with an armed band of the Bani Ozra.

Meanwhile, another occasion presented itself. From remote times the Bani Sufa (a distant branch collateral with the Quraish) had been the possessors of certain privileges in connection with the temple at Mecca, amongst the rest the highly-prized right of dismissing the multitudes who annually repaired as pilgrims to the sacred precincts. The time had, however, now arrived when Qussai, conscious of his strength, determined to question this privilege: so, stepping forth before the assembled throng, he claimed the honour in question. A dispute took place, and weapons were drawn, but after a sharp encounter, in which Riza, with 300 of the Bani Ozra, rushed to the succour of Qussai, the Sufa yielded the coveted office to their opponents.

To return to the Khozaites; as may be imagined, they regarded with jealousy the usurpation of their prescriptive right, and began to entertain suspicions that Qussai would seek to snatch from them their own hereditary title to supremacy over the Hijaz: whereupon they prepared to resist, and associated with themselves some quondam allies, who had aided in the expulsion of the Jorhomites. The Quraish rallied round Qussai, who, as before, was supported by Riza and his comrades. A second but more general and bloody action ensued. The victory remained uncertain, for the carnage was great on both sides, and the combatants naturally agreed to a truce, surrendering the decision of their claims into

the hands of an aged sage named Amr. The umpire affirming the pretensions of Qussai, yielded to him the guardianship of the Kaba and the government of Mecca : further, still more strongly to mark the justice of Qussai's position, Amr decreed the price of blood for all men killed on the side of the latter, while the dead amongst the Khozaites were allowed to pass un-avenged by fine.

Such is the most generally received account of the way in which the command of Mecca passed into the hands of Qussai. Some, however, are of opinion that Holail, the Khozaite king, openly held that Qussai was best entitled to succeed him, and therefore left to his son-in-law the coveted inheritance. Others maintain that the monarch in question gave up the care of the Kaba, with its keys, to his daughter Hobba, and appointed an individual of the name of Ghubshan to assist her ; whereupon Qussai—so runs the legend—made the man intoxicated and purchased from him, when in a state of incapability, the control of the sacred city in exchange for a skin of wine and some camels—a proceeding which the Khozaites resenting, hostilities ensued. A third statement is that the last-mentioned tribe, being attacked by a deadly pestilence, which nearly extirpated them, resolved to evacuate Mecca, selling or otherwise disposing of their houses in the city.

However, be the circumstances what they may, it is beyond question that towards the middle of the fifth century (A.D. 440) Qussai ruled supreme at Mecca. The first act of his authority was to bring within the valley his kinsmen of Quraish descent, many of whom had been wont to live in the surrounding glens and

mountains : this done, the town was laid out anew, a separate quarter being allotted to each family. But so large an influx of inhabitants, added to the regular distribution of the land, swelled the city far beyond its previous bounds, and the site of the new habitations trenched upon the acacias and brushwood of the valley. It chanced that the superstition of the place had invested the trees with so peculiar a sanctity that the people feared to remove them. Without hesitation Qussai, superior to such scruples, seized a hatchet, the Quraish followed his example, and the wilderness was soon cleared. Owing to his having effected the reunion of his clan, Qussai was called "the Gatherer." The next civic work of this enterprising chieftain was to build a Hall of Council, near the Kaba, having its porch opening towards that sacred spot. Here all political movements were discussed, and social ceremonies solemnised. In this building, too, girls first assumed the dress of womanhood, and within its revered precincts marriages were celebrated. Thence all caravans set forth, and thither the traveller, on returning from his journey, first bent his steps. When war was imminent it was there that the banner was mounted upon its staff by Qussai himself, or by one of his sons. The assumption of the presidency in the Hall of Council riveted the authority of its builder as the Shaikh of Mecca, and governor of the country, and "both before and after his death"—such is the language of one of the most famous of Muslim historians—"his ordinances were obeyed and venerated as people obey and venerate the observances of religion."

Besides these civil offices, Qussai possessed the

chief religious dignities connected with the worship of the nation ; thus he held the keys, and with them the control, of the Kaba, or holy of holies, in the temple of Mecca ; his was the privilege of giving drink to the votaries who were wont annually to repair to the sacred city, and providing them with food—prerogatives which in the eyes of the generous Arabs, invested his name with a peculiar lustre. During the pilgrimage leathern bags of water were, at his instigation, hung up at Mecca, and other places in the vicinity ; and stimulating the liberality of the inhabitants he persuaded them to subscribe annually an ample fund, which was expended by himself in the gratuitous distribution of food to the pilgrims. With strange inconsistency, though it was ostensibly to secure the right of marshalling the processions of pilgrims on their return from Mecca that he drew his sword, he did not, when established in power, personally exercise this prerogative, which, in common with some other privileges, he delegated to the hands of subordinates.

The last days of the Patriarch are portrayed by the Arab historian "Waqidi" in terms of simplicity, which enhances the charm of all that proceeds from the pen of a writer, whose language recalls in some measure the unaffected grandeur of early biblical narrative :—

"In process of time Qussai became old and infirm. Abdul Dar was the oldest of his sons, but he lacked influence and power, and his brethren raised themselves up against him. Wherefore Qussai resigned all his offices into the hands of his firstborn, saying : 'Thus wilt thou retain thine authority over thy people, even though they raise themselves up against thee : let no man enter the Kaba unless thou hast opened it unto him : nor let any banner

of the Quraish be mounted upon its staff for war, excepting by thine own hands : let no one drink at Mecca, but of the water which thou hast drawn, nor any pilgrim eat therein save of thy food : and let not the Quraish resolve upon any business but in thy Council Hall.' So he gave him up the Hall of Council, and the custody of the Holy House, and the giving of drink and of food, that he might unite his brethren unto him. And Qussai died and was buried in Al Hajun."

So passed Qussai from the stage of life, towards the middle of the fifth century of the Christian era.

For a time, and not without considerable difficulty, the eldest son, Abdul Dar, contrived, notwithstanding his weakness, to retain at least a nominal supremacy. But he enjoyed little influence in comparison with his brother Abd Manaf, on whom the real management of public affairs devolved, and who laid out fresh quarters for the growing population of the city. Before the death of Abdul Dar the whole of the offices of state and religion passed into the hands of his sons ; but they all died within a short space of time, and his grandsons, who inherited the dignities of the family (A.D. 500), were of too tender years effectually to maintain their rights. Meanwhile, the sons of Abd Manaf having grown up and continued in possession of their father's influence, conspired to wrest from the descendants of Abdul Dar the hereditary offices bequeathed by Qussai. Amongst the new candidates for power one Hashim took the lead, grounding his claim on the superior dignity attaching to his branch of the family. But the descendants of Abdul Dar refused to cede any of their rights, and an open rupture ensued. The community of

Mecca was equally divided between the two factions, one portion of the Quraish siding with the claimants to, and the others with the actual possessors of, the offices, while but few remained neutral. Both parties swore that they would prosecute their claim and be faithful amongst themselves "so long as there remained in the sea sufficient water to wet a tuft of wool." To add stringency to their oath, Hashim and his faction filled a dish with aromatic substances; this done and having placed it close to the Kaba and put their hands therein, they rubbed them upon the Holy House and invoked the aid of the gods to their enterprise. The opposite party similarly dipped *their* hands into a bowl of blood and sought the assistance of the powers of Heaven. The opponents now made ready for the contest, and the ranks were already marshalled within sight of each other, when for some unexplained cause they mutually called for a truce. The conditions proposed were that Hashim and his party should have the offices of providing food and water for the pilgrims, the descendants of Abdul Dar, as hitherto, retaining the custody of the Kaba and the Hall of Council, as well as the right of raising the banner. Upon these terms peace was restored, and the disputants returned to their homes, each faction content with its bloodless victory.

Hashim thus installed in the office of entertaining the pilgrims, fulfilled his duties with a princely magnificence. Not only was he himself possessed of great riches, but many others of the Quraish had also by trading acquired much wealth. He appealed to them, therefore, as his grandfather Qussai had done before him: "Ye are neighbours of God and the

keepers of His house. The pilgrims who come honouring the sanctity of this temple are His guests, and it is meet that ye should entertain them above all other guests. Ye are especially chosen of God and exalted unto this high dignity ; therefore, honour His guests and refresh them. For, from distant cities on their lean and jaded camels they come unto you fatigued and harassed, with hair dishevelled and bodies covered with the dust and squalor of the long way. Then invite them hospitably and furnish them with water in abundance." Hashim set the example by a munificent expenditure from his own resources, and the Quraish were not backward in contributing, every man according to his ability, though a fixed cess was also levied upon them all. Water sufficient for the prodigious assemblage was collected from the wells of Mecca, in cisterns close by the Kaba, and in reservoirs of leather at the various stations frequented by the votaries who annually repaired to the sacred city. The distribution of food commenced upon the day on which the pilgrims set out for the sacred city and Mount Arafat (of which more anon), and continued till the assemblage dispersed. During this period they were entertained with pottage of meat and bread, or of butter and barley, variously prepared, and with the favourite national repast of dates.

Thus Hashim supported the credit of Mecca. But his name is even more renowned for the splendid charity by which he relieved the necessities of his fellow citizens, when the latter were by a long-continued famine reduced to extreme distress. On that occasion he proceeded to Syria, and purchasing an immense stock of food, packed it in panniers, and

conveyed it upon camels to Mecca. There the provisions were cooked, the camels slaughtered and roasted, which done, the whole was divided amongst the people.

The foreign relations of the Quraish were managed solely by the sons of Abd Manaf; though with the Byzantine authorities and the Ghassanide prince a treaty was concluded by Hashim himself, who received from the Emperor a rescript authorising the tribe to travel to and from Syria in safety. He also secured the friendship of the inhabitants on the road by promising to carry their goods without hire. One brother, too, Abd Shams by name, made a treaty with a neighbouring people, in pursuance of which the Quraish traded to Abyssinia; while his other brothers concluded alliances respectively with the King of Persia, who allowed them to traffic in Iraq and Fars, and with the Kings of Himyar, who encouraged commercial operations in Yaman. Thus the affairs of the Quraish prospered in every direction.

To Hashim is further ascribed the credit of having established upon an uniform footing the mercantile expeditions of his people, so that every winter a caravan set out regularly for Yaman and Abyssinia, while in the summer a second visited the marts of Syria.

The success and glory of Hashim exposed him to the envy of the son of his brother, Abd Shams. This chief, Omaiya by name, was opulent, and he expended his riches in a vain attempt to rival the splendour of his uncle's munificence. The Quraish perceived the endeavour, and turned it into ridicule. Omaiya was enraged. "Who," said he, "is Hashim?" So he

defied him to a trial of tongues, each party endeavouring to establish his pretensions to superiority. Hashim would willingly have avoided a wrangle with one so much his inferior both in years and dignity; but the people, who loved such exhibitions, would not excuse him: so the proud chieftain consented; but on the express stipulation that the vanquished party should lose fifty black-eyed camels, and pass ten years in exile from Mecca. A Khozaite soothsayer was appointed umpire, who, having heard the pretensions of both, pronounced Hashim to be the victor. The conqueror took the fifty camels, and slaughtering them in the desert, fed therewith all the people who were present, while in turn Omaiya set out for Syria, and remained there the stipulated period of his banishment. The circumstance is carefully and superstitiously noted by the Muhammadan writers as the first trace of that rivalry between the Hashimite and Omayyad factions which in after ages shook the Khalifat to its base.

Hashim, now advanced in years, chanced, on a mercantile journey to the north, to visit Madina with a party of the Quraish. As he traded there in one of the markets of the city he was attracted by the graceful form of a female, directing her people from an elevated position how to buy and sell for her. She was discreet, and withal comely, and made a tender impression upon the heart of Hashim. He inquired of the citizens whether she was married or single, and they answered that she was divorced. They added, however, that the dignity of Salma, daughter of Amr—the name which the fair enchantress bore—was so great amongst her people, that she would not

narry, save on the condition that she should remain mistress of her own actions, and have at pleasure the power of divorce. Hashim, in spite of the reservations in question, offered her his hand in marriage—to such an alliance she was nothing loth, for she was well aware of his renown and noble birth. So he married her, and made a great feast to the Quraish, of whom forty were present with the caravan. The result of this union was a son named Shiba, born (A.D. 500) at her father's home in Madina, whither the bride had retired.

Scarce had the sixth century dawned upon mankind than Hashim was gathered to his fathers, an event which is generally supposed to have occurred in A.D. 510. He left his dignities to his elder brother Al Muttalib, who conducted the entertainment of the pilgrims in so splendid a style as to gain the epithet "The Munificent." Meanwhile his little nephew Shiba was growing up under the care of the widowed mother at Madina. Several years after his brother's death, Al Muttalib chanced to meet a traveller from the latter city, who described in glowing terms the noble bearing of the young Meccan. The chieftain's heart smote him because he had so long left his brother's son in a distant locality, and he set out forthwith to bring the lad to his ancestral home. Arrived at Madina, he inquired for the child, and found him practising archery among the boys of the city. Recognising the youth at once from his likeness to his father, he embraced him, wept over him, and clothed him in a suit of Yaman raiment. His mother sent to invite Al Muttalib to her house, but the zealous chieftain

refused to untie a knot of his camel's accoutrements until he had carried off the child to Mecca. Salma, taken by surprise at the proposal, was passionate in her grief. Al Muttalib, however, reasoned with her, and explained the great advantages which her son was losing by absence from his father's house. At length the fond mother, seeing the man's determined action, relented, and in a few days the lad turned his back upon the home of his childhood. Reaching Mecca in broad light of day, the people supposed that the new-comer was a slave whom his master had purchased, and exclaimed, "Abdul Muttalib," which being interpreted is, "the servant of Al Muttalib;" though the necessary explanations at once convinced them of their error, the appellation clung to the son of Hashim for the rest of his life.

Al Muttalib proceeded in due time to instal his nephew in the possession of his father's property; but Naufal, another uncle, interposed and violently deprived the young man of his paternal estate. Abdul Muttalib, who by this time had reached years of discretion, appealed to his tribe to aid him in resisting the usurpation of his rights, but they declined to interfere. He then wrote to his maternal relatives at Madina, who no sooner received the intelligence than eighty mounted men, with Abu Asad at their head, started for Mecca. Abdul Muttalib went forth to meet the party, and invited them to his house, but Abu Asad refused to alight till he had called Naufal to account. So proceeding straightway to the yard of the Holy House he found the man he sought seated in the midst of the Quraish

chiefs. Naufal rose to welcome the new-comer, who, however, refused to accept the proffered hospitality, and drawing his sword sternly declared he would plunge it into the Meccan's bosom unless the latter forthwith reinstated the orphan in his rights. The oppressor was daunted, and agreed to make restitution, ratifying his pledge on oath before the assembled multitude.

Some years after these events, Al Muttalib died while on a mercantile expedition to Yaman, whereupon Abdul Muttalib succeeded to the office of entertaining the pilgrims. But for a long time he was destitute of power and influence, and having but one son to assist him in the assertion of his claims, he found it difficult to cope with the opposing faction of the Quraish. However, good fortune had not deserted him, for, at this period of his career, he discovered the ancient Meccan well "Zamzam," in after years immortalised by the devotions of countless myriads of devotees, who with its waters purge their souls of the offences and sins of corrupt humanity. It happened thus: Finding it laborious to procure water from the scattered wells of Mecca, and store it in cisterns by the Kaba, perhaps, too, aware by tradition of the existence of a well in the vicinity, he made diligent search, and at last came upon the circle of its venerable masonry. It was a remnant of the palmy days of the city, when a rich and incessant stream of commerce flowed in this direction. Centuries had elapsed since the trade had ceased, and with it followed the desertion of Mecca, and the neglect of the well, which had been choked up, either accidentally or by design, the remembrance thereof being so

indistinct that even the site of the spring was unknown.

As Abdul Muttalib, aided by his son, dug deeper and deeper, he came upon two golden gazelles, with the swords and suits of armour which had been buried there by the Jorhomite king more than three centuries before. The rest of the Quraish, envying him these treasures, demanded a share in them. They asserted their right also to the well itself, which they declared had been possessed by their common ancestor Ishmael. Abdul Muttalib was not powerful enough to resist the claim, but he agreed to refer their several pretensions to the decision of *Hobal*, the god whose image was within the Kaba. So six arrows were taken; two coloured yellow for the Kaba, two painted black for Abdul Muttalib, and two stained white for the Quraish. Lots were then cast, with a result that the gazelles fell to the share of the temple, the swords and suits of armour became the lot of Abdul Muttalib, while the Quraish drew blanks. The latter tribe could not avoid acquiescing in the divine will, and were perforce constrained to relinquish the pretensions they had put forward. Abdul Muttalib beat out the golden gazelles into plates, and fixed them by way of ornament to the door of the Kaba, while he hung up the swords before the entrance as a protection to the treasures within. At the same time he added a more effectual guard, in the shape of a lock and key, both of which, so it is said, were made of gold.

The plentiful flow of fresh water which soon filled the "Zamzam," was a great triumph to its fortunate possessor. All other wells in Mecca were now

deserted, and the new spring alone patronised ; but above all, from this source the pilgrims were henceforth supplied, and the liquid stream soon began to share in the sacredness attaching to the Kaba. The fame and influence of Abdul Muttalib rapidly increased, and a large family of sons, born to him in later years, added to the estimation in which he was held. For a lengthened period, it is true, he had but one son ; feeling so strongly his weakness and inferiority in contending with the large and influential families of those who, in his early career, opposed and thwarted him, he vowed a vow that if destiny should ever grant him ten sons, he would devote one of them as a sacrifice to the Fates. Years rolled on, and the rash father at last found himself surrounded by the fatal number in question, the sight of whom daily reminded him of his pledge. But the oath was sacred and could not be disregarded ; bidding his sons accompany him to the Kaba, each was made to write his name upon a lot, which done, the whole of these were made over to the Intendant of the Temple, who cast them in the usual manner. The fatal arrow fell upon the youngest and best beloved of all Abdul Muttalib's sons. The father was inconsolable, but the vow devoting him to the gods, must needs be kept, and the sacrifice be made ready. His daughters wept and clung around the fond parent, who was willingly persuaded to cast lots between the lad and ten camels, the current fine for the blood of a man. If the Deity should accept the ransom, there need be no scruple in sparing the son. But the lot a second time fell upon the hapless youth. Again, and with

the same result, it was cast between him and twenty camels. At each successive trial Abdul Muttalib added ten camels to the stake, but Fortune was inexorable. It was now the tenth throw, and the ransom had reached a hundred camels, when the lot at last fell upon the unfortunate animals. The father joyfully released the young man from his impending fate, and taking the creatures slaughtered them as food for the inhabitants of Mecca, the residue being left to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, for the family of Abdul Muttalib refused to taste of food hallowed as a sacrifice to the gods.

The story is romantic, but pregnant with importance. The events of that day had changed the history of the world, inasmuch, as the lad, Abdullah by name, whose life was thus spared, lived to become the father of the Prophet of Arabia.

After an interval of some years passed by Abdul Muttalib in consolidating his power and strengthening his position, the hand of time points to the memorable year, A.D. 570, when Mecca was invaded by Abraha, the Abyssinian Viceroy of Yaman. That potentate had erected at Sana a magnificent cathedral, a circumstance which inflamed the hearts of the Arabs with angry feelings, as they considered it an attempt to divert the pilgrimage of their tribes to another direction than that of the sacred precincts of Mecca ; so they assumed a hostile attitude and endeavoured to thwart the building of the objectionable edifice. The Viceroy, enraged in turn at this state of affairs, resolved to attack the "City of Cities," and raze its temple to the ground. Upon this enterprise he set out with a considerable army, in the train of which

was led an elephant, a circumstance so singular and remarkable in the annals of Arabia, that the commander, his host, the invasion, and the year are to this day linked in the memories of the people with the name of that mighty creature. A prince of the old Himyar stock, with an army of Arab adherents, was the first to oppose the advance of the Abyssinians. The venturous warrior was, however, defeated, though his life was spared, and he was permitted to follow the camp of the conqueror as a prisoner of war. A like result attended the efforts of a local chieftain, who, in the northern limits of Yaman, endeavoured to stop the progress of the invasion. Thence the elated Abyssinian proceeded to a spot but three days' march from Mecca; the inhabitants—possibly making discretion the better part of valour—sent to say that they had no concern with the Kaba, to destroy which was the object of the warlike enterprise, and would willingly permit a guide to direct the Abyssinian army to the spot. For this purpose they sent a man named Abu Rughal, but scarce had the treacherous miscreant proceeded a day's march than he sickened and died. Centuries afterwards the Meccans were wont to mark their abhorrence of the traitor by casting stones at his tomb as they passed. In spite of the misfortune which befel their guide, the Abyssinian troops continued their journey, carrying off what cattle they could secure, amongst the rest, some camels belonging to Abdul Muttalib, till they came at length to the outskirts of the city; an embassy was then despatched to the inhabitants. "Abraha," so the message ran, "had no desire to do them injury. His only object was to demolish the Kaba—that

performed, he would retire without shedding the blood of any."

The Meccans had already resolved that it would be vain to oppose the invader by force of arms, but the destruction of the Kaba they refused to allow upon any save compulsory terms. At last the embassy prevailed upon Abdul Muttalib and the chieftains of some of the other Meccan tribes to repair to the Viceroy's camp, and there plead their cause. The visitors were treated with distinguished honour. To gain over the envoy the camels which had been plundered from him on the march, were restored by Abraha; but the dusky warrior could obtain no answer such as to meet his wishes in regard to the Kaba. "Another is its master who will surely defend it," was the oracular speech of the Hashimite envoy. The chiefs who accompanied the Quraish ruler, less confident in the miraculous protection thus promised, offered a third of the wealth of the region of Tihama if the Abyssinian Viceroy would desist from his designs against their temple. But he refused; the negotiations were thereupon broken off, and the chieftains returned to Mecca. The people, by the advice of their head, now made preparations for retiring in a body to the hills and defiles in the vicinity, on the day before the expected attack. As Abdul Muttalib leaned upon the ring of the door of the Kaba he is said to have prayed aloud in the following terms, to the Deity whom he had been taught to worship and venerate:—"Defend, O Lord, thine own Home, and suffer not the cross to triumph over the Kaba!" He then relaxed his hold, and betaking himself with the rest of the people to

the neighbouring heights, awaited the course of events.

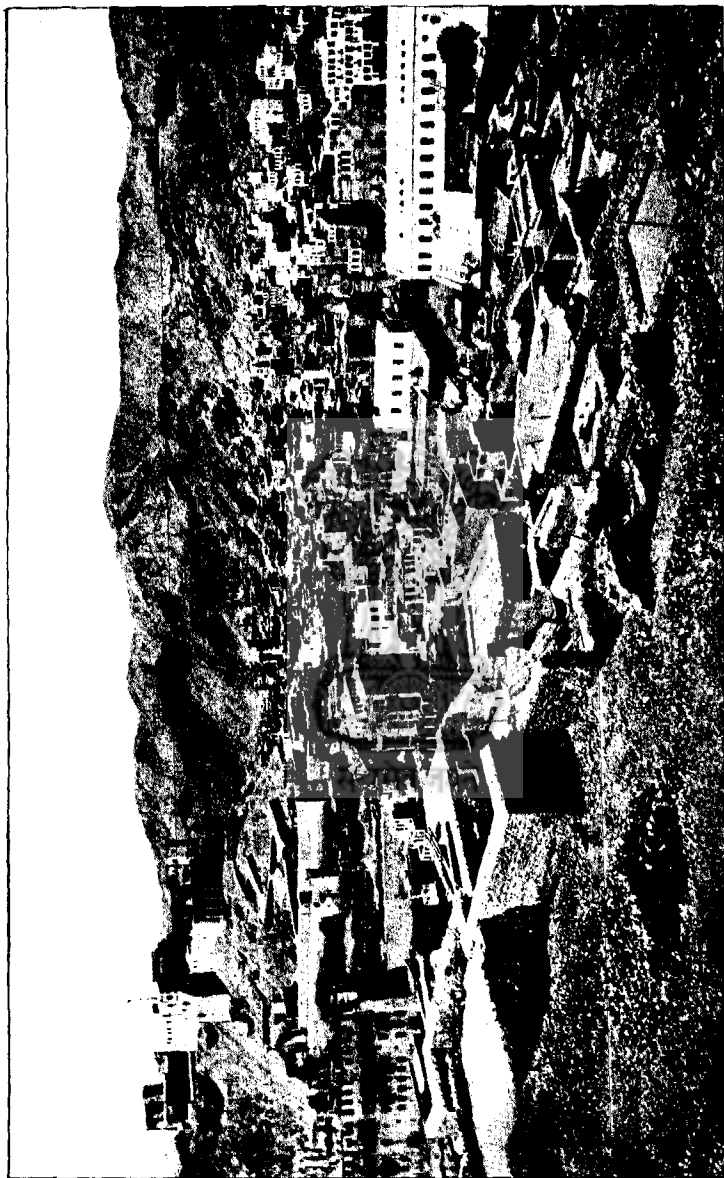
Meanwhile a pestilential distemper had shown itself in the camp of the Abyssinian Viceroy. It broke out with deadly pustules and frightful blains, and was probably an aggravated form of small-pox. In confusion and dismay the army commenced its retreat. Abandoned by their guides many perished among the valleys, while a flood (such is the pious legend) sent by the wrath of Heaven, swept off multitudes into the sea. Abraha himself, a mass of malignant and putrid sores, died in pain and misery on his return to his capital.

After the disastrous termination of the Expedition of the Elephant, Abdul Muttalib, then about seventy years of age, enjoyed the rank and consideration of the foremost chief of Mecca. A few months previous to this event he had taken his youngest son, Abdullah, a stripling of four-and-twenty summers, to the house of a distant kinsman, and there affianced him to a lady of the name of Amina. The bridegroom remained with his wife for three days, and then set out on a mercantile expedition to Syria. On his way back he sickened and died at Madina, leaving his young widow far advanced in pregnancy. So it happened that fifty-three days after the attack of Abraha—that is 20th August, A.D. 570—a hapless infant was born into the world, inheriting nought but five camels, a flock of goats, and the house in which his mother dwelt, to which heritage of wealth it may be perhaps fair to add the slave girl (Baraka by name) who tended the suckling. Abdul Muttalib on hearing the tidings, took the infant in his arms, and went to

the Kaba, where, standing by the holy house, he gave thanks to God. The child thus ushered into life with all the surroundings of poverty and humility, was called Muhammad, and was destined in the fulness of time to become the Prophet of Arabia, at whose command countless thousands bent their knee in submissive obedience, while his memory still lives in the hearts of innumerable myriads of devotees, who worship as a god a being twelve centuries ago no more than a poor, feeble, portionless babe of the desert.



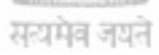
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APPROACH TO MECCA.

Reproduced by permission from C. Snouck Hurgronje's "Bildcrans Mekka."

[To face p. 34.



CHAPTER II

MUHAMMAD. A.D. 570-632

ACCORDING to the wont of the Arabs, the infant Muhammad was made over to the charge of a slave woman named Baraka : but after he had been suckled a few days, a party of wanderers from the desert arrived at Mecca with several women, who offered themselves as nurses for the infants of the city. Accordingly the child was placed in the hands of one of the matrons in question, by name Halima, and for five years he remained amongst the Bani Sad in the tents of his adopted parents. To this accidental residence amidst the most eloquent of Arab tribes, the Prophet of Arabia was indebted for the elegance of diction which contributed so much in after years towards the success of his mission. "Verily, I am the most perfect Arab amongst you ; my descent is from the Quraish, and my tongue is the tongue of the Bani Sad." Such was the boast of a man, conscious how much in his career was due to the beauty and sweetness of the language in which he clothed the thoughts, the expression of which gave life and vigour to the mission he proclaimed.

After remaining at Mecca for upwards of a year, Muhammad was taken by his mother, Amina, to Madina, but on the return home, after a sojourn of a month in the city, she fell sick and died (A.D. 576). Whereupon the little orphan was carried back to his native city, Mecca, by his nurse Baraka, who handed him over to his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, at that time a patriarch of fourscore years. "The child," says Sir W. Muir, "was treated by him with singular fondness. A rug used to be spread under the shadow of the Kaba, and on it the aged chief reclined in shelter from the heat of the sun. Around the carpet, but at a respectful distance, sat his sons. The little Muhammad was wont to run close up to the patriarch and unceremoniously take possession of his rug; his sons would seek to drive him off, but Abdul Muttalib would interpose, saying, 'Let my little son alone,' stroke him on the back, and delight to hear his childish prattle."

Thus passed an interval of two years, when the grandfather paid the debt of nature (A.D. 578), having on his deathbed consigned the guardianship of his orphan grandchild to his son Abu Talib, who discharged the trust with most scrupulous care and diligence: indeed, he scarce ever allowed the lad to leave his side, and when he had occasion to undertake a mercantile journey to Syria, it needed but little persuasion on the part of the child, now twelve years old, to induce his benefactor to allow him to accompany the caravan.

The youth of Muhammad was spent amongst the hills and dales around Mecca, tending such sheep and goats as might from time to time be placed in his

charge, the hire received being taken home to his uncle Abu Talib, whose slender resources stood in need of any assistance which the young shepherd could afford. But a change was at hand. Abu Talib determined that his nephew, who had reached his five-and-twentieth birthday, should seek a more extended sphere of action. "I am, as thou knowest, a man of small substance, and truly the times deal hardly with me." Such was the language of the noble but impoverished Quraishite. "Now here is a caravan of thine own tribe about to start for Syria, and Khadija, daughter of Quwailid, needeth men of our tribe to send forth with her merchandise. If thou wert to offer thyself she would readily accept thy services." So it happened that Muhammad betook himself to Syria, where he acquitted himself with sagacity and prudence. On his return he recounted to Khadija the tale of his doings, and the handsome widow, struck by the noble features and comely form of the young man before her, formed the resolution that her agent should, if thus it might chance, fill the more dignified portion of husband. It may well be imagined that the young man was nothing loth. Khadija was distinguished alike by birth and fortune, in that her father Quwailid was a direct and near descendant of the famous Qussai, while the considerable substance which she inherited by her former marriages had been increased by mercantile speculation. Added to this, she was handsome and fair to behold. But how could she expect her father to consent to the alliance. She, a matron whose hand had been sought by many a noble suitor from amongst the chiefs of the Quraish,

while Muhammad was but poor and humble, with no pretensions and no prospects. The difficulty was, however, speedily overcome. The ready-witted widow prepared a feast at which she induced her father to partake somewhat freely of the good cheer provided for him. When matters were ripe, she artfully introduced the object of her adoration, and induced the old man to unite him in marriage with herself in the presence of a witness. Awakening to clearer consciousness the fond father was surprised to find himself surrounded by tokens of a nuptial feast. Still greater was his astonishment when he learned what had happened, and that he had given his consent to a match of which he did not approve.

This union (A.D. 595) proved the turning-point in Muhammad's career, as it not only removed from his path the necessity of living by the sweat of his brow, but afforded him time and opportunity to reflect upon, and bring into play those spiritual longings which for years had agitated his bosom. It was also emphatically a happy marriage, while, in spite of Khadija's somewhat mature age, no less than six children in due course gladdened the abode of the future Lawgiver of Arabia. The eldest offspring was a son, by name Qasim, then followed four daughters in succession, Zainab, Rukayya, Fatima, and Umm Kalzum; last of all was born his second son, Abdullah.

For a considerable period the tenor of Muhammad's life was smooth and uneventful, but when he was about five-and-thirty years old an incident occurred in his career, foreshadowing that marvellous power of turning to account the ordinary circum-

stances of life, which, in after times, gave him a command over the hearts of men such as has never been surpassed, rarely indeed equalled, in the history of the world. In A.D. 605, it happened that a violent storm sweeping down the valley of Mecca, hurled destruction upon the sacred temple; while to add to the evil, the edifice being roofless, a band of robbers clambered over the walls and carried off some of the relics. Though these latter were recovered, it was resolved that measures should be taken to avoid dangers of theft in the future; accordingly the Quraish, dividing themselves into four bodies, commenced to heighten the walls, of which one was assigned to each of the four sections of the tribe. In spite of the sacrilege of dismantling the holy fabric, so sacred in the eyes of a pious Arab, the work proceeded without interruption, until it became necessary to place the venerated "Black Stone" (to be hereafter described) in such a position in the Eastern Corner, that it could readily be kissed by the votaries who annually repaired to the temple. The honour of handling this most revered of relics was so great that each family of the Quraish advanced an exclusive pretension to the coveted privilege. The strife waxed warm, and the danger of bloodshed became imminent. It so happened that Muhammad one day chanced to pass through the midst, at a time when the various aspirants, unable to arrange their quarrel, had argued that the first person who entered by a certain gate of the city should be arbitrator in the matter; it thus fell to the lot of "The faithful," as he was known amongst his kinsfolk, to decide the dispute. "Calm and self-possessed," so writes the biographer

of the Prophet of Arabia, "Muhammad received the commission, and, with his usual sagacity, at once resolved upon an expedient which should conciliate all. Taking off his mantle and spreading it upon the ground, he placed the stone thereon, and said, 'Now let one from each of your four divisions come forward, and raise a corner of this mantle.' Four chiefs approached, and seizing the corners simultaneously, lifted the stone. When it had reached the proper height, Muhammad with his own hand guided it to its place."

Five comparatively uneventful years elapsed, and the hero of this episode was now approaching his fortieth year.

"Always pensive," again we quote the eloquent words of Sir William Muir, "he had of late become even more thoughtful and retiring. Contemplation and reflection now engaged his whole mind. The debasement of his people, his own uncertainty as to the true religion, the dim and imperfect shadows of Judaism and Christianity exciting doubts without satisfying them, pressed heavily upon his soul, and he frequently retired to seek relief in meditation amongst the solitary valleys and rocks near Mecca. His favourite spot was a cave in the declivities at the foot of Mount Hira, a lofty conical hill, two or three miles north of Mecca. Thither he would retire for some days at a time, and his faithful wife sometimes accompanied him. The continued solitude, instead of stilling his anxiety, magnified into sterner and more impressive shapes the solemn realities which perplexed and agitated his soul. . . . All around was bleak and rugged. . . . There was harmony between these desert scenes of external nature and the troubled, chaotic elements of the spiritual world within. By degrees his impulsive and susceptible mind was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement; and he would give vent to his agitation in wild and rhapsodical language, the counterpart of his inward struggles after truth."

It may readily be supposed that the careless and

indifferent denizens of the desert received, as the day-dreams of a half-witted enthusiast, the warnings and expostulations which Muhammad now began to utter; yet a few regarded his sayings with attention if not with reverence; but even these latter argued that they had better be content with the light their Maker had given them. "If," said they, "a Prophet had been sent unto us, we should, no doubt, have followed his directions, and been equally devout and spiritual in our worship as the Jews and Christians." Though surrounded by a small band of adherents who recognised him as their spiritual head, Muhammad saw clearly that he would be powerless, unless charged with a "Divine commission" to call forth his people from darkness into light. Distracted in mind and soul, he betook himself to the desert, where under the canopy of the skies, he struggled with a destiny fraught, in his case, with such difficulties and anxieties. But while he meditated on these things a heavenly visitant appeared before his astonished eyes (so Muslims would have it believed), charged with the "memorable behest" *—

"Recite in the name of the Lord who created :—
Created Man from nought but congealed blood :—
Recite! For thy Lord is beneficent.
It is He who hath taught (to record Revelation) with the Pen ;—
Hath taught Man that which he knoweth not.
Nay, verily Man is rebellious ;
Because he seeth himself to abound in Wealth.
Verily unto thy Lord is the return of all.
Hast thou seen him that holdeth back
The servant (of God) when he prayeth ?
What thinkest thou ? had he listened to right Direction,

* *Quran*, chapter 96.

And commanded unto Piety?

Dost thou not see that he hath rejected the Truth, and turned his back;

What! Doth he not know that God seeth?

Nay, verily, if he forbear not, We shall drag him by the Forelock—
The lying, sinful Forelock!

Then let him call his company of friends, and We shall call the
guards of Hell;

Nay! submit not unto him; but worship, and draw nigh unto the
Lord."

Muhammad now (A.D. 610) claimed to have become the servant of God, the Prophet of the Most High, but his "Mission" was unheeded; the busy world had no mind to listen to the rhapsodies of a religious enthusiast. Weary in mind, and his soul filled with despair, the idea seized his frenzied brain, that to end an existence so painful and full of perplexities, he would rush headlong over one of the wild cliffs where he was wont to repair to cool his thoughts, and collect his ideas. But his better judgment prevailed, and the fatal resolution was cast aside. An invisible influence held him back! Nor did he pass unrewarded; again for the second time an angel from heaven came down from the skies with comfort and support for the struggling and tortured son of Adam, and, falling into a trance, he received the command to "Arise and preach."

Slowly and surely did the twice-consecrated "Mission" of Muhammad gain ground. In the forty-fourth year of his age (A.D. 614), we find him surrounded by a knot of adherents, all of whom looked up to him as their divinely-appointed guide.

The first convert to his doctrines is supposed to have been the faithful wife of his bosom, though

certain sectaries would have it believed otherwise. "So Khadija believed," thus is it recorded in the annals of Islam, "and attested the truth of that which came from God. Thus was the Lord minded to lighten the burden of his Prophet, for he heard nothing that grieved him touching his rejection by his people, but he had recourse unto her, and she comforted, reassured, and supported him." Her example was followed by Zaid, the husband of Baraka, the nurse of Muhammad; while his father's brother's son, the lad Ali, who lived under the same roof with the Prophet, had grown up from a child in the faith of his distinguished guardian and protector. To this small group—the first germs of the Muslim faith—must be added the name of Abu Bakr, the bosom friend of the new apostle—a convert who, as possessing both wealth and influence, secured for the recently proclaimed creed an amount of consideration and respect which it could scarcely have otherwise obtained. Within a period of between three or four years after Muhammad had assumed the rôle of a Prophet, the converts to his preaching amounted to upwards of forty souls, including amongst the number the well-known Osman, who, together with the aforementioned Ali, succeeded in the fulness of time to the position held by the founder of the faith; nor must mention be omitted of the famous Bilal, the son of an Abyssinian slave-girl, shortly, and for future ages, to be renowned throughout the Muhammadan world as the first "Muazzin," or "Crier to Prayer."

It was not to be expected that the citizens of Mecca would regard with much favour the man who was wont "to speak unto the people about the

heavens." The religion of their ancestors might be wrong, but what evidence had *they* that the "Divine commission" of the Prophet who had sprung up in their midst was aught but a device to secure to himself the obedience and support of his credulous brethren? When, however, Muhammad began to abuse their idols, and to proclaim that all who trusted in such blocks of wood and stone would be consigned to the bottomless pit, "they became displeased, and began to treat him with contumely." Yet at this time, as is generally the case, persecution failed in its object, while, on the other hand, it afforded a plausible excuse for opposing force to force against those who "obstructed the ways of the Lord"; and so it happened that a contention arose, and "the first blood was shed in Islam."

In the fourth year of his Mission (A.D. 614), Muhammad removed to the house of a convert named Arqam, with the view of more peaceably expounding his new creed to those who were prepared to give him ear. Aggravated by the success of the sect which had sprung up, the Quraish commenced to ill-treat such of the humbler converts as came within the pale of their vengeance, and the wretched beings whom they seized were exposed "in the glare of the mid-day sun, upon the scorching gravel of the Meccan valley," till anguish induced them to revile their Prophet, and acknowledge the idols of their kinsfolk and fellow-countrymen. Unable to protect these sufferers for the faith, Muhammad enjoined them to seek in a foreign land that security which was denied them in their own kingdom. "Yonder," said he, pointing to the West, "lieth a region wherein

no one is wronged—a land of righteousness. Depart thither, and there remain till it pleaseth the Lord to open your way before you.” So in the fifth year of the Prophet’s ministry (A.D. 615), a party of fifteen souls embarked in haste for Abyssinia.

“On this occasion,” says Sir W. Muir, “the emigrants were few, but the part they acted was of deep importance in the history of Islam. It convinced the Meccans of the sincerity and resolution of the converts, and proved their readiness to undergo any loss and any hardship rather than abjure the faith of Muhammad; a bright example of self-denial was exhibited to the believers generally, who were led to regard peril and exile in the cause of God as a glorious privilege and distinction. It suggested that the hostile attitude of their fellow-citizens, together with the purity of their own faith, might secure for them within the limits of Arabia itself a sympathy and hospitality as cordial as that afforded by the Abyssinians; and thus it gave birth to the idea of a greater Hijra—the emigration to Madina.”

At this time the “Apostle of the Lord”—such was the title which he had assumed—broken in spirit, when he reflected on the small progress made in converting his fellow-countrymen, conceived the idea of effecting a compromise with his opponents; so one day, entering a group of Meccans who were assembled in the Kaba, he recited to them a revelation which contained an acknowledgment of the idols of Arabia. The Quraish, surprised and delighted at this recognition of their deities, prostrated themselves with one accord on the ground. With the rapidity of the wind, the rumour spread throughout the city that they had been converted, and in a brief time the welcome news was wafted to the far-off shores of Abyssinia. Encouraged by the glad tidings, the little band of refugees who had settled therein at

once determined to revisit the land of their birth, where, under the altered condition of affairs, they felt sure of a warm and hospitable reception. So, three months after they had shaken off the dust of their feet against Mecca, they once again (A.D. 616) reappeared at the gates of the sacred city. But much had happened during the eventful weeks in which they had journeyed along with joyous hearts and eager expectations. Muhammad had made a compromise with his opponents, but he quickly perceived that his policy of concession had not stood him in good stead: the worship of images continued, while the God of Islam remained unhonoured and unheeded. The dilemma was perplexing, but his resolve was firm and unhesitating; he denounced his own actions, and proclaimed that "the devil had deceived him." Ever at hand to comfort and console the dejected Apostle of the Lord, an angel now came down from heaven, but his mission was, on this occasion, prefaced by the stern rebuke, "What is this that thou hast done? thou hast repeated before the people words that I never gave unto thee." So the terrified penitent was led to cancel the verse which had brought down upon him the wrath of his Maker, and to substitute another, proclaiming the idols of Arabia as "naught but names." But the circumstance that Muhammad had temporised with idolatry seriously undermined his position at Mecca—his explanation was laughed to scorn, and persecution waxed hotter and more severe than ever. So the new-comers from Abyssinia, on their arrival, finding matters even worse than when they quitted the city some months before, were compelled to retrace their weary steps, and for the second

time they turned their backs upon their brethren. Their number, however, was further augmented, and on their return amounted to the not inconsiderable total of 101 souls, of whom 83 were men.

Muhammad himself remained behind, but he was exposed to insults of every description at the hands of the incensed populace, who were wont to pelt him in the streets; and now and again the Prophet, who in after years numbered his followers by millions of pious Muslims, was compelled to crouch under the ledge of projecting stones, there to offer up to Heaven his prayers to the God in whom he trusted! Strange and mysterious indeed are the workings of Providence!

In the sixth year of his Mission, Muhammad was fortunate enough to secure the adhesion to his cause of two citizens of position, by name Hamza and Omar. Encouraged by this circumstance, the Prophet of Arabia, abandoning the quiet seclusion of the "House of Islam"—for thus was called his humble abode at Mecca—betook himself with his followers to the Kaba, where before all the assembled multitudes the worship of the One God was thenceforth to be performed. Islam was no longer now a down-trodden, despised faith, held by a few isolated and, for the most part, obscure converts; but a powerful faction, which challenged open hostility with those who worshipped the gods of Arabia, the idols of wood and stone. In these circumstances the Quraish bethought themselves of an expedient to reduce to submission their rivals, and the Hashimite tribe by whom the latter were supported. They entered into a soleran bond, which they impressed with their seals and hung

up in the temple, to the effect that "they would not marry their women, nor give their own in marriage to them; that they would sell nothing to them, nor buy aught from them; that dealings with them of every kind should cease." Unable to resist the attacks thus made upon them, the Prophet and his followers retired (A. D. 617) into a secluded quarter of the city, where they soon found themselves deprived even of the barest necessities of life—the ban of the Quraish had taken fatal effect. For three years the well-nigh famished converts, in company with their wives and little ones, maintained the struggle; but the piteous cries and emaciated features of the hapless children indicated in unmistakable language how great were the hardships which the believers in the new faith had to undergo.

Fortunately a time of delivery was at hand. While the sympathies of the Quraish were aroused at the exemplary conduct of Muhammad under these trying circumstances, it was discovered that the parchment in the Kaba, on which the ban was engraved, had been devoured by vermin. Encouraged by this intelligence, the venerable Abu Talib, bent down as he was with the weight of more than fourscore years, proceeded with a troop of followers, and addressed the assembled tribe in these stirring words:—"Intelligence hath reached me that your parchment hath been eaten up of insects. If my words be found true, then desist from your evil designs; if false, I will deliver up Muhammad that ye may do with him as ye list." The proposal found acceptance—the document was fetched from the Kaba, and, true enough, the greater portion thereof had been

devoured by white ants, and was no longer legible. Abu Talib thereupon bitterly upbraided them for their inhumanity, and portrayed in forcible terms their breach of social kindness. So the refugees were allowed to go forth to their respective homes. Scarce had he time to rejoice over his success, ere the cup of joy was once again dashed from the lips of the exultant Prophet. Khadija, for five-and-twenty years the wife of his bosom, was at this period (Dec. A.D. 619) taken from him, and barely, too, had he begun to realise how great was his loss, when Abu Talib, who for forty years had nurtured and protected him, was gathered to his fathers. It was an occasion for action rather than grief—something must be done, seeing that the new faith had not materially gained ground at Mecca during the last three or four years. Muhammad thereupon determined to visit the neighbouring city of Tayif, in the hope that the people might be induced to give ear to his message. With this resolve, unaccompanied save by his faithful attendant Zaid, he set out on his adventurous mission, struggling through rocky defiles for forty weary miles, till he reached the fertile valleys which surrounded the city whither he was bending his steps. But he preached to heedless listeners; the chiefs received him with cold disdain, while the populace, contrasting the poverty of the man with the richness of his mission, regarded him with contempt, and, pelting him with stones, drove him forth from the town. Wearied and lacerated, the Prophet of Arabia took refuge in an orchard; but some wealthy Meccans, sitting in their pleasure gardens near Tayif, had watched the flight of Muhammad, and, moved by compassion at his sorry

condition, they sent a tray of grapes to refresh his parched lips. Somewhat relieved, he betook himself to prayer, and, falling down on his knees, poured forth a touching appeal to the Lord whom he worshipped. "O Lord! I make my complaint unto Thee of the feebleness of my strength and the poverty of my expedients, and of my insignificance before mankind. O Thou Most Merciful! Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my Lord. Into whose hands wilt Thou abandon me? Into the hands of the strangers that beset me round, or of the enemy to whom Thou hast given the mastery over me? If *Thy* wrath be not upon me I have no concern, but rather *Thy* favour is the more wide unto me. I seek refuge in the light of *Thy* gracious countenance, by which the darkness is dispersed, and peace ariseth both for this world and the next, that *Thy* wrath light not upon me, nor *Thine* indignation. It is *Thine* to show anger until Thou art pleased, and there is not any power or resource but in *Thee*."

Repulsed from Tayif, and hopeless of succeeding in Mecca, the Apostle sought in the domestic circle a solace for the disappointments and vexations which attended his public career. A widower, he took to himself a second wife (A.D. 620), one Sauda, a widow, while he betrothed himself to the daughter of Abu Bakr, by name Ayisha, then a child of tender years.

Fortune seemed at this period of his career altogether to have deserted him; but a change was at hand. The season of pilgrimage had arrived. Muhammad, as usual, wandered forth to proclaim the faith of Islam to such as would listen to his words: it chanced that he perceived a knot of six or seven

persons, and, recognising them as strangers from Madina, he addressed them in kindly tones: ultimately, finding that they gave ear with readiness to his words, he expounded to them his doctrine, and, pointing out the difficulties of his position at Mecca, inquired whether they would receive and protect him in *their* city. While ready to embrace the Muslim faith, they were unable to pledge themselves to comply with the wishes of the Prophet in regard to his migration to Madina—a matter which concerned others as well as themselves—but they promised to return at the season of pilgrimage in the ensuing year to the same spot whereon they stood. Months of anxious expectation passed by, till at length the appointed time came round. Conscious how much depended on the issue, Muhammad repaired with anxious steps and beating heart to the spot which he had named, a sheltered glen in Mina. But his apprehensions were soon dispelled, for, true to their word, he found there a band of twelve faithful followers from amongst the people of Madina, ready to acknowledge him as their spiritual pastor and master: so they plighted their faith: “We will not worship any but the one God; we will not steal, neither will we commit adultery or kill our children; we will not slander in anywise; and we will not disobey the Prophet in anything that is right.” Muhammad replied, “If ye fulfil the pledge, Paradise shall be your reward. He that shall fail in any part thereof, to God belongeth his concern, either to punish or forgive.” This memorable proceeding, fraught with such vital consequences to the future of Islam, is known as the First Pledge of Aqaba, being

named after the spot whither the band had retired to avoid observation. It happened in April, A.D. 621.

On returning to Madina, the disciples of the new faith found favour in the eyes of the people, converts flocked in with astonishing rapidity, and ere long it became necessary that a teacher well versed in the doctrines of God's Apostle should repair to the town, now rapidly becoming a centre of the Muslim world. Thus it happened that a youth, by name Musab, was deputed for the purpose.

"The hopes of Muhammad," says Sir W. Muir, "were now fixed upon Madina. Visions of his journey northwards flitted before his imagination. The musings of the day reappeared in midnight slumber. He dreamed that he was swiftly carried by Gabriel on a winged steed past Madina to the temple at Jerusalem, where he was welcomed by the former Prophets, all assembled for his reception in solemn conclave. His excited spirit conjured up a still more transcendent scene. From Jerusalem he seemed to mount upwards and ascend from one heaven to another; he found himself at last in the awful presence of his Maker, who dismissed him with the behest that his people were to pray five times in the day. As he awoke in the morning in the house of Abu Talib, where he had passed the night, the vision was vividly before his eyes, and he exclaimed to Umm Hani, the daughter of Abu Talib, that during the night he had prayed in the temple of Jerusalem. While he was going forth to tell the vision to others, she seized him by the mantle, and conjured him not thus to expose himself to the mockery and revilings of the unbelievers. But he persisted. As the story spread abroad the idolaters scoffed, the believers were staggered, and some are said even to have gone back."

Another year elapsed, and for the second time (A.D. 622) the Madina converts repaired to Mecca; on this occasion, however, they assembled to the goodly number of seventy-five. To elude the vigilance of the watchful and bigoted citizens, it was determined that the meeting with the Prophet should

take place at night at a secluded glen beneath the famous eminence Aqaba. It was a romantic and striking scene. Thither the votaries repaired by twos and threes, to hear the address of their new leader. This finished, the "Seventy" proclaimed with one voice their readiness to receive the Prophet in their city, even at the risk of life and property. So they one and all swore the oath of fealty:—thus came about the second pledge of Aqaba (March, A.D. 622). The Madina people now commenced their homeward journey; but rumours of what had happened reached the tents of the Quraish, who, amazed and exasperated, followed in the footsteps of the departed caravans; but in vain—they secured but one solitary captive. Still further irritated and incensed, they began to persecute both Muhammad and his followers; whereupon the Prophet gave the command, "Depart unto Madina, for the Lord hath verily given you brethren in that city, and a home in which ye may find refuge." This latter town is distant from Mecca upwards of 250 miles, the journey being usually accomplished in from ten to eleven days: but the Muslim wanderers were compelled to travel secretly in parties of two or three, and about two months elapsed before all the followers of the Prophet had reached their new abode. At last there remained but three believers in Mecca—Muhammad and Abu Bakr, together with their families, and lastly, Ali, now a stripling of about twenty summers. When all the preparations were complete, hearing that the Quraish were about to send a deputation to his house, and fearing that their intentions were evil, the Lawgiver of Arabia stole

away secretly and unobserved from his abode : before starting, however, he cast his red Hazramaut mantle round the youthful Ali, and bid the lad occupy the bed he had himself just vacated. He then went to the house of Abu Bakr, and tarrying there till the shades of evening, they both escaped, unobserved, through a back window, and journeying south instead of north to avoid detection, took refuge in a cave in the mountain of Saur. The disappearance of Muhammad occasioned no small stir in the city, and the chief of the Quraish went to the Prophet's house to gain tidings of the flight. Finding Ali the sole occupant of the abode, he questioned the youth as to what had occurred. "I have no knowledge of him," was the rejoinder ; "am I his keeper ? Ye bade him to quit the city, and he hath quitted it." Inquiry at the residence of Abu Bakr produced no more satisfactory results : so the tribe sent emissaries in all directions to discover if possible traces of the fugitives—but without success : the simple expedient of journeying in a direction diametrically opposite to the destination which it might be supposed they would have taken had saved the faith of Islam ! Some of the scouts, it is true, came to the cave where the Prophet and his companions were concealed, but finding a spider's web spun across the entrance, they imagined the place deserted, and omitted to search for the fugitives. One tiny insect, to use the expressive language of the historian of Rome, "had changed the history of the world."

After remaining three nights in the cave, preparations were made to start on their journey, and on the following evening the two camels which had

borne them to their retreat, being ready, Muhammad and a guide mounted the swifter of the two, named Al Qaswa, while Abu Bakr, accompanied by his faithful servant, who had now joined his master, rode the second beast. The morn of flight, so memorable in the annals of Arabia, was 16th July,* A.D. 622; a date from which henceforth the chronology of the Muhammadan peoples was to be computed. The first "Hijra" year of the Eastern world had now commenced. Fatigued and weary, the fugitives plodded along, resting awhile during the hottest part of the day. After several hours had elapsed, they came to the encampment of some Bedouins of the desert, and seeing an Arab lady sitting in the front of her tent offering food and drink to such travellers as might pass her hospitable doors, the party refreshed themselves with a draught of milk. Hurrying on, they then turned into the common road which connects the cities of Mecca and Madina. They had not proceeded far when they perceived a scout who had been sent to track their footsteps; but the man was single-handed, while they themselves numbered four individuals. So they feared not; rather, indeed, they extracted from the venturesome wanderer a promise that if they allowed him "to depart in peace, he would not reveal that he had met them." With anxious hearts and worn-out frames, onward they toiled, till at length on the memorable 24th of July, A.D. 622, they arrived safe and secure from the molestations of their enemies, amidst the

* According to the calculations of M. Caussin de Perceval the date was 20th June, but the figures given in the text are generally now accepted.

congratulations of their friends, at the outskirts of Madina, a city henceforth destined to share with Mecca the love and reverence of all faithful Muslims. The stripling Ali remained three days at the capital, and meeting with no interference or annoyance, leisurely set out, when a fitting opportunity arose, towards the new home of his adoption. As regards the families of Muhammad and Abu Bakr, some of the members betook themselves at once to Madina, while others continued to abide at Mecca, where they do not appear to have met with either insult or molestation.

When the news of the arrival of the fugitives spread through the town persons rushed forth in every direction, vieing "with one another in showing honour to their visitor." Thus writes the historian of the Prophet of Islam :—

"It was a triumphal procession. Around the camels of Muhammad and his immediate followers rode the chief men of the city, clad in their best raiment and in glittering armour. The cavalcade pursued its way through the gardens and palm groves of the southern suburbs; and as it now threaded the streets of the city, the heart of Muhammad was gladdened by the incessant call from one and another of the citizens who flocked around: 'Alight here, O Prophet! We have abundance with us, and we have the means of defence, and weapons, and room: abide with us.' So urgent was the appeal, that sometimes they seized hold of Al Qaswa's halter. Muhammad answered them all courteously and kindly. 'The decision,' he said, 'rests with the camel: make way therefore for her; let her go free.' It was a stroke of policy. His residence would be hallowed in the eyes of the people as selected supernaturally, while any heart-burnings of the jealous tribes, which otherwise might arise from the quarter of one being preferred before the quarter of another, would thus receive a decisive check."

It chanced that the animal halted at a spot owned

by two orphan boys. The Prophet, summoning the lads to his presence, proposed to purchase the piece of ground ; but they refused, saying, "Nay, but we will make a free gift of it to thee." But Muhammad refused the pious offer, and insisted upon paying over to the youths a fitting sum, in accordance with the worth of the land. Having received possession of the property, he proceeded to erect thereon a mosque, where he established a daily service of prayer, while at the same spot, once in every week, he proclaimed to the assembled multitude the new faith embodied in the formula "there is but one God." When all was finished, the Prophet bethought himself of his worldly concerns, and celebrated his nuptials with his third wife Ayisha (A.D. 623), (two living), to whom, as before stated, he had been affianced in A.D. 620. The circumstance of this marriage is important, as henceforward polygamy became an institution in the Muslim world, hallowed as the custom thus was by the example of their Prophet, who, it should be kept in mind, up to this period had limited himself to a single wife.

The first anxiety of Muhammad, after matters had settled down at Madina, was to league himself with the Jews, whose religion had afforded him the groundwork of his own creed. So Jerusalem became the "Qibla" or holy spot towards which the pious worshipper turned his face when he prostrated himself in prayer. Not content with this, too, a formal agreement, known as the Treaty of Madina, was concluded with the descendants of Abraham (the exact date is not known), confirming them in the practice of their religion, and in the secure possession

of their property. But Judaism and Islam were antagonistic in principle; the Prophet of Madina could never be the Messiah of Jerusalem, seeing that the offspring of the Quraish was not the descendant of David. The Jews thereupon began to murmur against Muhammad. "This prophet of yours," said they, in tones of contempt, "knew not where to find his 'Qibla' till we pointed it out to him." Angered and distressed, he poured forth his soul to his Guardian Angel:—"O Gabriel, would that the Lord might change the direction of my face at prayer away from the 'Qibla' of the Jews!" "I am but a servant," was the response of the messenger from Heaven; "address thy prayer to God." Thereupon Muhammad petitioned the Lord his Creator. "Turn now thy face toward the Holy Temple of Mecca," was the mandate to the trustful believer; thus the Kaba became the "Qibla" of Islam. This occurred in November, A.D. 623.

It may well be imagined that Muhammad bore no love towards the people of Mecca, who had not only refused to receive his new religion, but had even rendered his abode in their town a matter of more than difficulty. As soon, therefore, as he had somewhat consolidated his position at Madina, he commenced reprisals against the Quraish by harassing their caravans as they journeyed to and from Syria. The Prophet did not himself at first accompany these plundering excursions, which were indeed designed probably more to try the temper of the people of the city of his adoption towards himself and his followers, than to inflict any injury upon his enemies. But in the summer and autumn of A.D. 623, Muhammad led

in person three somewhat larger expeditions; the results were in each case insignificant, save as indicative of the fact that Muhammad was prepared to act on the *offensive* as well as the *defensive*, thus foreshadowing the great events which were to be brought to pass in subsequent years. It is also worthy of note that, while scouring the country on the occasion of the earliest of these forays, the Prophet entered into the first treaty he had concluded with any foreign tribe, having signed an engagement with the Bani Zamra "that neither party would levy war against the other, nor help their enemies" (June, A.D. 623). But the year, in its later months, was destined to play an important part in the annals of Islam. The Prophet on his return from his expeditions determined to send forth Abdullah ibn Jahsh with seven other refugees. His destination and the objects of his journey were unknown to any one save the Lawgiver of Arabia himself, who placed in the hands of the leader of the party a sealed packet of instructions, with the injunction that it should not be opened till the band had journeyed two days on the road, and had entered the valley of Mallal. The mandate was scrupulously obeyed, and on arriving at the appointed spot Abdullah was astonished to find that he must "go forward to Nakhla in the name of the Lord, and with His blessing! Yet force not any of thy followers against his inclination. Proceed with those that accompany thee willingly. And, when thou art arrived at the valley of Nakhla, there lie in wait for the caravans of the Quraish." The little band unanimously determined to go forward and fulfil the commands of the Prophet; but two of the party,

falling behind in search of a camel which had strayed, did not regain their companions. So the remnant, six in number, sallied forth towards the appointed locality : nor had they to wait long ere a caravan laden with wine, raisins, and leather, came up. Its guard, composed of four Quraish, seeing the strangers became alarmed. So to disarm their apprehensions one of Abdullah's party shaved his head, thereby betokening that he was a pilgrim on his return from Mecca. The ruse succeeded, and the fears of the men of the caravan were lulled. At this juncture a difficulty occurred to the minds of the pious Muslims. "If," said they, "we should defer the attack this night, they will surely move off, and entering the holy territory escape us; but if we should fight against them now it is unlawful, for we shall be transgressing the sacred month." In the end, an arrow from the bow of one of their number solved the problem, for it killed on the spot the hapless wanderer from the tents of the Quraish; the band then rushed upon the caravan and secured two prisoners, while the third escaped on his horse. Muhammad professed to be displeased with what had happened, saying, "I never commanded thee to fight in the sacred month." But reflecting that it was not advisable to discourage his followers, he shortly afterwards proclaimed a revelation from heaven justifying as a lesser evil than idolatry and opposition to Islam, hostilities undertaken during that holy period for the propagation of the faith. "This," says a fervent son of Arabia, "was the first booty that the Musulmans obtained, the first captives they seized, the first life they took."

Scarce had A. D. 624 commenced its course than the Prophet, calling together his followers, addressed them in words well calculated to inflame the minds of a people to whom the love of adventure is invariably an all-powerful incentive to action and enterprise: "Here," said he, "is a caravan of the Quraish, in which they have embarked much wealth. Come! perchance the Lord will enrich you with the same." The people of Madina responded with alacrity to the call, and sallied forth to the number of 305; but the leader of the caravan, by name Abu Sufiyan, on his way back from Syria, hearing rumours of what was taking place, and finding from the date-stones in the track of the spies which Muhammad had sent forth, the direction of the Prophet's movements, diverted his course and escaped the machinations of his foes. Meanwhile, however, unaware of the circumstance, a messenger from the caravan had entered breathless and in haste the streets of Mecca, exclaiming, "Quraish! Quraish! your caravan is pursued by Muhammad! Help! O help!" An army soon gathered together to punish the audacity of the exile from the Holy City. They had not proceeded far, when the news reached their camp of the safety of their goods and people; whereupon some counselled a return, the object for which they set out having been secured. Others, more warlike in their aspirations, pleaded that such a course would expose them to the taunt of cowardice. "Let us go forward to Badr, and there by the fountain spend three days in eating and making merry. All Arabia will hear of it, and will ever stand in awe of us." The advice was acceptable, and the 950 warriors of Arabia advanced

towards the city where it had been decided they should encamp.

Muhammad was fully alive to the importance of the struggle upon which he had entered, and immediately before the battle, which was now inevitable, he implored the assistance of the God whose cause he was supporting. "O Lord ! I beseech Thee forget not Thy promise of assistance and of victory. O Lord ! if this little band be vanquished Idolatry will prevail, and the pure worship of Thee cease from off the earth." The contest commenced, after the fashion of Arabian warfare, with single combats, in which it chanced that the champions of the Quraish were discomfited and slain. Encouraged by this circumstance, the followers of the Prophet fought with a vigour which carried everything before them. Still, in spite of prodigies of valour, the fate of the day tottered in the balance. At length, however, Muhammad, who had busied himself encouraging his followers, by holding out the prospect of Paradise to those who fell, seeing his opportunity stooped down, and taking a handful of dust cast it towards his enemies, exclaiming, "Confusion seize their faces !" It was the turning-point in the struggle. The Quraish began to waver, and soon an indiscriminate flight commenced throughout their ranks. They fled indeed for their lives, for they had no mercy to expect at the hands of their zealous opponents, in whose estimation pity was weakness, and mercy a token of effeminacy—forty-nine of the people of Mecca were slain, and as many more taken prisoners, while the followers of the Prophet lost but fourteen. Such was the celebrated battle

of Badr, which occurred on the 13th January, A.D. 624.

The sword of war had now been drawn from the scabbard of peace, and henceforth success in arms became the criterion of Muhammad's prophetic claim. The victory at Badr was but the foretaste of blood, and from this time the hand of extermination was raised against all those who refused to accept the teachings of Islam, or bow the knee to the Apostle of Madina.

The first to feel the weight of Muhammad's displeasure were the Jews; relentless and unforgiving, the Prophet determined upon the annihilation of the race. The pretext for attacking them was paltry and ludicrous. An Arab girl happened to sit herself down in the market-place, when a Jew, stealthily approaching from behind, pinned the lower hem of the skirt to the upper portion of her dress. On arising the exposure which followed evoked the ridicule of the bystanders, one of whom, however, more irritated than amused, slew the offender, whose kinsfolk in turn fell upon the hasty-actioned Muslim. The Prophet at once sent his followers to avenge the death of their companion in faith, and the hapless Jews, to the number of about 700, were blockaded till they surrendered at discretion. Marked out for execution, the poor wretches chanced to find an honest outspoken protector amongst the bands of the Muhammadans, and on his intercession Muhammad consented to spare their lives, and commanded that the captives should be sent into exile. "Let them go. God curse them, and God curse him also!" was the angry denunciation of the enraged Prophet against

the children of Abraham, and their deliverer. This occurred in February, A.D. 624. Foiled of his prey Muhammad retaliated by giving his followers permission to kill any Jews whom they might chance to meet, a privilege of which the pious fanatics were only too eager to avail themselves. Alarmed and cowed, the Israelites, with trembling steps, repaired to their exasperated foe, and ultimately concluded a new treaty with the view of securing themselves from molestation, if not death. Towards the close of the year Muhammad, though in the midst of "wars and rumours of wars," did not lose sight of the attractions of home, and took to himself a fourth wife (three of them living) in the person of Hafsa, the daughter of Omar, a matron who had been left a widow some six or seven months before her espousal to the Apostle of Islam.

The new year (A.D. 625) opened ominously as regards the Prophet and the band of enthusiasts by whom he was surrounded; for the Quraish then carried into execution the long deferred threat of revenge, which they had harboured since their defeat at Badr. Emerging forth from the city of Mecca to the number of 3000, of whom 700 were mailed warriors and 200 cavalry, they encamped in the plain of Ohod, situated about three miles from Madina. To oppose this host Muhammad, after the desertion of some of his troops, mustered but 700 followers; but they were all men of mettle, animated with religious zeal, and determined to "do or die." The battle commenced with a series of mishaps on the part of the Quraish, whose champions were, one by one, laid low in the dust, and the cry "Allahu

Akbar" (God is great), raised with ever increasing enthusiasm and fervour, betokened successive victories to the sturdy warriors of Islam. The fight itself, too, was for a time much in favour of the heroic little band from Madina, who, animated by the presence of their Prophet, hurled destruction upon the ranks of the enemy. Indeed, in course of time the Meccans began to waver, and confusion overtook their ranks. But the cup of victory was destined to be dashed from the lips of the Muslim army. Encouraged by the success of their arms, the Prophet's followers could not resist the temptation of plundering the camp of their foes; whereupon one of the Quraish leaders seeing his opportunity wheeled round and attacked the Musulmans in the rear; a terrible struggle ensued—again and again the ranks of the Faithful were broken, and as repeatedly the calls of their chiefs reinspired their stout-hearted followers to fresh deeds of prowess—warrior after warrior fell beneath the swords of the maddened sons of the desert; when suddenly a cry arose that the Prophet himself was slain; nor was the alarm altogether groundless, for not only had a stone struck the leader of the Faithful in the face, knocking out one of his teeth, but another severe blow had driven the rings of his helmet into his cheek, and gashed his forehead; blood flowed copiously from Muhammad's wounds, and he was carried off the field of battle, helpless and hopeless as a leader of men. The Quraish soon became masters of the field; but their feelings of hatred were against the Prophet rather than the city, and contenting themselves with the defeat of their foe, they betook themselves back to Mecca—

thus passed the disastrous 26th January, A.D. 625. From amongst the ranks of the Muslims no less than seventy-four corpses lay mangled in the dust, many of them barbarously disfigured, for the feelings of revenge, which for many a month had rankled in the bosoms of the Quraish, found vent in the mutilation of the slain, and the example of Hind, the wife of Abu Sufiyan, who is said to have torn out the liver of her victim, Hamza, and chewed it, stringing, at the same time, his nails and pieces of his skin together to bedeck her arms and legs, was followed by many a frenzied virago of Mecca "as a return for Badr." "I was not giving counsel," was the exclamation of the leader of the Meccan army on hearing of the mutilation of the dead, "but neither am I displeased thereat."

The misfortune at Ohod was a severe blow to the hopes of Muhammad—a cloud obscuring the sun of Islam's greatness—and it needed all his skill to reanimate his followers: so the never-ending joys of Paradise were promised to all who had fallen on the fatal plain. "Yea, they are alive and are nourished with their Lord. No terror affecteth them, neither are they grieved." Such was the rhetoric of the Prophet; heaven and hell were enlisted in his service to do battle for the drooping warriors of Madina.

The remainder of the year passed comparatively uneventfully, save that towards its close the Bani Nazr were forcibly expelled from the Jewish settlements in Madina. So Muhammad, having leisure to bethink himself of domestic matters, espoused, as his fifth wife, the daughter of Khozaima, and widow of a kinsman slain at Badr. It is noteworthy that

Zainab, as was her name, was the only one of the Prophet's wives, except Khadija, who predeceased him. Within a month, too (January, A.D. 626), he wedded a sixth wife in the person of Umm Salma, also a widow; while the same year was destined to add a seventh spouse to the harem of the amorous Prophet, which now numbered six persons, Khadija, his first wife, being dead. It happened thus: One day Muhammad chancing to visit the house of Zaid, his adopted son, he saw Zainab, the wife of the latter, hastily arranging her dress; whereupon she bade the Lawgiver of Arabia enter. But the lustful eye of the leader of the Faithful had caught a glimpse of her unvested charms. "Gracious God Almighty" was the rapturous exclamation, "how Thou turnest the hearts of mankind." Proud of her conquest, the woman informed her husband on his return, as to what had occurred. Fully willing to profit by the circumstance, Zaid at once repaired to Muhammad, and declared his readiness to divorce the wife of his bosom to make way for such an illustrious successor. The alliance, however, was not in accordance with Arab morals, and for a long time the Prophet struggled with the better feelings of his nature, till at last he received a message from Heaven, and Zainab (the second of that name) was added to the list of the wives who graced the home of the Apostle of Islam.

It was at this time that the seclusion of women was enjoined upon the Muslim world. Having himself had personal experience in regard to the danger arising from the freedom hitherto allowed to the daughters of Arabia, the Prophet not unnaturally argued that the disciple was not likely to be more

discreet than his master. So a revelation came down from the Almighty bidding Muhammad place his wives (henceforth designated the "Mothers of the Faithful") "behind a curtain," while, when walking abroad, they were to "throw around them a part of their mantle," that they might not "be subject to annoyance."

The waning weeks of A.D. 626 were rapidly drawing to a close when Muhammad resolved to chastise the Banu Mustaliq, who were raising troops to join in an attack on Madina; the tribe fell an easy prey to their jealous foes, and numerous captives were brought back by the exultant followers of the Prophet—amongst the number a matron, by name Juwaira, the daughter of the chief of the offending Arabians. This lady fell to the lot of a citizen, who taking advantage of her rank and comeliness "fixed her ransom at nine ounces of gold." Unable to raise such a sum, she pleaded before Muhammad that the amount should be lessened. "Wilt thou hearken to something better than that thou asketh of me?" was the insinuating reply of the Prophet. With timid lips she begged of the conqueror to name his conditions. "Even that I should pay thy ransom and marry thee myself" were the words which fell on the amazed ears of the daughter of Arabia. So an eighth wife was added to the rapidly increasing list of the "Mothers of the Faithful."* At this time a trouble fell upon

* It is probable that Juwaira was a widow; undoubtedly she had been married, and unless her husband was dead—possibly killed in the war—it is not apparent how Muhammad, in the absence of a divorce, could have married her.

Muhammad, in that his favourite wife Ayisha, being accidentally left behind in a nocturnal march, returned in the morning in company with a stranger; this led to an estrangement between the husband and wife, to the great joy of the enemies of the Prophet. Matters went on moodily for a time, till one day the offended spouse openly taxed his wife with misconduct, and bade her repent. She refused, alleging that she was innocent. Thereupon Muhammad fell into a prophetic trance, on awakening from which he exclaimed, the drops of sweat trickling down his cheeks as he spake, "Ayisha, rejoice! Verily the Lord hath revealed thine innocence. Praise be to God." So a command was issued: "They that slander married women, and thereafter do not bring forward four witnesses, scourge them with fourscore stripes."

But the anxieties with which the Prophet was surrounded were not confined to domestic scenes. Scarce had the year 627 commenced its course than a Quraish force of no less than 10,000 men besieged Madina—so sudden indeed had been their approach that Muhammad barely found time to make ready for the attack. Unable to withstand in the field so powerful an army, the Muslims resolved in haste to entrench the town, and act on the defensive—a design characterised by their enemies as "a foreign artifice, to which no Arabs had ever yet descended"—an artifice, which, none the less, saved the city for a while, till the master mind of the Prophet, who viewed war as a "game of deception," was enabled by cunning and treachery to sow discord amongst his foes, and paralyse their

energies. The siege was indeed protracted, but nature lent her powerful assistance to the cause of the people of Madina, and a storm of wind and rain fell upon the besiegers, who, wet, dispirited, and comfortless, were only too glad to betake themselves again to their homes. Thereupon the pious Muslims persuaded themselves that the armies of heaven had been ranged on their side! Thus ended the "battle of the ditch" (2nd March, A.D. 627).

Scarcely had the sturdy warriors laid aside their armour than a command came from on high, "Arise and go forth against the Quraitza," a Jewish tribe, who had detached themselves from the cause of the Faithful during the attack on Madina. After a siege of fourteen days the wretched Jews were forced to surrender; whereupon the men, to the number of 700 or 800, were led forth with their hands tied behind their backs, and taken in companies of five or six at a time to the breach of a trench, where they were ruthlessly butchered in cold blood! One solitary prisoner was spared, but, on learning that all his comrades had been slain, he begged that he might also be killed. "Of what use is life to me any longer? Slay me also, that I may join those that have preceded me," was the fearless request of the fearless child of Israel. "Yea, he shall join them in the fire of Hell," was in turn the reply of the relentless Prophet of the Muslims. The women of the party were sold into slavery, save one, Rihana, whom the founder of Islam reserved for himself. However, the lovely matron, faithful to the memory of her husband and brethren—who one and all had been massacred—refused to yield her charms

to the savage victor who had ordered such a "human butchery." The licentious conqueror was himself conquered; and the all-powerful Lawgiver of Arabia was fain to place in his harem, as a slave, a Jewish widow, too proud to abjure the faith of her ancestors, and too noble to become the wife of the murderer of her husband, the destroyer of her kinsfolk!

After about twelve months had been passed in several minor expeditions against various marauding and refractory tribes, Muhammad, who had not for six years visited his native city, bethought himself that the time had arrived when he should give a practical token of his zeal and piety by undertaking a pilgrimage to Mecca. Accordingly, in February, A.D. 628, accompanied by about 1500 men, he started from Madina. But the Quraish were obdurate, and refused to allow the Prophet to enter the holy city. At length, however, after repeated parleys and discussions, a treaty was concluded between the tribe in question and the Muslims, arranging for a truce of ten years, and for the immediate withdrawal of Muhammad and his followers, with permission to return on the same errand the following year, provided that every one who might wish to avail himself of the privilege of performing the pilgrimage, should appear without any weapon save what is allowed to a traveller, viz., a sheathed sword. The people of Islam, sad and dejected, betook themselves to their homes, and it needed all the energies of their Prophet to persuade them that what had happened was for the best. An addition was thereupon made to the sacred mandates, and a revelation from Heaven proclaimed that God had given unto them "an evident

victory." What is this victory? was the rejoinder of a simple-minded bystander. The artless followers of the Prophet did not realise that "on all other occasions there was fighting, but here war was laid aside, tranquillity and peace restored; the one party henceforward met and conversed freely with the other, and there was no man of sense or judgment amongst the idolaters who was not led thereby to join Islam."

With a singularity of purpose which can only be explained by the firmness of his belief in the faith which he had founded, Muhammad about this time conceived the strange notion that he would summon the various states and empires by which he was surrounded, to embrace the doctrines of the faith he had founded. Accordingly, in the autumn of A.D. 628, he dispatched a missive, sealed with a seal bearing the inscription, "Muhammad the apostle of God," to the Emperor Heraclius, then in the zenith of power, having subdued and driven from his throne the mighty monarch of Persia. The strange, uncouth despatch was viewed as the "effusion of some harmless fanatic," and cast aside with scorn and disdain. A second, addressed to the Ghassanide prince met with no better fate; while a third, which reached the hand of the King of Persia, was torn in pieces by the incensed sovereign. "Even thus, O Lord, rend Thou his kingdom from him," was the prayer of the offended Prophet on hearing the reception of this last missive. An embassy to Egypt met with more success, for the Governor, while refusing to recognise the Prophet, sent for his acceptance "two damsels, highly estimated among the Copts, a present of raiment, and a mule

for thee to ride upon." Of the two damsels Muhammad retained one, by name Mary, for his own harem ; and she became noteworthy as the mother of the only son surviving at the time of his birth amongst the Prophet's children. The mule, which was white, was greatly prized by the Lawgiver of Arabia, and henceforth took the place of the camel upon which he had been wont to ride. The summons addressed to the Court of Abyssinia was couched in language similar to that which had hitherto failed to allure other Christian potentates ; but in this instance the result was more encouraging, as the swarthy monarch expressed his readiness to embrace the new faith, but lamented his inability to join in person the standard of the Prophet. The last messenger despatched by Muhammad was sent to the Christian Chief of Yamama. The reply which the envoy was charged to convey to his master merits recital : "How excellent is that revelation to which thou invitest me, and how beautiful ! Know that I am the poet of my tribe, and their orator. The Arabs revere my dignity. Grant unto me a share in the rule, and I will follow thee." But the Prophet taught unity, alike as regards the Godhead and the Apostleship, and no one could be allowed to participate in the sovereignty of Islam. "Had this man stipulated for an unripe date only, as his share in the land, I could not have consented. Let him perish, and his vain glory with him !"

The year 628 of the Christian era was now fast passing away, and the expectation of plunder, which the Prophet had held out to his faithful followers, had not been fulfilled ; not, indeed, that Muhammad had

been forgetful of his promise—he was far too prudent to overlook an opportunity of enriching his bands at the expense of their enemies, but the occasion had not presented itself. The Lawgiver of Arabia had indeed cast his eyes upon the rich and fertile lands of Khaibar, a town about 100 miles from Madina, inhabited by a colony of Jews; but no act of aggression on the part of the inhabitants had occurred, and the Muslim chief was unable to fix a quarrel upon his peace-loving foes. Despairing of finding a legitimate pretext, Muhammad resolved on a sudden and unprovoked invasion of the Jewish territory. Utterly unprepared for resistance, their forts, fell one by one into the hands of the 1600 warriors who raised on high the standard of Islam. One citadel alone had courage to resist, and under Kinana, who had recently succeeded to the headship of the Jews of Khaibar, a long and desperate resistance was offered; but in the end the city capitulated, and torture and death were the reward of the ill-fated descendants of Abraham, while the chieftain's widow, by name Safiyah, a hapless matron of bewitching beauty and loveliness, was forced henceforth to grace the home circle of the Lord of Arabia as his ninth wife. But retaliation was at hand: it chanced that there was a Jewish woman who had lost her husband, her father, her brother, and other relatives in the battle: her bosom was filled with revenge: accordingly, she planned a scheme to rid mankind of the victor, at whose command the blood of her kinsmen had flowed in streams down the streets and highways of the doomed city. Dressing a kid, and steeping it in a deadly poison, she placed the dish before the

Prophet, who himself ate thereof, and gave to those around him. But scarcely had he tasted a mouthful than he exclaimed, "Hold! surely this shoulder hath been poisoned!" and he spat forth what was in his mouth. Though seized with excruciating pains, Muhammad gradually recovered, but to his dying day he felt the effects of the poison which had been imbibed into his system. The daughter of Abraham was foiled, but her victim had not passed through the ordeal scatheless.

On his return to Madina, Muhammad took to himself a tenth wife, in the person of Umm Habiba, the daughter of Abu Sufiyan (A.D. 628). This fair matron was a widow like nearly all her predecessors in the Apostle's harem, her husband having long since died in Abyssinia, and it is conjectured that the Prophet was moved by motives of policy to add the lady to his long list of spouses, hoping that she might thereby be enabled to soften, in some measure, the animosity of her father, a bitter, unrelenting, and withal powerful opponent to the faith of Islam.

The time had now arrived when Muhammad, according to the treaty concluded with the Quraish, might again perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. Accordingly, in February, A.D. 629, he started on his journey of piety with upwards of 2000 of his followers, many of whom had not for several years visited their native city. The ceremonies passed off without any remarkable incident, save that the Prophet, though now burdened with the weight of threescore years, took occasion to add an eleventh daughter of Eve to the list of the "Mothers of the Faithful." The favoured lady was a widow, by name, Maimuna, and

though upwards of fifty-one years of age, she lived for thirty years, to boast that she had been enrolled amongst the wives of the Apostle of the Lord, who at this time numbered nine (Khadija and Zainab the daughter of Khozaima having died) in addition to his concubines.

Muhammad now thought himself strong enough to measure swords with the Imperial Byzantine troops ; so taking advantage of the murder of a messenger, who had been despatched to the Ghassanide Prince at Bostra, he sent an army of 3000 men to invade the Syrian frontier. The Muslims fought with the desperation of fanatic zeal. Victory or martyrdom was the motto of the day—but it was of no avail. The well-drilled Christian phalanxes pressed upon the brave but comparatively ill-disciplined bands composing the Muhammadan army ; leader after leader was slain, covered with wounds, and the skill and powers of the veteran Khalid, who had succeeded to the command, were sorely taxed to draw from the field the shattered remnant of his troops. This battle of Muta (Sept. A.D. 629), was, for a while, a severe blow to the prestige of Muhammad, and the rest of the year was consumed in a variety of expeditions, planned with the object of restoring to Islam that influence which could not brook defeat or reverse.

Fate was at this time pregnant with importance to the Prophet, who saw his opportunity of attacking Mecca—the dream of his life—the one great object of his ambition. A blood feud between two rival tribes, one of whom sought his assistance, afforded him the pretext which he had so long and so anxiously awaited. Concealing his designs till all his prepara-

tions were completed, Muhammad, on 1st January, A.D. 630, marched forth from Madina, at the head of from 8000 to 10,000 men. With the view of impressing the people of Mecca with an exalted idea of the mighty array of troops which were about to sweep down upon the sacred city, the Prophet commanded that as they approached the town, each of his followers should kindle a fire on the heights above the camp. The design was successful, and Abu Sufiyan, the leader of the Quraish, who had witnessed the blaze from the walls of his capital, conceiving the notion that opposition was in vain, betook himself in the dead of the night to the tent of the Apostle of God, and embraced the faith of Islam. The defection of their leader secured the submission of his troops, and in a few hours the Prophet had accomplished his destiny—he was now Lord of Mecca! It was, indeed, a proud moment for the Lawgiver of Arabia, a moment, too, when all the noble qualities of his nature stood forth in grandeur; for in spite of the provocations which he had received, in spite of the insults, the contumelies which the people of Mecca had heaped upon his head, in spite, too, of the circumstance that eight years previously he had himself been driven forth an exile to Madina—he spared the city. The affection and goodwill of the citizens were the reward of a magnanimity and moderation which have few parallels in the history of the world.

But Muhammad had no time for repose, for after an interval of about two weeks spent in purging the spot of its idols, he was compelled to set forth at the head of an army to chastise a neighbouring tribe,

which had assumed an attitude of defiance. The rival troops met at Honain on 1st February, A.D. 630. For a while victory was in suspense, but the fervent exhortations of the Prophet encouraged his followers to deeds of desperation, and at length the Muslim banner floated over the tents of their foes. The glory of this day was in some measure counter-balanced by the subsequent failure of the Muhammadan army before Tayif, a city which, being well provisioned and surrounded by strong battlements, successfully resisted the attacks of the warriors of the Faithful. Mecca was now subdued, and firm in its allegiance, so leaving a representative to rule the people, Muhammad betook himself once again to Madina, the city of his adoption. There seated in his mosque, he received embassies from all quarters of Arabia, the various chiefs thinking, by an early submission, to secure the favour of a potentate, so powerful as a friend, so dangerous as a foe. "Simple though its exterior was," says Sir W. Muir, "and unpretending its forms and usages, more real power was wielded, and affairs of greater importance transacted in the courtyard of the mosque of Muhammad than in many an Imperial palace."

The country was at this time disquieted by rumours of a Syrian invasion, to repel which a Muslim army of upwards of 30,000 warriors assembled in October, A.D. 630; but when they marched forth they found the peace of the border undisturbed; so they returned home, yet not before they brought to submission John the Christian Prince of Ayla or Aqaba, which potentate entered into a treaty with the Prophet, covenanting amongst

other things to pay a yearly tribute to the Lord of Mecca. This campaign is worthy of note as being the last expedition undertaken during the Prophet's lifetime.

But the sunshine of prosperity was overclouded by a domestic affliction, which bore heavily upon the soul of the Prophet. Ibrahim, the son whom the Coptic maid had borne to him in his old age, and save his daughter Fatima, the only surviving member of Muhammad's offspring, was struck with illness. "Ibrahim! O Ibrahim!" cried the fond father, in accents of despair, as he wept by the bedside of his dying child, "if it were not that the promise is faithful, and the hope of resurrection sure; if it were not that this is the way to be trodden by all, and the last of us shall join the first, I would grieve for thee with a grief deeper even than this." But his words were addressed to a lifeless corpse; the spirit of the tender infant had fled to the Lord its maker (June, A. D. 631). Prayers and intercessions could avail nought, so the Prophet turned aside. "The remainder of the days of his nursing shall be fulfilled in Paradise," was the comforting assurance which he gave to the comfortless mother.

The remainder of the year was spent in sweeping away the remnants of idolatry, which still existed in some places together with the worship of the One God. Amidst the cries and lamentations of the women, the idol of Lat at Tayif was hewn down and broken to pieces. No idolater in future could take part in the pilgrimage; no unbeliever henceforth should enter Paradise. The mission of Islam was inexorable: Jew, Pagan, and Christian were alike set

aside ; the religion of the future was to be the worship of the One God. "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," had become a factor in the world's history ; the key of Paradise was, to use the Prophet's own striking words, "to testify that there is no God but the Lord alone. With Him there is no partner."

The work of Muhammad was now well-nigh complete ; from north, south, east, and west there was a constant stream of embassies, charged with tendering homage to the Prophet who had risen to power. With the weight of more than sixty summers on his shoulders, it might have been supposed that the venerable Apostle would wish to pass in ease and repose the remaining years of his eventful life ; but this could not be done till he had performed the Greater Pilgrimage to Mecca. Accordingly, in February, A.D. 632, the Prophet, assuming the pilgrim garb, set out on the journey to the sacred city, followed by vast multitudes ; when all the ceremonies were concluded, he betook himself to a spot in the Valley of Mecca, and addressed the people in memorable terms. "Ye people ! hearken to my words ; for I know not whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you here again," was the stirring commencement of an exhortation, which was felt on all sides to be the parting words of the speaker who stood before the assembled multitude. Then followed a variety of injunctions regarding the social duties of the Muslims, alike in respect of their private households, as with reference to their relations towards one another. This done, looking up to Heaven, the Prophet exclaimed, "O Lord, I have delivered my message

and fulfilled my mission!" "Yea, thou hast," was the response of the teeming multitudes around him. "O Lord, I beseech Thee bear Thou witness unto it." With these words the Prophet closed his address. The occasion and the language were alike remarkable—it was the seal of Islam.

The end was evidently rapidly approaching; sick in body, and emaciated in frame, it remained for Muhammad only "to busy himself in the praises of his Lord, and to seek for pardon." Such, in his own words, was *now* his mission. No longer able to visit in turn the homes of his numerous wives, he announced his intention of betaking himself to the abode of Ayisha, who had from the first possessed an inscrutable hold over the affections of her husband. Faithful to her charge, the youthful wife—she was at this time barely twenty years of age—watched and tended the bedside of her aged lord and master; the affection of so young and beautiful a damsel for the aged and infirm Prophet was touching and pathetic. It was the *romance* of Islam. Prostrate with fever, and scarce able to move from his couch, the Apostle of God felt that his end was at hand; so repairing, though with tottering steps, to the mosque, he there, amidst the tears and sobs of his faithful followers, addressed them in accents of mingled pride and affection. But the excitement of the occasion was too much for his exhausted strength, and for some days the flame of existence flickered in the socket; at length, however, the paroxysm of pain passed away, and, finding a slight return of strength, the Prophet again appeared before the congregation. It was a striking scene—the mosque, at all times full

when Muhammad was present, was on this occasion, the memorable 8th June, A.D. 632, thronged to suffocation, for the dangerous condition of his illness had become known throughout the city. With slow and weary steps the venerable Prophet, supported by two attendants, repaired to his accustomed spot; too weak to lead the devotions, the task devolved upon the faithful Abu Bakr; yet "the Lord verily had granted unto Muhammad refreshment in prayer," and, mustering the feeble remnants of his decaying strength, he spoke with emotion as to the single-mindedness of his actions, and his belief in his mission. But the effort severely taxed his emaciated frame and feeble energies, and on reaching his apartments he was seized with an attack of delirium. Ayisha thereupon lifted his right hand, and rubbed it to restore animation, repeating at the same time an invocation which the Prophet himself had been wont to use when visiting the sick. It may well be imagined his weak body could ill bear such rough, though affectionate usage; so, on recovering his consciousness, he begged that he might be left quiet. He then muttered a scarce audible prayer: "Lord grant me pardon, and join me to the companionship on high." Too weak to continue his devotions, he lay back on his bed, and there was stillness, interrupted at times with ejaculations, "Eternity in Paradise. Pardon! Yes, the blessed companionship on high!" Grand, noble expressions were these, the last words which hung on the lips of the dying enthusiast. After a few moments, perceiving a change, Ayisha, with her arms around her lord, looked up as the grey head grew heavy on her breast. It

needed not the instinct of a ministering angel to realise that the soul of the Prophet of Arabia had winged its way to the Mansion in the skies. . . . Such was Muhammad : such his life, such his death ! “ He was piously interred,” says the historian of the Roman Empire, “ on the same spot on which he expired. Madina has been sanctified by the death and burial of Muhammad, and the innumerable pilgrims of Mecca often turn aside from the way, to bow, in voluntary devotion, before the simple tomb of the Prophet.”



सत्यमेव जयते

CHAPTER III

THE SUCCESSORS OF MUHAMMAD

ABU BAKR. A.D. 632-634

THE first to enter the apartments of Ayisha, after the death of Muhammad, was Omar, who, glancing at the calm, placid countenance of his departed friend, could scarce bring himself to believe that the hand of death had robbed Arabia of its Prophet. "Verily, by the Lord, he shall return," was the honest, but self-deceiving exclamation of the fervent Muslim, as he rushed into the mosque and harangued the assembled awe-stricken multitude. The chamber of death then received another entrant—the faithful Abu Bakr, who, hastening from his home, rushed to the apartment where the Prophet lay stretched a stiffened corpse; gently removing the coverlet, he stooped down and kissed the cheeks of the scarce cold frame—the kiss of devotion at once dissipated all doubt. "Yes, thou art dead! Alas! my friend, my chosen one—dearer than father or mother to me! Thou hast tasted the bitter pains of death, and thou art too precious in the sight of the Lord that He should

give thee this cup a second time to drink." Repairing to the mosque, he bid the excited Omar cease his frenzied exhortations. "Let him know," so taught the calmer of the two preachers in the temple, "whosoever worshippeth Muhammad, that Muhammad indeed is dead; but whoso worshippeth God, let him know that the Lord liveth, and doth not die." The familiar voice of Abu Bakr recalled his companion to his senses. "By the Lord," he used to exclaim in after years, "it was so, that when I heard Abu Bakr reciting those verses, I was horror-struck, my limbs trembled, I dropped down, and I knew of a certainty that Muhammad indeed was dead."

A contention now arose between the people of Mecca and Madina as to the succession to the chief command—the crisis was serious—the fate of Islam depended on the issue; Abu Bakr pleaded that the Arabs would not recognise a successor save he belonged to the tribe of Quraish; but the indignant citizens of Madina rejected the idea with scorn, claiming *their* right to choose their own leader, even should the command be divided. "That can never be," was the stern rejoinder; "so choose ye whom ye will of these two," saying which he led forward Omar, and a bystander, by name Abu Obaida, "and do allegiance to him." But the generous-minded Omar refused the proffered honour. "Did not the Prophet himself command that *thou*, O Abu Bakr, shouldest lead the prayers? Thou art our Master, and to thee we pledge our allegiance, thou whom the Prophet loved the best amongst us all!" The clear, powerful voice of Omar disarmed opposition, and Abu

Bakr was saluted as the "Khalif" or successor of the deceased Prophet (June, A.D. 632).

. On the morrow, the quondam rivals repaired to the mosque, where Omar, addressing the great assemblage, bade them swear allegiance to the companion of the Prophet, "the second of the two when they were in the cave alone." The people flocked around the new Khalif, and one by one paid homage to the chosen of God. Abu Bakr then delivered himself of an inaugural address, the words of which were well chosen, and the sentiments therein no less noble :—

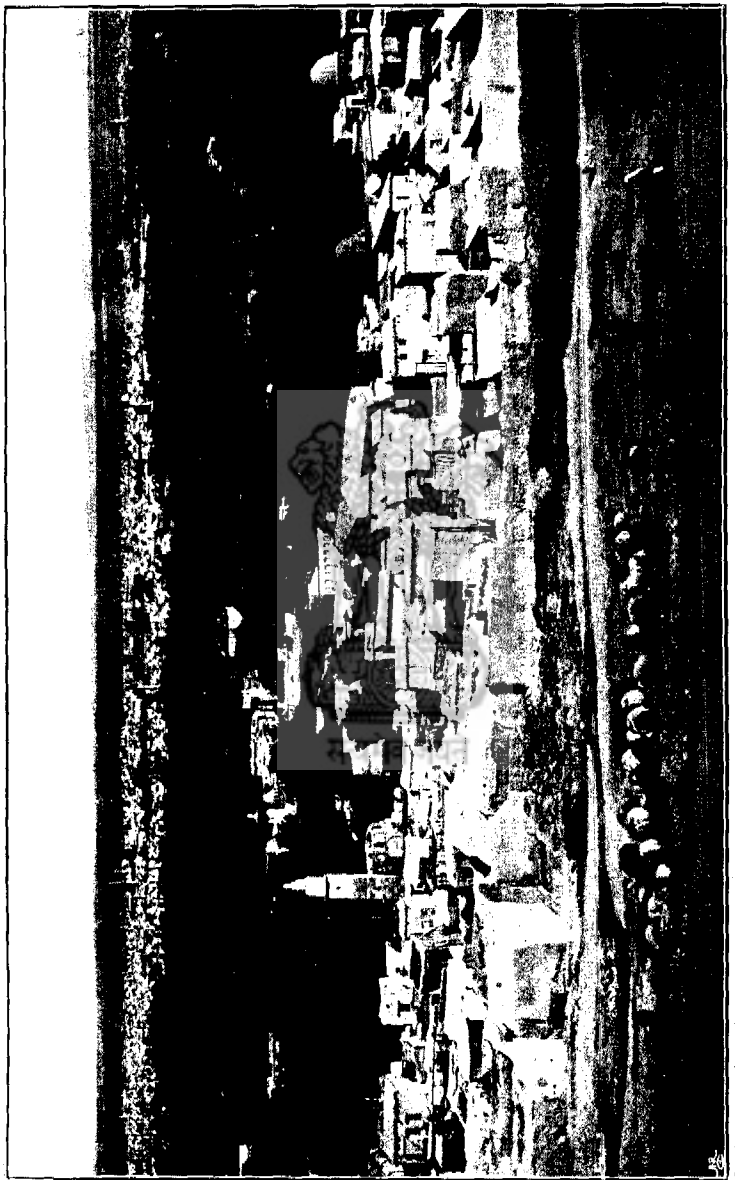
"Ye people! now, verily, I have become the chief over you, although I am not the best amongst you. If I do well, support me; if I err, then set me right. In sincerity is faithfulness, and in falsehood perfidy. The weak and oppressed among you in my sight shall be strong, until I restore his right unto him, if the Lord will; and the strong oppressor among you shall be weak until I wrest from him that which he hath usurped. Now hearken to me: when a people leaveth off to fight in the ways of the Lord, He casteth them away in disgrace; know also that wickedness never aboundeth in any nation, but the Lord visiteth it with calamity. Wherefore, obey ye me, even as I obey the Lord and His Apostle. Whosoever I disobey, then obedience is no longer obligatory upon you. Arise to prayers! and the Lord have mercy on you."

Scarce had Abu Bakr been installed in the seat of power, than the Arabs in various regions seized the opportunity which the death of the Prophet afforded, of refusing to pay alms to the Khalif, as enjoined by the Muhammadan law. Chief amongst the offenders was Malek ibn Nuwaira. To bring the recusant to submission, Khalid, "the sword of God," as he is designated by Greek and Arab historians—was sent "to talk with him" about "the matter."

The refractory chief at once avowed that "he could say his prayers without paying that," a remark which so incensed the zealous warrior, that he at once resolved upon the death of the outspoken opponent of Islam. Seeing that escape was hopeless, Malek turned round and looking upon his wife, a woman of surpassing beauty, exclaimed, "This woman has killed me." "Nay," said Khalid, "God has killed thee, because of thy apostacy from the true religion." "I profess the true Religion," was the ready rejoinder—but the headless trunk of the victim told in language which could not be misunderstood, that backsliding held no place in the faith of the early followers of Muhammad.

A more serious matter, however, soon engaged the attention of the "Defender of the Faith." During the last year of Muhammad's life, a person of the name of Musailama set up as a Prophet of Islam, and gave forth a book in imitation of the Quran. His power was not at first considerable, but the events of the year had added to the number of his followers, and now (A.D. 632) he began to be so formidable an opponent, that it became necessary to despatch a body of troops to Yamama, a province of Arabia, where he had established himself. Accordingly, Khalid and other commanders were sent forth at the head of an army of upwards of 40,000 Muslims; the combatants met at a place called Aqraba, where a furious battle ensued, but at length Musailama was pierced with a javelin, and the loss of their leader was soon followed by the defeat of his adherents, ten thousand of whose corpses testified to the zeal with which they fought in defence of their religion.

Abu Bakr having thus set matters at home in order, bethought himself of the injunctions of the Prophet that "true Muslims must fight till all people were of the true religion"; accordingly, summoning together his followers, and pointing out the success which had already attended their arms, he inquired whether it was their wish to carry the war into the region of Syria. Meeting with a ready response to a proposal so much in accordance with the pious zeal of the enthusiastic converts to the religion of the Prophet, Abu Bakr at once sent a circular-letter to all the leading men in Arabia acquainting them with his design, and bidding them remember that "fighting for Religion is an act of obedience to God." A large array of warriors was the response to this exhortation; appointing as general of the forces Yazid, the son of Abu Sufiyan, for many a lengthened year the bitter enemy of Muhammad, the Khalif sent them forth to "conquer or to die." It soon became evident that the troops of the decaying Byzantine Empire were no match for the hardy and inspirited soldiers enrolled under the banner of Islam, and victory bestowed her favours upon those who most deserved them. Encouraged by the success which attended these efforts, Abu Bakr found no difficulty in inducing the inhabitants of Mecca to emulate the deeds of their brethren of Madina, and another army under the command originally of Said ibn Khalid, but subsequently of Amru, famous in after years as the conqueror of Egypt, was despatched to swell the ranks of the Faithful in the regions of Syria. The command of the united forces was placed in the hands of Abu Obaida, whose piety did not unfortunately counterbalance his want of



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military experience ; so after a while he was replaced by the valiant and courageous Khalid. City after city was now compelled to open its gates to the all-conquering Saracens—the name by which these warriors are known to history. One town alone had the courage to resist. Bostra, a populous and wealthy mart, where the commerce of Syria, Iraq and the Hijaz, poured riches into the lap of luxury, was rash enough to refuse to listen to the overtures of the Muslims that she should surrender her faith and her liberty. Trusting to the solid walls which encompassed the town, the inhabitants prepared to resist ; at the first, success attended them, and encouraged by the reverses which befel the Saracens, they were emboldened to sally forth and encamp in the plain. But the goddess of victory, fickle in her favours, deserted the Bostra standard, and the ramparts of the town ere long towered down upon the mangled corpses of her faithful citizens. A religion of peace could ill contend with a creed in which fighting was an article of faith ; the cross of Christianity had been vanquished by the crescent of Islam. Still the people, though defeated, were not subdued ; but the perfidy of the governor, Romanus by name, completed what the zeal of Khalid and his soldiers had commenced. Wrapped in a coat wrought with gold, the faithless traitor proceeded in the dead of night to the camp of the enemy, and offered to deliver up the town, which he had sworn to defend ; his overtures were accepted, and a hundred intrepid warriors returned with him to his house, whence they emerged disguised as Christians to wreck vengeance upon the unsuspecting defenders of the city (A.D. 632). The issue could

not be doubtful, but the verdict of mankind has branded with infamy and disgrace the name of an apostate, who was a traitor to his sovereign, his subjects, and his God.

The redoubtable Saracens now turned their steps towards Damascus, the rich and flourishing capital of Syria, to which city they laid siege. The Emperor Heraclius, beginning to get alarmed at the success which befel the Muslim arms, despatched a band of 5000 men under a general of the name of Calous, to the assistance of the beleaguered town. At the onset the Christians despised their enemies, and did not hesitate to sally forth in the plain; but the trunkless heads of their general, and of the governor, which were thrown over the wall by the victorious assailants, soon caused the trembling followers of the Cross to realise that their only chance of safety lay within the ramparts which gave them protection. They contrived, however, to despatch a messenger at night to apprise the Emperor of the fate of his general, whereupon an army of 100,000 men under the command of Wardan, was sent to relieve Damascus. For a while success inclined towards the Saracens, and the famous Dirar, one of the boldest and most intrepid warriors that ever did battle for the crescent of Islam, was wounded by the son of the Byzantine general; but his Saracen antagonist, incensed at the outrage, drove his lance through the hapless youth with such violence that the point was left sticking in the bone, and the youthful hero tumbled a lifeless corpse on the plain. The Muslim, however, was weakened with loss of blood, and fell into the hands of his enemies. The Saracens now made the most

strenuous efforts to turn the tide of fortune, and the valour of Khalid compensated for the captivity of Dirar. At length the Byzantine army, no longer able to withstand the furious onslaughts of their intrepid antagonists, began to waver. The Muhammadans pursued them for a while, till, having rescued Dirar from the hands of his enemies, they ceased from further efforts, and returned to Damascus.

The Emperor Heraclius had no disposition to part with his possessions in Syria, and the capture of Damascus could of necessity mean nothing less than the loss of the region of which it was the capital; so he for a second time despatched Wardan at the head of an army of 70,000 soldiers to raise the siege of the city. Matters now began to assume a serious aspect for the Saracens, whose forces were not only diminished by war but scattered over the country, some at Balka, on the confines of Syria; others in Palestine, while a third body of men was in Iraq. It became necessary, therefore, to concentrate the troops thus distributed over a large expanse of territory, and accordingly Khalid penned a letter to the various commanders, apprising them that a vast army had come forth "that they might extinguish the light of God with their mouths," and bidding all friends of the Faithful to repair without delay to a certain spot. The letter met with a ready response, and 45,000 Muslims joined the hand of fellowship in the appointed locality on the appointed day, the 13th July, A.D. 633, an occasion memorable in the annals of Islam.

Meanwhile, news had reached the inhabitants of Damascus that succour was at hand; this intelligence

encouraged the citizens to sally forth in the hope of overpowering their enemies. Falling upon the rear of the Saracens the Christian soldiers seized a rich spoil of wealth and baggage, while numerous captives were taken back as prizes to the victors. Amongst the number was Qaula, the sister of Dirar, a woman endowed with a vigour of frame and energy of mind which would not have disgraced her scarce more valiant brother. Summoning her sister captives, she bade them "die honourably rather than live scandalously"; whereupon, forming themselves into a circle, they armed themselves with tent-poles, and the shattered skull of many a noble of Damascus, who with amorous step had ventured to approach the high-minded Saracen heroines, betokened that to a maiden of Arabia honour was no less precious than life. Thus were they defending themselves from the polluted touch of the Christian debauchees, when the victorious swords of their Saracen brethren completed the work which the tent-poles, in the hands of their maidens, had so heroically commenced; and in an incredibly short space of time three thousand lifeless frames bit the dust under the lance of Khalid and his avenging band.

Hastening to the field of Aiznadin, where the scattered forces of the Saracens were now united to give battle to the Byzantine troops, the Muslim leader rode through the ranks of his men, bidding them "Fight in good earnest and take religious part." Nor was Wardan less zealous amongst the cohorts under his charge. "Call upon Christ and He will help you," was the encouraging exhortation to soldiers to whom it was pointed out "for their comfort" that

they mustered three to one as compared with the army of the Infidels. Before the battle commenced Dirar, ever ready to undertake an enterprise of hazard and danger, was sent to gain tidings of the enemy; he was surprised by Wardan as the latter was riding on a white mule decorated with the gold which embellished the Imperial purple. Seeing a "fierce and naked" warrior scouring the plain, the Christian general bid some of the Emperor's soldiers fall upon him. But of the thirty who ventured upon the errand, seventeen soon lay in the dust, some unhorsed, some in the agonies of death, while Dirar returned in safety to receive the censures of his general. "Did not I warn you not to fight without order," was the hesitating rebuke of the more sober-minded Khalid. "Nay," said Dirar, "I did not begin first, but they came out to take me, and I was afraid that God should see me turn my back." A venerable Byzantine now offered to purchase the departure of the Saracens by a gift to each soldier of a turban, a robe, and a piece of gold, while their leaders were to receive ten robes and a hundred pieces of the precious metal; one hundred robes, and a thousand coins being reserved for the Khalif. "Ye Christian dogs," was the scornful reply, "you know your option, the Quran, the tribute, or the sword. We are a people whose delight is in war rather than in peace, and we despise your pitiful alms, since we shall be speedily masters of your wealth, your families, and your persons." But in good truth, the Muslim commander was deeply conscious of the danger which impended. "You see before you," said he to his impatient troops, "the united force of the Romans; you cannot hope to

escape, but you may conquer Syria in a single day."

The general of the Christian army now bethought himself to gain by stratagem what he had not as yet achieved by force of arms, and endeavoured to entrap the leader of the Saracens, so as the more easily to bring destruction upon his followers. The device which was planned was revealed by a traitor, and punishment recoiled upon the plotting Wardan, whose head was destined to grace the spear of the honest-minded and valiant Khalid. "There is no security where there is no faith kept," was the laconic exclamation of the Muslim, as he cast in the dust the lifeless trunk of the Christian dog. The death of their leader was as usual the signal of defeat, and the corpses of 50,000 followers of the Cross, which lay strewn on the field of battle, testified that Imperial apathy was no match for the enthusiastic fervour of the newly-founded faith of Islam.

The Saracens were now at liberty to resume the siege of Damascus. Despair would have induced the citizens to capitulate, but the valour of the Emperor's son-in-law, a noble of the name of Thomas, infused new life into the Christian defenders of the town, and it was determined to make a sally. Innumerable lights placed upon the turrets betokened that something unusual was at hand, and the morning found both the followers of the Cross and the Crescent engaged in invoking the help of the Powers on High. Thomas, an incomparable archer, was ever in the thickest of the fight, and many a son of the Faithful closed his eyes in death, pierced with an arrow from the unerring bow of the lion-hearted Christian

marksman. Among the rest a bridegroom from amongst the leaders of the Saracen army, lay on the field of battle, mortally wounded by a dart from the same hand. Vowing vengeance, the incensed and desolate bride, scarcely waiting to bury her husband, hastily seized a bow and quiver; her first arrow pierced the hand of the standard-bearer, while the second shot out the eye of the "Christian dog" who had slain her husband, so that the hapless Thomas was thereupon forced to withdraw into the city. The fight was continued till the evening, when the Arabians rested for a while; but the intrepid soul of the Emperor's son-in-law thirsted for the destruction of his enemies, and at his instigation, at a given signal, in the dead of the night, all the gates of Damascus were thrown open and a general attack was made upon the Saracen camp. However, the activity of Khalid—the sword of God—counterbalanced the impetuosity of his scarcely less illustrious Christian brother-in arms. Ejaculating a short prayer to "the God who never sleepeth," the Muhammadan general seizing his arms, led his troops to the front. The battle waged furious; but at length fortune deserted the unfortunate Damascenes, and once again they were compelled to betake themselves within the ramparts. The siege had now lasted for seventy days, and it became more and more evident that the city could not hope much longer to hold out against the insatiate fury of the followers of the Prophet. So a party of deputies, at the hour of midnight, sought the protection of Abu Obaida—a leader whose mild and gentle character had inspired the beleaguered garrison with respect and admiration. Their request was granted, and the city was spared;

but meanwhile the impetuous Khalid had been conducted into Damascus by a renegade priest, who professed to have read in the book of Daniel the impending doom of the town; the relentless warrior put to the sword all who came across his path, and the blood of the Christians streamed like water down the streets of proud Syria's prouder capital. Thus fell Damascus on 22nd August, A.D. 634.

The Muslim Khalif, however, was not destined to receive these tidings of great joy, for Abu Bakr died on the very day on which the black eagle of the Saracenic troops waved over the ramparts of the doomed city. About fifteen days before his decease, he was seized with a serious illness, occasioned as some suppose by the imprudent use of a bath on a cold day; fever ensued, and the successor of Muhammad, feeling that his end was at hand, called his secretary and gave written directions that "Omar should sit on the throne of power." For many days he battled with death, but the issue was never doubtful. On the 22nd August, A.D. 634, as before stated, Islam was called upon to mourn the loss of the leader of the Faithful, whose death occurred at the age of sixty-three. For more than two years he had held the sword of dominion, yet such was the simplicity and uprightness of his disposition that the lord of the Saracen monarchy at his decease was possessed of but five gold coins—the savings of a lifetime! As to the rest, he had distributed amongst the public what the public had bestowed. Well may Omar have exclaimed that "the Khalif had left his successor a hard pattern." Such was Abu Bakr, whose pious zeal gained for him a niche in the temple of fame,

far more honourable and renowned than attached to his exalted rank, in that he was the first who gathered together the scattered chapters of the Quran, a work consecrated by the devotions of untold myriads, who regard it with a veneration and esteem which command admiration and deserve respect—a work which is the prized heritage of every follower of the Prophet, who penned its sacred pages, and indited its holy ordinances.

OMAR. A.D. 634-644

The same day (22nd August, A.D. 634) that Abu Bakr died, Omar assumed the reins of power, to be followed in due course, with the consent of the Saracenic nation, by the title of “Amirul Muminin, Commander of the Faithful” — a title afterwards universally adopted by succeeding Khalifs. The lust of conquest had at this time seized the minds of the Saracens, and an invasion of the lands of Persia around the Euphrates was the field selected to give vent to the aspirations of the warriors of Islam; but matters did not prosper, and it became necessary to raise new levies to succour their brethren in adversity. At this juncture things took a turn for the better; and the Persians in these circumstances, attributing their defeat to the monarch who ruled over them, deposed Queen Arzamidakht, and raised Yazdagird to the throne; the newly elected king made a vigorous effort to disperse the Saracens, then overrunning his dominions, but in vain, and the loss of two armies betokened that some more vigorous measures were needed than a change of dynasty.

Meanwhile the conquerors of Damascus were not

idle. In the region around Tripoli, about 30 miles from the Syrian capital, was a holy spot known as the "Monastery of the Holy Father," tenanted by a priest eminent for his singular learning, piety, and austerity of life; thither persons of all degrees used to resort to receive the blessings of this earthly saint. It happened at this time that the Prefect of Tripoli had married his daughter to a grandee, and had sent the young lady to receive the communion at the hands of the revered priest. The occasion was great, and the assemblage large. Moved by the rich harvest of plunder, a body of five hundred Saracens bore down suddenly upon the astonished penitents; in a few moments the standard of Islam waved proudly amongst the unresisting multitude of Christians; but the audacity of surprise had but a short-lived glory, and after a few moments of victory the small but enthusiastic band of Muslims was hemmed in on every side like "a white spot in the skin of a black camel." In this crisis Khalid came to the rescue; after the siege of Damascus and the pursuit of its inhabitants for many miles into the territories of the Byzantine Emperor, the "Sword of God" had been censured for his rashness and deprived of his command, which was made over to Abu Obaida; but the occasion was now serious, so swearing with an oath that if the command of the army had been given to a "child he would have obeyed him," Khalid buckled on his armour, and flew to the rescue of his comrades in arms. His presence turned the tide in favour of the Arabians.

"The Christians," says the historian of the Roman Empire, "were broken by his attack, and slaughtered in their flight as far

as the river of Tripoli. They left behind them the various riches of the fair; the merchandises that were exposed for sale, the money that was brought for purchase, the gay decorations of the nuptials, and the governor's daughter, with forty of her female attendants. The fruits, provisions, and furniture, the money, plate, and jewels were diligently laden on the backs of horses, asses, and mules; and the holy robbers returned in triumph to Damascus. The hermit, after a short and angry controversy with Khalid, declined the crown of martyrdom, and was left alive in the solitary scene of blood and devastation."

Town after town now fell into the hands of the followers of the Prophet. Heliopolis the capital of the valley, and Hems the metropolis of the plain, alike threw open their gates to the conquerors of the Cross. Of minor cities, some were taken by treachery, while others endeavoured by a speedy capitulation to secure the protection which their valour had not the means of attaining. Heraclius, wearied with the constant and uninterrupted succession of messengers bringing ill news, and alarmed lest the Byzantine Empire should become the scorn of barbarian insolence, resolved to make a vigorous effort to regain his authority; so collecting troops from all parts he gathered together a mighty army consisting of upwards of fourscore thousand soldiers; while on the principle that "there is nothing like a diamond to cut diamond," the cavalcade of warriors was swelled by the presence of a large number of Christian Arabs. The command of this, the mightiest army which had ever been gathered in the regions of Syria, was placed in the hands of a general named Mahan. Both sides now prepared for the fight which was to determine the fate of the land. On this momentous occasion Khalid assumed his station in

the front, while Abu Obaida was posted in the rear, under the shade of the yellow banner which the Prophet of Arabia had displayed beneath the walls of Khaibar. The last line was occupied by a phalanx of female warriors, whose presence lent to the weak-hearted amongst the Saracen hosts the enthusiasm of shame. The exhortation of the Muslim generals was brief and characteristic : "Paradise is before you ; the devil and hell-fire in your rear." The Christians fought furiously, and thrice the shattered ranks of the Arabs were broken ; but the reproaches of the women drove back the wavering soldiers to the charge. It was the hardest and the most doubtful of the days which the veterans of the Muhammadan army had yet witnessed, and it is related that apart from those which were slain, no less than 700 testified by the loss of an eye that the dogs of Christians were no mean handlers of the bow. At length Mahan's vast army gave way before their enemies, and thousands upon thousands thereupon fell by the swords of the Arabs, so that the waters of the river became stained with the blood of the Christians ruthlessly slaughtered by a relentless foe, who neither sought nor gave quarter on the field of battle. Such was the memorable battle of Yarmuk (Nov., A.D. 636) which broke the Imperial Byzantine power, and made the Saracens masters of the regions of Syria.

The Arab leaders now turned the eye of conquest towards Jerusalem, and Yazid, the Muhammadan general, was accordingly directed to "sit down" before the town ; but at the lapse of ten days he had made no impression against its stout walls and massive ramparts. However, on the eleventh morning

Abu Obaida came up with the remainder of the army, and at once sent a summons to the inhabitants to embrace the religion of Islam, else, said the zealous warrior, "I shall bring men against you who love death better than you do the drinking of wine, or eating hog's flesh." But Jerusalem was strongly situated, amidst deep valleys and steep ascents, and the people having added to the defences of nature the fortifications of art, determined upon resistance. For four weary months the besiegers endured the sallies and assaults of the "Christian dogs," while the inclemency of the season added to the hardships suffered by the Saracen troops; yet not a murmur escaped the lips of the faithful veterans, and it became evident to the Patriarch who ruled within the city, that with such determined foes, the capture of Jerusalem could be but a matter of time: persuaded of this, Sempronius betook himself to the wall and tried, but in vain, to dissuade the Muslims from their purpose. In his extremity he agreed to capitulate on the condition that the Khalif himself should be present on the occasion—the Holy City of the Cross would submit to none but the noblest and most sacred representative of the Crescent. The council at Madina decided to gratify the whim of the Infidel, and the mighty "Commander of the Faithful," whose wish was law, whose nod was death, started on his journey with but a handful of attendants, the greater part of whom moreover, eventually, on the way returned to their own homes. The successor of the Prophet of Arabia rode upon a camel on which were slung a couple of sacks, containing corn and fruit for the way, while a leathern bottle and a large wooden

platter completed the modest equipment of the conqueror of Syria and Persia. Whenever he halted, his scanty band of fellow travellers joined without distinction in the frugal repast ; and the power attaching to the position of Khalif was only discernible by the circumstance that, as opportunities presented themselves, Omar took occasion to reform the errors and correct the vices of the people amongst whom he journeyed. On arriving at the city, he met several of the Faithful clad in the rich silks which had fallen into their hands as booty of war ; but the plain simplicity of the zealot could ill brook the pride of his sumptuously arrayed followers, whom he indignantly caused to be dragged in the mire, their clothes being at the same time rent in pieces before their eyes. Seated in a tent constructed of a material woven from coarse camels' hair, the Lord of the Saracen world received the submission of the sacred city of Jerusalem, and the year (A.D. 637) was not destined to expire ere a mosque dedicated to the worship of the God of Arabia stood on the spot where the Temple of Solomon, since then unknown, even in its ruins, was hallowed in the memories of the pious Israelites by the glories and traditions of the national greatness of which it was an emblem. Well might the Khalif in the arrogance of conquest have exclaimed, as he pointed with the finger of pride to the edifice which his zeal and piety had erected, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here." A war was also carried on against the Persians in Iraq, unsuccessfully at first till the victory of the Saracens at Qadisiya (A.D. 637) forced the Persians to abandon the western portion of their empire.

The next city to feel the weight of the Saracen might was Aleppo: but the town was situated in a position of great strength and defended by a governor—Youkinna by name—of determination and courage. For five months in the year 638 of the Christian era, the fortress resisted all the attacks of the Arab troops; the loss on the part of the garrison was, it is true, immense, but still the resolute defenders held out, and it was reserved for the enterprise of a single soldier to accomplish what was denied to the courage of an army of veteran warriors. It chanced that amongst the Arabs who were sent by the Khalif to reinforce the Saracen army was a certain slave called Dames, a man of gigantic stature and indomitable energy, who was accompanied by thirty dauntless comrades. This prodigy of valour and daring planted himself, in the dead of the night, beneath the ramparts of the castle; standing with his back against the wall the huge frame of the herculean slave formed a support for his companions, who mounted on his shoulders, each one climbing above his fellow, till the human ladder reached the top of the tower; stabbing the watchman, the Muslims linked their turbans, and one after another the whole of the band was drawn up. This daring feat successfully accomplished, the guard was at once overpowered, the bolts of the drawbridge were undrawn, and at dawn of day the Saracen standard waved proudly above the towers of Christian Aleppo. But the cup of bitterness had further to be quaffed by the people who ate hog's flesh, and drank wine. Discouraged by the success which everywhere attended the arms of the warriors from Arabia, the luxurious city of Antioch was, in

turn, glad to purchase her ransom for 300,000 pieces of gold, and on the 21st day of August in the year of grace 638, the glory of Cæsar passed under the yoke of victorious Islam.

Matters were now becoming serious for the Byzantine Empire; to such an extent indeed did the danger press, that finding himself encompassed by traitors, neither the sense of shame nor the importunities of his people could inspire with zeal the indolently disposed Emperor Heraclius, who, secretly embarking with a few attendants bid an eternal farewell to the land of Syria, leaving his eldest son Constantine as an unequal champion against the forces of the ever-victorious Arabian hordes. The new monarch endeavoured to act with vigour, and encamping at Cæsarea, made a show of preparing for the defence of the town; but shortly after he had reached the city, hearing of the loss of Tripoli and Tyre, both of which had been betrayed into the hands of the enemy, his heart failed him, and, embarking in the night, the Christian Prince followed the example of his father; and quitting the land he had been left to defend, sought refuge and security in the luxurious and effeminate palaces of Constantinople. The hapless citizens of Cæsarea thus deserted by their sovereign, at once surrendered, and sought to propitiate their stern conquerors with an offering of 200 pieces of gold. The contagion of submission thereupon spread rapidly throughout the regions of the land, and the year of our Lord 639 witnessed the entire subjugation of the populous and wealthy plains of Syria.

For a lengthened period the insatiate Saracens

had thirsted for the conquest of the rich and noble cities of Egypt, but their national architecture was solid, and the Nile with its innumerable branches formed an insuperable barrier to the progress of the Musulman warriors. After a while, however, the ardour of the famous Amru, famous alike for the baseness of his birth, and the prowess of his sword, could brook no restraint. After a siege of thirty days he captured Farma, a key which unlocked the entrance of the country to his faithful followers. He then proceeded to invest Memphis, the ancient capital of the Ptolemies and Cæsars. For seven months the Arabian engines of war battered in vain the walls of the devoted town, and the delay had been so great that the time was now nigh at hand when the rising of the Nile would encompass the invaders with destruction. Even the hardy daring and unconquerable energy of the heroes of Islam could not resist the attacks of nature, the only foe to whom they bowed the knee of submission and defeat. At this critical juncture, Omar's lieutenant resolved to "do or die"; so making a bold and vigorous assault, he drove the Byzantines to their boats, A.D. 639, and the Pyramids of Egypt were destined to look down upon the mosque which the pious zeal of the Arabian conqueror erected to consecrate the victory, and hallow the capture in the eyes of his fiery followers.

The Saracens at this time found in the heart of the country an alliance as unexpected as it was valuable. The Coptic Christians, a sect whom the persecutions of the Emperors of Rome had converted into a nation, welcomed the Muslim conquerors as their deliverers, and swore allegiance to the Khalif.

This important defection from the ranks of the Cross enabled Amru to concentrate all his energies upon the siege of Alexandria, at that time the emporium of the world. The Arabs behaved like lions, but the besieged were fighting for the dearest of human blessings—religion, property, and life—and a siege of fourteen months, during which the Arabs lost upwards of three-and-twenty thousand men, betokened the valour and courage of the defenders of the city. Still destiny had decreed that the Crescent of Islam should supplant the Byzantine Eagle, and on the 22nd December, A.D. 640, Amru was enabled to send to his master a missive, simple in expression but portentous with meaning, "I have taken the great city of the West." The capital of Egypt had, indeed, passed into the possession of the followers of the Prophet, with its palaces, its baths, its theatres, its shops, its houses. Alone amongst all the spoils of Alexandria the royal library had not been appropriated by the zeal of the conqueror. The boon was inestimable, and with earnest entreaties Philoponus, the learned custodian of these priceless treasures, pleaded against their destruction. Amru was in a measure inclined to gratify the wish of the man of letters, but refused to act otherwise than according to the mandate of the Khalif, his master. The answer of Omar is historical; it tarnished with infamy the escutcheon of a conqueror unwilling or unable to appreciate the precious trophy, the preservation of which would have lent glory to his reign, and immortality to his moderation: "If these writings of the Greeks agree with the book of God, they are useless and need not be preserved: if they disagree they are pernicious and

ought to be destroyed." So the incomparable collection which reflected the glory of the Ptolemies was used to light the fires of the baths of the city, and for six months the smouldering ashes of 700,000 volumes bore witness to the withering influence of bigotry and fanaticism.

The genius of Amru, who united in his person the qualities of warrior and administrator, turned his newly conquered territory into the granary of the Saracen world, and when, some time after his sway had commenced, a dearth overtook the land of Arabia, he was enabled to supply his famished brethren in the Peninsula with corn from Egypt: indeed native historians, whose zeal probably outran their veracity, would have it believed that the trains of camels laden with grain stretched in an unbroken line from Alexandria to Madina, a distance of some hundreds of miles! It will not occasion surprise that in these circumstances the Khalif, to whom the land was known only from the voice of fame and legend, became anxious to learn somewhat as to the kingdom of the Pharaohs; the reply of the conqueror of the country to the inquiries of his master is too singular to pass unnoticed.

"O Commander of the Faithful! Egypt is a compound of black earth and green plants, between a pulverised mountain and a red sand. The distance from Syene to the sea is a month's journey for a horseman. Along the valley descends a river, on which the blessing of the Most High reposes both in the evening and the morning, and which rises and falls with the revolutions of the sun and moon. When the annual dispensation of Providence unlocks the springs and fountains that nourish the earth, the Nile rolls his swelling and sounding waters through the realm of Egypt; the fields are overspread by the salutary flood; and the villagers

communicate with each other in their painted barks. The retreat of the inundation deposits a fertilising mud for the reception of the various seeds; the crowds of husbandmen who blacken the land may be compared to a swarm of industrious ants; and their native indolence is quickened by the lash of the task-master, and the promise of the flowers and fruits of a plentiful increase. Their hope is seldom deceived; but the riches which they extract from the wheat, the barley and the rice, the legumes, the fruit trees, and the cattle, are unequally shared between those who labour and those who possess. According to the vicissitudes of the seasons the face of the country is adorned with a *silver* wave, a verdant *emerald*, or the deep yellow of a *golden* harvest."

Omar now ruled over a mighty empire; his administration was impartial, his ears were open to the complaints of the meanest of his subjects, while in no case could the rank of any offender exempt him from punishment. Pious, grave, and abstinent, he commanded unbounded respect, and in the quaint words of a pious Arab historian, "His walking stick struck more terror into those that were present than another man's sword." His veneration for the faith of which he was the head may be gathered from the circumstance that he was the first to introduce the "Hijra," or flight from Mecca to Madina, as the era from which Muhammadan chronology is computed, though in practice the decision was ante-dated, and took effect from the date of the occurrence (July, A.D. 622). But his inflexible sternness had given offence to a Persian, by name Firuz, who, belonging to the sect of Magi, had, as such, been compelled to pay to his Muslim masters a daily tribute of two pieces of silver. Thinking to obtain relief at least in part from the hateful impost, the man appealed to Omar; but the latter refused to listen to a suppliant who could well afford to expend what was demanded of him. Firuz,

filled with resentment, waited his opportunity, and whilst the Khalif was saying morning prayer in the mosque, the Persian stabbed the "Commander of the Faithful" thrice in the stomach with a dagger. The Saracens present on the occasion at once rushed upon the assassin; but thirteen of them soon lay low in the dust, seven of the number in the pangs of death, while the remaining six carried in their bodies to the end of their lives the marks of the Persian's revengeful weapon. At length one of the Arabs threw a vest over the murderer, who, finding himself at the mercy of his enemies, stabbed himself and fell at their feet a lifeless, quivering corpse. Omar lingered for three days and died (3rd Nov., A.D. 644), after a reign of a little more than ten years, during which period the empire over which he held sway had become enlarged by the powers of his generals, and the zeal and determination of his troops, to an extent that must have caused anxiety and alarm to the surrounding potentates; these latter, indeed, a few short years in the past, had rejected as the aberrations of a madman the overtures which the Prophet of Arabia had made to princes and kings, who mocked his messengers, and laughed to scorn the babblings of their master. Islam had now become a powerful factor in the history of the world.

OSMAN. A.D. 644-656

While Omar lay on his deathbed, those around him endeavoured to persuade the dying "Commander of the Faithful" to name a successor; but of the many names suggested to him, not one pleased the austere

Khalif, though eventually he was induced to mention six persons from amongst whom a selection was to be made within three days of his decease. This choice fell upon Osman, who succeeded to the Khalifat on the 6th November, A.D. 644. Following the example of his predecessors, as soon as he had assumed the reins of power he sought to enlarge the dominions which owned the sway of Islam, and after a succession of minor expeditions, extending over a period of two or three years, an army of 40,000 warriors advanced towards Africa, under the command of Abdullah, the son of Zaid. The latter, in the time of Muhammad, had been entrusted with the important office of transcribing the sheets of the Quran : but the faithless scribe corrupting the text, fled to Mecca, where, thinking himself secure, he was imprudent enough to ridicule the work which he had been commissioned to engross ; the capture, however, of the sacred city convinced him of his folly, and he fell at the feet of the Prophet, whose ignorance he had so imprudently endeavoured to expose. His life was at the time spared at the entreaty of Osman, and he repaid the kindness by serving with fidelity the religion which he had at one time laboured to subvert. After crossing the parched sands of the desert, the Arabs (A.D. 647) pitched their tents before the walls of Tripoli ; but the fortifications were strong, and enabled the town to hold out till the arrival of the Prefect Gregory, at the head of a disorderly host of no less than 120,000 troops, most of whom were Africans and Moors. Relying on the numerical superiority of his followers, the Christian general thought fit to reject with scorn the option of the Quran, or payment of

tribute; so the struggle commenced, and for two whole days the armies were engaged in combat, the fierceness of which was only abated at times by the necessity of seeking shelter during the heat of the day from the burning glare of the African sun. It chanced that the daughter of Gregory, a maiden of incomparable grace and beauty, wielded a scimitar amongst the ranks of the Byzantine troops, and the fond father, in the pride of enthusiasm, was led to offer her hand, and 100,000 pieces of gold, to the fortunate aspirant who could give as a dowry the head of the Arabian general. But Abdullah was too prudent to be entrapped, and withdrew his person from the field, a proceeding which had the effect of dejecting his friends, and encouraging his enemies; the taunts, however, of a noble Arabian aroused the leader of the Muslims from his lethargy, and emulating the pattern of his rival, he proclaimed that the head of Gregory should be repaid with the hand of his warlike daughter, and a sum of 100,000 pieces of gold. For a long while the balance of superiority swayed to and fro, neither side being able to claim the victory; at length, however, the Arabs were induced to adopt a stratagem—simple in conception, but effective in result. Instead of engaging all their troops in the daily onslaught, the Saracen general kept a reserve of intrepid warriors, who, when the sun was high in the heavens, rushing upon the Christians after the latter had prepared for the usual refreshment of the camp, surprised the levies already fatigued with the toil of the morning fight. The prefect fell in the thick of the battle, his daughter was surrounded and made prisoner, and the

plains of Barbary echoed with the prayers of the Faithful, as they knelt to return thanks to the Lord of heaven and earth for the recent victory vouchsafed to their arms. After a campaign of many months (A.D. 647), the Saracen army returned to Madina laden with spoils and wealth, and covered with honour and distinction.

While the sunny plains of Africa were thus the scene of Islam's glory, matters in Egypt had become somewhat serious. Amru, though he had done such service to the cause of the Khalif, had incurred the displeasure of his fickle master, who deposed his trusty lieutenant; with the result that Alexandria was recaptured by the troops of the Byzantine Emperor, and once again the standard of the Cross waved over the imperial city of the plain. In this crisis it became necessary to restore the disgraced leader; but the latter, on resuming the command, found the Christians in a good posture of defence, and for days they held out bravely. Their obstinacy provoked him to a degree that he took an oath that should God grant him the victory he would raze the walls of the town. He was as good as his word, and, ere long, the desolate houses and overturned buildings of the noblest city in Egypt testified to the ruthless barbarism of the warriors, who founded an empire on the ruins of the towns which their intemperate zeal would not permit them to preserve.

The same year (A.D. 647) which witnessed the capture of Tripoli, was signalised by the subjugation of the island of Cyprus, and the invasion of Khorassan, one of the kingdoms of the Persian Monarchy. The circumstances of this last-mentioned

expedition were these :—Yazdagird, the Sovereign of Iran, finding himself unable to cope with the hardy warriors who had seized his lands and plundered his cities, invited Tarchan the Turk to his assistance ; the jealousy, however, of the occupant of the throne of Alexander the Great soon led him to quarrel with his new ally, whom he sent back to his own dominions ; but only to return after a while to vent his fury and indignation on the hapless Yazdagird by leaguings with the enemies who were plundering the fair lands of Persia. His army shattered, and his followers dispersed, the king was compelled to take to flight as a hapless wanderer, and coming to a mill he proffered his belt, his bracelets, and his ring for protection and food ; but the churlish miller, ignorant of the rank and position of the suppliant before him, rejoined in tones of displeasure that “he earned four pieces of silver with his mill every day, and if he would give him so much money he would let it stand still upon his account, if not he would not.” While they were debating the matter, a party of horse came up, and in a few moments the lifeless corpse of the murdered sovereign revealed to the awe-stricken miller the rank of the suppliant, and the cause of his importunity. Thus, on 23rd August in the year of our Lord 651, the kingdom of the Medes and Persians passed under the yoke of the Khalif of Arabia.

Matters were now prospering abroad, beyond the dreams of expectation, but a storm was in turn arising at home. Osman, though a man of piety and of good disposition, was not fitted for government, and numerous acts of impolicy alienated the hearts of not a few of his subjects. Murmurings were frequent,

and accusations incessant. Lavish of treasure to his friends, his enemies took occasion to tax him with improvidence; whereupon in a public assembly he told the people from the pulpit that "the money which was in the treasury was sacred and belonged to God, and that he would dispose of it to whomsoever he thought fit, in spite of them." Not content with this vehement language, he threatened and cursed whomsoever showed any dislike of what he had said. A hapless bystander on one occasion inconsiderately announced *his* sentiments; but he had reason to repent of his temerity, for he was at once beaten till he swooned. Such arrogant conduct on the part of Osman deeply incensed the Arabs, who, gathering themselves together, and raising their standard of rebellion, took up arms and encamped within a league of Madina. Alarmed at the disaffection of his subjects, the poor Khalif ascended the pulpit in the mosque, and solemnly, before the whole congregation, called God to witness that he was truly sorry for what was past, and that he heartily repented him of his misdeeds. But to no purpose. The outbreak gathered strength daily, till at length 200 men from Kufa, 150 from Bussora, and 1000 from Egypt, leagued together to depose Osman. In this juncture the "Commander of the Faithful" contrived to enlist the sympathies of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, whose influence, coupled with the promise of redress, for a while allayed the storm of discontent, and the rebels returned every man to his own land. The treachery, however, of his own secretary brought ruin and destruction upon the successor of the Prophet. This unscrupulous intriguer, by name Marwan, con-

trived that as the Egyptians journeyed homewards, they should intercept a messenger bearing letters sealed with the signet of the "Commander of the Faithful" at Madina, to the effect that an individual of note whom the Egyptians desired as their prefect should be impaled and put to death. Such barefaced treachery and perfidiousness on the part of the Ruler of the Saracens now became the one theme of conversation throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula; none questioned the authenticity of the fatal document, which the crafty and insidious secretary had in good truth penned with his own hands. Feelings of revenge soon displaced the better dictates of the inflammable sons of the desert, and ere long a crowd besieged the door of the venerable Osman, clamoring for the blood of the tyrant, whose cruelty, alas! be it told, existed but in their own heated imaginations. In vain he offered every satisfaction, avowing that he never intended them any injury; in vain did Ali send his two sons, Hasan and Husain, to protect the aged Khalif from violence. Forcing open the door the infuriated malcontents found Osman with the Quran in his lap; falling upon him, one wounded him in the throat, while a second stabbed him with a sword. The hapless Patriarch then fell to the ground, whereupon one of the murderers sat upon his bosom, and with savage vindictiveness gashed the defenceless successor of the Prophet till death released the quivering frame from its pains and sufferings. Thus died (30th June, A.D. 656) the aged Osman; bowed down with the weight of more than eighty years, his feeble limbs and tottering steps might have pleaded for mercy; but the assassins were

implacable, and for three days the murdered corpse lay unheeded and unburied, festering in the heat of an Eastern sun; in the end necessity compelled what decency failed to secure, and the blood-stained body was cast into a hole, unwashed, unhonoured, and unsung. Strange destiny! that the proud ruler, whose will was law, he at whose command the mighty Byzantine Empire shook to its base, while the Monarchy of Iran lay humbled in the dust, should have been denied the sacred rites which accompany the burial of the meanest, the vilest of God's creatures on earth below. Well may the pious historian of the Saracen Empire have moralised as to the "vanity of human greatness and the uncertainty of all earthly felicity."



CHAPTER IV

THE OMAIYAD DYNASTY OF KHALIFS

A.D. 661-750

AMONGST the many opponents of the Prophet of Arabia, none was more violent than Abu Sufiyan the grandson of the chieftain, by name Omaiya, who, as previously explained, entered the lists with Hashim for the leadership of the Quraish tribe. It was he who led the Meccans against Muhammad at the battle of Ohod which ended so disastrously for the cause of Islam. It is true that eventually Abu Sufiyan, seeing opposition to be vain, embraced Islam; but he acted practically under compulsion. It is also true that his son Muawiya became one of Muhammad's secretaries, but only, as is generally believed, to forward the interests of himself and his house. At the time of the murder of Osman (A.D. 656) this Muawiya was governor of Syria, a province which he ruled with wisdom and a strong hand. Admittedly he might have sent an army to help Osman before the murder of the "Commander of the Faithful," but to have done so would not have served his ambition, and he

remained quiescent till the assassination of the venerable Khalif afforded him a pretext to turn the situation to account. Accordingly, he exhibited Osman's blood-stained shirt in the mosque of Damascus, and thereby created a powerful feeling of disgust amongst the Syrians with whom he was popular, if not altogether beloved. In due course, though not without difficulty, he succeeded in bringing about a conference at a spot seven days' journey from Damascus and thirteen from Madina, with a result that he was elected Khalif (A.D. 661), and thus became the founder of the Omayyad dynasty with Damascus as its capital. Leaving to another chapter the events which arose consequent upon the pretensions of Ali the Prophet's son-in-law (whose opposition only terminated with his death), and his two sons Hasan and Husain, it will suffice to pass on to A.D. 661, when Muawiya became sole master of the Muslim Empire comprising ten provinces, viz.—(1) Syria; (2) Kufa with Arabian Iraq, and Persian Iraq; (3) Bussora with Persia, Sistan, Khorassan, Bahrain, and Oman; (4) Armenia; (5) Mecca; (6) Madina; (7) The Indian Marches; (8) Africa; (9) Egypt; and (10) Yaman. Administrative changes, however, at times became necessary, and the list as thus given was, as occasion required, modified both by Muawiya himself and his successors.

Dissensions still arose, notably as regards the Kharijites (the dissenters of Islam), who broke out in revolt in Bussora. This rebellion was soon put down and it then became necessary to come to terms with his bastard brother Ziyad, whose submission paved the way for his employment in high places, notably as

governor of Iraq, over which he ruled with such vigour that Muawiya contemplated naming him as successor to the Khalifat; but the death of Ziyad in A.D. 672, put an end to such an arrangement. The departure was entirely novel, since as yet no precedent existed in the annals of Islam for the nomination of a future Khalif, inasmuch as Muhammad, whose actions had as yet been the rule of the Muslim world, had refrained from naming the person upon whose shoulders his mantle of power was to fall. Still Muawiya with whom diplomacy was no less potent than religion, did not shrink from naming his son Yazid as his successor; but the idea met with such dislike, that the Khalif did not venture for some years to publicly announce his intention. When the Muslim world received the intelligence, divisions arose. People in Syria took the oath of allegiance to the future sovereign; but in Arabia and Iraq the opposition was so pronounced as to render it necessary for Muawiya to repair at the head of an army to Mecca and Madina, where, in due course, he reduced the malcontents to submission.

Meanwhile the Khalif had not been idle as regards foreign affairs. In Africa he steadily extended his conquests, and overcoming a considerable army sent by the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine IV., his sway became so thoroughly established, that he was able to separate the Muslim provinces in Africa and Egypt. In order further to consolidate his power, he founded the city of Khairwan, which was completed in A.D. 674.

Still more brilliant were the Muslim successes in the East. An army invaded Khorassan, afterwards crossing the Oxus, and returning laden with plunder

from the tribes of Transoxiana; Bokhara was captured, and his ever-victorious generals proceeded towards India as far as the Indus. These important events bring the narrative to A.D. 675-676.

Encouraged by these successes, the Muslims turned their attention to the Byzantine Empire, and sent a fleet of twelve hundred vessels to the Mediterranean: the islands of Cos, Crete, and Rhodes, soon fell into the hands of the Arabs, who, after destroying the famous Colossus of Rhodes proceeded to Constantinople, which, however, resisted all their efforts, owing its safety to Greek fire. After a while, Muawiya concluded a thirty years' peace with Constantine IV., and returned to Damascus, where he died in April, A.D. 680, after a brilliant reign of about twenty years.

He was succeeded by his son Yazid I., who commenced his reign by the murder of Husain the son of Ali—an act reprobated alike by the Omayyads themselves as by the whole Muslim world. Indeed, so great was the indignation aroused that a powerful revolt shortly afterwards occurred at Madina, which, however, fell into the hands of Yazid, who after the battle of Harra on 26th August, A.D. 683, gave up the city for three days to pillage and massacre. Not content with this act of bloodshed and cruelty, the Khalif sent an army to Mecca where a rebellion was assuming dangerous proportions. Pious Arabs from all parts hastened to defend the holy city, and the issue was for a time doubtful, although the Syrian army after investing the town placed balistas on the neighbouring heights, and hurled against the temple stones and vessels full of blazing pitch, with the

result that the temple caught fire and was consumed. Fortunately, however, after the holy city had for about two months endured the miseries of a siege, intelligence was received of the death of Yazid on 11th November, A.D. 683. He was a gay festive occupant of the throne, and was the first Khalif who publicly drank wine.

Passing by the pretender, Ibn Zubair, who caused himself to be proclaimed "Commander of the Faithful," the course of events reverts to Damascus, where immediately after the death of Yazid, his eldest son, a stripling of about twenty years, was proclaimed Khalif under the title of Muawiya II. He was a weak and incapable ruler whose reign lasted but forty days. On his death (A.D. 683), the succession fell upon Marwan I., who had been secretary to the Khalif Osman, and governor of Madina under Muawiya. After crushing a rebellion against his accession to power, he turned his attention to Egypt, which he overran. In the year 684, he was compelled to hasten to Syria, which had been invaded by a hostile band. In the midst, however, of a battle (A.D. 685), the Khalif died, as is generally supposed at the hands of his wife who suffocated her husband to avenge her son by a former marriage—by name, Khalid—whom she considered to have been insulted by the Commander of the Faithful's nomination of his own son Abdul Malik as his successor.

The new Khalif was at once acknowledged by the whole of Syria and Egypt; but his power was by no means firmly established, and for many years he was engaged in strenuously defending his rights. At one time he laid siege to his own capital of Damascus

(A.D. 688), where in his absence a revolt had broken out ; and on another occasion he attacked Mecca (Oct., A.D. 692). Success attended his arms principally owing to the service of Hajjaj, originally an obscure officer, but destined in after years to play a most important part in the annals of Islam. The leading spirit in the rebellion was Ibn Zubair, whose death at the fall of Mecca led to the pacification of the country ; the political importance, too, of the holy cities of Mecca and Madina, which had hitherto maintained an uninterrupted struggle with Damascus as the seat of power, was lessened, and the centre of Islam was gradually removed, as the flower of the Muslim world passed beyond the limits of Arabia.

Abdul Malik, now sole master of the empire, at once turned his attention to Kufa where a considerable band of Kharijites continued recusant and refractory, and Hajjaj was directed to bring them to reason. The troops of Iraq, engaged at the time in an expedition against the "Separatists," had abandoned their general and refused to return to duty. Hajjaj on his arrival at Kufa at once set himself to quell this mutinous spirit. Ascending the pulpit at the time of morning prayers he addressed his hearers in sentences which, while they evidenced the man, were no less effective and successful. "Men of Kufa," so ran the language of the warrior, "I see before me heads ripe for the harvest and the reaper. I am he. I seem to myself to see blood between turbans and shoulders. I am not one of those who can be frightened by an inflated bag of skin, nor need any one think to squeeze me like dried figs. I have

been chosen on good grounds : and it is because I have been seen at work that I have been picked out from among others. The Prince of the Believers has spread before him the arrows of his quiver, and has tried every one of them by biting its wood. It is my wood that he has found the hardest, and the bitterest, and I am the arrow which he shoots against you." Then followed a command that every man capable of fighting should take up arms—at the peril of the loss of his head. The threat did not fail in its object—an army was raised, and after a struggle of eighteen months the Kharijites tendered their submission (A.D. 697). But matters did not quieten down in these parts, for in less than four years Hajjaj was engaged in various expeditions to quell disaffection, and it was not till A.D. 702, that the province was completely subjugated. While these troubles in Iraq were occupying the attention of Abdul Malik, his generals were engaged in a struggle with the Byzantine Empire in the West. At first success attended the arms of the Muslims, but after a while reverses befell the Khalif, and he was obliged to accept peace. About A.D. 694, however, Abdul Malik, in a letter to Justinian II., used language which was considered wanting in respect. The Christian monarch retaliated by a threat to engrave on his coins an inscription offensive to Islam. Up to this period the Arabs had no coinage of their own, but they now instituted an Arabic coinage, which the Byzantine Emperor refused to accept in payment of tribute, and declared peace at an end. This led to reprisals on the part of the Muslims, who met with varying success. Neither side, however, could claim a decided

superiority, and for years Asia Minor and Armenia were subject to raids on the part of the Muslims, whose territories were in turn invaded by the Byzantine troops.

In Africa the Muslim troops were on the whole victorious, and the sea-board fell to a considerable extent into the hands of the Khalif, who, in spite of all the efforts of the Byzantine Emperor, was able to maintain his hold upon the cities he had conquered. These events occurred between A.D. 692 and 701. Abdul Malik died on 8th October, A.D. 705, after a stormy but glorious reign which greatly extended and strengthened the Muslim Empire. He had two nicknames given him, the one was the "Sweat of a Stone," because of his extreme covetousness; the other was "Father of Flies" on account of his breath, which was so bad that it killed all the flies that came near his lips.

He was succeeded by his son Walid I., who at once turned his attention to the internal condition of his dominions. At Mecca and Madina many salutary improvements were made which attracted large numbers of Muslims to the holy cities. But Walid's generals were by no means inactive in foreign lands, and Muslim troops overran a large portion of Transoxiana as far as the frontier of China, while the invasion of India and the plunder of cities in Mekran, Sind, and elsewhere, testified to the energy of the troops and the aggressive policy of their master. In Armenia and Asia Minor the Khalif's lieutenant obtained several successes against the Byzantine soldiers.

But these triumphs were eclipsed by the conquest

of Spain. The governor of Africa, by name Musa, entered Morocco and captured Fez and Tangier, leaving his lieutenant Tariq, as governor of the latter city, and of all the Muslim possessions in the west of the Continent. About this time dissensions occurred in Spain in regard to the town of Ceuta, the governor of which (Julian) invoked the aid of Tariq. Only too ready to interfere, the Muslim commander proceeded to "reconnoitre" the coast with four ships and five hundred men. Finding that there was no likelihood of any opposition, he eventually (A.D. 710) landed at the head of 12,000 men, and passed into Spain. He disembarked at a spot to which he gave the name of Jabal Tariq, or "Mountain of Tariq"—since corrupted and known to fame as Gibraltar. Roderic, King of Spain, hastened to give battle, but was defeated and slain at Cadiz. Town after town now fell a prey to the Muslim troops, till in less than three years (A.D. 713) the whole of Spain was subdued. Musa and his lieutenant Tariq returned to Damascus to find that the Khalif had died (A.D. 715), and that the renowned Hajjaj had predeceased his sovereign by a few weeks. Musa on his arrival was accused of peculation, beaten with rods, and condemned to a heavy fine. He died shortly afterwards, while no further mention is made of Tariq. Such was the gratitude of Islam!

On the death of Walid, his brother, Sulaiman, ascended the throne. The chief event during his reign was the attack on Constantinople, August, A.D. 717. But the huge Muslim army which necessitated eighteen hundred vessels to transport it to the capital of the Byzantine Empire, could not resist the Greek

fire with which it was assailed. Their fleet too was destroyed, while lack of provisions occasioned a famine amongst the troops. The Khalif, while hastening to be present at the capture of the city, fell ill, and died on his journey, and his cousin, Omar II., who succeeded him (A.D. 717), vainly endeavoured by the despatch of a fleet of four hundred vessels to convey arms and provisions to the army before Constantinople. No less than 100,000 men perished under the walls of the city, and not without difficulty a mere handful of soldiers arrived back in Asia Minor. Austere and intolerant in his religion, though simple in his habits of life, Omar gained the reputation of a saint, but his severity alienated his people, and his death in February, A.D. 720, after a brief reign of two years and a half was scarcely lamented.

Yazid II., another son of Abdul Malik, succeeded to power without resistance. His reign was occupied at first in quelling various insurrections, and subsequently the Muslim armies were directed against Farghana in Transoxiana, Armenia, and the Byzantines in Asia Minor. In Europe also they crossed the Pyrenees and took possession of Narbonne, but were afterwards repulsed at Toulouse, and forced to retrace their steps.

Yazid II. died in A.D. 724, owing, it is supposed, to grief for the loss of a favourite slave.

During the rule of his son and successor Hisham, who reigned for twenty years, the Muslims made vigorous onslaughts on the Byzantine possessions in Asia Minor; they also crossed the Pyrenees and ravaged parts of France, but the energy of the warrior, Charles Martel, drove them back to Spain,

where internal troubles prevented their again assuming the offensive. Hisham died on 6th February, A.D. 743.

His brother, Walid II., had but a brief taste of power, owing largely to his debaucheries and want of religion, which gave great offence. After he had been on the throne about a twelvemonth a rebellion headed by Yazid, a son of Walid I., rendered it necessary for the Khalif to take up arms, but he was unsuccessful and died on the field of battle in April, A.D. 744. His head was thereupon taken to Damascus and carried about the city on the end of a spear.

Yazid the third of that name became Khalif, but held sway for no more than six months (A.D. 744), leaving the kingdom on his death a prey to rebellion and anarchy in every direction.

His brother Ibrahim, who succeeded to the throne (A.D. 744), reigned for two months, at the end of which period he resigned the Khalifat to Marwan bin Muhammad, formerly governor of Armenia, who had entered Damascus and caused himself to be proclaimed Khalif (A.D. 744) under the title of Marwan II. Unrest and rebellion, however, followed the footsteps of the usurper, till the unfortunate Khalif was forced to risk the fate of war in a battle, the loss of which cost him his empire. On his defeat (25th January, A.D. 750) Marwan fled for refuge at first to Mosul, the inhabitants of which refused to open their gates to him. Foiled in this direction he tried, with no better success, various other towns in the empire, and finally took refuge in a Coptic church in Egypt, where, however, his enemies pursued him, and slew him at the foot of the altar. His head was then cut

off and sent to Kufa as a trophy of welcome to the new Khalif. Thus ended the Omaiya dynasty, which founded in blood perished in blood, after a turbulent interval of somewhat less than a hundred years.



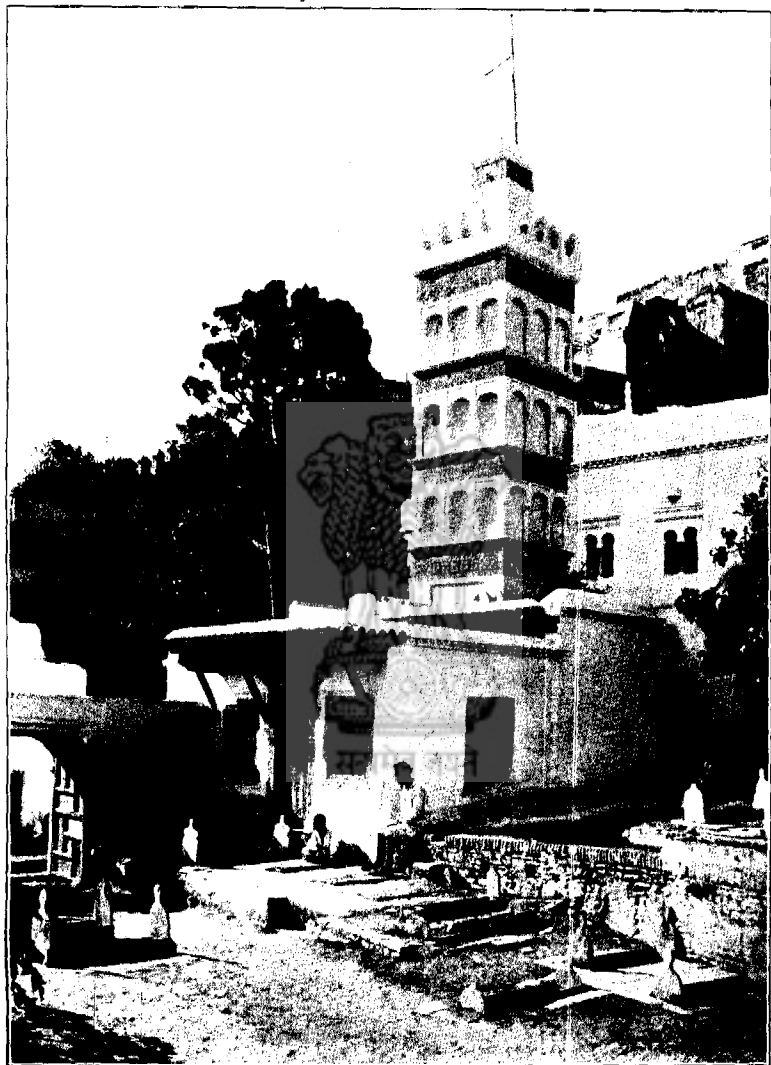
CHAPTER V

THE ABBASIDE DYNASTY OF KHALIFS

A.D. 750-1258

DURING the life of the Prophet of Arabia his paternal uncle Abbas was a personage of considerable power and influence in the Muslim world; the more so as having an elder son, Abdullah, who lived in the closest friendship with the grandson of the Prophet. After the events of the fatal field of Karbala, which will be described in a subsequent chapter, Abdullah retired to Mecca, where he brought up his family in deadly hatred of the Omayyad Khalif, who then held sway at Damascus. A son by name Ali was born to him in A.D. 660, who settled at Damascus, where, however, he was subjected to every kind of insult and eventually driven from court. He thereupon betook himself and his family to a town on the borders of Syria and Arabia, where in due course his son Muhammad conceived the ambitious design of supplanting the Omayyad dynasty. To attain this end the Abbaside intriguer spread abroad a report that the rights of the Khalifat had descended to him,

as linked by close affinity to the Prophet of Arabia. As time passed, emissaries were sent into Iraq and Khorassan, where the adherents of the house of Ali were more numerous than elsewhere, to stir up the people in secret against the reigning house. Gradually the movement gained power and strength, till during the reign of Omar II. (A.D. 717-720) it became a source of considerable danger to the "Commander of the Faithful." After an interval of twenty years (A.D. 740), the Abbasides found themselves sufficiently strong to proclaim a member of the house of Ali—by name Zaid bin Ali—as Khalif, but he was deserted by his troops and slain in an unequal conflict, his head being sent to Damascus. Nothing daunted, the Abbaside emissaries secretly continued their propaganda, and other dissensions and rebellions added considerably to the danger of the empire. During the troublous reign of Walid II. (A.D. 743-744), the Abbasides grew more and more powerful, especially under the leadership of Ibrahim bin Muhammad, who had become the head of the family on the death of his father, Muhammad bin Ali. When Marwan II. succeeded to the throne (A.D. 744), he found the Abbasides powerful and united, more particularly in Khorassan, where their leader Abu Muslim and his three sons engaged in a vast conspiracy to overthrow the Omayyad Khalif (A.D. 745). Angered at the success of the rebellion Marwan caused Ibrahim, the rival candidate for the throne of the Muslim world, to be put to death, an act of cruelty which brought upon the Omayyad dynasty the most terrible reprisals at the hands of his brother Abdullah, called Abul Abbas, surnamed



A NOOK IN ALGIERS.



सत्यमेव जयते

As Saffah (the Sanguinary), on account of the cruelty which he displayed against the house of his enemy, culminating in the murder of Marwan, as previously described, in a Coptic church in Egypt (A.D. 750), an act of horror which paved the way for his own accession, as the first to hoist the black standard of the Abbasides, as monarchs of Islam.

Abdullah as Saffah, a man of iron will and untiring energy, took vigorous and prompt steps to ensure the triumph of his dynasty. Establishing himself at the city of Hashimiya, which he had founded not far from Kufa, he at once commenced to treat the Omayyads with the utmost cruelty. The better to secure their destruction, the new Khalif caused it to be understood that an amnesty would be granted to all members of the dispossessed dynasty who were prepared to submit; and as a further inducement, it was given out that their property would be restored to them should they prove tractable. Seduced by these promises, no less than ninety members of the Omayyad family tendered their allegiance, whereupon, under pretence of holding out the hand of friendship and goodwill, Abdullah invited them to a banquet. In the midst of the festivities, a body of executioners rushed into the hall and slew the unarmed guests. The cruelties of the Khalif, however, raised a host of enemies throughout the empire, and his entire reign till his death (9th June, A.D. 754) was passed in quelling insurrection and consolidating his power.

The next Khalif was Abu Jafar, who on his accession assumed the name of "Al Mansur," "The Victorious." He signalled the commencement of his

reign by the inhuman act of putting to death his general, Abu Muslim, and throwing his body into the Tigris. This famous warrior, who had just gained a decisive victory (28th Nov., A.D. 754) over a large body of rebels, under the leadership of Abdullah bin Ali, the uncle of the deceased Khalif, was the real founder of the Abbaside dynasty, at a cost, it is said, of more than half a million of lives. Such was his reward. Soon after these events a series of rebellions in Africa rendered the hold of Mansur on his possessions in that region so precarious, that from this time onwards the Abbasides retained but a nominal sway over the Western regions of the Empire.

These misfortunes, however, were dwarfed into insignificance by the loss of sovereign rights in Spain. It happened thus. For a long while the country had been distracted by internal dissensions, consequent upon the inability of the Abbaside Khalifs to control effectively a possession so distant from their capital. After various petty chiefs had struggled for power, with a constantly changing measure of success, the people of the land became weary of such an endless scene of internecine strife, and resolved to elect a Khalif independent of the Saracen Empire. Their choice fell upon Abdur Rahman bin Muawiya, a grandson of the Omayyad Khalif Hisham. The prince was at the time wandering in the deserts of Africa, but he at once responded to the call, and on 25th September, A.D. 755, landed in Iberia, and shortly after founded the Omayyad dynasty which flourished at Cordova: thus Spain passed out of the hands of the Abbasides.

The losses in Africa and Spain were to some extent counterbalanced by successes in Asia Minor, where the Muslims not only captured the important city of Malatiya (A.D. 756) from the hand of the Byzantine Emperor, but further inflicted such losses upon the Imperial troops, that the latter were fain to sue for a seven years' truce. This the Khalif was the more ready to grant, as serious difficulties had arisen owing to the vagaries of a sect of Persian fanatics, known as Rawandis, who, amongst other strange notions conceived the idea that divine honours were due to Mansur, whose palace was treated as a sacred spot. Unwilling to be a party to this extraordinary impiety, the Khalif caused the leaders to be cast into prison, but the Rawandis at once flew to arms in revolt, and besieged the object of their veneration in his own palace. Incensed at the proceedings of the fanatics, the populace rose *en masse* and annihilated the entire sect. Owing to these circumstances Mansur conceived a dislike for the city of Hashimiya where they had occurred, and determined to found a new city on the banks of the Tigris. Thus it happened that about the 760th year of the Christian era was laid the first stone of the town of Baghdad, destined for so many years to remain the capital of the Muslim Empire, and the world-famed centre of luxury, wealth, and splendour. The remaining years of the Khalif's life were devoted to the suppression of a revolt which the descendants of Ali raised at Madina, and were further embittered by family dissensions as to his successor. In A.D. 775 Mansur resolved to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, but shortly before he arrived at the gates of the holy

city he chanced to fall from his horse, and was killed on the spot. His reign had lasted for about twenty-two years.

Muhammad bin Mansur on hearing of his father's death at once proclaimed himself Khalif, under the title of Mahdi (the Well Directed). Brighter days now dawned upon the city of Baghdad: the reign of the previous Khalif had been harsh, gloomy, and austere, his successor was bright, handsome, gay, and fond of pleasure. "He resembles," said a writer of his day, "the brilliant moon in beauty; the spring-time from his perfumes and his suavity; the lion by his courage; and the sea, with its resounding waves, is the emblem of his munificence and generosity." Thus it was that the metropolis became a city of revels—gaiety, dissipation, and pleasures of every sort and description being the order of the day. "If you seek for the Vicar of God," wrote a poet of the era, "you will find him with a wine-flask on one side and a lute on the other."

"What does living avail,
If we spend not our evenings with those we prize,
And at morning fail,
By the wine-cup subdued, and by fair large eyes?"

After a year spent in quelling rebellion, he determined to visit Mecca to see the tomb of his father, and as a consequence of his experiences on this journey, took steps to ameliorate as far as possible the condition of such of his subjects as repaired from Baghdad to the sacred city. But on his return his energies were directed to repressing a formidable rebellion headed by the famous "Al Muqanna"—the Veiled One, so called because he always appeared in

public with his face enveloped in a covering. Eventually the imposter, who had betaken himself to the city of Kash was reduced to submission, and offered the alternative of surrender or death. He chose the latter, and died by poison administered by his own hand. Mahdi now turned his attention to Asia Minor, where he commenced operations against the Byzantine army. Though disaster at first befell the Muslim arms, success finally was achieved mainly owing to the efforts of the Khalif's son Harun, who, under the guidance of his Barmecide tutor, Yahia bin Khalid, was enabled to impose most humiliating terms of peace upon the leader of the Imperial troops. This occurred in A.D. 780. Consequent upon this feat of arms Mahdi determined to select Harun as his successor, but while endeavouring to impose this condition upon his eldest son Musa, death intervened, and, as some contend, an accident in the hunting field, or, as others suppose, the poisoned bowl put an end to the reign of Mahdi (A.D. 785).

The succession in these circumstances naturally passed to Musa, who was proclaimed Khalif at Baghdad under the title of Hadi (the Director). During his short reign of a few months, he was occupied chiefly in subduing an Aliite insurrection in his dominions, and in taking measures to secure the succession to his son Jafar, to the exclusion of his brother Harun; but the firmness and opposition of the Barmecide Yahia defeated this latter object. Thereupon Hadi resolved upon the destruction of this famous minister. Strangely enough, however, the dart of death fell, not upon the man, but upon his master. It happened in this wise. His mother,

Khaizuran, a woman of ability, but entirely lacking in principle, had been, for a long period, intriguing to get supreme power into her own hands. Hadi resented her interference, and attempted to poison her—a delicate attention on his part which the haughty dame repaid with no less maternal affection, by causing the young Khalif to be smothered in bed by two slaves whom she had presented to her son for this express purpose. This conclusion of the domestic drama occurred in September, A.D. 786.

Harun, who assumed the additional name of Ar Rashid (the Upright), became Khalif without any opposition, and at once appointed his former tutor Yahia as Prime Minister, and further to mark his affection entrusted the two sons of the latter with high positions in the empire. In the skilful hands of the Barmecides matters prospered throughout the Muslim Empire—rebellion was checked, and victory after victory was gained over the Byzantine troops in Asia Minor, so that the Empress Irene was compelled to sue for peace. Step by step the might of the Khalifat was increased till a dazzling degree of splendour was reached, which made the reign of Harun ar Rashid the glory and the pride of the Eastern world.

In the midst, however, of all his majesty, dominion, and power, Harun was not unmindful of the demands of religion, and he repaired again and again, albeit with most sumptuous luxury and comfort, as a pilgrim to the shrine at Mecca. Thus passed an eventful period of about seventeen years—(A.D. 786-803)—when a bolt fell from the blue, and like a flash of lightning ruin overtook the Barmecide family. The causes of this sudden revulsion have

been variously stated, but the reason may be gathered from a remark made one day by the Khalif Harun as he looked down from his palace upon a huge crowd which had gathered round the home of his Prime Minister. "Verily, Yahia has taken all business into his own hands; he it is who really exercises supreme power; as for me, I am Khalif only in name." But, be the reasons which actuated Harun what they may, the overthrow of the Barmecides was complete. Yahia was cast into prison, where he remained till his death in A.D. 805. His followers were arrested, imprisoned, and their property confiscated. Not content with these severe measures, he further forbade the poets to compose elegies on the disgrace of the family, and commanded that all who disobeyed this order should be punished. An offender was ere long detected and led to the palace of the "Commander of the Faithful," who inquired the cause of such refractory conduct. "Prince," replied the man, "let me relate my history to thee! When thou hast heard it, do with me as thou wilt." He then proceeded to narrate to the astonished Khalif how years since, when but a humble clerk in the service of Yahia, the latter one day expressed a wish to be invited to the home of his menial. The house not being fit to receive a visitor of such rank and importance, an interval of some months was readily granted to enable its possessor to make, as far as might be possible, suitable arrangements. The Prime Minister was in due course shown over the humble cottage of his humble clerk. When the inspection was ended Yahia expressed a wish to see the buildings attached thereto. "My Lord," was the reply of the somewhat perplexed man of the pen,

"thou hast seen everything." Not content with this assurance, Yahia at once sent for a mason and bade him make an opening in the wall through which, to the astonishment of the owner of the place, all present were ushered into a beautiful home, with pavilions adorned with furniture and carpets, and filled with slaves of both sexes, all of surpassing beauty. The explanation was simple: pleased with the man, the head of the Barmecide family had used the interval, while the clerk was putting his house in order, to purchase the adjoining land and lay it out with the most costly and sumptuous splendour. "All this is thine," said Yahia. Not content with this liberality, the Prime Minister added to his generosity a gift of money which enabled the fortunate object of his bounty to live in pomp and luxury. "Since that day," added the trembling culprit as he concluded his story, "I have never lost any opportunity of singing the praises of that noble family. And now, Prince, slay me if thou wilt: I am ready to die." It is gratifying to record that Harun was touched with the man's gratitude, and withdrew the prohibition that no one should lament the tragical end of the sons of Barmak.

Deprived of the Barmecide's support it became necessary for Harun to take the field in person, but the Khalif proved a man of action, and on the occasion of receiving an insulting letter from the Emperor Nicephorus at Constantinople (A.D. 803), he replied, "Thou shalt not hear, but see, my answer." At the conclusion of the campaign the troops of Nicephorus were completely routed, and the Emperor was compelled to submit to the hard conditions which the victor imposed upon him.

Barely had the country recovered from this war, when disturbances broke out in Khorassan which necessitated active operations on the part of the Khalif. Accompanied by his son Mamun he set out for that province, but ere a year had elapsed he was attacked by an internal tumour, and died at Tus (now known as Mashhad), A.D. 809, at the age of forty-seven.

The last end of the great Khalif was too terrible for language. Himself sick unto death he summoned to his presence the rebel leader in Khorassan, and addressed to him this language. "Thou adversary of God! by thy malice and that of thy brother, in subverting my authority in Khorassan, have I been compelled to undertake this painful journey. But by Him who created Harun, thou shalt perish by a death so painful, that its agonies shall surpass all that has ever yet been known." Then dying as he was, he sent for a butcher, and ordered him, then and there, to cut the prisoner in pieces, bit by bit. Each limb, as it was separated from the quivering body, was laid at the feet of the implacable Khalif. When life at last was ended, the body was hacked into four pieces, in the presence and by the command of the Khalif, who then fainted away.

"Such was the last act," the words are those of the historian from whom the other passage is quoted, "of the good Harun ar Rashid." Two days after, he was dead.

During one of Harun ar Rashid's visits to Mecca he executed a deed, under which his son Muhammad, surnamed "Al Amin" (the Trusty), was appointed his immediate successor. Next in order came Abdullah,

known as Al Mamun (the Trusted), while the third son Qasim, called Mutamin billah (He who trusts in God), was the last of heirs to the throne. It was further stipulated that during the lifetime of his elder brother the government of the eastern portion of the empire should be entrusted to Mamun. Each of the three parties swore faithfully to observe this deed which, to add force to the oaths, was suspended in the Kaba at Mecca.

On the death of Harun, A.D. 809, Amin succeeded to the Khalifat as arranged by his father, but violated this agreement by refusing to allow his brother Mamun any share in the monarchy. A civil war ensued which resulted in the victory of Mamun, who after a siege of two years drove his brother from Baghdad. Amin escaped from his capital, but fell into the hands of his enemies, and was put to death by order of his brother, A.D. 813, after a troublous and little more than nominal reign of four years.

The accession of Mamun did not in any way quiet the empire. Rebellion after rebellion arose, caused in one instance by an inconsiderate edict on the part of the Khalif, that the black standard of the Abbasides was to be changed for the green flag of the Aliites—an order which was subsequently abrogated. An interval of no less than ten years passed in quelling disorders and restoring tranquillity to the empire. Mamun then gave himself up to the cultivated tastes, which made the latter half of his reign celebrated as amongst the most brilliant periods of the Abbaside dynasty. His death which occurred while on an expedition against the Byzantine troops (A.D. 833), arose from a burning fever consequent upon an

imprudent bath. His brother who became Khalif under the title of Mutasim billah (He who seeks defence in God) met with considerable opposition. To such an extent indeed was popular dislike aroused that the "Commander of the Faithful" determined to create a new body-guard, composed of unbridled and undisciplined Turks. Their excesses led to an insurrection which drove Mutasim from his capital of Baghdad to Samarra, some few leagues above the former city. Hostilities with Constantinople and a domestic revolt at Baghdad occupied the remaining portion of the reign of this Khalif, who died at Samarra, A.D. 842.

His son Wasiq who succeeded reigned for five years (A.D. 842-847), the greater part of which period was consumed in doctrinal questions as to the origin of the Quran.

Not having appointed a successor the choice fell upon his brother, known as Mutawakkil alallah (He who trusts in God). His first act was to seize his brother's Vizier, and place him in a furnace bristling with iron points. When the fire was raised to a red heat, the Khalif calmly stood by and watched the agonies of his victim; repeating the while at intervals the favourite saying of the wretch who was writhing in agony, "Pity is a weakness."

The animosity of Mutawakkil, however, was chiefly directed against the descendants of Imam Ali, whom he treated with the most bitter malevolence, even so far as to destroy the chapel which had been erected over the tomb of Husain at Karbala, and to forbid the Shiias to visit that spot. He also persecuted the Christians and Jews, who were equally excluded from public employment, while to increase

their vexations they were forced to send their children to Muslim schools.

Troubles on the Byzantine frontier led the Khalif to transfer his residence for a while to Damascus, but the course of events induced him to return to Samarra, where he built a magnificent quarter of the town to which he assigned the name of Jafariyya. At the conclusion of his reign he gave way to excesses, and was murdered in A.D. 861 by a Turkish soldier who had been bribed to this atrocious deed by the Khalif's own son.

The parricide, by name Muntasir, who succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, lived but five months to enjoy the reward of his infamy. His death in the same year, A.D. 861, was, it is supposed, occasioned by poison.

From this time onward, for a period of nearly four hundred years, the history of the Baghdad Khalifat is a mere narration of intrigue and rebellion. At first the Turkish soldiery obtained the upper hand, and cruelty, rapine, and lust were prevalent throughout the empire. A state of affairs which lasted from A.D. 861 to 945, when the citizens of Baghdad seeing no other means of escape from their tyranny and lawlessness, secretly applied to Ahmad ibn Buyah, a successful military adventurer, to take possession of the capital of Islam. In response to this invitation, Ahmad, marching upon Baghdad, obtained possession of the city without having to fight a battle. These momentous events occurred in A.D. 945. From that date onwards till A.D. 1050, the ascendancy of the House of Buyah was supreme. It is also noteworthy that at this period the Khalif

made a formal renunciation of his temporal dominions, remaining simply the Imam, or Spiritual head of the Faithful. At another time the Karmathians and the Fatimites gained such ascendancy as to leave successive Khalifs little more than a shadow of sovereignty.

But the end was drawing near. In the year 1050, the Turkish general of that day exercised at the court of the Khalif an almost unlimited authority. It chanced, however, that he had occasion to quit Baghdad for a while, to oppose rebels who swarmed on every side of the city. The Khalif thought this a favourable opportunity to get rid of his hated rival, and accordingly appealed for assistance to Tugril Bey, the Saljukian Monarch of the Turks. Nothing loath the ruler of these hordes of plunderers appeared at the gates of Baghdad, which were thrown open to him, and in December, A.D. 1050, he entered the city, which he occupied in force. It is true that riots occurred, but the power of the Saljuks was never seriously challenged, and in due course the Khalif was forced to confirm Tugril Bey in the possession of all the kingdoms which the latter had snatched from the Muslim Empire. For little less than two hundred years these barbarians held sway more or less powerful, according to the circumstances of the hour. A change, however, was at hand.

Towards the close of the twelfth century the Mongols under the terrible Jinghiz Khan commenced to issue from the wilds of Asia, and soon overran the Muslim Empire. In vain did the weak and feeble Khalifs endeavour to stem the tide of rapine and plunder. City after city fell before the invaders till, at length, Hulaku Khan determined to make him-

self master of the whole of Western Asia. Sweeping down with immense hordes he soon appeared before the walls of Baghdad, and on 5th February, A.D. 1258, the standard of the Mongols was planted on the towers of the city. The town was given up to fire and slaughter, the Khalif Mustasim then reigning, was thrown into prison, where he subsequently died, and the Abbaside dynasty ceased to exist after a not wholly inglorious sovereignty of five hundred years.



CHAPTER VI

THE CRUSADES. A.D. 1095-1291

It has been well observed that "the desire of visiting the places in which celebrated events have occurred seems, indeed, a curiosity too deeply implanted in our nature to belong to any particular time or condition of man : but the associations connected with the hallowed scene of Human Redemption were calculated to sanctify this feeling with peculiar interest, and rendered journeys to Jerusalem not uncommon in some of the earlier ages of Christianity."

This ardour for pilgrimages was fostered and encouraged by the Church of Rome, which, turning to its own ends the general belief entertained in the tenth century as to the approaching end of the world, urged its votaries not only to do penance for their sins, but to flock to Jerusalem as a meritorious act of piety calculated to bring down Divine blessings. The flame of religious zeal was further fanned and extended by the spirit of chivalry, which gave to the Middle Ages a splendour of glory and renown such as has scarcely been surpassed in the annals of the world. In the tenth century the Holy City of Palestine was in the

hands of the Saljukian Turks, nominally acting under the authority of the Abbaside Khalifs. Under the rule of these fanatical and cruel governors, the unhappy Christians were exposed to insult and oppression to a degree which stung to frenzy their co-religionists throughout the length and breadth of Christendom.

This craving to "do and dare" was also materially increased by the ravages of the Fatimites and the Turks in the Byzantine dominions up to the outskirts of the mighty city of Constantinople, ravages which led to an appeal from the Emperor to the Pope for that assistance without which it seemed probable that the Cross of Christianity would be laid low in the dust by the Crescent of Islam. It may be well imagined that in such circumstances it needed but a spark to produce a general conflagration. It chanced that the unquenchable flame of fanaticism was lit by the well-known Peter the Hermit, a poor gentleman of Picardy, who, forsaking the service of his feudal lord, Eustace de Bouillon, took refuge in the cloister. After a while he repaired as a pilgrim to the Holy Land, where he was shocked at the cruelties and profanations which he witnessed at every turn. Fired with enthusiasm, he conceived that he had a mandate from Heaven to purge Jerusalem from its Muhammadan possessors, and he commenced a self-imposed mission to rouse the princes and peoples of the West to avenge the disgrace which Christendom was forced to suffer at the hands of the Muslims. The success which attended his efforts was little less than incredible. The Pope of Rome sent him the all-powerful support of the Church; nobles and men of wealth sold or mort-

gaged their possessions; the laity of all ranks from France, Italy, and Germany flocked to his standard; while merchants repaired in numbers, in the hope and expectation of lucrative trade. Further, men, women, and children mingled their enthusiasm with the stern and fiery zeal of the warriors and soldiers of fortune. Indeed, even criminals of the deepest dye clamoured to be permitted to wash out their sins in the blood of the enemies of God.

Towards the close of the year of grace 1095, a huge mass of seething humanity assembled round Peter the Hermit, on the eastern frontier of France, ready to hurl themselves under his direction and command against the Muslim forces of Asia. At the instance of Pope Urban II., a holy token in red cloth (probably the origin of the Red Cross of St George) was assumed as an emblem, indicating that the enterprise was sacred and dedicated to the Cross of Christ. Such was the origin of the First Crusade.

So large was this motley crew of fanatical enthusiasts, that it became necessary to separate them into bands more moderate in size. The first division was placed under the command of a Burgundian knight, by name Gualtier, or Walter, but better known by his cognomen of "Sans-avoir," or the "Pauper." At the head of an advanced guard of about 20,000 adventurers, this worthy proceeded through Hungary and Bulgaria towards Constantinople. But the conduct of the soldiers was as reckless as their condition was deplorable, and a wake of blood and rapine followed their line of march. The end could scarcely be in doubt; and it is recorded that a mere handful of his troops

gathered round Walter as he marched into the Court of Constantinople.

The second division of 40,000 persons of all ages and both sexes, under the command of Peter the Hermit himself, was scarcely more fortunate; for the excesses of the troops provoked hostilities from the inhabitants, and no less than 10,000 of the Crusaders are supposed to have perished by the way—while the rest, despoiled of their baggage, their money, and their arms, were little more than a wretched herd of fugitives. However, on reaching the capital they were joined by Walter and his few tatterdemalions. Again their insolence and licentiousness knew no bounds, and Peter the Hermit finding he had no power to control the excesses of his followers, who had now crossed over to Asia Minor, returned to Constantinople, and took no part in the struggles with the Muslim troops. The complete annihilation of the followers of the Cross, of whom no more than 3000 lived to proclaim the disaster which once again had befallen the hosts of the Crusaders, betokened that the man of God had been wise in his generation when he withdrew from the scene of action.

Still more distressing was the fate of the third division, consisting of about 15,000 Germans, under the command of a monk named Godeschal, whose excesses so inflamed the people of Hungary, through which he passed, that the Crusaders, unable to resist the angry passions which had been aroused, were compelled by force to lay down their arms; which done, the populace fell upon the defenceless soldiers and slew them to a man.

But the gross superstition, the licentious wicked-

ness, and the miserable extirpation of these fanatical hordes all sink into insignificance as compared with the conduct and fate of the fourth and last division. From France, from the Rhenish Provinces, and Flanders, as well as from the British Isles, a seething mass issued forth, composed of the refuse and scum of all these nations. First of all, these merciless rascallions attacked the Jews of the Rhine and Moselle, and thousands were massacred, while others, to escape the fate of their co-religionists, cast themselves, their wives, and their children, into the flames or the water. Sated with murder and spoliation, the ruffians pursued their march from the Rhine to the Danube, but only to encounter annihilation at the hands of the Hungarians. So dreadful indeed was the carnage, that the river was choked with putrefying corpses, and its waters dyed with the blood of the slain.

This picture of death and destruction is relieved by none of the higher qualities of religious zeal and martial emulation—in a sentence, the offscourings of Europe to the number of perhaps 250,000 ruffians, mostly of the lowest class, were swept off the face of the earth—and happily, perchance, for mankind, their place knew them no more (A. D. 1096).

However, a change was at hand. Hitherto, as already explained, the advanced guards of the Crusaders had been men of the lowest rank, and with a degraded past; but the scene now (A. D. 1097) changes, and the chivalry of Europe at this time opens to view. As in the first instance, the Crusaders were separated into four divisions; the first, composed of the nobility of the Rhenish provinces and the northern parts of

Germany, ranged themselves, to the number of about 10,000 cavalry and 80,000 foot, under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Brabant. The second division, comprising the chivalry of central and northern France, the British Isles, Normandy, and Flanders, assembled under the command of the Counts of Vermandois and Chartres, the two Roberts respectively of Normandy and Flanders, and Eustace, Count of Boulogne; their number was large, but is not accurately recorded. The third army, composed of southern Italians, under Bohemond the Norman, and his cousin Tancred, formed an army of 10,000 horse and 20,000 foot. The fourth and last division served under the command of the Count of Toulouse, from the south of France: composed originally of Provencals, it was so largely augmented on its march by soldiers from northern Italy that its numbers eventually amounted to 100,000 souls. For many months this crowd of warriors lingered on the confines of the Byzantine capital, while their leaders were listening with varied degrees of satisfaction and dislike to the seductive wiles of the Emperor Alexius, who at that time sat upon the throne of Constantinople. The first operations of the Crusaders, who had been joined by the motley remnants of the earlier hordes, including the renowned Peter the Hermit, were directed against Nicæa, a town situated on a fertile plain on the direct route to Jerusalem. After a lengthened siege, the city fell into their hands—a victory which was shortly followed, after a most terrific struggle, by the capture of Dorylæum, about fifty miles from the former city. On this occasion an immense spoil, consisting of gold and silver, arms

and apparel, war horses, camels, and other beasts of burden, fell into the hands of the Crusaders on their defeat of the Turkish hosts who owed obedience to the Sultan Sulaiman.

The Christian troops now pursued their way unchecked towards the territories of Syria; but so incomplete were their arrangements, and so terrible their sufferings, that it was with the greatest difficulty they emerged from the passes into open country.

At this juncture a serious difference arose between Counts Baldwin and Tancred, which caused the former to desert his confederates and seek his own fortune in the eastern regions of Armenia and Mesopotamia. To this circumstance is due the foundation of Edessa, the first Latin principality in the East, which Baldwin brought into subjection and emancipation from the Muslim yoke (A.D. 1097).

Meanwhile the main body of the Crusaders had advanced to Antioch, then in possession of a Saljukian prince, supported by a garrison of about 10,000 horse and 20,000 infantry. But famine and pestilence made such terrible ravages amongst the Christian host, that at the end of the third month of the siege (autumn of A.D. 1097) their cavalry, which at the first was supposed to have numbered 30,000 lances, had been diminished to no more than 2000. So piteous was the condition of the Crusaders that desertions occurred daily, amidst alike the mighty princes as the humble soldiers. Still the Christians held their own, in a measure consequent upon the genius and valour of the Duke of Brabant, till the treachery of Firuz, an apostate Norman who had

taken service under the Turks, secured the success of the besiegers, who, admitted by the traitor into the citadel, massacred the Saracen garrison with relentless vengeance. Still, however, a band of Muslim refugees declined to surrender, and desperately maintained a protracted resistance (A.D. 1098). The sovereign of Persia, alarmed, as well he might be, at the success of the Christian arms, joined the Turkish States in union against the invaders. Once more famine and distress overtook the Crusaders, but fortune was fickle: the imposture of a priest of Marseilles, Peter Barthelemy by name, who professed to have discovered the spear-head which pierced the side of the Crucified Redeemer, lent to the arms of Europe the all-powerful aid of superstition. The effect was electrical, and the fortune of war began to incline to the side of the fanatical Crusaders, who, strange as it may read, deemed it fitting at this time to send Peter the Hermit as an ambassador to the Turkish generals, enjoining upon them and their followers the choice of destruction or conversion to the faith of Christ! Refusal was of course the answer to this singular message; so the fight was renewed, and, incredible as it may seem, a band of 200 Latin horsemen, supported by an unwieldy array of dismounted knights and men-at-arms, charged and routed the thousands who had mustered under the ensign of Islam! Antioch capitulated, and the banner of St George floated triumphant over the battlements of the Syrian citadel (A.D. 1098).

Relieved of the pressure of war, the Crusaders now commenced to quarrel amongst themselves, while famine and pestilence once again trod in the

footsteps of improvidence and want of thought. So terrible indeed were the distresses which the hosts of Christendom underwent, that no fewer than 100,000 persons are supposed to have perished; and alas, be it said, the soul-sickening charge of cannibalism was written in lurid letters of shame across the annals of the First Crusade.

Thus it happened, that out of the enormous host of little less than 700,000 souls who had started for the sacred war, no more than 1500 cavalry and 20,000 foot soldiers, with a number of unarmed pilgrims and camp-followers, could be mustered and gathered together to snatch Jerusalem from the grasp of the Muslims. In the summer of the year 1099 these sturdy enthusiasts arrived before the Holy City, and we are told that "The proud noble, the fierce soldier, and the lowly pilgrim, confessed their common unworthiness even to look upon the scene which had witnessed the sufferings of the Redeemer of Mankind; and the whole armed multitude, as with one impulse, sinking on their knees, prostrated themselves and poured out their tears over the consecrated soil."

The first assault was unsuccessful, but the attack was renewed with a redoubled ardour which nothing could resist; history records that on the memorable 15th of July A.D. 1099, the strength and might of the Musulman defenders quailed before the iron chivalry of Christendom, and the sacred city fell into the hands of the champions of the Cross. Then followed most revolting scenes of fanatical cruelty, resulting in the indiscriminate slaughter of countless thousands of Muslim men, women, and children. So great indeed

was the massacre that, in a public letter to the Pope, the leader of the Christian forces boasted that in the magnificent mosque which the Khalif Omar had four hundred and fifty years since erected on the site of the Temple of Solomon, they rode up to the horses' knees in the blood of the Saracens! Then followed a reaction, and, weary with slaughter, the Christian warriors laid aside their arms and repaired in "sack-cloth and ashes" to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to atone for their sins and offences, and make intercession with the god of battles! This done, however, they at once betook themselves to the more congenial occupation of murder and rapine: the Jews were burned alive in their synagogues; the Muslims, dragged forth from their recesses and hiding-places, were remorselessly butchered — and the city, turned into human shambles, became a wreck and ruin. In the midst of this scene of license and unhallowed fury, Peter the Hermit was brought forward to receive at the hands of the grateful multitude the ovation due to such a chosen instrument of the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth! Godfrey of Bouillon was chosen "Defender of the tomb of Christ"; arrangements were made for the governance of the new kingdom thus acquired by the martial prowess of the Christian hosts, and the sun of the First Crusade passed below the horizon in a halo of splendour and renown.

The Latin princes at once commenced the task of consolidating their possessions, and the towns of Acre (A.D. 1104), Sidon (A.D. 1115), and Tyre (A.D. 1124), fell a prey to their attacks. The latter town was erected into an Archbishopric, and the Christian kingdom at this time attained the zenith of its great-

ness. About this time the union of zealous enthusiasm and martial ardour gave birth to the two famous Orders of St John, and the Temple of Solomon. The former of these was merely a charitable institution designed to help the sick and needy amongst the pilgrims who repaired to the Holy City; and its chiefs, binding themselves under triple laws of obedience, charity, and poverty, received in A.D. 1113 recognition from Pope Paschal II., who invested the fraternity with many valuable privileges. But by degrees the revenues of the order being more than sufficient for the requirements of charity, began to accumulate, till at length it was determined to devote the surplus income to the defences of the State.

The Order of the Temple of Solomon, founded at a later date (A.D. 1127), was instituted for the purpose of defending the roads to the Holy City from the incursions of the predatory bands with which they were infested. Both Orders established themselves, in due course, in London; the first mentioned (generally known as Hospitallers) in Clerkenwell, and the latter (commonly termed Templars) in Holborn.

The course of events now centres, as regards interest, in the fall of Edessa (A.D. 1145), which was captured by the Turkish Emir of Aleppo. Stung to fury by the loss of this outpost of the Latin Empire, and moved by the frenzied exhortations of St Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, Western Christendom raised on high the banners of the Second Crusade, under the auspices of Louis VII. of France and Conrad III. of Germany. So a mighty host, said to have reached the enormous total of a million of souls, marched forth to do battle for the Cross in the Holy

Land against the warriors of the Crescent ! Begun in pomp and glory, the Second Crusade was finished in shame and humiliation, and in A.D. 1149 a shattered and disorganised remnant returned to Europe without having accomplished the object of their enterprise. Assistance being impossible, the guardians of the Holy Sepulchre were left to sustain as best they could the attacks of the Muslim arms with which they were continuously assailed.

The narrative now passes on to the year 1173, when the famous Kurdish chieftain Salah-uddin—better known as Saladin—rose to power and might, and established his dynasty in Egypt, from the sovereignty of which country he had ousted the Fatimite Khalifs. As long as Saladin was occupied in establishing his authority over Egypt and Syria, the peace of the Latin Kingdom had not been disturbed by Muslim incursions ; but in A.D. 1186 the two races came into conflict, and the first-fruits of victory fell to the Muslims, who (A.D. 1187) captured the important Castle of Tiberias. On this occasion the conqueror was ruthless, and the entire Christian army was massacred—alike leaders as men ; nor did the celebrated Order of St John of Jerusalem fare better, for to a man these devoted champions of the Cross—two hundred and thirty in number—were murdered in cold blood !

Saladin at once proceeded to Jerusalem, which city, on the 2nd October, A.D. 1187, fell into the hands of the Muslims, and once again the great mosque of Omar, which had been converted into a Christian church, passed into the possession of the Muhammadan conquerors. The golden Cross was taken down, and

the Crescent proclaimed to the world that, at any rate at this juncture, the powers of Christian warriors had been no match for the skill and bravery of the sons of the Prophet. This event, followed as it was by the fall of other cities in Palestine, filled the Christendom of Europe with unspeakable rage; religious enthusiasm burned to recover the Holy City from the grasp of the Muslims, and in the year of grace 1189 troops of warriors flocked from all parts and all countries to the standard of the Cross. The Third Crusade had, indeed, already commenced, inasmuch as popular enthusiasm had outrun the more dilatory movements of the great sovereigns of the West. The hapless town of Acre, then held by the Muslims, was besieged; but successfully resisted for no less than two years the attacks of the hordes of soldiers who had rushed to avenge the fall of Jerusalem. However, at this time, the monarchs of Germany, France, and England, moved by a love of glory and a thirst for fame, lent aid to the Crusaders; and as is well known, Richard Cœur-de-Lion himself proceeded to the Holy Land as a warrior of the Cross. The defence of the city was desperate; but the arrival of the English king on the scene inspired the Crusaders with renewed energy; and in A.D. 1191 Saladin was forced to give the order for capitulation. A ransom was imposed, but, whether from reluctance or inability, it was left unpaid, whereupon the Muslim hostages to the number of about 5000 were led out of the town and slaughtered in cold blood. The history of the Crusades was, indeed, written in letters of blood.

The capture of Acre was regarded by the

Christians as an augury for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre ; but destiny willed otherwise. The first blow to the Crusaders was the withdrawal of the King of France, and the return of that monarch to his own land ; the brunt of the war then fell upon the valiant Cœur-de-Lion—the “Lion-hearted” Plantagenet—who on the 7th Sept. 1191 achieved a notable victory over Saladin, near Azotus, probably the most severe defeat that veteran Muslim chief had ever sustained. Thereupon the Crusaders advanced towards Jerusalem : but at this critical juncture the English monarch resolved to withdraw his powerful assistance, and return to England. This fatal decision spread dismay amongst the Christians, and joy in the ranks of the Muslims, who, led by Saladin, at once invested Jaffa : fired with wrathful indignation, King Richard, thereupon, turned back with a handful of followers, and performing prodigies of valour, relieved the town. A truce followed this heroic action on the part of the greatest hero of the times, and Christian pilgrims were allowed free access to the holy places of Jerusalem. Thus ended the Third Crusade (A.D. 1192), in a gloaming of disappointment that the recapture of the sacred city had not been achieved. Still, much had been performed, and, at any rate for a while, the tide of Muslim conquest was arrested.

King Richard returned to his own land in a halo of glory and renown. So great indeed was the repute of his prowess, that, on the authority of Gibbon the historian, “his tremendous name was employed by Syrian mothers to silence their infants ; and if any horse suddenly started from the way, his rider was wont to exclaim, ‘Dost thou think King

Richard is in the bush ?'” Saladin only survived the treaty with the Plantagenet a few months (A.D. 1193).

Passing by the comparatively unimportant German Crusade of A.D. 1195, history records that in A.D. 1200 Pope Innocent III. conceived the design of again arming Europe against the Saracens. He was ably seconded by the vehement exhortations of a priest named Foulques, of Neuilly, near Paris, who kindled a flame of religious enthusiasm throughout Flanders and France. Numerous difficulties, however, arose, and it was not till A.D. 1202 that the Fourth Crusade started on its errand of war. Assisted by the Doge of Venice—the famous Dandolo, then in his ninety-third year—whose help had been enlisted on the side of the Christians by the promise that any conquests were to be shared with the Republic, the Crusaders mustered in force : perplexities, however, surrounded them on all sides, notably as regards the intrigues which were at the time raging in the Byzantine Empire. So it chanced that the pious zeal of the Christian warriors was expended, not in an effort to snatch the Holy Land from the grasp of the Muslim conqueror, but in a fruitless attempt to recover the proud city of Constantinople for a usurper who at the time laid claim to the Imperial capital. The town, after a struggle of two years, fell into the hands of the Latins (A.D. 1204), who sought to impose their creed upon the Greek Church, which at that date flourished in the Imperial city. For sixty years the dispute raged as to the sceptre of the Eastern Empire ; but the immediate fruits of the war were no more than the gates and chain of the harbour of Constantinople, which were sent to Palestine as trophies of the Fourth Crusade.

Disputes continued to arise between the Christians at Jerusalem and the Muslims, culminating in an appeal made by Pope Innocent III. to the monarchs of Christendom, with the object of arming Europe anew against the warriors of Eastern lands. Thus in A.D. 1216 commenced the Fifth Crusade, composed of three expeditions; the first consisting principally of Hungarians under their King Andrew; the second composed of Germans, Italians, French, and English nobles; and the third led by the Emperor Frederic II. of Germany in person. After desultory and inconclusive struggles, it was resolved to change the scene of warfare from Syria to Egypt, and in A.D. 1218 the town of Damietta, at the mouth of the Nile, was made the first object of attack. The siege was long, and the defence obstinate; so that when, at length, in A.D. 1219, the assailants succeeded in forcing their way into the city, nine-tenths of the inhabitants had perished from disease and hunger, and few remained but the dead and dying. The Muslims, now greatly alarmed, were prepared to negotiate terms of withdrawal from the Holy Land, on condition that the Crusaders should evacuate Egypt. The compromise was, however, rejected, and in the following year (A.D. 1220) the Christian forces began an advance to Cairo. It so happened that at this time the Nile commenced to rise, and the Crusaders, finding themselves enclosed on all sides by the waters of the river, and surrounded by the hosts of the infidels, were compelled to purchase an inglorious peace by the surrender of Damietta. It was left to the zeal and energy of the Emperor Frederic II. to redeem the crusade from an ignominious failure. Despite the hostility of the Pope, Honorius III., and

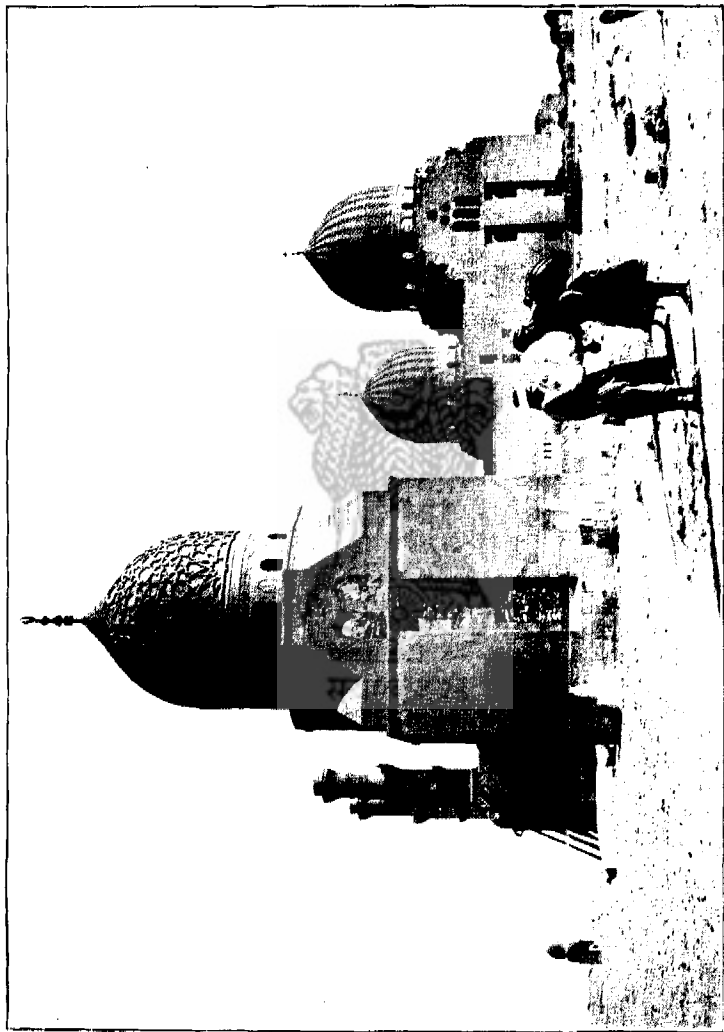
the half-hearted support of many of the knights whom the papal denunciation had seduced from their allegiance, the Emperor took the field, and succeeded in imposing terms upon the Muslims under which free access to the Holy City, together with the possession of Bethlehem, Nazareth, and other places, was restored to the Christians. On these lines a peace for ten years was concluded with the Saracens.

The departure of the Emperor Frederic for Europe was followed by dissensions, and, to add to the misfortune, civil war arose (A.D. 1230) in the Holy Land, which led to aggressions on the part of the Saracens: matters indeed became so serious as regards the Christian rights in Palestine, that measures were taken to defend their interests; but while quarrels and bickerings were of daily occurrence amongst the peoples of Christendom, the Sultan of Egypt threw down the gauntlet, and expelled the Christians from Palestine (A.D. 1237).

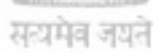
The news of this event roused the martial ardour and religious enthusiasm of Western chivalry in Europe, and the nobles of France and England resolved to proceed on a Sixth Crusade to the Holy Land (A.D. 1238). The French warriors were first in the field, and achieved some successes at Askalon and the neighbourhood of Damascus; but a subsequent defeat at Gaza so disheartened the French leaders that they returned to Europe (A.D. 1239). After this abortive result, the English troops landed at Acre, under the command of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III., accompanied by the flower of English chivalry. The presence of this chieftain appears to have struck the Muslims with terror, and

on his advance to Jaffa the latter hastened to negotiate with him with a result that he succeeded in wresting from the Saracens the cession of the sacred city of Jerusalem, and of a large tract of land which had formerly been incorporated in the Latin dominions (A.D. 1239).

About this date the Latin Kingdom was desolated by an irruption of barbarians from Tartary, and little more than the single fortress of Acre remained in possession of the Christians in Palestine, while the ruined defences of Jerusalem had been unable to sustain the attacks of the Muslims. Thus it chanced that in A.D. 1242 the Holy Sepulchre again passed into the possession of the Crescent. These events imposed upon Christendom the necessity of a Seventh Crusade. No less a period than five years was consumed in making arrangements for this enterprise, the whole burden of which fell upon the chivalry of France and England. In A.D. 1248 the army, under the orders of Louis IX., departed from the shores of Cyprus in a fleet of eighteen hundred vessels. This huge array of ships transported about 2800 knights, 6000 men-at-arms, and from 50,000 to 100,000 foot soldiers. Their destination was Damietta. On reaching the city, the fleet was overtaken by a storm which wrought havoc and ruin—nor was this the only misfortune, for on reaching the coast they were distressed to find the Muslims drawn up in battle array ready to hurl themselves upon their Christian adversaries ere ever they touched the shore. Nothing daunted, the gallant-hearted monarch leapt into the waves breast high, followed by the



CAIRO, TOMBS OF THE KHALIFS.



foremost warriors of his army—an act of daring which spread such consternation amongst the barbarians that they flew, panic-stricken, and Damietta fell a prize to the resolute boldness of the Crusaders (A.D. 1249), who occupied the city and awaited the arrival of the scattered armament.

It soon, however, became apparent that a transient panic had delivered Damietta into the hands of the Christian army, which now found itself besieged in the town thus recently captured. Nor were the troubles of the hour lessened by the licentious excesses and disorder which disgraced and enfeebled the hosts of Christendom. The arrival, however, of reinforcements enabled the Crusaders to make an advance to Cairo; but this led to the isolation of various detachments, which, separated from the main body of the army, fell an easy prey to their active and ever watchful adversaries. On bursting into the town of Mansaura, the Crusaders were soon surrounded by a surging mass of Muslim warriors, who wrought havoc in every direction. But the terrible condition of the followers of the Cross was rendered worse by the attacks of famine and pestilence, and ere the waning months of the year 1250 had passed away, upwards of 30,000 warriors lay festering on the sands; while, to crown all, the lion-hearted Louis, exhausted from disease and wounds, fell into the hands of the victorious followers of the Prophet. After a while the French monarch was ransomed, and proceeded at once to Palestine, where he remained for no less a period than four years, spent in persevering efforts to add to the strength and improve the condition of the various citadels which yet remained

in possession of the Latin Kingdom. However, by degrees the bulk of his troops returned to Europe, and the royal warrior found that his train consisted ere long of no more than about 4000 soldiers, albeit all men of steel, determined to "do or die" with their brave leader and self-sacrificing monarch. In these circumstances, finding himself powerless for good, he eventually determined to return to his own kingdom, and in A.D. 1254 reached his native land. Thus ended the Seventh Crusade—its only legacy regret for ambitions unachieved, and remorse for the sacrifice of the best blood of France.

Scarcely had the French king taken his departure from Palestine than dissensions began to arise between the various communities which were comprised within the Latin Kingdom. The Venetians quarrelled with the Genoese, and both states were at enmity with the Pisans. Worse than this, the religious chivalry of the Hospitallers was in deadly opposition to the Knights of the Temple, and so bitter was the feud that a war of extermination seemed inevitable (A.D. 1259).

Thus matters seethed for a period of four years, when (A.D. 1263) an irruption of the Mamelukes of Egypt rendered it necessary to set aside all bickerings and animosities amongst the Christians, in order to show a bold and united front to the enemy. All the efforts of the followers of the Cross were, however, unavailing, and Cæsarea, Laodicea, Jaffa, and many maritime fortresses fell into the possession of the Mamelukes. The cup of bitterness was, it may be well supposed, drained to the dregs when the famous city of Antioch surrendered without a blow (A.D. 1268); a crushing

calamity which involved the massacre of thousands upon thousands of Christians, while, of those who survived, no less than 100,000 were sold into slavery.

The intelligence of this appalling catastrophe aroused the indignation of Christendom ; but it was reserved to England to take the lead in the Eighth Crusade. A small but determined band of warriors set out in A.D. 1270 for Acre, under the command of Prince Edward, the future monarch of England : this gallant prince was accompanied by the no less enthusiastic Consort Eleanor, and his kinsman Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster. At the outset, success attended the efforts of the gallant Plantagenet ; and the capture of Nazareth, with the indiscriminate slaughter of its inhabitants, betokened that the fanatical cruelty of the Crescent found a reflex in the no less savage ferocity of the Cross. At this juncture, however, the English troops began to fall victims to the deadly attacks of the Syrian climate, and Prince Edward was himself prostrated on a bed of sickness. While thus helpless and incapacitated for active warfare, an assassin found an opportunity to gain admission to the royal tent, and, seizing a favourable chance, sprang forward and aimed a blow at the unsuspecting prince. The latter after a brief struggle felled the would-be murderer to the ground, but not before he had himself received a scratch with the dagger ; the weapon being poisoned, the legend arose that Queen Eleanor herself saved the life of her royal husband by the simple but dangerous expedient of sucking the wound.

In the end a truce was concluded for ten years, and Edward, after a stay in the Holy Land of about

fourteen months, bade adieu to the Syrian shores (A.D. 1272). Pope Gregory X. endeavoured, but in vain, to arouse the interest of Europe in the continuation of the struggle; and the Eighth Crusade was destined to be the last of the heroic efforts made by Christendom to wrest the Holy Land from the grasp of the Muslims.

It only remains to add, that the Latin Kingdom, thus left to its own resources, was utterly unable to cope with the swarms of Musulman fanatics, who, taking advantage of some indiscretions on the part of the Christians, attacked them with a severity which knew no bounds, although the ten years' truce was still running its course. Tripoli fell in A.D. 1289—a disaster which, however, paled into insignificance before the overwhelming calamity of the capture of Acre (A.D. 1291). The defence was heroic, and the efforts of the Hospitallers and Templars, who were annihilated almost to a man, was worthy of their great name and magnificent courage; but the result, though delayed, could not be averted, and the catastrophe which left the Holy Land in the undisputed possession of the Muslims cost the Christians the lives of no less than 60,000 heroes. So the Crusades, in spite of failure and defeat, closed in the sunset of splendour and renown. Nor can it be denied that, even after a lapse of seven centuries, the very name conjures up visions of superb heroism and unmatched zeal for the faith of Christendom; while the crimes and offences of these Knights of the Cross are blotted from the memories of mankind, who dwell rather upon deeds of prowess and efforts of gallantry, which have never been surpassed in the annals of fame.

CHAPTER VII

MUSLIM DYNASTIES AT CORDOVA AND GRANADA IN SPAIN

A.D. 756-1610

IN the middle of the eighth century, when the dynasty of the Omaiya Khalif came to an end, the race were, as already narrated, almost exterminated by the conquering Abbasides. However, one member of the deposed family, by name Abdur Rahman, escaped massacre, and fleeing for his life in company with his infant son, reached Africa, where he was joined by the few of his kin who survived the perils of the time. After wandering for five years, passed in planning and scheming how best to achieve position and reputation, he at length found an opportunity of gaining influence amidst the peoples in Spain, who were to some degree prepared to espouse the Omaiya cause. Sailing for that country in September, A.D. 755, he at once secured a large following, ready to obey his orders and support his designs. Time, however, was needed to consolidate his power and recruit his forces. In the following year (A.D. 756) he found himself able to start on his enterprise. On landing he received the

homage of Seville and other towns, and prepared to march on Cordova, where he encountered but feeble resistance, and entered the city in triumph as a victor. Such was his energy, that ere the lapse of a few months the Muhammadans of Spain generally submitted to his rule, and the Omaiyyad dynasty became established in that country.

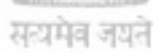
A man of boundless energy, prompt in action, and swift in punishment, Abdur Rahman was able to retain the power he had secured. The Abbaside Khalif, however, was not disposed to let the Muslim domains in Spain slip from his grasp without a struggle, and in due course an army was sent to reduce the rebels to obedience. The campaign was fierce, and victory alternated; but in the end the Abbasides were completely routed, and the heads of their leaders sent in sacks as a present to the Commander of the Faithful at Mecca. "Thank God! there is a sea between that man and me," was the involuntary exclamation of the Khalif as he saw the contents of the bags.

Then followed a series of successes. Toledo consented to a peace, and delivered up her chieftains—as it transpired—to humiliation and death. The assassination of a leading hostile chief secured quiet for a while; but the rebellion of the Berbers gave more serious cause for alarm, as not only were they powerful adversaries in themselves, but they entered into alliance with others, little less powerful than themselves, and the combination was dangerous. Intrigue came to Abdur Rahman's aid, and dissaffection led to desertion in the ranks of his enemies: so it was that, in the fulness of time, the Muslim troops fell upon the multitude as they fled before them,



THE GATE OF BLOOD, TOLEDO.

From a Drawing by A. H. Hollem Murray.



and upwards of 36,000 corpses testified to the grim fury of the relentless Omaiya.

No less than ten years was consumed in these struggles for power; but in the end Abdur Rahman was completely victorious, and thenceforward no one dared cross swords with the all-potent Sovereign of Cordova. The sunset of life, however, was not destined to be bright and unclouded. Deserted by his friends, hated, though dreaded by his enemies, he sat on the throne of alarm and unrest. Fearful of the populace, he did not dare trust himself unguarded in the capital of the empire which he had founded: so 40,000 African soldiers formed a body-guard of a tyrant "suspicious of every one, wrapped in gloomy thoughts, and distracted by bloody memories." Thus it happened that after a reign of thirty-two years he passed away, "a detested tyrant, upheld in his blood-stained throne only by the swords of mercenaries, whose loyalty was purchased by gold."

On the father's death, in A.D. 788, his son Hisham I. succeeded to this heritage of blood. The new ruler was a man of a quite contrary disposition, being peaceable, quiet, and humane. On his accession an astrologer predicted that he had but eight years to live. A fatalist, Hisham became imbued with this idea, and determined that the short period assigned him in this world, should be devoted to a preparation for the next. Numerous were his charities and deeds of pious benevolence: he visited the sick, he relieved the destitute, and many were his acts of kindness and pity. An ardent enthusiast in matters of religion, he by no means neglected affairs of State, and did not shrink from leading his armies against the enemies

of his empire. The character of the man may be gathered from the circumstance that, though he was devotedly fond of hunting, yet when he was told by carping critics that the magnificent bridge which he built at Cordova was only created in the interests of his favourite pastime, he vowed, and kept to his vow, that he would never cross it. After a peaceful reign, the great prince passed away in all the odour of sanctity in A.D. 796.

The new Sultan, by name Hakam, was a light-hearted, merry-souled young cavalier, taking life easy and extracting as much enjoyment therefrom as was in his power. Himself indifferent to religion, the religious devotees of the nation and students of Islam again and again stirred up the populace to strife. The rebellion was quenched, but the plague of fanaticism subdued in one place broke out in another. These events carry the narrative to A.D. 806, when the massacre of the nobles of Toledo, who rose in revolt and were killed to a man, kept religious ardour within bounds. The spirit of sedition, however, was not dead, and after an interval of seven years a serious outbreak occurred, directed in some measure against Hakam, who would not pretend to an asceticism which he did not feel, but principally aimed against his body-guard of negroes, who not understanding and being unable to speak Arabic, maintained, of course, an enforced silence, which acquired for them their nickname of "Mutes." A casual street disturbance gave the signal for the rush of a motley but inflamed crowd to the palace of the Sultan. The occasion was alarming, but nothing daunted, the crafty sovereign despatched a force of cavalry to a suburb

of the city, which they set in flames. Thereupon the people rushed in terror to save their homes and families from destruction, but met an army ready to attack them in the front, while troops in the rear added to their discomfiture; the terrible "Mutes" cut them down by hundreds, and the citadel reeked with massacre. The victory was not, however, pressed home, but no less than twenty-five thousand of his subjects had to seek in exile a security which could not be possible for them after they had cast in their lot with rebellion.

Sultan Hakam died A.D. 822 after a troublous reign of twenty-six years, and left the kingdom in comparative tranquillity to his son Abdur Rahman II. The new monarch at once set himself to beautify Cordova in every direction, till at length in magnificence and splendour it rivalled the great city of Baghdad. For no less than thirty years he devoted himself to a life of luxury and pleasure; but, amidst all his gaities, he had to encounter trouble in a direction where it might least have been expected. Singular as it may seem a spirit of martyrdom rose up amidst the Christian communities throughout the empire, and young men and maidens, old men and children, vied with one another to die the death of the righteous. The decease of the easy-going Abdur Rahman in A.D. 852, and the accession of his austere and bigoted son Muhammad, led to severe measures; however, it was not till the execution of the Monk Eulogius in A.D. 859, that the movement faded into oblivion, and the Christian martyrs ceased to be a danger to the State.

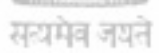
On the death of Muhammad in A.D. 886, his son Mundhir reigned for two years with energy and rigour,

but his assassination in A.D. 888 led to the accession of his brother Abdullah, who had instigated the murder. During the period of twenty-four years that this prince sat on the throne, lawlessness and intrigue stalked unchecked throughout the land, and anarchy and desolation overtook every province of the empire. However, the new Sultan Abdur Rahman III., who succeeded in A.D. 912, was a man of very different calibre from his grandfather Abdullah. Young, energetic, and popular, he let it be understood at the commencement of his reign that there would be no dallying with rebellion, and no trifling with lawlessness. Nevertheless, despite all his vigorous efforts, which were in the long run invariably successful, no less than eighteen years elapsed before the country was restored to a condition of peace and tranquillity.

The Sultan, however, had to contend with most vigorous opposition on the part of the Christians in the south of Spain, who at one time (A.D. 939) became so powerful as to inflict a signal defeat upon the Moorish troops, of whom upwards of 50,000 were said to have been left slain upon the field of battle. Still Abdur Rahman retrieved his position, and at his death in A.D. 961 he left his kingdom in the highest state of prosperity. Cordova, the capital of the empire, was indeed one of the finest cities of the world. To quote the quaint language of an Arab writer, "Cordova is the Bride of Andalusia. To her belong all the beauty and the ornaments that delight the eye or dazzle the sight. Her long line of Sultans form her crown of glory; her necklace is strung with the pearls which her poets have gathered from the ocean of language; her dress is of the banners of



MOSQUE IN CORDOVA.



learning, well knit together by her men of science ; and the masters of every art and industry are the hem of her garments." In verity her bridges, her public buildings, her private mansions, her mosques 700 in number, dazzle the imagination and fill the mind with astonishment and wonder, while her 900 public baths were a reproach to the mediæval Christians, with whom in those days, and indeed up to the time of Philip II., the husband of our Queen Mary, dirt was typical of sanctity, and cleanliness the mark of infidelity. Yet with all this dazzling splendour, if native historians are to be believed, a paper was found in the handwriting of the Khalif—a title assumed in A.D. 929—in which he had enumerated the days of happiness and freedom from care ; the total during a reign of forty-nine years was no more than fourteen ! Well may the Arab annalist have moralised in these touching words, "O man of understanding ! wonder and observe how small a portion of unclouded happiness the world can give even to the most fortunate."

His son and successor Hakam II. (A.D. 961), was peaceful and scholarly, and cared naught for the responsibilities of empire. The one dream of his life was to collect rare manuscripts, and truly may it be said, his efforts made the Library of Cordova one of the marvels of the world. At a time when printing was unknown, he amassed no less than 400,000 volumes, all of which, it is said, though it may be doubted, Hakam himself had read.

Thus passed fourteen years during which the Royal Book Collector sat upon the throne of Empire. On his death in A.D. 976, his son Hisham II., a

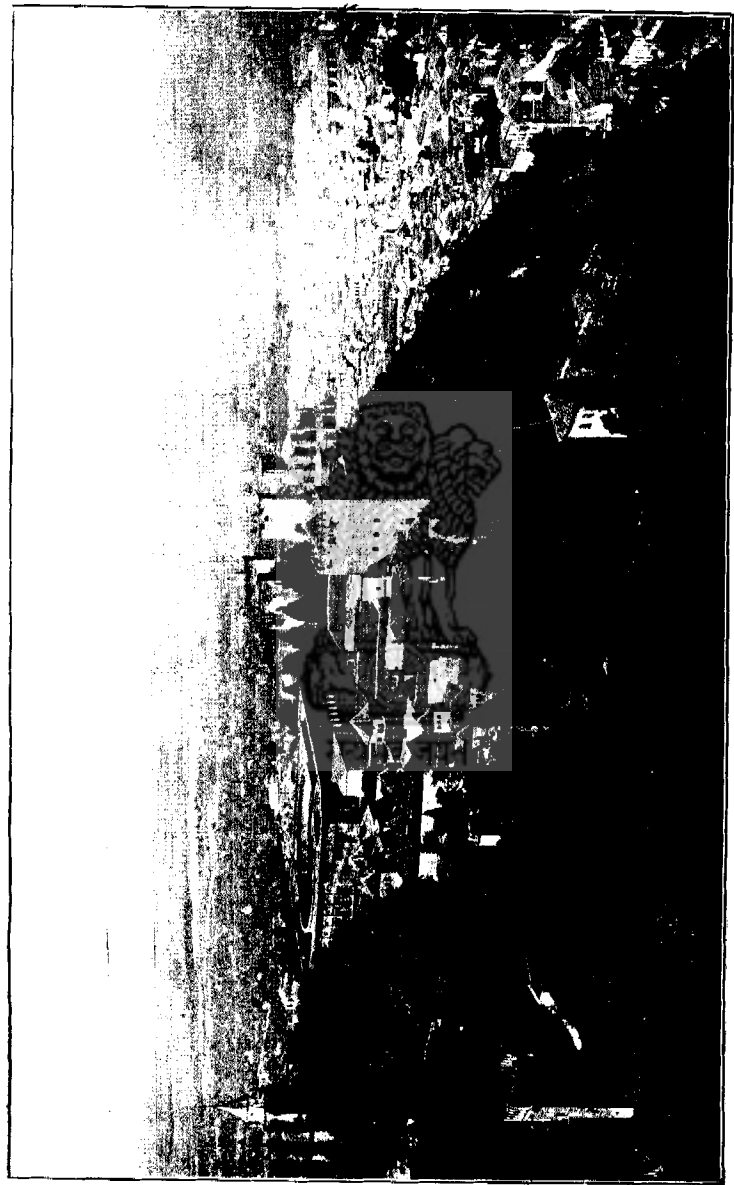
stripling of tender years, succeeded to the heritage of sovereignty. He followed in the footsteps of his father, but it soon became apparent that monarchy has its duties as well as its pleasures and privileges. It often happens in Eastern lands that when the strong hand of power is lacking, intrigues are fomented amongst the ladies of the Imperial harem. Cordova formed no exception to the rule, and Sultana Aurora, the mother of the young Khalif, by degrees acquired an amount of influence second to no one in the empire. She was seconded by a young man whose rise to fame and power was largely due to her support and patronage. It chanced that a humble student at the University of Cordova—a youth of great capacity and promise—succeeded in securing a trifling post at Court as professional letter writer to the royal servants: while in this position he managed to attract the notice of the Grand Chamberlain, who after a while appointed the lad to an office at Court, which afforded him the opportunity of flattering the ladies with whom he came in contact—amongst the number, Aurora, the royal mother of the Khalif. Aided by the influence and support of the ladies of the Court his advancement was rapid, and his resources soon became plentiful. By this means he ere long contrived by graciousness of manner and prodigality of promise, to make himself the centre of a wealthy and important following. From this time onwards he was a power in the State, till at length in A.D. 978, Ibn Abyamir—such was the name of this extraordinary personage—became Prime Minister, and assumed the title of *Al manzur*, “The Victorious”—by which he is known in history. His

administration was stern and unscrupulous. Nothing escaped his notice, and no means were ever neglected to further his ends. One example will suffice: a local leader of the army became so popular with his troops as to become a danger in the State. The remedy was simple in the extreme—he was invited by the minister to a banquet, and having drunk “not wisely but too well,” he was assassinated as he staggered home in a state of intoxication. The end of this powerful controller of the destinies of the Muslim Empire in Spain, is quaintly narrated in a single sentence of the Monkish historian, “In 1002, died Al manzur, and was buried in hell.”

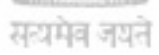
With the death of Al manzur tumbled to pieces the edifice he had raised. It is true that his son Muzaffar for a while kept rebellion in check; but like the Israelites of old the people sought a king to rule over them. Accordingly, after thirty years of enforced seclusion as nominal Khalif, the unhappy Hisham II. was dragged from the harem, and charged with the government of the empire (A.D. 1010). Utterly unfitted for rule he was soon forced to abdicate. Then followed a succession of Khalifs for a period of nearly twenty years, not one of whom possessed real power. Hisham III. was, like his predecessor, dethroned and taken from the palace to a dungeon, where, with his little daughter and his tattered wives, he dragged out a miserable existence. From this time (A.D. 1027) the Omayyad dynasty may be said to have passed away. A reign of anarchy, plunder, and destruction now ensued—palace and public buildings were razed to the ground—men, women, and children were ruthlessly slaughtered, and the Andalu-

sian Empire became a veritable hell upon earth. In this sad plight some of the leading personages in the State invited the Berbers from North Africa to cross the water and quiet the country: so it happened that a body of fanatical Muslims, afterwards known to Spain as the Almoravides (A.D. 1086), commenced measures of "pacification," measures which continued with undiminished success till A.D. 1102, by which date nearly the whole of Muhammadan Spain had passed under their rule. These in turn became demoralised by luxury, and were displaced in A.D. 1145 by the Almohades.

Prominent amidst the many persons who in these troublous times rose to high distinction was Rodrigo Diaz of Bivar, generally known by the appellation of "Cid," which his followers gave him. This doughty warrior, who flourished in the latter half of the eleventh century, is the national hero of Spain, possessing, at any rate in the legends of his day, all the virtues which can ennoble and adorn poor fallen humanity. Whether the apotheosis of the famous warrior was well deserved may perhaps be doubted: but the romance which attaches to his name and reputation is more delightful than the perhaps truer but less attractive narrative which seeks to despoil "My Cid the challenger" of the halo of greatness shining forth in every page of the chronicles of the day. He died in July, A.D. 1099, and they left him in the vault "of San Pedro de Cordena," to quote the language of the *Story of the Nations*, from which these pages are summarised, "still upright in the ivory chair, still in his princely robes, with the sword Tizona in his hand—still the great Cam-



GRANADA—THE ALHAMBRA.



peador whose dinted shield and banner of victory hung desolate over his tomb."

The reign of the fanatical Almohades was brief, owing, in no small measure, to the circumstance that they attempted the impossible task of governing Spain from Africa, by sending deputies from Morocco. The Christians were not backward in seizing their opportunities, but at Badajoz (A.D. 1195), they were signally defeated with heavy loss. However, in A.D. 1212, they had their revenge, and the fatal field of Las Navas, where the Moors are said to have lost something like 600,000 men, was a blow to the Almohades from which they never recovered, and in A.D. 1235 they were finally driven out of the Peninsula.

Little now remained to the Moors in Spain save the kingdom of Granada, where an Arab chieftain known as "Ibn al Ahmar," or the "Son of the Red Man," so called from the fairness of his skin and the colour of his hair, founded a dynasty destined to last for no less than two centuries and a half. Great as was the magnificence of Cordova, its fame was equalled, if not eclipsed, by the glories of its rival, Granada, which has been immortalised by the far famed Red Palace of the "Alhambra," thus named from the colour of the soil which surrounds it. Commenced in the thirteenth century, this wonder of the world was completed in the fourteenth century. Its beauties, its famous Court of the Lions, and little less beautiful Court of the Myrtles, its balconies, its terraced roofs, its lofty battlements are familiar to all readers of Washington Irving's well-known work, which describes his visit to the spot at the commencement of the nineteenth century.

The writing, however, was on the wall. About the year 1481 of the Christian era, the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella united the provinces of Aragon and Castile, and gave to the Christians of Spain a power of which their dissensions had for a long period of years deprived them. The Moors were keenly alive to the danger to themselves which this alliance was likely to occasion, and resolved to take the initiative by refusing to pay the accustomed tribute. "Tell your sovereigns," such was the fiery language of the Ruler of Granada, "that the kings of Granada who paid tribute are dead; our mint now coins nothing but sword-blades." Thus it happened that once again the dogs of war were let loose on the land. The result was never really in doubt; for though success at first attended the Moorish arms, they were in the end (A.D. 1492) completely vanquished, their king, Boabdil, the "Unlucky" (more properly Abu Abdullah), was dethroned, and Granada passed into the possession of the Christian monarchs. "The Light of the Alhambra was set for ever."

From this terrible blow the Moors never recovered, though the end was not yet at hand. For no less a period than a century they resisted all the efforts of the Christians to repress and humiliate them. The fiery fury of the militant Cardinal Ximenes, who had been sent to aid in the work of regeneration, added fuel to the flames. The terrible cruelties of Don John of Austria, who ruthlessly butchered every human being who fell into his clutches, indifferent alike to age and sex, wrought sad havoc among the Moorish insurgents, but it failed to quell the spirit of

daring which characterised the descendants of heroes. Their numbers were, however, too much reduced to enable them successfully to cope with their adversaries, and year by year their ranks were thinned by massacre, exposure, and famine. For forty years the depopulation of the Moorish race continued steadily to progress, during which time no less than three millions of souls were driven from the soil their ancestors had conquered, and in A.D. 1610, the final expulsion of the Moors from Spain left that kingdom a prey to the Christianity of the Inquisition, and its terrible myrmidons.



CHAPTER VIII

THE SULTANS OF TURKEY

A.D. 1288—TILL PRESENT TIME

FROM the dim and distant days of antiquity onwards, two races—the Mongols and the Turks—were wont to issue forth in swarming hordes from what is now known as Central Asia, plundering, devastating, and leaving a trail of misery and sorrow in all lands which came in their path. After many decades of internecine struggle, the Turks remained possessors of the regions in Western Asia which border on the shores of the Mediterranean. While the momentous events outlined in these brief sentences were occurring, the hand of time had passed in its course to the meridian of the thirteenth century of the Christian era. It chanced that at the village of Angora a fierce struggle was taking place between the Mongols and the Turks : in the thick of the fight, at an hour when victory was likely to slip from the grasp of the latter, an unknown horseman appeared upon the scene at the head of a small band of doughty warriors. The assistance of this knight errant decided the contest, and so it

happened that Ertoghrul, a member of the Oghuz family of Turks who had been driven out by the Mongols from his lands in Khorassan, secured new possessions in Anatolia as a reward for his services to the Sultan of Iconium. Established in this neighbourhood, the wandering soldier had soon an opportunity of displaying his mettle against a combined attack of Byzantines and Mongols. The brilliant service of Ertoghrul on this occasion led to further rewards from the gratified Sultan, and the city of Dorylæum henceforth famous in the pages of history as Sultanoni—"the king's front"—passed into the possession of the successful adventurer. By degrees Ertoghrul established his power over his turbulent neighbours, and fixed his capital at Sugut, where in A.D. 1258 was born to him a son named Osman—destined in the fulness of time to be the founder of the Turkish Empire of the Osmanlis or Ottomans. Thirty years of comparative peace, during which his father consolidated his power, and added to his territories, were passed by the son in gaining an experience which in after years stood him in good stead. On the death of Ertoghrul in A.D. 1288 Osman naturally succeeded to the heritage of his father, as ruler of Eskişehir, where he built a mosque—a Muslim is seldom lacking in outward and visible signs of piety. Year by year the young chieftain extended his possessions, till at length in A.D. 1299 they reached well-nigh to Brusa and Nicæa, the foremost Byzantine cities in Asia. The Turkish chieftain now removed his capital to Yenisehir. At this time the extinction of the Saljuk dynasty enabled Osman to extend his possessions, while minor attacks upon the Christian

armies extending over a number of years, paved the way for the fall of Brusa, which, in A.D. 1326, being unable to resist the attacks of Osman's son, Orkhan, was incorporated into the Ottoman dominions, as the new capital of the empire. Shortly after these important events, Osman died (A.D. 1326) and was buried at Brusa where his sepulchre remains to the present day. His father left him a petty principality, the son founded an empire which extended to the shores of the Hellespont.

His son and successor, Orkhan, at once devoted his energies to enlarge his possessions, and city after city of the Byzantine Empire succumbed to the prowess of his warriors. After this for a while he rested content with the dominions which now formed the Ottoman Empire. The keystone of his success was, of course, his army, which he now entirely reorganised and placed upon a sound footing. Amongst the many reforms which he introduced, was the corps of "Janissaries." The soldiers who were enrolled in this famous body of troops were Christian youths converted by "*force majeure*" to the religion of Muhammad. Trained in the profession of arms from an early age, their life was one of hardship and strict discipline, but reward was sure, and promotion at times rapid.

At the head of an army to whom plunder and prizes were an irresistible attraction, Orkhan cast longing eyes in the direction of Constantinople; but having married the daughter of the Christian Emperor who sat upon the throne in that capital, he did not, for a while, find an excuse for crossing the Hellespont. Quarrels, however, in the suburbs of the city, in the

end afforded him his chance, and the capture of the Castle of Tzympe gave the Ottomans a footing in Europe; destined ere long to be strengthened by the occupation in A.D. 1358 of the town of Gallipoli, which chancing at that period to have been overthrown by an earthquake, became an easy prey to the Muslim troops.

Örkhan died in A.D. 1360, and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Murad I., who was in no way behind his predecessors as regards military ardour and love of conquest. Captures of various cities in Macedonia, Thrace, and kingdoms bordering on the Danube, testified to his martial prowess, while his dominions were further enlarged by the marriage of his son Bayazid with the daughter of the chief of Kermiyan. One circumstance deserves mention. In A.D. 1365, when concluding a treaty with the Republic of Ragusa, Murad—so runs the legend—instead of using a pen smeared some ink upon his hand and rubbed it upon the paper. The official “tughra,” or royal seal of the empire, owes its origin, it is said, to this accidental circumstance. It is also noteworthy that at this time the Greek Emperor became a convert to the Latin Church in order to secure the aid of the Pope of Rome. The Balkan Peninsula, however, though as stated, overrun, was not subdued, and in A.D. 1388 the various races which composed that teeming mass of nationalities joined hand in hand and inflicted a serious defeat upon the Ottoman army in Bosnia. This disaster roused the spirit of Murad I., who thereupon invaded Bulgaria, and added that principality to the Ottoman Empire, which now extended to the banks of the

Danube. Still, the Christians were not prepared to sit tamely as vassals of the Muslim monarch. This time the Servians led the way, and unfurled the banner of rebellion. Murad—nothing loath—took the field in person, accompanied by his two sons, Bayazid and Yakub. The battle of Kosovo (A.D. 1389) which ensued was so fierce and terrible that the native annalists recorded that “the angels in heaven amazed with the hideous noise, for that time forgot the heavenly hymns wherewith they always glorify God.” Victory rested with the Turks, and the slaughter of the Christians was immense. Hardly, however, had the din of battle subsided than a Servian warrior, by name Milosh Kobilovich, under the pretext of communicating important tidings to the Sultan, approached the royal presence and plunged a dagger into the breast of the unsuspecting Murad. The death of the assassin was, of course, the penalty that he paid for his daring, but posterity has been lenient to the treachery, and has rewarded the hero of the deed with a chaplet of fame. From that time onwards, no stranger is allowed to enter the royal presence save accompanied by two attendants, who are responsible for his conduct and actions. Murad, at the time of his death (A.D. 1389), had reigned thirty-one years. He was buried at the Chapel in Brusa by the side of Osman, the founder of the Turkish Empire. Three lances with three *

* “The Tugh,” says Stanley Lane-Poole, “or ensign of the Turkish tribes, was originally the tail of a yak, but when the Ottomans left Central Asia, that of a horse was substituted. Governors of provinces received one, two, or three Tughs, according to their rank: the Sultan alone displayed seven.”

horse-tails attached (the national standard of the empire), gave to the spot a martial air which well harmonised with the military ardour of the warrior whom they commemorated.

Bayazid, who succeeded to the throne—the “Thunderbolt” of the Balkan Campaign—in A.D. 1389, at once put to death his brother Yakub, lest under the rules of royal succession in Turkey, he should succeed to power. From this time onwards, the murder of family rivals has been a recognised custom in the annals of the Ottoman Empire.

Soon after his accession, Bayazid concluded peace with the ruler of Servia, who agreed to supply troops, to pay a yearly tribute, and to give his sister in marriage to the Ottoman conqueror. This latter clause of the agreement became, as it happened, a snare to the Muslim prince, who, taught by his wife, gave way to luxury and effeminate habits; she even persuaded him to drink intoxicating liquors, contrary to the injunctions of the Quran. In spite of the loss of energy which the new mode of life naturally occasioned, Bayazid brought Wallachia into subjection, and by degrees all Asia Minor acknowledged his supremacy. These successes led to his receiving at the hand of the Abbaside Khalif the title of Sultan, which had been previously used by the Ottoman sovereigns, but was now for the first time formally recognised. A danger was, however, at hand. Sigismund of Hungary, a Catholic prince who had been worsted in the war of A.D. 1392, smarting under his defeat, induced the Pope to avenge his cause. The flower of European chivalry leagued together, charged with the duty of crossing the Hellespont and freeing

the Holy Cities of Palestine from the dominion of the hated Muslims. Victory in the end fell to Bayazid, but his losses were enormous. Enraged beyond the limits of endurance at the fearful slaughter which had been inflicted on his troops, he caused upwards of 10,000 Christian prisoners who had fallen into his hands at the final battle of Nicopolis (A.D. 1396) to be ruthlessly slain before his eyes. At length, weary with the indiscriminate destruction of so many thousands of hapless creatures, his officers implored their sovereign to desist, and so the "plague was stayed."

The star of Bayazid's prosperity now shone with undimmed splendour. The whole of the Balkan peninsular as far as the Danube owed him allegiance, and Asia Minor up to the banks of the Euphrates was under his sway. Not content he overran the Peloponnesus, and the famous Acropolis of Athens was forced to adopt the Crescent as a symbol of submission to the mighty ruler of Turkey. Still the lust of conquest was not satisfied, and Bayazid proceeded to demand the surrender of the Imperial city of Constantinople. For ten years the siege continued, and the fate of the town seemed sealed, when the mighty Taimur the Tartar, known as the "Wrath of God," swept over the Turkish dominions with his terrible hordes. Raising the siege of Constantinople, Bayazid at once hastened with his troops to oppose the intruder, whom he met on the fatal field of Angora (A.D. 1402). The Sultan's soldiers, albeit many of them were veterans, were no match for the hordes which so largely outnumbered them, and victory, as is not unusually the

case, fell to the largest battalions. Bayazid was taken prisoner and carried about in fetters to grace the train of the captors. Destiny had terribly avenged the terrible massacre of Nicopolis. The Turkish monarch died about eight months after these events, and the fate of the empire of his ancestors hung in the balance (A.D. 1402).

Taimur now remained master of the situation, and so powerful was he that the Turkish Empire in Asia crumbled to pieces in his hands. In verity the "sick man" was "sick," but as the event showed, not "unto death." It so chanced that a singularly able and sagacious sovereign (Muhammad I.) succeeded to the throne of his father (A.D. 1402), and during the period of eighteen years in which he held the sceptre of power he not only crushed rebellion, but consolidated his dominions. It chanced, too, that the terrible Taimur died about two years after the young Sultan came to the throne, a fortunate circumstance for the latter monarch. Reverses came, it is true, but Muhammad never allowed aught to interfere with the steady efforts to restore his empire to its pristine grandeur. At the time of his death in A.D. 1421, he had largely achieved this ambition, while the transfer of his capital from Brusa in Asia to Adrianople in Europe, paved the way for the eventual seizure of Constantinople. From his reign onwards the Turks were a power to be reckoned with in the politics of Europe.

If Muhammad was largely a man of peace and repose, his son and successor, Murad II. (A.D. 1421), was a spirited warrior, full of fire and fury. Early in his reign, roused by the duplicity of Manuel, the

Byzantine Emperor, the sturdy Sultan laid siege to the Imperial capital. But once again fortune befriended the Christians, for a rebellion in Asia called away Murad to those regions, and the city of Constantine escaped that capture which would otherwise have been inevitable. At this time new troubles befell the Sultan of Turkey. About A.D. 1427, Hunyady, the famous "White Knight of Wallachia," harassed the Turks whenever they entered his country, and for little less than twenty years he was a thorn in the side of his Muslim foes. In A.D. 1444, however, he and the Christians whom he led received a most crushing defeat at Varna at the hands of the Turkish army.

Murad II. died in A.D. 1451, after a reign of thirty years, during which, in the quaint language of Knolles the great historian of the Ottoman Empire, "by the spoils of so many mighty kings and princes, and by the conquest of so many proud and warlike nations, he again restored and embellished the Turks' kingdom, before by Tamerlane and the Tartars in a manner clean defaced."

He was succeeded by his son Muhammad II., surnamed the Conqueror, because, during his reign, Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks after a desperate siege of fifty-three days, commencing on 6th April, A.D. 1453, and terminating on the memorable 29th of May in the same year. Gibbon the historian has told in language of immortality, how Constantine Palæologus, the last of his line, fought manfully in defence of his capital; how "amidst the tumult, he fell by an unknown hand, and his body was buried under a monument of the slain," and how, by

command of the conqueror, "the Metropolis of the Eastern Church was transformed into a mosque; the rich and portable instruments of superstition had been removed; the crosses were thrown down low; and the walls, which were covered with images and mosaics, were washed and purified, and restored to a state of naked simplicity. On the same day, or on the ensuing Friday, the muezzin, or crier, ascended the most lofty turret, and proclaimed the azan, or public invitation in the name of God and His Prophet, the Imam preached, and Muhammad II. performed the *namaz* thanksgiving on the first altar, where the Christian mysteries had so lately been celebrated before the last of the Cæsars. From St Sophia he proceeded to the august but desolate mansion of one hundred successors of the great Constantine, but which, in a few hours, had been stripped of the pomp of royalty. A melancholy reflection on the vicissitudes of human greatness forced itself upon his mind, and he repeated an elegant distich of Persian poetry:

" 'Now the spider draws the curtain in the Cæsar's palace hall,
And the owl proclaims the watch beneath Afrasiab's vaulted
dome.' "

After a short interval Muhammad conquered Wallachia and annexed Servia and Bosnia; but he was severely repulsed at Belgrade (A.D. 1456) owing chiefly to the heroism of Hunyady, nobly seconded by the valiant monk, St John Capistran. In Epirus, too, he failed to reduce to submission the well-known national hero Skanderbeg. Ottoman arms were thereupon pushed westward in the direction of Venice, while

the famous Rhodes became the scene of a prolonged but unsuccessful siege on the part of the Turks, whose failure in this direction was compensated by their success in storming the Castle of Otranto near Brindisi (A.D. 1480). In A.D. 1481 Muhammad issued orders to prepare a colossal expedition. Whither bound, and for what purpose, must ever remain undisclosed, for the death of the ambitious Muslim sovereign hid his purposes from view, and the capital of the Byzantine Empire which might have been the aim and object of these gigantic preparations remained secure from the foreign invader. Thus in A.D. 1481 ended the glorious reign of the glorious Muhammad II.

Now came a swing of the pendulum. The new Sultan, Bayazid II., a prince the exact antithesis of his father, was indolent, and utterly unfitted to fill a throne which demanded energy and vigour of mind, no less than of body. His long reign of thirty-one years was almost entirely consumed with family troubles and dissensions. It is only necessary on this occasion to allude to the extraordinary incidents which centre round the hapless Prince Jamshid, generally called and known to fame as "Prince Jem," a brother of the reigning monarch. It may well be supposed that, as this young man was possessed of great force of character, he might at any moment become a dangerous candidate for power, and possibly monarchy. So D'Aubusson, the Grand Master of Rhodes, conceived the strange idea of seizing Prince Jem, and incarcerating him in one of the dungeons of the Order, receiving from the Sultan a large hire for this villainy and rascality. Years rolled on and the

unprincipled head of the Christian brotherhood received during the time large sums of money from different directions, inasmuch as many in high places wished to obtain possession of the captive prince, and were willing to pay handsomely for a prize which could be turned to good account. At length, instigated by Charles VIII. of France, the Pope of Rome appeared on the scene, and in the most generous manner Innocent VIII. agreed to become the jailor of the unfortunate captive. On the death (A.D. 1492) of this benevolent occupant of the Pontifical chair, his successor, the celebrated Alexander Borgia, conceived a grand policy, and entered upon negotiations at Constantinople, the aim and object of which were that Prince Jem should be assassinated in return for the payment to the magnanimous captor of no less a sum than 300,000 ducats, which the successor of St Peter graciously consented to accept. How death came to the captive is not known for certain, but "the balance of probability, however," says Mr Stanley Lane-Poole in the volume "Turkey" which he contributed to the *Story of Nations* series (a work largely used in this brief summary of Ottoman history), "inclines towards poison, and Alexander Borgia has so many crimes on the place where his conscience should have been, that it can do him no harm to bear one murder more. The curious conclusion one draws from the whole melancholy tale is that there was not apparently a single honest prince in Christendom to take compassion upon the captive ; nor one to reprobate the ungenerous and venal intrigues of the Grand Master, the Pope, and Charles VIII. Each contended with the other for the prize of perfidy and shame.

Bayazid may be excused for his desire to see his brother in safe keeping ; but what can be said for the head of the Christian Church, and the leader of an Order of religious knights, who eagerly betrayed a helpless refugee for the sake of the infidel's gold. When we come to read of the heroism of the knights of Rhodes and Malta, it may be well to recall the history of Prince Jem, and to weigh well the chivalry that could fatten upon such treason."

In A.D. 1512 the feeble Bayazid was deposed by his son Selim I., known in after years as "Selim the Grim," who commenced his reign by cruelly butchering the numerous members of the royal family who were likely to prove dangerous. Not content with giving the order for their death, he himself watched the gruesome scene from an adjoining room. This inhuman tyrant soon found an opportunity for gratifying his thirst for blood on a more lavish scale than the murder of a handful of helpless youths and children. It happened in this wise. By a long series of conquests, Shah Ismail, the Safavi Monarch of Persia, had wrested province after province from the hands of the various petty chiefs who held possession of the territories under the sway of Hulaku Khan, and at a later date of Taimur, and had extended his dominions until they became conterminous in parts with the limits of the Ottoman Empire. The Persians were, as a nation, members of the unorthodox Shia sect of Muhammadans: this circumstance afforded the "orthodox" Selim a pretext for suddenly sweeping down upon the "heretics" of whom it is said no less than 40,000 were either massacred in cold blood or

imprisoned. War with the monarch of Persia ensued, and the victory of the Turks at Chaldiran (A.D. 1514) was followed by the annexation of the Persian provinces of Kurdistan and Diarbekir which thenceforth formed part of the Ottoman Empire. A series of successes against the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt (A.D. 1516-1517) gave to the Turks authority over Mecca and Madina, the sacred cities of Arabia. The prestige and importance thus gained were materially enhanced by the action of the last of the Abbaside Khalifs, who, in A.D. 1518, made over to the victorious monarch who sat upon the throne of majesty at Constantinople, the spiritual powers which attached to the Khalifat, and added to the coveted heritage, as outward and visible tokens, the standard and cloak of the Prophet of Arabia. Thenceforth, in spite of the objection—in theory fatal, but in practice more or less immaterial—that the Sultan of Turkey is not descended from the Quraish tribe of Arabia, the Ottoman ruler has been the supreme head of Islam and Commander of the Faithful.

Selim the Grim died on 22nd September, A.D. 1520, after a brief but glorious reign of eight years, during which time the empire over which he ruled was enlarged by the inclusion of Egypt, Syria, and Arabia. Albeit a bloodthirsty and cruel tyrant he was admittedly a great sovereign. But his glory was eclipsed and the splendour of his reign dwarfed by the deeds of his son and successor Sulaiman, the Magnificent, who controlled the destinies of the Turkish Empire for the long period of forty-six years. Gracious in manner, firm in his administration, of

indomitable energy, quick to punish wrong, and ever ready to reward right, he was at once loved and feared by his subjects. With such a monarch at the head of the State, it needed but an able minister at the helm to bring about a combination which could defy the world in arms. Destiny gave this boon to the empire in the person of the Grand Vizier Ibrahim. The son of a humble seaman, he passed as a slave into the hands of Sulaiman, and step by step climbed the ladder of success, till in the year 1523 of the Christian era, he rose to be the first minister of his sovereign, the Lord of Constantinople, and materially helped to increase the power of the powerful Sultan, whose prowess had already added Belgrade (A.D. 1521), and Rhodes (A.D. 1522), to the Turkish Empire, and reduced Venice to the position of a vassal in the same year.

The effect of this union of great men and great minds was at once manifest in the campaign of Mohacs (A.D. 1526), which placed Hungary under the heel of the Ottoman conqueror: and for little less than a century and a half the Turkish "Horsetails" floated over the possessions thus gained. However, after an interval of three years, dissensions in the same region, amongst the candidates for the nominal kingship of Hungary, led Sulaiman to turn his steps once again to that region. Overtures were made to the offended Sultan, but they interceded in vain, and they were bid to meet him either at Mohacs or Pesth, failing which His Majesty intimated that he would "breakfast" with them at Vienna. The happy meal was destined, however, to remain unconsumed, for in spite of the appearance on the

scene of a Turkish army of upwards of 250,000 men, and notwithstanding the devastation wrought by the implacable Janissaries, seconded by the no less terrible irregular troops, the Imperial city resisted all the efforts of the besiegers. On the memorable 14th October, A.D. 1529, the Turkish troops were withdrawn as it had not been necessary—so ran the royal decree—"to clear out the fortress or purify, improve, or put it in repair." After an interval of three years the attack was again renewed; but shortly afterwards was abandoned on the conclusion of peace with Hungary in A.D. 1533. For no less a period than thirty-three years after these events Sulaiman carried on war in various parts of South-Eastern Europe, and died on the 6th September, A.D. 1566, in the midst of the din of battle, leaving a memory as the greatest sovereign that ever sat upon the throne of the Turkish Empire, which at his death covered a large area of the most splendid regions in the world. Almost the only blots upon his character were the murder (A.D. 1536) of his Prime Minister Ibrahim in a fit of jealousy, and the execution of the royal first-born son, Mustafa, a deed of cruelty instigated by his Russian wife, Roxelana, who wished by this means to secure the succession to her son Salim.

But little remains to be written, after this date, in regard to the Sultans of Turkey: most of them were besotted sensualists, addicted to the vices and pleasures of the harem. It is true that now and again, as is the case of Murad IV., A.D. 1623-1640—who conquered Baghdad—a brilliant warrior came to the throne: but such monarchs were the exception rather than the rule, and the interests of the empire

in reality passed into the hands of the Viziers. Such a state of affairs of necessity meant ruin, and it can occasion no surprise that by degrees the Ottoman Empire in Europe was diminished to little more than half its original extent. "Henceforward the Ottoman Empire ceased to hold the position of a dangerous military power," so writes Mr Stanley Lane-Poole; "its armies were never again a menace to Christendom. Its prestige was gone: instead of perpetually threatening its neighbours on the north, it had to exert its utmost strength and diplomatic ingenuity to restrain the aggrandising policy of Austria and Russia. Turkey was now to become important only from a diplomatic point of view. Other powers would fight over her, and the business of the Porte would be less to fight itself, though she can still do it well, than to secure allies whose interests compelled them to do battle for it. In the hundred and seventy years of Turkish history which remain to be recorded, the chief external interest centres in the aggression of Russia, and the efforts of English diplomacy and English arms to restrain her."

Such was the rise and such the fall of the Ottoman Empire. For six centuries Turkey has played an important and at times a glorious rôle in the annals of the world, and even in the later days of his degeneracy the "sick man" may perchance continue in his sickness, but not as a "very sick man" (to use the language of the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, spoken in A.D. 1844). So long at least as the question remains unanswered, "Who is to hold Constantinople?" the "Golden Horn" may yet be

destined to be pregnant with the fate of Empires, and the Sublime Porte—so-called from the Imperial Gate which guards the entrance of the Royal Palace at Constantinople—a factor in the history of the world.



CHAPTER IX

THE TWELVE IMAMS, OR SPIRITUAL HEADS OF ISLAM

I.--ALI. A.D. 656-661

THE narrative now reverts to the events which occurred on the murder of Osman (A.D. 656). The death of the Khalif caused no little stir amongst the Saracens, who were divided in their wishes as to the election of a successor. In the confusion which ensued several persons came to Ali, the spouse of the Prophet's daughter Fatima, and desired of him that he would accept the government. To these solicitations he rejoined that personally he did not wish for the honour, but would readily bow to the choice of any person upon whom they might agree. They still insisted that no one was so well qualified as himself, whether as regarded his personal accomplishments, or his near relationship to the Prophet of Arabia. But the "Hand of God" (as Arabian historians delight to call him) was inexorable, and ultimately it was agreed that the matter should be referred to the chief inhabitants of Madina; these latter came to Ali with an appeal to his piety. "We adjure thee by God!"

such was the forcible language of the religious enthusiasts of Islam. "Dost thou not consider in what condition we are? Dost thou not consider the religion? Dost thou not consider the distraction of the people? Dost thou not fear God?" Moved with these expostulations, and it may well be supposed secretly overjoyed at the prospect before him, Ali consented to comply with the wishes of his fellow-countrymen; but aware that his enemies were neither few in number nor inconsiderable in influence, he prudently insisted that the allegiance of his subjects should be publicly tendered in the mosque, rather than in private at his own house. Accordingly, clad in a thin cotton gown, tied about him with a girdle, having a coarse turban upon his head, his slippers in one hand, and a bow in the other instead of a staff, the son-in-law of Muhammad repaired to the sacred edifice, with the view of receiving the homage of the citizens, who had elected him to the dignity of Khalif. This occurred in A. D. 656.

As soon as Ali was publicly acknowledged at Madina as successor to the throne, he inconsiderately resolved to take away the high appointments held by those persons who had been nominated by Osman, his predecessor. In vain did faithful friends remonstrate against the needless folly and perilous danger of raising up a host of enemies, ere he was well secure at his capital; in vain did they point out that it behoved him not only to be a man of courage—this could never be questioned—but a "man of conduct." Ali was deaf to all representations, and the fiat went forth; murmurs of discontent followed the rash resolve, and a body of malcontents

was speedily formed ; these, at the instigation of two men of influence by name Talha and Zubair, inflamed by the malignant counsels of Ayisha, the favourite wife of the Prophet, but the bitterest and most implacable enemy of his daughter's husband, betook themselves into Syria, whither they carried Osman's blood-stained shirt. This latter they sometimes spread upon the pulpit, and at others raised on high in the face of the army. While, more effectually to inflame the feelings of the people, his wife's fingers, which were cut off at the time when the venerable Khalif was murdered, were pinned upon the shirt. The people of Syria, aroused at the piteous sight, vowed vengeance against a tyrant whom they supposed to have planned the murder of their sovereign, and whom they knew to have decreed the recall of their governor. This last-mentioned personage, the well-known Muawiya, so famous in the annals of after years, finding that feelings of revenge and animosity were deeply implanted in the hearts of the people under his charge, did not vouchsafe to give a reply to the messenger whom Ali had sent to Syria. At length, however, after an interval of about three months had elapsed, the proud and aspiring recusant bethought himself that he would send an answer to the son-in-law of the Prophet. He selected an attendant, and delivering him a letter, sealed with the superscription "From Muawiya to Ali," he bade him return with the envoy from Madina. Entering the town in the evening when people were strolling in the cool, the emissaries carried the packet aloft upon a staff; they were soon surrounded by a band of inquirers, anxious to ascertain the reply of the governor of Syria,

whom they knew to be disaffected towards Ali. On reaching their destination, Ali seized the letter with evident tokens of anxiety, but great was his astonishment to find the missive a blank sheet of paper—not a single word of writing was visible. Rightly understanding this token of contempt and disdain, he asked the messenger what news he had to convey; whereupon the man replied that 60,000 men were in arms under the standard of Osman's shirt. The die was now cast, and destiny decreed that Ali's reign should be inaugurated with a war against the Syrians, whose animosity he had courted, and whose allegiance he had estranged. While these events, so pregnant with importance, were transpiring at Madina, a crier was parading the streets of Mecca proclaiming that "the Mother of the Faithful and Talha and Zubair are going in person to Bussora—whosoever therefore is desirous of strengthening the religion and fighting voluntarily to avenge the death of Osman if he hath any convenience of riding let him come." The people of the sacred city flocked eagerly to the standard of revolt, and upwards of 3000 warriors surrounded the litter of Ayisha, as, mounted upon a camel and animated with a spirit of unquenchable hatred to the house of Ali, she turned her steps towards Bussora. The city, rent with factions, and divided in allegiance, offered no material resistance; and after a skirmish, in which forty of his men were slain, the governor submitted to the Amazon leader. The implacable matron at first ordered that death should be the punishment for resistance; but the entreaties of her companions mitigated the severity of such a bloodthirsty decree, and the hapless suppliant was

allowed to depart with his life; at the same time, however, he was disgraced and humiliated with the loss of his beard and eyebrows, both of which were plucked out by the roots to appease the irritated Mother of the Faithful.

But to return to Madina. Though Ali was exceedingly popular, and though it was well known that he was fairly elected, yet all his eloquence—and he was allowed to be the best orator of his age—was not sufficient to stir up the people in his behalf. At length, however, one of the leaders in the town stepping forth proclaimed his readiness to unsheath his sword in Ali's behalf; his example was soon followed by another zealous warrior, and history proclaims that a woman in the crowd, struck by the contagion of enthusiasm, offered the services of her cousin-german whom she considered as dearer to her than her own life. The ardour of these patriots inflamed the hearts of their fellow citizens, and Ali was enabled to march forth from the city at the head of 900 men to confront the disturbers of his kingdom, now esconced at Bussora under the command of his sworn foe Ayisha. His son Hasan, seeing the hopelessness of the enterprise, endeavoured to dissuade his father from the perilous attempt, and advised him to "sit still at home." The reply was typical of the resolute warrior whose brow had been graced by destiny with a crown: "Would you have me lurk in a hole like a wild beast till she is digged out. If I do not myself look after what concerns me in this affair, and provide for my necessary defence, who will look after it? Therefore, son, hold you your tongue!" So Ali and his party proceeded on their way.

When they had journeyed some days, he halted and despatched two messengers to Kufa, bearing a letter to his friends in that city, informing them "how much he preferred them to all the rest of the provinces, and what confidence he reposed in them in the time of his extremity," and adding "that they should keep the religion of God, and repair to him in order to make use of such means as might be proper for the reconciling of this divided people, and making them brethren again." The messengers, on arrival at the town, were surrounded with a crowd of the populace, but none demanded whence they came, or what they required: the silence was ominous. In the end some of the "hajis," or pilgrims who had visited Mecca, came to the governor, by name Ali Musa, and inquired as to his views about going out to assist Ali. The answer would have reflected no discredit on the Oracle of Delphi: "My opinion to-day is different from what it was yesterday. What you despised in time past hath drawn upon you what you see now. The going out and sitting still at home are two things. Sitting still at home is the heavenly way; the going out is the way of the world. Therefore take your choice." Again there ensued a deep silence, broken only by the angry and reproachful exclamations of the messengers. Thereupon Ali Musa, waxing warm at the insults thus hurled against him, bade the men tell their master that the people of Kufa would have no dealings with a person round whose neck hung the murder of Osman.

All this while Ali was employing his time at the camp in haranguing and encouraging his people, who

at his solicitation had been plentifully supplied from Madina with horses, arms, and all the necessities of war. "Keep close to your religion," so spake the head of the Muslim faith, "and be directed in the right way; for it is the direction of your prophet. What is too hard for you let alone, till you bring it to the test of the Quran; and what the Quran approveth stand to, and what it disapproveth reject. Delight in God for your Lord, and in Islam for your religion, and in Muhammad for your Prophet, and in the Quran for your Guide and Director." The party was now joined by the ex-governor of Bussora, who came to wait upon Ali; the beardless face of the hapless pilgrim betokened the sufferings he had undergone, and raised at once the compassion and the ire of his generous-minded master, who unable to restrain his indignation at the perfidy of Talha and Zubair, in that "their tongues were not according to their hearts," exclaimed in tones of wrath, "My God! they shall both know that I am not one jot inferior to any of my predecessors."

Full of anxiety as to the fate of his appeal to the people of Kufa, Ali received with trembling heart the message returned by Ali Musa to the overtures of reconciliation which had been addressed to him. The answer of the governor was fatal to the resolve of his master, who could scarcely proceed against Bussora, unless assured of the assistance of the inhabitants of Kufa, so he determined once again to try and appease the storm which was gathering around him: but his efforts were fruitless. Last of all he despatched his eldest son Hasan, who was received with the respect due to his dignity and birth.

Still Ali Musa persisted in his opposition : words ran high, and no small tumult arose, some wishing to march to the assistance of Ali, others preferring to remain true to their allegiance to the "Mother of the Faithful." When at length the debate passed the bounds of moderation, and feelings were at their highest, Hasan rose up and bid the people "hearken to the request of your Emperor, and help us in this calamity which is befallen both you and us. Thus saith the Emperor of the Faithful, Either I do injury myself, or else I suffer injury. If I suffer injury God will help me, if I do injury He will take vengeance upon me. By God, Talha and Zubair were the first that inaugurated me, and the first that prevaricated. Have I discovered any covetous inclination, or prevented justice? Wherefore come on, and command that which is good and refuse that which is evil." This appeal touched the audience to the quick, and upwards of 9000 citizens of Kufa joined the camp of Ali; the latter received them with honour as "men of distinguished valour" who had "conquered the kings of Persia, and dispersed their forces!"

The army of Ali now consisted of not less than 30,000 men, and the heart of Ayisha sank within her as she beheld in battle array round Bussora a host of fighting men, not materially inferior in point of numbers to those who supported her cause, led by a commander whose prowess in battle had earned for him an appellation so endeared to the consciences of Muslim historians--the "Lion of God." Nothing daunted, however, the resolute Amazon mounted her camel, and, riding in a litter shaped as a cage, was carried up and down the ranks to inspire the soldiers

with somewhat of the zeal and impetuosity which filled the breast of the most heroic, the most implacable heroine of which the annals of Islam can boast. So the "day of the camel" commenced; the contest was conducted with ungovernable fury on both sides, and for a long while the issue was doubtful. At this juncture Talha was pierced in the leg by an arrow; unable to control his horse he soon stretched his length on the field of battle, the faithfulness of his servant alone enabling his master to reach the town safe from the weapons of his enemies; but his end was approaching, and impending fate, so pious Muslims would have it believed, convinced the traitor of his sin, and on his deathbed he renewed the oath of fidelity which he had so recently and shamelessly violated. Ali, with a generous consideration for his enemy's want of faith, avowed that "God would not call him to heaven till he had blotted out the first breach of his word by this last protestation of fidelity." Thus one stumbling-block was removed from Ali's path. The traitor's comrade in guilt, Zubair, too, having qualms of conscience withdrew himself from the battle, and took the road towards Mecca. He was followed by an adherent from Ali's camp, who, overtaking him, and worming himself into the dispirited intriguer's confidence, treacherously cut off the head of his unsuspecting victim as the hapless Arab was prostrating himself at evening prayers. When the Lion of God saw the blood-stained skull of his foe he denounced the latter as a denizen of hell, an illiberality of sentiment which so shocked the susceptibilities of the assassin that, repentant of his sin, he ran his own body through

with a sword, and fell a corpse at the feet of his astonished master. The principal conspirators were now removed from the scene; but the struggle was not ended, and there still remained Ayisha, ever to be seen where the battle raged hottest and most severe; the centre of attraction alike for friend and foe, her litter bristled, as it were the back of a porcupine, with the arrows which were launched at the intrepid leader of her troops, and no less than three score and ten hands which lay severed on the plain, beneath the feet of the beast which bore her, betokened at once the zeal of those who held her bridle, and the fury of the contest of which she was the very life and existence. Thus the day advanced till at length her camel was hamstrung, and no longer able to take part in the fray, she remained at the mercy of her victorious enemy. Ali, however, more considerate to his defeated rival than she had been wont to be to those whom *she* hated and disliked, dismissed her handsomely, with a goodly equipage, and sent her in company with his two sons, Hasan and Husain, to Madina, enjoining her at the same time not to intermeddle any more with affairs of State.

After this eventful day Ali encountered no further opposition, and marching into Kufa, established in that city the seat of his government. These important events occurred in A.D. 656.

There now remained but one region where the standard of rebellion yet floated: in Syria, Muawiya still headed a people disaffected towards Ali, and eager to revenge the blood of Osman. A messenger was sent to him bidding him pay allegiance to

his sovereign; but he refused to listen to any one save Amru, the conqueror of Egypt, who was accordingly despatched, but finding on his arrival the position of affairs, the warrior linked his fortunes with the governor of Syria, and amidst the acclamations of the people, this traitor to his trust took the oath of allegiance to his new Lord.

When Ali was apprised of these proceedings he at first adopted gentle means to reduce the rebels to a sense of their duty, but, perceiving that his efforts were fruitless, he marched at the head of an army of 90,000 men towards the confines of Syria. Halting at Saffain, a full month (June-July, A.D. 657) was consumed in abortive efforts to settle the matter amicably; but all his attempts were fruitless, and at the end of that interval the war began, not in the usual way of a pitched battle, but rather with a series of desultory onslaughts: indeed, scarce a day passed without an engagement of some sort, and it is said that no less than ninety skirmishes took place, in which Ali lost upwards of five-and-twenty thousand of his troops, while the slain amongst the army of Muawiya amounted to little short of five-and-forty thousand. This irritating and unsatisfactory method of warfare was ill in accord with the ardent spirit of the warrior of Islam, who called out to his antagonist, "How long shall the people lose their lives between us? Come hither. I challenge you to appeal to the decision of God, and whichever of us two kills his man has all entire to himself." But Muawiya refused, alleging with truth, that no man had ever come forth against Ali, and lived to tell the tale. So the slaughter continued, and the Syrians

were sore pushed ; the crisis was serious, and it was reserved to Amru to extricate his followers from a danger which threatened destruction. This crafty leader, seeing the impending discomfiture of his soldiers, bade them hoist the Quran upon the points of their lances, and advance into battle exclaiming "This is the book that ought to decide all our differences : this is the book of God between us and you." The effect was magical — eager warriors, whose ardour no human power could restrain, at once threw down their arms, and appeared before Ali : "Will you not answer to the book of God?" was the zealous inquiry of these zealous bigots. In vain was it pointed out that the whole affair was trickery and a deceit—the men were inexorable, and at the moment when victory was in his grasp, the "Lion of God" was compelled to sound a retreat. After much discussion it was determined that the difference should be settled by arbitration, and two persons were chosen to represent the contending factions. For eight months the armies remained listless and inactive ; at the expiration of which time the decision was announced, in the sight of all the people, from a tribunal erected for the purpose on the plain. It had been agreed between the umpires that both competitors for the throne should be deposed, and the choice of a successor left to the nation at large : accordingly mounting the rostrum the arbitrator selected to represent the interests of Ali proclaimed that both the "Lion of God" and Muawiya should be set aside, and, suiting his action to his words, he drew the ring from off his finger, and cast it aside, to betoken that the Khalifat had

been taken from the disputants. On the other hand his companion, departing from the agreement, proclaimed that the governor of Syria should be the successor of Osman, "after the same manner as I put this ring on my finger"; a decision in which neither of the arbitrators agreed, settled nothing, and the armies separated leaving matters just as they were when the war began. But the action of Ali in referring to the judgment of man what ought to have been determined by God alone--such was the language of his opponents--gave great offence to some of his adherents, and there arose a body of irreconcilables known as the separatists, who held aloof from his interests, and established themselves in the vicinity of Baghdad, whither all the malcontents flocked, till at length their number was swelled to five-and-twenty thousand men. It was impossible to leave such a formidable array of opponents as a standing menace to his authority and power, and Ali had no alternative but to reduce them to submission; so he presented himself before them at the head of a considerable army. Ere, however, giving the order for the attack, he planted a standard without the camp, and made proclamation with sound of trumpet, that whosoever would come under it should have quarter; while if any of them desired to retire to Kufa they should find there a sanctuary. The stratagem was completely successful, and no more than 4000 men remained true to the cause of rebellion. This handful of desperadoes, none the less, resolved to attack Ali's army; but their presumption was greater than their success, for they were cut to pieces, and but nine of them

escaped to repent of their rashness. This victory, which was gained in the year of grace 658, united all the Arabians under the government of Ali, and it only remained to reduce the Syrians to obedience. For upwards of two years attempts were made to subdue the refractory Muawiya, but the efforts were spasmodic and productive of no practical results; it was not so much a matter of the sword as of intrigue, and the poisoned bowl and the forged letter not infrequently did a work which the armed hand failed to accomplish. The state of things was indeed wearisome and unsatisfactory; at one time Ali's lieutenants secured a victory over their opponents, while it occasionally happened that one of his generals, less fortunate than his master, was routed, and his dead body tied up in that of an ass and burned to ashes. In these circumstances three of the separatists met together at Mecca, and discoursing over the troubles of their nation and country, came to the conclusion that all the ills which had befallen the people of Islam were due to Ali, Muawiya, and Amru: so they resolved that they would rid the world of such fertile springs of discord, and restore to the Muslim nation that peace and unity of which there seemed no prospect in any other direction. Poisoning their swords the three conspirators separated; the first to Kufa, the second to Damascus, and the third to Egypt.

As regards Muawiya, he was struck by the assassin, but the wound was not mortal, while Amru on the day selected for his murder chanced to be unwell, a fortunate circumstance, to which he owed his life; a substitute who had filled his place at the

mosque fell dead beneath the blow which had been intended for the conqueror of Egypt. "I designed Amru, but God designeth another" was the calm and unconcerned exclamation with which the cold-blooded assassin withdrew his sword from the innocent victim of his hate.

The third conspirator, by name Abdur Rahman, met with better success in his deadly mission. On arriving at Kufa he happened to take up his lodgings in the abode of a woman, whose nearest relation had been slain in the battle, and who for that reason retained in her heart a strong desire to be revenged upon the author of her misfortunes. Ingratiating himself with this fiendish-minded companion, the designing villain even went so far as to offer her his hand in marriage; she in turn, eager for the blood of her enemy, readily consented, and joining with fervent ardour in the murderous plan of her pretended lover, merely stipulated that her dowry should be "3000 drachms of silver, a slave, a maid, and Ali's head." The better to carry out her deadly purpose, and to guard against the risk of failure, she associated with her newly-arrived lover, two other men, named Wardan and Shabib. The three associates repaired to the mosque, and pretending to quarrel amongst themselves, drew their swords; but hardly were their weapons unsheathed than they all fell upon the hapless Ali, who soon lay at their feet, struck down with a mortal wound; he lingered for a few days, and died on the 22nd January, A.D. 661, having previously given directions that the assassin Abdur Rahman should be detained in custody, to await the result of his murderous attack; if the blow should prove fatal,

the generous Ali stipulated that one stroke should deprive the murderer of a life justly forfeited.

Thus died Ali, after a troublous reign of a little more than five years.

Among the surnames or honourable titles which the Muslims bestow upon Muhammad's son-in-law is that of "legatee" or "heir,"—that is, of the Prophet. His second title is "Beloved by, or acceptable to God." He is also known as the great "Curer," and sometimes as the "Pardoner." His undaunted courage and unconquerable skill in battle also gained for him the appellation, "the victorious Lion of God"; but he is more commonly known as "the Lion." The Persians for a similar reason call him "the Lion of God," and not unfrequent mention of him is made as the "Hand of God," the "King of men," the "distributor of Lights and Graces," or the "Commander of the Faithful."

Ali was buried at Najaf, near Kufa; for many decades the site of his tomb was unmarked, but in the year A.D. 977, a sumptuous monument, which the Persians generally call "the dome of the distributor of Lights," was erected to mark the spot which contains the ashes of a man beloved by his friends and feared by his enemies—a warrior who delighted in battle, but hated diplomacy—a chieftain who, possessing unlimited and unrestrained power, was endowed with a meekness and humility, which found expression in the inscription which he placed on the seal of the empire: "The Kingdom belongs to the only mighty God."

II.—HASAN. A.D. 661. ABDICATED SAME
YEAR. DIED A.D. 670

When Ali had received his mortal wound, and it was perceived that life was ebbing away, those around him inquired whom he would nominate for his successor. The son-in-law of the Prophet replied that he intended in this matter to follow the example of the Apostle of God, who died without selecting a ruler of the Faithful, and that if it pleased God to favour them, He would, undoubtedly, unite their judgments in making a good choice. In these circumstances it was deemed fit, since Ali had passed away, that the mantle of the father should fall upon his elder son, Hasan, who, however, inherited more of Ali's piety than his courage, while being naturally of a peaceable disposition, he was ill-fitted to rule over a monarchy which needed a firm hand, and a stout heart. When the Imam had drawn his last breath, Hasan stood up and said to the people: "You have killed a man on that same night in which the Quran came down from Heaven, and Isa (Jesus), upon whom be peace, was lifted up to Heaven, and in which Joshua the son of Nun was killed; by God! none of his predecessors exceeded him, nor will any of his successors ever be equal to him." After this harangue the speaker was inaugurated as Commander of the Faithful. "Stretch out your hand," such was the formulary observed, "as a token that you will stand by the Book of God, and the Tradition of the Apostle, and make war against all opposers." "As to the Book of God and the Tradition of the Apostle, they will stand," was the pious rejoinder of the saintly Hasan. The people

then made obeisance, and agreed that they would be subject and obedient to him, and remain at peace with his friends, and at war with his enemies. Some, however—the recollection of the Syrian war, with all its wearisome contests and indecisive battles, filling their hearts with misgivings—hesitated as to this latter condition, and exclaimed: “This man will never serve you for a master, we are not for fighting.” But upwards of 40,000 warriors had, in days of yore, bound themselves to stand by Ali in the matter of his dispute with the Syrians, and Hasan was persuaded, contrary to his own inclination, to put himself at the head of this body, with the view of reducing to obedience the rebel Muawiya, who, even before his rival was killed, had proclaimed himself Khalif, and who now refused to acknowledge the claims of Hasan, whom he charged with having been an accomplice in the murder of Osman. The contending forces met at a place called Madain, but a tumult in his army—on which occasion he was not only treated with discourtesy, but received a wound—revealed to Hasan the alarming circumstance that his authority was precarious, and his power slight. So, weary at heart he wrote to Muawiya, resigning to the latter a sovereignty so beset with difficulties, and so fraught with danger. In the meanwhile, the governor of Syria, judging from the position of affairs, that Hasan might not impossibly be disposed to listen to terms, sent him a sheet of paper completely blank, save in so far as it was signed at the bottom, and bade the timid-minded Imam write therein what conditions he pleased, which it was promised should be punctually and scrupulously performed. Hasan thereupon altered in his own favour the terms which he had previously

proposed for Muawiya's acceptance; but his adversary, not unnaturally, preferred to adhere to the first letter, which he said truly was Hasan's own proposal.

Ultimately it was arranged that (1) Muawiya should give up all the money in the treasury at Kufa; (2) that Hasan should receive a vast estate in Persia; and (3) that Muawiya should make no reproachful reflection upon Ali, at least in the presence of the son of the latter. These conditions being settled, Hasan and Muawiya repaired together to Kufa, where the former made a formal abdication of his rights. "O people," such was the language of the Imam, "God, whose name be magnified and glorified, directed you the right way by the help of the first of our family, and hath prevented the effusion of your blood by the means of the last of us. Muawiya contended with me concerning a matter to which I had a better pretension than he; but I chose rather to restrain the people from fighting, and surrender it to him. But even this affair also hath a time prefixed for its duration, and the world is liable to changes." So Hasan, in company with his brother Husain, retired to Madina in the enjoyment of the magnificent income of upwards of £150,000 a year, most of which he spent in deeds of charity. But he was so little attached to the things of this world, that twice in his lifetime he deprived himself of well-nigh all that he possessed, and on three other occasions he divided half of his substance amongst the poor.

Thus passed the first half of the year 661 of the Christian era. Authorities differ as to the precise duration of Hasan's reign, but it is generally considered to have lasted about six months.

Upon his coming to Madina he was blamed by his friends for having so tamely and easily resigned ; but he answered that he was weary of the world, while the people of Kufa were, in his opinion, such a faithless and fickle nation that he could place no reliance upon their allegiance or assistance, seeing that no man ever reposed confidence in them but he was a sufferer for his rashness and folly ; while never two of them concurred in their opinions and wishes ; in short, they had no regard either to good or evil. So he turned away in disgust from a people whom he could neither trust nor admire.

While he was settled at Madina, it happened that the "separatists," who had occasioned his father so much trouble, raised an insurrection against Muawiya, and the latter thereupon wrote to Hasan, enjoining him to go forth against them. But he desired to be excused, on the plea that he had quitted public affairs ; and that, if he had cared for fighting at all, he should have himself entered the lists with him against whom the rebellion was raised.

Though successful in his schemes, ill-feelings lurked in the bosom of the newly elected Khalif, who was anxious to secure the succession for his son Yazid, and he resolved to rid himself of an enemy whose near relationship to the Prophet attached the people to his person, while the meekness and gentleness of his disposition made amends for the absence of those traits of boldness and vigour which were so highly esteemed in a land where every one was a warrior from his youth, and where the sword and the bow graced alike the stripling of a few summers, as the venerable elder with snow-white locks.

Sad to relate, Muawiya found an instrument to secure the accomplishment of his treacherous design in the sanctuary of the domestic circle; and the person selected to rid the world of an inoffensive and unsuspecting victim, was no other than the wife of Hasan's bosom, who, lured with the dazzling prospect of an ultimate union with Yazid, and tempted with the promise of a sum of 50,000 dirhams (somewhat over £1000), readily consented to sacrifice the life of her lord and master. The method which she adopted for its accomplishment was not less remarkable than the consummate perfidy of the design. While yet warm from her embraces, she rubbed the body of her husband with a napkin which she had previously impregnated with poison. The deadly preparation quickly pervaded the frame of her hapless spouse, who soon lay stretched on the bed a stiffened and distorted corpse.

When the time of his death drew near, his brother Husain begged of him to say who it was that had poisoned him, and swore that judgment should overtake the murderer. But the noble-hearted Hasan refused to disclose the secret. "O brother! the life of this world is made up of nights which vanish away. Let him alone till he and I meet together before God," was the only response which passed the lips of the murdered saint; but the expression indicated a consciousness that, in his opinion, his wife, though the instrument, was not the instigator of his death.

When Muawiya heard the glad tidings of his enemy's murder, that ambitious and unprincipled intriguer fell down on his knees with affected humility, and worshipped the Lord of Heaven, who had

removed from his path the sole opponent whom he dreaded in his heart, and hated in his soul. It is at least satisfactory in the midst of this black record of treachery and guilt to find that Yazid, more prudent perhaps than honourable, refused to fulfil the promise made in his name and on his behalf. So the murderess, whose memory is to this day bitterly execrated, remained a widow, while the paltry sum of money which she received as the price of a husband's blood was but an insignificant reward for an act of villainy which has few parallels in the annals of infamy and crime.

Thus (March, A.D. 670) died the ex-Khalif, familiarly known as "The Pious," which name he derived from the many actions by which he was distinguished. Before his death, Hasan had expressed a wish that he might be interred at Madina by the side of the Prophet of Islam; but the jealousy of the implacable Ayisha prevented compliance with this desire, and an ordinary cemetery in the city afforded the grandson of Muhammad that peace and rest in the grave of death which the implacable malignity of his foes denied him when alive.

III.—HUSAIN. A.D. 680—AFTER AN INTERVAL OF TEN YEARS

It had been part of the agreement between Muawiya and Hasan that, after the decease of the former the government should revert to the family of the latter: but as years rolled on, the usurper was by no means willing that the reins of power should pass

from his own branch, and he took steps to make the succession hereditary. He was successful in his efforts, and on his death (A.D. 680) his son Yazid succeeded to the throne of his father ; not only so, indeed, but, as previously related, for fourteen generations the Khalifat remained in the Omayyad branch to which Muawiya had belonged. But the whole of these successors of the Prophet are regarded by the followers of Ali as usurpers.

As soon as Yazid succeeded to the government, he sent a letter to the governor of Madina, bidding him hold Husain and others "close to the inauguration, without any remission or relaxation." But the grandson of the Prophet managed, with various excuses, to put off the evil day when he would have had to bow down to a sovereign whose succession he disputed, and whose authority he ignored ; moreover, during this interval he managed to steal away secretly and escape to Mecca, taking with him the whole of his family except one brother.

Never were people more overjoyed than were the inhabitants of Iraq at the death of Muawiya, whom they detested as a tyrant and usurper, while they sighed for the government of Husain, who belonged to a family which they considered as almost divine ; added to which his wife was the daughter of the last Sassanide King of Persia. The Kufans, in particular, were so impatient, that they sent message after message to Ali's son, assuring him that if he would but make his appearance amongst them, he should not only be secure as to his own person, but that, in consideration of the esteem which they had for his father and family, they would render him homage,

and acknowledge him as the only lawful and true Khalif. Though lending a ready ear to these solicitations and importunities, he, nevertheless, deemed it prudent to despatch a messenger to feel the pulse of the people, whose humour he somewhat mistrusted. Muslim, the person selected for this delicate and important office, at first met with great encouragement, and no less than 18,000 men flocked to the standard of his master Husain. However, the lieutenant of Yazid soon found means to turn the tide of popular favour, and the hapless envoy was eventually forced to flee for his life: being ere long seized at the house of an old woman, and taken back to the city, he was afterwards carried to the top of the castle, where he was decapitated, and his head and mangled body cast down on the plain beneath; which done, the former was picked up and sent as a present to Yazid.

When the messenger did not return, it should have been evident to Husain that something was amiss, and he might well have paused ere committing himself to the mercies of such a fickle and inconstant people: but he still persisted in his intention. To no effect did his friends represent to him the madness of embarking in such a desperate undertaking, suggesting that he should keep himself retired till a sufficient body of supporters was raised to ensure success. Husain was not to be moved from his resolution: so, at length, finding all their protestations of no effect, they earnestly pressed him at least not to take the wives and children of his household, lest evil should befall them. One zealous counsellor, in his eager efforts to avert a destruction which he foresaw, swore "By that

God, beside whom there is no other, if I knew that my taking you by the hair of the head till they came in and parted us, would be a means to detain you at Mecca, I would do it." To use the quaint words of the Arabian author who has chronicled these events, "No advice took place with Husain," who, on the morning of the 10th September, A.D. 680, set out from Mecca with a small retinue of followers. This little cavalcade had not proceeded far on their road, when they fell in with a body of a thousand horse, under the command of a chieftain named Al Hurr, a man well affected to the family of Ali. To him Husain explained the object of the expedition which had been taken at the invitation of the people of Kufa. Charged with the commission to bring before Obaidullah, the governor of Bussora, as a prisoner the very man who now stood before him powerless to resist, Al Hurr was moved with compassion, and bade the grandson of the Prophet choose his own road: "Perhaps it may please God I may meet with something that may bring me off without my being enforced to any extremity upon your account," was the pious ejaculation of a warrior who dreaded that the blood of so near a descendant of the Apostle of God should be laid to his account. So, wheeling his charger, he departed out of the way, leaving Husain to pursue his journey unmolested. Scarce a few hours elapsed when four horsemen appeared in sight bringing the news that the nobility of the fickle city whither Husain was wending his steps, were opposed to him to a man, while as for the rest "their hearts are with you, but to-morrow their swords will be drawn against you." He now, too, learned for the first time

the fate of the messenger who had been despatched to the town: the murder of this man affected him deeply, but did not deter him from continuing his march. Another faded blossom was added to the chaplet of destruction. In the still solitude of night he saw in a vision a horseman who said, "Men travel by night, and their destinies travel by night towards them"; from this he knew that the hand of death was upon him, but onward he went till they came to the fatal plain of Karbala, where a large force was drawn up commanded by Amr, a general acting in the interests of Obaidullah, the governor of Bussora. A conference now took place between the two armies, but it was productive of no material results. After it became evident that it was not possible to accommodate matters in this fashion, Obaidullah sent one Shimar to the commander of the forces with orders that if Husain and his followers would surrender themselves they should be received, but if not that he should fall upon them, and trample them under foot.

This offer of mercy reached Husain as he was sitting at the door of his tent, just at the close of evening prayer; whereupon he begged that he might be allowed till morn to consider as to the answer he would return. In the night his sister came up to her brother with tears in her eyes from a foreboding of evil. "Alas for the desolation of my family!" such were her piteous cries. "I wish I had died yesterday rather than have lived till to-day: my mother Fatima is dead, and my father Ali, and my brother Hasan. Alas for the destruction that is past, and the dregs of it that remain behind." Husain looking upon the

frail creature at his side began to chide her, saying, "Sister, do not let the devil take away your temper." Unable to influence him, or deter him from the fatal course upon which he had embarked, the hapless maiden, beating her face, and tearing open her bosom, fell at his feet motionless in a swoon. Hastily sprinkling his sister with cold water, till she had somewhat recovered, Husain counselled her "Put thy trust in God, and depend upon the comfort that comes from Him: and know that the people of the earth shall die, and the people of the Heavens shall not remain: and every thing shall perish but the presence of God, who created all things by His power, and shall make them return, and they shall return to Him alone. My father was better than I, and my mother was better than I, and my brother was better than I, and I, and they, and every Musulman has an example in the Apostle of God." Leading away the terrified girl to her own apartments he commanded his men to cord the tents close together so that the enemy might not be able to pass between them: he also caused a trench to be digged at the end of the line of tents, into which they threw a large quantity of wood, so that when set on fire it would be impossible for their foes to encompass them from that direction. The rest of the night was spent in prayer and supplication, and as the morn began to dawn, both sides prepared for battle; but the disproportion of the contending parties left no room for doubt as to the issue of the day; for while Amr was at the head of upwards of 4000 men, Husain's band could muster no more than two-and-thirty horse-soldiers, and forty men on foot—a total of

seventy-two devoted adherents. So soon as it became evident that the struggle was imminent, Husain went into his tent, and, as is customary amongst the Arabs when about to engage in dangerous and forlorn enterprises, perfumed his body with musk, an example followed by the leading men of his party. The reason of this quaint proceeding showed at once the desperate nature of the adventure in which the martyrs of Islam were about to hazard their lives, and their firm belief in the future of the cause for which they were ready to fight. "Alas!" such was the explanation which one of their number vouchsafed to an inquiring comrade, "there is nothing between us and the black-eyed girls (of Paradise) but only that these people come down upon us and kill us." Then Husain mounted his horse, and, Quran in hand, invited the people to the performance of their duty; adding "O God! Thou art my confidence in every trouble, and my hope in all adversity." He next reminded them of his virtues, the nobility of his birth, the greatness of his power, and his high descent, bidding them consider "whether or no such a man as I am is not better for you: I, who am the son of your Prophet's daughter, beside whom there is no other upon the face of the earth."

While this exhortation was going on in front of the tent, a party of thirty horse wheeled round, as if to commence the attack. They were commanded by Al Hurr, who had resolved to throw in his lot with the grandson of the Prophet. So, drawing rein before the master whom he had elected to serve, he placed at the disposal of the latter the band which had come forth with the apparent design of hurling destruction

upon their adversaries. His submission accepted, Al Hurr turned his charger towards the tents of his former friends, whom he reproached most bitterly for their treachery and perfidy. "Alas for you! you invited him till he came, and then deceived him; and this did not satisfy you, but you are come out to fight against him. Nay, you have hindered him, and his wives, and his family, from the waters of the Euphrates, where Jews, and Christians, and Sabians drink, and hogs, and dogs, sport themselves, and he is like a prisoner in your hands incapable of doing himself either good or hurt." An arrow from the bow of Shimar put a summary end to all controversy, and the battle began in good earnest. Two warriors now stepped forth from the ranks of the Kufian army, and challenged their adversaries to single combat; but their bodies soon lay prostrate in the dust at the feet of a victorious champion from amidst Husain's little band, who slew them both in the presence of the two armies. Nor was the next who offered himself more fortunate: coming up close to the grandson of the Prophet, he muttered in the ear of the latter, words of bitterness and gall. "You are first at hell," said the arrogant Kufian warrior. "By no means," was the rejoinder; "alas for thee, I go to a merciful Lord full of forgiveness, easy to be obeyed, but thou art more worthy of hell." The Syrian soldier turned about, but at this instant his horse became unmanageable, and he fell off, leaving his foot hanging in the stirrup: seeing his plight, one of Husain's party stepped forth and lopped off the cavalier's right leg. Powerless and mutilated the poor wretch was dragged along the stones and

his head dashed to pieces ere his friends could stop the horse in its mad career. Emboldened by these successes, the Imam's champions fought with redoubled energy, and of all the warriors of Kufa who stepped into the arena to contend in single combat with the heroes of Karbala not one lived to return. In these circumstances, orders were given for a general onslaught on the desperate knot of followers who had placed their swords and their lives at the disposal of the son of the "Lion of God." The fight raged thick and furious, but still Husain's party, whose superiority in courage made, in some degree, amends for their inferiority in numbers, managed to repulse the enemy at all points. Seeing this, the commander of their adversaries ordered 500 archers to the front, and in a few minutes such a rain of arrows poured down upon Husain's camp, that not a man of them could remain in the saddle. So leaping down, the martyrs fought sword in hand with a valour which nothing could resist, and with an impetuosity which no living soul could oppose.

Amr perceiving that, thanks to timely precautions, the Meccans were inaccessible save in the front, commanded his men to pull down the tents; but the soldiers told off for the duty were killed to a man. This so enraged the desperate Shimar, that, indifferent to all the rules of warfare, he struck his javelin into the tent which gave shelter to the women of Husain's household, and then, calling for a brand, proceeded to set fire to the slender house with its helpless and delicate inmates. The Apostle's grandson, hearing the shrieks of the terrified females, and seeing at a glance what had occasioned

their distress, was bitterly enraged. "What!" said he, "would'st thou burn my family? God burn thee in hell fire!"

It was now noon, and the time of prayer; and in the midst of his troubles and danger Husain was not unmindful of the duties which his religion imposed upon every true son of Islam. Calling together the remnant of his shattered company, the Imam poured forth to the God of heaven a petition for succour and aid, adding to the office the "Prayer of Fear," which is never used but in cases of extremity. After the devotions were finished, the fight was renewed with redoubled energy on both sides. Fatima's son soon found himself surrounded by his foes, but the prodigious valour of his adherents, one alone of whom slew ten men as they pressed around him, kept the enemy for a while at bay; still as soldier after soldier fell fighting like a hero, there was in the end no one left to fill the gaps. The little party was now almost exterminated, while Husain's eldest son lay mangled at his feet, surrounded by the lifeless and quivering frames of many a stalwart warrior who, faithful even unto death, had "done and dared" all that mortal man could do. The Imam himself had throughout the day been in the thickest of the fight; arrows had poured round him on every side; swords had clashed before his eyes, and javelins had pierced the heart of many of his followers at his very feet; but the Martyr of Karbala seemed to possess a charmed life, and he stood on the field of battle as yet unharmed and unhurt. At length, however, the spell was broken, and the blow of a sabre clove his skull, so that his headpiece became

filled with the blood which gushed forth from the wound. Casting aside the helmet which pressed his temples, he bound up his head with a turban, and continued the fight; but soon becoming exhausted, he sat down sick in heart, and weary in body, at the door of the tent, taking in his lap his little son Abdullah; yet scarce had he cast the eyes of fond affection upon the innocent face which he loved with all the deepness of a tender and compassionate nature, than an arrow pierced the heart of the hapless infant, who fell on his breast a blood-stained stiffening corpse. Placing his hands beneath the wound to catch the blood which flowed in copious streams, the agonised father threw it forth towards the skies, ejaculating at the time, "O Lord! if Thou withholdest help from us from heaven, give it to those that are better, and take vengeance upon the wicked." Husain now became thirsty, but while in the act of drinking, an arrow entered his mouth, and he sank to the earth with hands uplifted, imploring that help which man could now no longer afford. At this juncture his little nephew, a beautiful child with jewels in his ears, came to embrace him; but a ruthless soldier cut off the lad's hand with a sword; whereupon, roused by the sight of this stripling, mangled before his very eyes, the infuriated uncle, hastily muttering, "Thy reward, child, is with God; thou shalt go to thy pious forefathers," rushed once more into the ranks of the enemy, and hurled death and destruction in every direction—charging sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, till his foes fled in every direction like deer before a lion. The effect was visible, and the deed heroic; but such

forlorn desperation could avail nothing against the seething phalanx of the maddened foe, who by mere force of numbers were able to strike the undaunted swordsman a blow on the hand which partially disabled him. A second cut on the neck brought him to the ground, where, as he lay, a spear was thrust into his heart. So fell the noble and much loved Husain, the third Imam of the house of Ali. The remorseless victors, indifferent alike to the claims of humanity as of decency, gloated over the corpse with the malignity of fiends, and severing the head from the body, rode their horses over the mangled carcase already scarred with three-and-thirty wounds which it had received in the battle, till a quivering and scarce recognisable mass of flesh was all that remained of the hero whose praises poets delight to sing, and whose prowess has seldom been equalled, never surpassed, in the annals of a nation ever "prone for the fight, and eager for the fray."

A brutal wretch from amongst the hardened knot of ruffians who had not shrunk from an act of barbarity which has consigned its perpetrator to eternal infamy and disgrace, seizing the head of the martyred Imam, hastened with the sickening charge to Obaidullah, the governor of Bussora. Finding, however, the castle shut, he carried home the blood-stained trophy to his house, and told his wife that he had brought her a great rarity. But the woman was moved with compassion at a sight so revolting to the better feelings of a tender nature. "Other men make presents of gold and silver, and you have brought me the head of the son of the Apostle's daughter. By

God! the same bed shall never hold us two any more." Such was the indignant protest of the incensed matron, who thereupon quitted the house of a man whose baseness she had learned to despise, and whose conduct she was fain to loathe. Next morning the head was taken to the governor, who treated it reproachfully, and struck it over the mouth with a stick, after which it was set up in Kufa, and subsequently carried about the streets of that city. In due course it was sent to Yazid, at Damascus; but the Khalif was moved at the ghastly sight, and expressed his regret at Husain's murder. As to the ultimate resting-place of the head there is considerable difference of opinion. Some say it was sent to Madina and buried by the side of the tomb of Fatima, the mother of Husain; others incline to the view that it was interred at Damascus, in a place called the Garden Gate, whence it was eventually removed to Askalon, its last resting-place being at Cairo, where a monument was erected called the "Sepulchre of Husain the Martyr." Again, some pretend that the head was interred at Karbala, and it is certainly significant that a sumptuous monument was erected at that city, which is visited to this day with great respect by devotees from Persia and other regions in which the "family of the tent" are venerated, and their memories revered.

As regards the mutilated corpse of Husain, it lay exposed on the sands of the plain for the space of three days, when the people of a neighbouring village, fearing lest they should incur the vengeance of heaven if they suffered the remains of their fellow creatures to be longer a prey to wolves and vultures, went together and committed to earth on the spot where they

found it the headless and scarce recognisable body of the grandson of the Prophet of Arabia.

The two titles usually given to Husain in Persia, are "the martyr" and "Sayyid" (Lord), while both he and his brother Hasan are comprehended in the dual word "as Sayyidain," which signifies "the two Lords." He was killed on the 11th October, A.D. 680, an anniversary religiously observed by the myriads of pious worshippers who annually celebrate the memory and mourn the death of the "Martyrs of Karbala."

IV.—ALI ASGHAR, surnamed ZAINUL ABIDIN.

A.D. 680-712

When Husain lay slain on the fatal field of Karbala on that memorable day of days, a soldier entering the tent of the martyred hero, found therein a young lad languishing in pain and sickness. Snatching from the midst of the screaming assembly of women the innocent and defenceless stripling, who alone of all "the family of the tent" had escaped the massacre, the bigoted warrior, his soul deadened to all the better feelings of humanity, drew his sword to quench the flame of life which flickered in the bosom of the unfortunate youth: but a more sympathising bystander, attracted by the shrieks which issued from the tent, reproached his comrade for his want of manliness in butchering a beardless child. "The believers," said he, "have hitherto abstained from killing the infant children even of infidels; let this child be carried to thy general that he may decide upon his fate." So the

life of Ali Asghar, better known perhaps as Zainul Abidin, was spared, and he was led away captive to the presence of Obaidullah. At the time of the lad's arrival the governor was busied in mocking and insulting the head of the massacred Husain; but turning suddenly, in the midst of his fiendish triumph towards the new object of his aversion, he jeeringly observed to the youthful prisoner that it was understood that God had slain his father. To this brutal remark the proud youth vouchsafed no reply, whereupon the merciless tormentor impetuously demanded the reason of such silence. "I once had an elder brother, but him also the murderers have slain," was the undismayed rejoinder.

The rage of the tyrant was easily roused, and he bid his attendants fall upon the boy and despatch him: at this critical juncture Zainab, the daughter of Ali, in company with the women of Husain's family, rushing forward, implored him to spare the only representative of their wretched race, and if the victor was not yet satisfied with blood, to direct his vengeance rather against themselves, since they had no one left to whom he could be accountable. Their entreaties prevailed, and the order for this last act of savage butchery was countermanded; so for the second time the child's life was spared. The whole party were now despatched to Damascus, but the malignity of the captor is evidenced by the circumstance that the women were stripped of their clothing, and paraded through the streets exposed to the insults of a pitiless and insulting rabble! The noble soul of the youthful prisoner resented this wanton act of cruelty, and he would not vouchsafe a

word to his attendants, as with a chain about his neck he journeyed along in the silence of despair. Coming to the presence of Yazid, the party experienced scarcely better treatment than they had received at the hands of his lieutenant. First of all the brutal-minded wretch proceeded in a strain of insult to reproach Ali Asghar with the misfortunes and troubles which seemed to pursue the destinies of himself, and of the family to which he belonged. On receiving from him a reply equally modest and applicable, the baffled ruler bade his son take up the discourse, if haply he might be able to incense and irritate the captive before him. The youth, however, refused to listen to the brutal commands of his father, who after sufficiently indulging his malevolent spirit turned to exhaust his spleen upon the noble-minded Zainab, endeavouring to aggravate her sorrows by addressing her under the title of the daughter of the Prophet's son-in-law, and thereby bringing to her recollection the exalted stock from which she was sprung.

When their souls had been tortured as long as he thought proper by the remarks to which, in the insolence of his power, the tormentor thus compelled them to submit, he at length dismissed the captives to the apartments of his women. There they remained several days, at the expiration of which they received instructions to betake themselves to Madina. Before, however, their final departure, Yazid desired that Ali Asghar might be brought to the royal presence to receive his dismissal. The language to which the lad was compelled to submit was somewhat more gentle than might have been expected at the hands of

a man who did not hesitate to stoop to the most contemptible means to vex and distress the unfortunate and hapless beings whom fate had placed in his power. "The curse of God light on thee, thou descendant of the Prophet's son-in-law! Had it rested with myself I might have been disposed to subscribe to the views of thy father; but it becomes not man to controvert the decrees of Providence; thou art now at liberty to return to Madina with the whole of thy family."

The person to whose care Yazid had committed the party of fugitives conducted himself with such civility and respect to them all the way, that Fatima said to her sister Zainab, "Sister, this Syrian hath behaved himself so kindly to us, do not you think we ought to make him a present?" "Alas," was the rejoinder, "we have nothing to present him withal but our jewels." So they took off their bracelets, and sent them to the man, with an apology, begging of him to accept them as a token of their respect for his courtesy. He, however, modestly refused the proffered gift, generously representing, "If what I have done had been only with regard to this world, a less price than your jewels had been a sufficient reward; but what I did was for God's sake, and upon the account of your relation to the Prophet, God's peace be upon him!"

When Ali Asghar arrived at Madina he was welcomed with enthusiasm as the sole survivor left to perpetuate the race of the Martyr of Karbala: the adherents, indeed, of the house of Ali soon formed a large and influential party, which endeavoured, on all occasions, to magnify the merits of Husain, in pre-

ferring an honourable death to an ignominious life. By this means they contrived to stir up the people to such a pitch of enthusiasm that the latter threw off the yoke of the house of Omaiya, and Islam presented the strange spectacle of a divided allegiance, Yazid ruling at Damascus, while the followers of the martyrs of Karbala possessed power and influence at Madina. For a while the Aliites hesitated formally to refuse homage to the sensual profligate who was passing his days in the Syrian capital, drinking wine, and minding nothing "but his tabors, his singing wenches, and his dogs"; however, after an interval they broke out into open rebellion, and, repairing to the mosque, publicly renounced their allegiance. "I lay aside Yazid as I lay aside this turban," said a lad amongst the number, as, suiting the action to the word, he cast his head dress to the ground. "I put away Yazid as I put away this shoe," rejoined another, and soon a great heap of shoes and turbans proclaimed the fact that the reveller at Damascus held no sway at Madina. An army was quickly despatched to reduce the rebels to obedience, but the Aliites excavated a ditch round about the city, and made a most vigorous defence: in spite of their valour, however, they were ultimately overpowered, and for three days the city was given over as a prey to the soldiers of the conquering general. Ali Asghar, contrary to what might have been expected, was treated with the greatest respect, and escaped the general massacre of those who had hoped to re-establish the fortunes of his ill-destined house. So soon as Madina was subjected, Yazid turned his attention to Mecca, which city also

exhibited signs of disaffection; but while the siege was at its height the hand of death struck down Yazid in his revels (1st Nov., A.D. 682) and the holy city escaped the destruction which had been impending.

At this time the people of Kufa, bethinking themselves that they had not dealt generously with Husain, began to take steps to avenge his death upon his murderers. Accordingly circular letters were sent bidding those who were favourable to the cause to meet on the plain of Naqila, to show that they repented, and that they were "persons duly qualified for the search of excellency, and the laying hold of the reward, and repentance towards their Lord from their sin, though it be the cutting off their necks, and the killing their children, and the consumption of their wealth, and the destruction of their tribes and families." Scarce a handful of persons responded to the call, and even when two messengers had repaired to Kufa crying in the streets, "Vengeance for Husain," no more than 4000 men could be found willing to embark upon a venture fraught with so much danger and peril. Marching all night, the little band in the morning came to Husain's burying-place, where they remained till each man of their number had prayed for pardon over the tomb of the Martyr of Karbala. "O Lord!" thus ran the language of penitence and remorse, "we have deceived the son of the daughter of our Prophet: forgive us what is past and repent towards us, for Thou art the Repenter, the Merciful! Have mercy upon Husain and his followers, the righteous martyrs! and we call Thee to witness, O Lord! that we are the very same

sort of men with those that were killed for his sake; if Thou dost not forgive us we must be sufferers." So soon as the party had finished their devotions they continued their journey towards Syria with the design of revenging themselves on Obaidullah, who had caused the blood of the martyrs to flow in streams on the plain of Karbala; but that "wicked wretch" met them on the way with an army of upwards of 20,000 men, and scarce a soul of the Aliites lived to mourn over the rashness of endeavouring with but a handful of zealots to withstand the attack of a body of troops so vastly superior in numbers and organisation. While these reverses were overtaking the hapless followers of Ali on the plains of Syria, a terrible revenge was being wreaked upon their foes at Mecca. It happened thus: a man, by name Al Mukhtar, had been struck with a cane by Obaidullah at the time the messengers from Husain were endeavouring to stir up the people of Kufa to declare for the grandson of the Prophet of Arabia; the violence of the blow dashed the man's eye to pieces: filled with rage, the mutilated servant swore with a solemn oath that he would take vengeance on the man who had at once insulted and injured him. Being cast into prison the poor wretch found, at first, but little opportunity to put his oath into execution, though he managed at times to get letters conveyed to him in the lining of his cap; but so soon as he was released he set about the task which he had taken upon himself, and by means of indomitable energy and perseverance at length managed to secure the command of such forces as the power of Ali could muster together. Indeed,

some of the party went so far as to proclaim him Khalif on condition that he would not only govern according to the contents of the Book of God, and the tradition of His Apostle, but destroy the murderers of Husain. Nothing loath, at any rate, as to the last condition, Al Mukhtar seized and killed Shimar, the man who had shot the first arrow on the memorable day of massacre on the field of Karbala. He next besieged in his house the brutal wretch who had carried Husain's head to Obaidullah, and when he had killed this contemptible miscreant, he burned the body to ashes and cast them to the winds of heaven. Amr, who had commanded the army sent out against Husain, met the same fate as had befallen the martyr whom he had slain, and his lifeless carcase was trampled under the feet of horses in like manner as, by his command, troops had ridden over the sacred body of the grandson of the Prophet. Another offender was bound and handed over to his tormentors to be treated as they might think proper. "You stripped the son of Ali before he was dead," such were the taunts of the captors, "and we will strip you alive: you made a mark of him, and we will make one of you;" so they let fly a shower of arrows at him which "stuck so thick over all parts of his body that he looked like a porcupine."

But fortune had reverses in store at this juncture for the house of Ali, some of whom were seized while performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, and imprisoned in the holy well "Zamzam." Whilst in this sorry plight they found means to make their condition known to Al Mukhtar, who at once despatched 750 troopers to their assistance, in batches of from forty

to one hundred men. These soldiers arriving at Mecca, beat off the guard, and breaking open the "Zamzam," released the imprisoned captives. Al Mukhtar now (A.D. 686) found leisure to attack the city of Kufa, on which occasion he adopted an expedient as original as it was successful: making a throne, he pretended that there was something mysterious connected therewith; accordingly it was carried into battle upon a mule, and the people, ere the contest began, knelt down before the sacred emblem and prayed for protection against their enemies. The petition was granted, and Kufa fell into the hands of a general who, filled with the bitterest animosity against the race of Omaiya persecuted all the inhabitants well disposed towards that cause; but the severity of his actions, and the disorders of his administration, raised enemies within the city, and these lending their assistance to the army which was sent to wrest the town from its captor, the latter was slain, while the whole of his followers, to the number of 7000 men, were put to the sword. Thus died Al Mukhtar—but he had lived to fulfil his oath, and wreak his vengeance upon all those who had dipped their hands in the blood of Husain, many of whom paid with their lives the penalty of their treachery and cruelty on the occasion of the tragedy at Karbala.

What part Zainul Abidin took in the struggles of his followers to establish the authority and consolidate the power of the house of the "family of the tent," is not stated by any of the Arabian annalists who have detailed the events of the period. But he appears to have exercised, at least in name, the

powers of Imam, for it is related that Muhammad Hanifa, a son of Ali by another wife, and therefore not a descendant of the Prophet, contended with him at one time for the sacred honours of the Khalifat, and insisted that the arms of the Lawgiver of Arabia should be consigned to himself as the nearest descendant of the son-in-law of Muhammad. It was determined to refer the claims to the decision of the "Black Stone" in the temple of Mecca, which pious Muslims suppose to be one of the relics which our first parent was suffered to bring with him on his expulsion from Paradise. Accordingly, the competitors presented themselves before this celebrated monument of antiquity; the son of Hanifa first addressed his prayer that some testimony might be revealed in favour of his claims; but not a sound was heard to establish his rights, or confirm his pretensions. Zainul Abidin next proceeded to invoke the sacred stone, by the truth of that Being from whom it derived its miraculous properties, to pronounce which of them after Husain should be Imam. The stone, so runs the legend, thereupon declared in favour of Ali, the great-grandson of the Prophet, who was accordingly invested with the dignity of which his uncle had sought to deprive him—a dignity which he retained for the rest of his days.

Regarding the date of Ali Asghar's decease there is a considerable difference of opinion, though it is generally supposed that it occurred in September, A.D. 712.

Nor is there less uncertainty as to the cause of his death, which is generally attributed to poison administered at the instance of a Khalif of the house

of Omaiya, to whom it may be supposed his presence was at once a source of annoyance and of danger.

He was buried at Madina near the tomb of his uncle Hasan.

This Imam is commonly known as Zainul Abidin, "the ornament of the servants of God," an epithet occasionally varied to Shaidul Abidin, "the sun of the servants of God." He is also at times referred to by the appellation of "the ever prostrate or adoring"; while the name which he not infrequently receives of Zul tanafat, takes its origin from the callosities on his hands and knees, resembling those of a camel; these, it is said, were contracted by his unremitting assiduity in the acts of devotion. His other titles, of Abu Muhammad and Abul Hasan, simply indicate that he was the father of children bearing those names. The nickname of "parent of liberality" may well be supposed to have been derived from his extensive charity, a virtue which endeared him in the eyes of a nation with whom generosity is a sacred duty, and hospitality a cherished privilege.

V.—MUHAMMAD IBN ZAINUL ABIDIN, surnamed MUHAMMAD BAQIR

Respecting the fifth Imam, Muhammad Baqir, but little is recorded in the pages of history. He was born at Madina in A.D. 694, his mother having been Omru Abdullah, a daughter of Hasan; he was therefore a great-great-grandson of the Prophet. He died in Jan., A.D. 733, by poison administered at the

instance of the then reigning Khalif, and was buried at Madina.

The surname of Baqir, which means "abounding in knowledge," was given him in consequence of the great extent of his learning and the vast depth of his information. He is also designated "the grateful," in consequence of his habit of thanking God on all occasions of life, while the name of Hadi, which is sometimes to be met with, signifies that he was a guide or director to watch the steps of the people committed to his care. The title Abu Jafar simply indicates that he was the father of the succeeding Imam who bore the name of Jafar.

VI.—JAFARUS SADIQ

Imam Jafarus Sadiq was born at Madina in A.D. 702, his mother having been a daughter of the son of the first Khalif Abu Bakr. According to the Orientals he was the possessor of every virtue and perfection that can exalt fallen humanity, or ennoble its erring instincts; and if their testimony be entitled to credit, he appears to have been so well persuaded of his own transcendent powers, that he used to tell his followers to embrace every opportunity to urge him with their inquiries while he was within their reach, seeing that when he was gone there would be none to supply his place as an instructor and director of mankind! He died in A.D. 765 by poison, at the age of sixty-five, the only member of his race who had hitherto lived to reach an advanced period of life. He was buried at Madina by the side of his predecessor. There are those who maintain that some time previous

to his death, Jafarus Sadiq nominated his son Musa to the Imamatus, to the prejudice of his elder brother Ismail, whom he thought proper to disinherit in consequence of his intemperate love of wine. Others, however, are of opinion that Ismail having died previous to his father, the succession devolved as a matter of course upon Musa as the next in seniority. Hence arose a schism amongst the advocates of the Imamatus, the Ismailians, of whom a branch exists to this day on the western side of India, ascribing to the person from whom they are so denominated the seventh place in the succession of the Rulers of the Faithful. It is, moreover, the belief of this latter sect that their founder was the last of his race, and that the sacred office which he held expired with him, a doctrine of which they availed themselves to indulge in the grossest impiety and atheism. Jafarus Sadiq (Jafar the sincere), derives his title from the rectitude of his life, and the pureness of his devotions, while the designation Abu Abdullah, which is sometimes to be found in the pages of history, indicates that he was the father of a son bearing the name of Abdullah.

VII.—MUSAUL KAZIM

It is generally believed that the birth of Imam Musa took place at a small station between Mecca and Madina in A.D. 745, his mother having been a native of Barbary. Owing to the unfortunate circumstance that he had excited the jealousy of the celebrated Khalif Harun ar Rashid, who ruled over the destinies of the Faithful, A.D. 786-809, he was summoned to Baghdad by that prince, and cast into prison, where

he remained till his decease in A.D. 799. The cause of his death is variously stated, some being of opinion that the poisoned chalice, so fatal to the members of his race, was the means employed to rid the world of a dangerous rival, while others incline to the view that the more barbarous method was adopted of pouring molten lead down the unhappy Imam's throat. He was buried in one of the suburbs of Baghdad. The appellation of Kazim takes its origin in the extreme clemency, combined with a wonderful power of restraining his anger, with which this Imam was gifted. But he is sometimes referred to as Salim (patient), and at others as Amin, which latter epithet indicates that he is the trusty guardian of the Faith and Tradition.

VIII.—ALI RIZA

The birth of Ali Riza is said to have taken place at Madina in A.D. 765. Of his life and actions nothing has been handed down to posterity, and even his decease is surrounded by a halo of obscurity and doubt, it being uncertain whether he died a natural death, or whether he was destroyed by a dish of poisoned grapes. All that is known for certain is the date of the occurrence, which happened in A.D. 818. He was buried at Mashhad, a name signifying "place of martyrdom," which city subsequently became known as Mashhad Ali. Ali Riza appears to have been a man much esteemed for his abstinence, and for his assiduity in prayer; his memory is indeed at the present day much revered amongst the people of Persia, who hold that a visit to his shrine is as meritorious as eighty pilgrimages to Mecca; but this

regard for the virtues of the departed saint does not appear to be shared by all those professing the faith of the Prophet of Arabia, for it is a tradition that when the golden mausoleum, which covers the remains and perpetuates the fame of the Martyr of Mashhad, was erected by Nadir Shah, King of Persia (A.D. 1736 to A.D. 1747) the Wahabi Arabs sent a sarcastic message to that sovereign to the effect that the treasure which he was expending on so useless a fabric would be much more meritoriously applied if bestowed to superior advantage upon themselves. The title of "Riza" signifies "resigned"; this Imam is, too, occasionally, designated "the approved."

IX.—MUHAMMAD TAQI

Imam Muhammad Taqi, born at Madina in A.D. 810, is said to have been possessed of such unrivalled endowments of person and mind, that the Khalif Al Mamun, won by the Imam's attractions, gave the latter a royal daughter in marriage. Notwithstanding, however, this exalted connection, he did not escape the fate of his predecessors, and in A.D. 835, when he had attained but twenty-five years, the poisoned bowl, as is sometimes supposed, terminated a career which had commenced under such favourable auspices. He was buried near Baghdad by the side of his grandfather Musaul Kazim. He is sometimes designated Abu Jafar (the father of Jafar), but more generally "Taqi," the pious. The other titles by which he is known are "the beneficent," "the liberal," and "the approved."

X.—ALI BIN MUHAMMAD TAQI

The birth of this venerated successor to the chair of the hierarchy is said to have taken place at Madina, about A.D. 827. He spent, however, the greater part of his days at Samarra, about four-and-twenty hours' journey from Baghdad, having been conducted to that town by order of the reigning Khalif. During his stay at the city in question he devoted himself to study and prayer, hoping thereby to avoid the jealousy of the prince into whose hands he had fallen ; but he failed, and once again poison put an end to the existence of an unfortunate member of the unfortunate house of Ali. This happened in A.D. 868. He was buried at Samarra, and, as in the case of his father, obtained the title of "pious," although he has been occasionally designated "the guide." The epithet of "Askari," by which he is sometimes known, may be derived from the town of Askari, where he resided, though there are some who incline to the view that it is meant merely to denote that he was the "younger" (Asghar) Imam of the name Ali. The title "the continent" perpetuates his piety, while Abul Hasan serves to show that he was the father of the succeeding Imam.

XI.—HASANUL ASKARI

The eleventh Imam was born at Madina in A.D. 846. He has been much celebrated for his extensive liberality and his munificent disposition, while he is said to have evidenced by numerous proofs the possession of very extraordinary, if not miraculous, powers. But these qualities caused him to be suspected by the

reigning Khalif of the Abbasides, who adopted the usual mode of ridding himself of a person whom he deemed dangerous. So Hasanul Askari shared the fate of those who had gone before him, and in A.D. 873, a draught of poison carried off the eleventh Imam of the house of Ali. The titles he bore were "pure," "saviour," "lantern"; the first marks the purity of his manners; the second was given him in the hope and expectation that he would deliver the Muslims from the oppression of the Abbasides; while the third signifies that he illuminated the world by the light of his faith and doctrine. In common with his father, and probably for the same reason, he bears the appellation of Askari.

XII.—MUHAMMAD ABUL QASIM AL MAHDI

This person, concerning whom the Orientals entertain some extraordinary beliefs, was born at Samarra in A.D. 868. His birth, so it is proclaimed, was accompanied with preternatural signs and peculiarities, while certain marks on his body testified that no ordinary mortal had been sent into the world. Of his life and career no information has been handed down, save that the Khalif at that time swaying the destinies of the Muslim monarchy, having manifested some design against this Imam, who is known throughout the East as the Mahdi or "Pontiff," the latter made his escape (A.D. 879) into a vault or subterraneous excavation at Samarra, and totally disappeared. It is, however, an article of belief amongst an immense number of votaries that he is still living, and that, when the proper period shall arrive, he will

again appear on earth and exercise sovereign sway ; and they have accordingly bestowed upon him the title of "testimony," "erect," "expected," "the universal prince." Other sectaries again are not agreed whether the Mahdi is to be in the person of this prince, or of some other individual yet unborn, of the race of Fatima, who will come into the world in the consummation of time. The Ismailians deem that Muhammad, the fourth son of Jafar, the sixth Imam, is the Mahdi who is destined to create a formidable revolution in the West, the regions of which will long continue in subjugation to him, and to his posterity. Nor are there wanting persons who profess to believe that after he had disappeared, the Mahdi continued to hold a mysterious communication with his adherents, through the intervention of certain individuals successively entrusted with his confidence, a state of things which terminated in A.D. 937, when one of the name of Ali bin Muhammad, the last who enjoyed this trust, produced, a short time before his death, a paper said to have been written by the invisible or concealed Imam, charging him to adjust all his concerns with this world, for that at the expiration of six days he was to die; a prediction which is supposed to have been verified. From that period the communications in question entirely ceased, and the existence of the twelfth Imam has remained enshrouded in a mist of obscurity, which no man has succeeded in removing. At his coming, an event which preludes the end of the world, it is supposed that he will be accompanied by Jesus Christ, who at his suggestion will kill all the swine appertaining to the followers of the Cross, and make Christianity similar to the religion of Islam, so that

after this period the two faiths will be merged into one homogeneous creed !

The Ghair-i-Mahdi (literally "without Mahdi") are a small sect who believe that the Mahdi will not reappear. They maintain that one Saiyyid Muhammad of Jaipur was the twelfth Imam, and that he has gone never more to return. They venerate this latter personage as highly as they do the Prophet, and consider all other Musulmans to be unbelievers. On a certain night in the ninth month they meet together and repeat two prayers, after which they say, "God is Almighty, Muhammad is our Prophet, the Quran and Mahdi are just and true. Imam Mahdi is come and gone. Whosoever disbelieves this is an infidel." A small branch of this community is settled at Mysore, where they are known as the Dairi.

Mahmud, the founder of the sect to which he gave his name, lived in the reign of Taimur (A.D. 1370 to 1405); he professed to be the Mahdi, and used to call himself the "Individual One." In the Quran there is a verse which runs thus:—"It may be that thy Lord will raise thee up to a glorious (Mahmud) station." From this he argued that the body of man had been advancing in purity since the creation, and that on its reaching to a certain degree the Mahmud would arise, and that then the dispensation of Muhammad would come to an end. He claimed to be this Mahmud. He also held the doctrine of transmigration, and taught that the beginning of everything was the "Nuqta-i-khak," an atom of earth, on which account his followers are sometimes called the "Nuqtawiya" sect: they are

also known by the names of “Mahmudiya” and “Wahidiya.” Shah Abbas, King of Persia, expelled them from his dominions about the end of the sixteenth century, but Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605) received the fugitives kindly, and promoted some of their number to high offices of State.



CHAPTER X

THE QURAN

THE word Quran signifies in Arabic "the reading," or rather, "that which ought to be read." The syllable *Al* is only the Arabic article equivalent to "*the*," and therefore ought to be omitted when the English article is prefixed.

The work is divided into 114 chapters, called "Suras," a term properly signifying a row, order, or regular series; as a course of bricks in building, or a rank of soldiers in an army.

In the manuscript copies these chapters are not distinguished by their numerical order, but by particular titles, which (except that of the first, which is the initial chapter, or introduction to the rest) are taken sometimes from a particular matter treated of, or person mentioned therein; but usually from the first word of note. Occasionally there are two or more titles, a peculiarity due to the difference of the copies.

Some of the chapters having been revealed at Mecca, and others at Madina, the explanation of this circumstance makes a part of the title; but a portion

of the text is said to have been revealed partly at the former town, and partly at the latter; and in some cases, it is yet a dispute among the commentators to which place of the two they belong.

Every chapter is subdivided into smaller portions, of very unequal length, customarily called verses; but the Arabic word is "*Ayat*," and signifies signs or wonders.

Notwithstanding this subdivision is common and well known, yet no manuscript exists wherein the verses are actually numbered; though in some copies the total of the verses in each chapter is set down after the title. And the Muhammadans seem to have some scruple in making an actual distinction in their copies, because the chief disagreement between their several editions of the Quran consists in the division and number of the verses.

Besides these unequal divisions of chapter and verse, the Muhammadans have also divided the book into sixty equal portions which they call *Ahzab*, each again subdivided into four equal parts; but the Quran is more usually apportioned into thirty sections, named *Ajza*, each of twice the length of the *Ahzab*, and in the like manner subdivided into four parts. These divisions are for the use of the readers in the royal temples, or in the adjoining chapels where princes and great men are interred. There are thirty of these readers belonging to every chapel, and each reads his section, every day, so that the whole work is read over once a day.

Next after the title, at the head of every chapter, except only the ninth, is prefixed the following solemn form, by the Muhammadans called the

Bismilla, "In the name of the most merciful God"; which sentence they constantly place at the beginning of all their books and writings in general, as a peculiar mark or distinguishing characteristic of their religion, it being counted a sort of impiety to omit it.

This dedicatory form, and also the titles of the chapters, are by the generality of the doctors and commentators believed to be of divine origin, no less than the text itself; but the more moderate are of opinion they are only human additions, and not the very word of God.

Twenty-nine chapters have this peculiarity, that they begin with certain letters of the alphabet, some with a single one, others with more. These letters the Muhammadans believe to be the peculiar marks of the Quran, and to conceal several profound mysteries, the certain understanding of which, the more intelligent confess, has not been communicated to any mortal, their Prophet only excepted. Notwithstanding which, some take the liberty of guessing at their meaning, and suppose the letters to stand for as many words expressing the names and attributes of God, His works, ordinances, and degrees. Others explain the intent of these letters from their nature, or else from their value in numbers; but in all probability their true meaning has yet to be found.

The Quran is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity of style, in the dialect of the tribe of Quraish (the most noble and polite of all the Arabians), but with some mixture, though very rarely, of other dialects. It is obvious, of course, that as the standard of the Arabic tongue, it scarcely comes within the pale of grammatical

criticism. Admittedly the diction is rude and rugged—indeed as it was probably the first prose work of a high order in the language, it was scarcely possible that its language should be polished to the highest degree—but for grandeur and sublimity, it probably approaches nearer to the Bible than any work extant. Further, as the Quran is widely used in schools and generally in private life, it may be said with truth to be the most widely read book in existence, and as the more orthodox believe, and are taught by the book itself, inimitable by any human pen.

It is asserted by the Muslims that each Prophet who has appeared in the world has performed miracles in that department of skill or science which flourished in his particular age; thus, Moses was a magician, Jesus healed the sick, while Muhammad produced a work which, for its eloquence and beauty of diction, was unrivalled by any of the compositions of its time. This circumstance is deemed to stamp the Quran as having a divine origin, and indeed to this miracle, for such it is considered in Islam, Muhammad himself appealed for the confirmation of his mission, publicly challenging the most learned and gifted men of the day to produce a single chapter to compare with the book which he alleged God had whispered into his ear. The challenge was accepted, and a poem, written by Labid Ibn Rabia, one of the greatest wits in Arabia, was fixed up on the gate of the temple of Mecca; as this honour was allowed to none but the most esteemed performances, other poets durst not offer anything of their own in competition with it. But the second chapter of the Quran being

placed by its side soon after, Labid himself (then an idolater) on reading the first verses was struck with admiration, and immediately professed the religion taught thereby, declaring that such words could only proceed from an inspired person.

That Muhammad's boast as to the literary excellence of the Quran was not unfounded, is further evidenced by a circumstance, which occurred about a century after the establishment of Islam. The story runs that in those days a body of religious "Nihilists," seeing the enormous power which the Quran exercised over the hearts of the faithful, commissioned a certain Ibn al Muqaffa, a man of profound learning, unsurpassable eloquence and vivid imagination, to produce a book to rival the Sacred Book of Islam. Ibn al Muqaffa agreed, but stipulated that he should be allowed a period of twelve months wherein to accomplish his task, during which time all his bodily wants should be supplied, so that he might be enabled to concentrate his mind on the task which he had undertaken. At the expiration of half the allotted interval his friends, on coming to make inquiries as to his progress, found him sitting, pen in hand, deeply absorbed in study, while before him was a blank sheet of paper, and around his desk a wild confusion of closely-written manuscripts torn to pieces, and scattered indiscriminately over the apartment. In good truth he had tried to write a single verse equalling the Quran in excellence, and failed; and he confessed with confusion and shame that a solitary line had baffled all his efforts for six months; so he retired from the task hopeless and crestfallen.

But in addition to the charm of the language in

which Muhammad clothed his mission, he possessed another source of power. To quote the words of a pious Muslim: "The poets before him had sung of valour and generosity, of love and strife, and revenge . . . of early graves, upon which weeps the morning cloud, and of the fleeting nature of life, which comes and goes as the waves of the desert sands, as the tents of a caravan, as a flower that shoots up and dies away; or they shoot their bitter arrows of satire right and left into the enemies' own soul. Muhammad sang of none of these. No love-minstrelsy his—not the joys of the world, nor sword, nor camel, nor jealousy, nor human vengeance; not the glories of tribe or ancestor. He preached Islam."

It is worthy of note that Muhammad in the Quran disclaims all power of working miracles; trusting, as has been before said, to that sacred book itself as evidence of his mission from on high. After his death, however, his followers found the temptation of attributing supernatural endowments to the founder of their religion too strong to be resisted. Of the many traditions which clothe the Prophet of Arabia with little less than divine power, the most striking is the account which has been handed down of his "Night Journey" when, bestriding a mystic steed, he was permitted to enter the precincts of Heaven. Pious Muslims believe that the "Messenger of God" was sitting in his house at Mecca, when of a sudden the roof was rent asunder, and the angel Gabriel descended. Opening the Prophet's breast the heavenly visitant proceeded to wash the heart with water from the holy spring which flows in the sacred city. This done, the messenger of God's behests

brought a golden vessel, full of Faith and Knowledge, which he poured into the Prophet's bosom, and then placing him on an animal called "Buraq," a creature between a mule, or an ass, and a bird, carried his astonished companion towards the skies. On arriving at the first heaven he was introduced to Adam, who is described as being "of a very dark brick-dust complexion, for he was made out of reddish earth, whence his name Adam." On the right hand and on the left of the forefather of mankind were black appearances, the spirits of his children, in the shape of men. Those on his right were destined for Paradise, those on his left for the regions of despair; as a consequence, when Adam looked to his right he laughed, but wept when his glance fell on the luckless beings on his left. Mounting upwards, the Prophet proceeded in turn through the remaining six heavens, meeting on his way successively Moses, "a man of tall stature, and the colour of wheat, and of middling body," and Jesus, "a middle-sized man, with a red and white complexion, and hair not curly but flowing loosely." All these greeted Muhammad as a friend and a brother. He was then shown the Houris of Paradise, destined for the solace and delight of the Faithful; and witnessed also the terrible punishments prepared for the unbelievers and hypocrites. Time for prayers being announced, Muhammad acted as Imam, or leader of all the prophets who had gone before him into heaven.

The general design of the Quran seems to be to unite in the knowledge and worship of the infinite, eternal, invisible God---by whose power, wisdom, and goodness all things were made, the supreme, and

One only Governor, Judge, and absolute Lord of creation—the adherents of the different religions then followed in the populous country of Arabia. These, for the most part lived promiscuously, and wandered without guides, the far greater number being idolaters, and the rest Jews and Christians, mostly of erroneous and heterodox belief. Accordingly, they were all to be brought to the obedience of Muhammad, as the Prophet and Ambassador of God, who after the repeated admonitions, promises, and threats of former ages, was at last to establish and propagate God's religion on earth by force of arms, and to be acknowledged chief pontiff in spiritual matters, as well as supreme prince in temporal affairs.

In the early ages the religion of the Arabs, which the Muslims call the state of ignorance, in opposition to the knowledge of God's true worship revealed to them by their Prophet, was chiefly gross idolatry; the Sabian worship having almost overrun the whole nation, though there were also great numbers of Christians, Jews, and Magians among them.

The Sabians, though they believed in one God, and produced many strong arguments for His unity, yet also paid an adoration to the stars, or the angels and intelligences which they supposed to reside in them and govern the world under the Supreme Deity. They endeavoured to perfect themselves in the intellectual virtues, and believed the souls of wicked men will be punished for nine thousand ages, but will afterwards be received to mercy. They were obliged to pray three times a day; the first, half an hour or less before sunrise, ordering it so that just as the sun rises they might finish eight adorations, each contain-

ing three prostrations; the second prayer ended at noon, when the sun begins to decline, in saying which they performed five such adorations as the former: and the same they used to do the third time, their task ending just as the sun sets. They fasted three times a year, the first time thirty days, the next nine days, and the last seven. They offered many sacrifices, but ate no part of them, burning them all. They abstained from beans, garlic, and some other pulse and vegetables. As to the Sabian "Qibla," or part to which they turn their faces in praying, authors greatly differ; one will have it to be the north, another the south, a third Mecca, and a fourth the star to which they paid their devotions; perhaps, too, there might have been some variety in their practice in this matter. They were wont to go on pilgrimage to a place near the city of Harran in Mesopotamia, where great numbers of them dwelt, and they had also a great respect for the temple of Mecca, and the pyramids of Egypt; fancying these last to be the sepulchres of Seth, and of Enoch and Sabi his two sons, whom they regarded as the first propagators of their religion; at these structures they sacrificed a cock and a black calf, and offered up incense. Besides the Book of Psalms, the only true scripture they read, they had other books which they esteemed equally sacred, particularly one in the Chaldee tongue which they called the Book of Seth, a work full of moral discourses. This sect is supposed to have taken the name of Sabians from the above-mentioned Sabi, though it seems rather to be derived from the word Saba, signifying the host of heaven, which they worshipped. Travellers commonly called them

Christians of St John the Baptist, whose disciples they also pretended to be, using a kind of baptism similar in some degree to that customary in Christian worship. This is one of the religions the practice of which Muhammad tolerated (on receipt of tribute), and the professors of it are often included in that expression of the Quran, "those to whom the scriptures have been given," or literally, *the people of the book*.

The idolatry of the Arabs then, as Sabians, chiefly consisted in worshipping the fixed stars and planets, and the angels and their images, which they honoured as inferior deities, and whose intercession they begged, as their mediators with God. For the Arabs acknowledged one supreme God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, whom they called "the Most High God"; and their other deities, who were subordinate to him, they termed simply "the goddesses."

It was from this gross idolatry, or the worship of inferior deities, or companions of God, as the Arabs continue to call them, that Muhammad reclaimed his countrymen, establishing the sole worship of the true God among them; so that the Muslims are far from being idolaters, as some writers have pretended.

The worship of the stars the Arabs might easily have been led to adopt from their observing the changes of weather to happen at the rising and setting of certain of them, a circumstance which after a long course of experience induced them to ascribe a divine power to those stars, and to think themselves indebted to them for their rains, a very great benefit and refreshment to their parched country: of this superstition the Quran particularly takes notice.

The ancient Arabians and Indians, between which two nations there was a great conformity of religions, had seven celebrated temples, dedicated to the seven planets.

Though these deities were generally revered by the whole nation, yet each tribe chose some one as the more peculiar object of adoration.

Of the angels or intelligences which they worshipped, the Quran makes mention only of three, known under the female names of Allat, al Uzza, and Mana. These were by them called goddesses, and the daughters of God; an appellation they gave not only to the angels, but also to their images, which were either believed to be inspired with life by God, or else to become the tabernacles of the angels, and to be animated by them; and divine worship was accorded them, because it was imagined they interceded with God for such as were their devotees.

Allat was the idol of a tribe which dwelt at Tayif, and had a temple consecrated to her in a place called Nakhla. This idol was overthrown by Muhammad's order, in A.D. 630. The inhabitants of Tayif, especially the women, bitterly lamented the loss of this their deity, of which they were so fond that they begged of the Prophet as a condition of peace, that it might not be destroyed for three years, and not obtaining that, asked only a month's respite; but he absolutely denied them even this concession. There are several derivations of this word, which most probably takes its origin from the root Alla, of which it is a feminine form, meaning "goddess."

Al Uzza, as some affirm, was the idol of the Quraish and lesser tribes; others are of opinion that

it was a tree called the Egyptian thorn, or acacia, worshipped by the tribe of Ghatfan, who built a chapel over it, called Boss, so contrived as to give a sound when any person entered. Khalid Ibn Walid being sent by Muhammad in A.D. 629 to destroy this idol, demolished the chapel, and cutting down the tree or image, burnt it: he also slew the priestess, who ran out with her hair dishevelled, and her hands on her head as a suppliant. Yet the author who relates this says, in another place, the chapel was pulled down, and its architect himself killed, because he consecrated it with design to draw the pilgrims thither from Mecca, and lessen the reputation of the Kaba. The name of this deity may be interpreted as signifying "*the most mighty*."

Mana, the object of worship of the tribes between Mecca and Madina, was a large stone, demolished by one Saad, in A.D. 629, a period so fatal to the idols of Arabia. The name, derived from a word signifying to flow, refers to the outpouring of the blood of the victims sacrificed to the deity; whence, also, the valley of Mina, near Mecca, where the pilgrims at this day slay their sacrifices, took its name.

There are also some antediluvian idols against which Noah preached; these were afterwards taken by the Arabs for gods, having been men of great merit and piety in their day, whose statues they revered at first with a civil honour only, which in process of time became heightened to a divine worship.

Of these Wadd, supposed to be typical of heaven, was worshipped under the form of a man.

Sawa was adored under the shape of a woman.

This idol, lying under water for sometime after the Deluge, was at length, it is said, discovered by the devil, and thenceforth worshipped by certain tribes, who instituted pilgrimages to it.

Yaghus was an idol in the shape of a lion. Its name seems to be derived from a term which signifies *to help*.

Yauk was worshipped under the figure of a horse. It is said he was a man of great piety, and his death much regretted; whereupon the devil appeared to his friends in human form, and persuaded them, by way of comfort, to place his effigies in their temples, that they might have it in view when at their devotions. This was done, and seven others of extraordinary merit had the same honours shown them, till at length their posterity made idols of them in earnest. The name Yauk probably comes from a word meaning to *prevent or avert*.

Nasr was a deity adored under the image of an eagle, which the name signifies.

Besides the idols mentioned, the Arabs also worshipped great numbers of lesser deities: for every housekeeper had his household god or gods, which he last took leave of and first saluted at his going abroad and returning home. There were no less than 360 idols, equalling in number the days of their year, in and about the Kaba of Mecca; the chief of which was Hobal, the statue of a man, made of agate, which having by some accident lost a hand, the Quraish repaired it with one of gold: he held in his grasp seven arrows without heads or feathers, such as the Arabs used in divination. This idol is supposed to have been identical with the image of Abraham

found and destroyed by the Prophet, on his entering the Kaba, in A.D. 629, when he took Mecca; the image was surrounded by a great number of angels and prophets, as inferior deities; among whom, as some say, was Ishmael, with divining arrows in his hand.

Asaf and Nayala, the former the image of a man, the latter of a woman, were also two idols brought from Syria, and placed the one on Mount Safa, and the other on Mount Marwa. It is related that Asaf was the son of Amru, and Nayala the daughter of Sahal, both of the tribe of Jorhom, who committing improprieties in the Kaba, were by God turned into stone, and afterwards worshipped by the Quraish, and so much revered by them, that though this superstition was condemned by Muhammad, yet he was forced to allow them to visit those mountains as monuments of divine justice.

One idol more of this nation merits notice, and that was a lump of dough worshipped by the tribe of Hanifa who treated the sacred mass with a respect which finds imitators in the present day, presuming not to eat it till they were compelled so to do by famine.

Several of their idols, as Mana in particular, were no more than large rude stones, the worship of which the posterity of Ishmael first introduced: for as they multiplied, and the territory of Mecca grew too strait for them, great numbers were obliged to seek new abodes; and on such migrations it was usual for them to take with them some of the stones of that holy land, and set them up in the places where they located themselves. But this at last ended in rank idolatry, the Ishmaelites forgetting the religion left

them by their father so far as to pay divine worship to any fine stone which they might happen to meet.

Some of the pagan Arabs gave credence to neither a creation past, nor a resurrection to come, attributing the origin of things to nature, and their dissolution to age. Others believed both, amongst whom were those who, when they died, had their camel tied by their sepulchre, and so left, without meat or drink, to perish, so as to accompany them to the other world, lest they should be obliged, at the resurrection, to go on foot, which was reckoned very scandalous. Some held to a metempsychosis, fancying that of the blood near the dead person's brain was formed a bird named Hama, which once in a hundred years visited the sepulchre; though others say this bird is animated by the soul of him who is unjustly slain, and continually cries, "give me to drink"—meaning of the murderer's blood—till his death be revenged, and then it flies away.

That Muhammad was really the author of the Quran is scarcely perhaps open to dispute; though it is doubtful whether, and to what extent, he had assistance from others.

However this may be, the Muslims absolutely deny that the book was composed by their Prophet himself, or by any other for him; it being their general and orthodox belief that it is of divine origin, nay, that it is eternal and uncreated, remaining, as some express it, in the very essence of God; that the first transcript has been from everlasting by God's throne, written on a table of vast size, in which are also recorded the divine decrees past and future: that a copy from this table, in one volume on paper, was,

by the ministry of the angel Gabriel, sent down to the lowest heaven, in the ninth month of the year, whence it was revealed to Muhammad by parcels, some at Mecca, and some at Madina, at different times, during the space of twenty-three years, as the exigency of affairs required. The angel gave him, however, the consolation to show him the whole (which they tell us was bound in silk, and adorned with gold and precious stones of Paradise) once a year; though in the later period of his life he had the favour to see it twice.

The number of visits which the angelic messenger paid to earth for the purpose of revealing to the Prophet the wishes of his Creator is said to have been no less than 24,000; but in what shape Gabriel appeared is a matter with regard to which there is considerable difference of opinion amongst Muslims, though they all agree in thinking that his angelic form was laid aside when he came down to this mundane sphere. It is supposed that few chapters were delivered entire, the most part having been revealed piecemeal, and written down from time to time by the Prophet's amanuensis, by name Zaid, a person of the most extraordinary erudition: it is said that he learned Hebrew in fifteen days, Persian in eighteen days, while in addition to these languages he knew Æthiopic, Greek, and Coptic. In this way the whole was gradually completed, according to the directions of the angel. The first parcel that was revealed, is generally agreed to have been the first five verses of the ninety-sixth chapter.

After the passages had been taken down in writing by his scribe, from the Prophet's mouth, they were

published to his followers, several of whom took copies for their private use, but the far greater number learned them by heart. The originals, when returned, were put promiscuously into a chest, no order of time being observed, for which reason it is uncertain when many passages were revealed.

When Muhammad died, he left his revelations in the same disorder in which he had put them away; their arrangement was the work of his successor, Abu Bakr (A.D. 632-634), who, considering that a great number of passages were committed to the memory of the Prophet's followers, many of whom had been slain in the wars, ordered the whole to be collected, not only from the palm-leaves and skins on which they had been written, and which were kept between two boards or covers, but also from the mouths of such as had acquired them by heart. This pious duty devolved upon Zaid, who had acted as amanuensis to the Prophet of Arabia. And this transcript when completed, he committed to the custody of Hafsa, the daughter of Omar, one of the Prophet's widows.

Owing to this circumstance it is generally imagined that Abu Bakr was really the compiler of the Quran; though for aught that appears to the contrary, Muhammad left the chapters complete as we now have them, excepting such passages as his successor might have added or corrected from those who knew them by heart; what Abu Bakr did else being perhaps no more than to range the chapters in their present order, a labour which seems to have been performed without any regard to chronological sequence, the longest having as a rule been placed first.

In A.D. 650, Osman being then Khalif, and

observing the great disagreement in the copies of the Quran as regards the several provinces of the empire, ordered a great number of copies to be transcribed from the compilation of Abu Bakr, in Hafsa's care, under the inspection of some specially selected scholars, whom he directed that wherever they disagreed about any word, they should write it in the dialect of the Quraish, in which it was at first delivered. These copies, which were made as before under the general direction of Zaid, were dispersed in the several provinces of the empire, and the old ones suppressed (A.D. 652). Though many things in Hafsa's copy were corrected by the above-mentioned supervisors, yet some few various readings still occur. The manuscript itself of Hafsa's copy was destroyed soon after this date.

It may interest the curious to learn that of the seven principal editions of the Quran which were subsequently prepared two were published and used at Madina, a third at Mecca, a fourth at Kufa, a fifth at Bussora, a sixth in Syria, while the seventh became the common or vulgar edition throughout the land. Of these, the first makes the whole number of the verses 6000; the second and fifth, 6214; the third, 6219; the fourth, 6236; the sixth, 6226; and the last, 6225. But they are all said to contain the same number of words, namely, 77,639; and the same number of letters, viz., 323,015.

The first *printed* edition of the entire Quran was published in Arabic at Venice, in the year 1530, under the direction of Pagninus of Brescia. The Pope of Rome, however, was alarmed, and by his orders all the copies were committed to the flames.

The next complete Arabic edition appeared at Hamburgh in A.D. 1649, in quarto, under the auspices of Hinkelmann. A later and more celebrated edition was printed at St Petersburg, in A.D. 1787, by command of the Empress Catherine II., for the benefit of such of her Tartar subjects as were Muslims; and in order not to offend their prejudices against printed books, the type was cast in such a manner as to present the appearance of a manuscript. A Latin translation made in A.D. 1143 but not published till the year 1543, was followed, after the interval of a century and a half (A.D. 1698), by the elaborate volumes in the same language which were given to the world by Father Lewis Maracci, the confessor of Pope Innocent XI. The first English edition of the Quran was the translation of Alexander Ross, which appeared at intervals between the years A.D. 1649-1688; but the edition best known in England is that by G. Sale, though the labour of his predecessor, Pocock, in no inconsiderable degree paved the way for his more fortunate rival.

It has been said that amongst the Muslims the Quran is considered to have had a divine origin, having been uncreated and eternal; but such a notion is not universal, and many and heated have been the controversies on this very point. One anecdote will suffice to indicate the nature of the dispute which rent Islam in sunder. The Imam ash Shafii, who flourished from about A.D. 767 to A.D. 820, held a public disputation in Baghdad on this very point; quoting the verse from the Quran, "God said be, and it was." He proceeded to inquire, "Did not therefore God create all things by the word be?"

His opponent assented. "If then," was the rejoinder, "the Quran were created, must not the word 'be' have been created with it?" So plain a proposition was unanswerable. "Then," said Shafii, "all things according to you were created by a created being, which is a gross inconsistency and manifest impiety." The disputant was reduced to silence, and proclaimed a pestilent heretic, for whom death was the only reward.

The Muslims would have it believed that the Arabic of the Quran is the language of heaven, and an effort was made in the first days of Islam to preserve a uniform pronunciation and reading of the sacred volume : but men of strange lands could not acquire the pure intonation of the people of Mecca, and no less than seven different ways of reading the book became current, owing in a great measure to the absence of vowel points and other diacritical marks. So a voice from heaven revealed to mankind that they were at liberty to read the sacred book in seven dialects, and a recognised School of Readers, seven in number, sprang into existence, whose readings are universally accepted throughout the Muslim world.

The Doctrines and Precepts of the Quran relating to Faith and Religious Duties.—To his religion Muhammad gave the name of Islam, which word signifies resignation, or submission to the service and commands of God.

The Muhammadans, again, divide Islam into two distinct parts : (1) faith, or theory ; and (2) religion, or practice ; and teach that it is built on five fundamental points, one belonging to faith, and the other four to practice.

The first is the confession of faith ; that “there is no God but the true God ; and that Muhammad is His apostle.” Under which they comprehend six distinct branches : viz., (1) Belief in God ; (2) In His angels ; (3) In His scriptures ; (4) In His prophets ; (5) In the resurrection and day of judgment ; and, (6) In God’s absolute decree and predetermination both of good and evil.

The four points relating to practice are : (1) Prayer, under which are comprehended those washings or purifications which are necessary preparations required before prayer ; (2) Alms ; (3) Fasting ; and, (4) The Pilgrimage to Mecca.

But besides these, there are a great number of passages which are occasional, and relate to particular emergencies. For whenever anything happened which perplexed Muhammad, he had constant recourse to a new revelation, as an infallible expedient in all cases of difficulty.

Belief in God.—The fundamental position on which Muhammad erected the superstructure of his religion was, that from the beginning to the end of the world there has been, and for ever will be, but one true orthodox belief ; consisting, (a) as to matter of faith, in acknowledging the only true God, and believing in and obeying such messengers or prophets as He should from time to time send, with proper credentials, to reveal His will to mankind ; and, (b) as to matter of practice, in the observance of the immutable and eternal laws of right and wrong, together with such other precepts and ceremonies as God should think fit to order for the time being, according to different dispensations in different ages of the world.

Under pretext that this eternal religion was in his time corrupted, and professed in its purity by no one sect of men, Muhammad claimed to be a prophet sent by God to reform those abuses which had crept into it, and to reduce it to its primitive simplicity; with the addition, however, of peculiar laws and ceremonies, some of which had been used in former times, and others were now first instituted. And he comprehended the whole substance of his doctrine under these two propositions, or articles of faith: viz., that there is but one God, and that he himself was the apostle of God; in consequence of which latter article, all such ordinances and institutions as he thought fit to establish must be received as obligatory and of divine authority.

Regarding the attributes of God, the Muhamadans believe that He is (1) Living and Eternal; (2) all-knowing; (3) all-powerful; (4) able to do what He wills; (5) all-hearing; (6) all-seeing; and, (7) endued with speech. But there is a considerable diversity of opinion as to the interpretation to be put upon some of these powers, and Islam is rent into factions holding views totally at variance with each other on many points of dogma relative to the Almighty Ruler of the world.

The names of God are supposed to be 3000 in number, of which one thousand are known to the angels, and a thousand to the Prophets, while the remaining thousand are thus distributed: in the Pentateuch three hundred, in the Psalms and in the Gospels respectively a similar number, while in the Quran there are to be found ninety and nine, one being still hidden, and concealed from mankind.

Angels.—The Muhammadans believe in the existence of angelic beings free from all sin, who neither eat nor drink, and who have no distinction of sex. As a rule invisible, save to animals, who, according to common belief can see them, they, occasionally at special times appear in human form. Of such beings there is a hierarchy. In the highest rank are those nearest to God. These are the firm supporters of His throne, who receive the homage of the others. The first of these is in the likeness of a man, the second in that of a bull, the third in that of an eagle, and the fourth in that of a lion. On the day of judgment, however, four other angels will be added to these, because in the Quran it is written that on that occasion eight angels will sustain the throne of God. After these comes the angel named “Ruh” or “Spirit,” so called because every breath he draws creates a soul.

The four angels who are considered to enjoy God’s favour in a pre-eminent degree are (1) Gabriel, the guardian and communicator of His revelation, who in the space of one hour can descend from heaven to earth, and who, with one wing, of which he has 600, can lift up a mountain; (2) Michael, an archangel, whose special province is to see that all created beings have what is needful for them, both as regards body and soul; (3) Izrail, the angel of death, whose feet stand on the foundation of the earth, while his head reaches to the highest heavens, to whom is assigned the duty of receiving men’s souls when they die; and lastly (4) Israfil, the angel of the resurrection.

In addition to these are the Seraphim occupied

exclusively in chanting the praises of God ; the two *secretaries*, who record the actions of men ; the *observers* who spy out the least gestures, and hear every word of mankind ; the *travellers*, who traverse the whole earth in order to know when people utter the name of God, and pray to Him ; the angels of the seven planets ; the two guardian angels appointed to keep watch over the world ; these latter are changed every day ; the two angels of the grave ; the nineteen who have charge of hell ; and lastly, the countless multitudes of heavenly beings who, according to the Muslim belief, are charged with the care of the earth, each particle of which has a separate angel, and who fill the illimitable expanse of space.

The devil, whom Muhammad named Iblis, was once one of those angels nearest to God's presence, and fell, according to the doctrine of the Quran, for refusing to pay homage to Adam at the command of the Lord of Heaven.

According to the notions of the Muslims, there is a special arrangement made by Providence to mitigate the evils of Satanic interference. Iblis, though able to assume all other forms, is not permitted to appear in the semblance of the Deity, or any of His angels, or prophets. There would otherwise be much danger to human salvation, as under the appearance of one of the prophets, or of some superior being, the Tempter might make use of his power to seduce men to sin. To prevent this, whenever he attempts to assume such forms, fire comes down from heaven and repulses him.

It has been said that the angels are immaculate, but, if the story of Harut and Marut is to be

accepted --- a matter upon which there is considerable difference of opinion amongst Muslims themselves --- this dictum must be qualified to some extent. The tale runs that in the time of Enoch the Prophet, when the angels beheld the wickedness of mankind, they were sorely distressed, and said to the Creator of Heaven and Earth, "O Lord! Adam and his descendants, whom Thou hast appointed as Thy vicegerents on earth, act disobediently." To which the Lord replied, "If I were to send you on earth, and to give you hurtful and angry dispositions, you, too, would sin." The angels thought otherwise, so God bade them select two of their number, who should undergo this ordeal. A choice having been made, the Almighty implanted in their hearts the passions of lust and anger, saying, "Go to and fro on the earth from day to day, put an end to the quarrels of men, ascribe no equal to Me, do not commit adultery, drink no wine, and every night repeat the exalted name of God, then return to heaven." For a while all went well, till one day a beautiful woman, named Zohra, brought them a cup of wine, whereupon one of the angels said, "God has forbidden it." But his brother was bewitched with the seductive persuasiveness of the fair daughter of Eve, and pleaded "God is merciful and forgiving." So they drank the wine, killed the husband of Zohra, to whom in their jovial moments they had revealed the "exalted name" of God, and fell into grievous sin. But they found to their cost, on awakening from their debauch, that the "name" which they had disclosed had fled from their memories, and so they could not return to heaven. Thereupon they begged

Enoch to intercede for them. The Prophet consented, with the result that they were allowed to choose between a present and a future punishment. They elected the former alternative, and are to this day hanging suspended with their heads downwards in a well, a fresh spring ever flowing just beyond reach of their parched lips. The woman, the author of all this evil and mischief, was changed into a star. The story is doubtless legendary, but it serves to show that according to the Muhammadan view the angels of heaven are not immaculate, or free from the vices which degrade their less favoured brethren on earth.

Jinn, or Genii.—Besides angels and devils, the Muhammadans are taught by the Quran to believe in an intermediate order of creatures, which they call Jinn, or Genii, created of fire, but of a grosser fabric than angels; since they eat and drink, propagate their species, and are subject to death, though they are supposed generally to live several centuries. Some of these are good, and others bad, but all capable of future salvation or damnation, alike as men; whence Muhammad claimed to be sent for the conversion of genii as well as men. The Orientals pretend that these spirits inhabited the world for many ages before Adam was created, under the government of several successive princes, who all bore the common name of Solomon; but falling at length into an almost general corruption, Iblis was sent to drive them into a remote part of the earth, there to be confined: that some of that generation still remaining, they were forced by one of the ancient kings of Persia, who waged war against them, to retreat into

the famous mountain of Qaf. Of which successions and wars they have many fabulous and romantic stories. They also make different ranks and degrees among these beings (if they be not rather supposed to be of a different species), some being called absolutely Jinn, some Peri or fairies, some Div or giants, others Taqwins or fates.

Scriptures.—As to the Scriptures, the Muhamadans are taught by the Quran that God, in divers ages of the world, gave revelations of His will in writing to several prophets. The number of these sacred books was, according to them, 104. Of which ten were given to Adam, fifty to Seth, thirty to Idris or Enoch, ten to Abraham; and the other four, [being the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospel, and the Quran, were successively delivered to Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad; which last being the seal of the prophets, those revelations are now closed, and no more are to be expected. All these divine books, except the four last, they agree to be now entirely lost, and their contents unknown; though the Sabians have several works which they attribute to some of the prophets of olden days. And of those four the Muslims hold that the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospel, have undergone so many alterations and corruptions, that though there may possibly be some part of the true word of God therein, yet no credit is to be given to the present copies in the hands of the Jews and Christians. The Jews in particular are frequently stigmatised in the Quran for falsifying and corrupting their copies of the law. As Muhammad acknowledged the divine authority of the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospel, he often appeals

as proofs of his mission, to the fact that the Quran was in harmony with those writings, and to the prophecies therein which he alleged concerned himself; and he frequently charges the Jews and Christians with stifling the passages which bear witness to him. His followers also fail not to produce several texts even from our present copies of the Old and New Testament, to support their master's cause.

Prophets.—The number of Prophets sent by God to make known His will is usually stated at about 200,000, of whom twenty-five are mentioned in the Quran; of these latter the principal, ranked in order of merit, are Noah (the prophet of God), Abraham (the friend of God), Moses (the speaker of God), Jesus (the spirit of God), and chief of all, Muhammad (the messenger of God). These, one and all, will be permitted to intercede in the Day of Judgment for their followers. There is some difference of opinion as to whether the prophets are superior to the angels. Some Muhammadans are inclined to one view, some to another. Again the question of sinlessness on the part of these favoured mortals is one to which considerable attention has been paid by Muslim theologians. The orthodox belief is that they are free from sin owing, as some think, to the Grace of God, which perpetually keeps them in the right path, or, as others suppose, because the power of sinning is not created in them. As, however, history records that prophets have at times stepped aside from the paths of rectitude and propriety, Muhammadans to meet the difficulty, divide sin into two distinct categories, "great sins" and "little sins." It is the universal belief that a prophet never, either wittingly

or unwittingly, commits offences in the former category ; but there is a latitude allowed with regard to the latter class of wrongdoings, though some excuse the frailties of the prophets as faults and slight imperfections, not amounting to sin ; and it is not a little curious that the one sinless prophet of Islam, he who alone of all is mentioned in the pages of the Quran as free from guilt, is the founder of the Christian Faith.

It is the universal belief that prophets work miracles. It is true that in the Quran Muhammad disclaims such a power ; but, none the less, his followers ascribe to him mighty and wonderful deeds, far transcending the feeble attempts of all those who preceded him : thus the sun and the moon, so the Muslims would have it believed, obeyed his behests, the elements, too, were subservient unto him, while not only were the keys of the treasuries of earth in his possession, but heaven itself opened its portals to receive the chosen of God.

Resurrection.—The next article of faith required by the Quran is the belief in a general resurrection and a future judgment. But before considering the Muhammadan tenets on those points, it will be well to mention their views concerning the intermediate state, both of the body and of the soul, after death.

When a corpse is laid in the grave, he is received by an angel, who gives him notice of the coming of the “examiners,” in the shape of two livid black angels, with blue eyes and of terrible appearance, named Munkar and Nakir. These order the dead person to sit upright, and examine him concerning

his faith, as to the unity of God, and the mission of Muhammad : it is for this reason that, when a person is buried, a cavity is made in such a way as to leave room for the body to be raised at the period of examination. If the answer be satisfactory, the body is suffered to rest in peace, and it is refreshed by the air of Paradise ; but if not, the angels beat him on the temples with iron maces, till he roars out for anguish so loud, that he is heard from east to west, by all except men and genii. Then they press the earth on the corpse, which is gnawed and stung till the resurrection by ninety-nine dragons, each having seven heads ; or, as others say, sins will become, as it were, venomous beasts, the grievous ones stinging like dragons, the smaller like scorpions, and the others like serpents ; circumstances which are not infrequently understood in a figurative sense.

As to the soul, when it is separated from the body by the angel of death, who performs his office with ease and gentleness towards the good, and with violence towards the wicked, it enters into that state which they call *Al Barzakh* or *the interval* between death and the resurrection. The souls of the faithful are divided into three classes : first, prophets, whose spirits are admitted into Paradise immediately ; second, martyrs, whose souls according to a tradition of Muhammad, rest in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits and drink of the rivers of Paradise ; and third, other believers, concerning whose state before the resurrection there are various opinions. (1) Some say they stay near the sepulchres, with liberty, however, of going wherever they please ; which they confirm from the

Prophet's custom of making a salutation when reaching a place of burial, and from a statement on his part that the dead answer none the less though they cannot hear such salutations as well as the living. Whence perhaps proceeds the custom of visiting the tombs of relations, so common among the Muhammadans. (2) Others imagine they are with Adam, in the lowest heaven; an opinion which they support by the authority of their Prophet, who gave out that on his return from the celestial regions in his well-known night-journey, he saw there the souls of those who were destined to Paradise on the right hand of Adam, and of those who were condemned to destruction on his left. (3) Some again fancy the souls of believers remain in the spring Zamzam, and those of infidels in a certain well in the province of Hadramaut, called Burhut; but this opinion is branded as heretical. (4) It is also maintained that they stay near the grave for seven days; but that whither they go afterwards is uncertain. (5) There are not wanting Muslims who hold that the deceased are all in the trumpet the sound of which is to raise the dead. (6) Lastly, it is thought that the souls of the good dwell in the form of white birds, under the throne of God. As to the condition of the spirits of the wicked, besides the opinions that have been already mentioned, the more orthodox hold that they are taken by the angels to heaven, whence being repulsed as unclean and filthy, they are brought to the earth, and being also refused a place there, are thrown into a dungeon, which they call Sijjin, under a green rock, or according to a tradition of Muhammad, under the devil's jaw, to be tormented

till they are called up and joined again to their bodies.

Touching the matter of children there is a similar difference of opinion: the general notion is that if their parents be believers, the young people will be questioned, but that angels will teach them to say, "Allah is my Lord, Islam my religion, and Muhammad my Prophet." But with reference to the offspring of unbelievers, some think that they will be in Araf—a place between heaven and hell, to be hereafter described—while others suppose that they will be compelled to act in Paradise as servants and attendants for the followers of God.

Though not a few among the Muhammadans hold to the view that the resurrection will be merely spiritual, and consist in no more than the return of the soul to the place whence it first came; and others, who allow man to be composed of body only, that it will be merely corporeal, the received opinion is that both body and soul will be raised, and Muslim doctors argue strenuously for the possibility of the resurrection of the body, and dispute with great subtlety concerning the manner thereof. In any case it is supposed that one part of the human frame will be preserved whatever becomes of the rest, to serve for a basis of the future edifice, or rather a leaven for the mass which is to be joined to it. For the Prophet taught that a man's body was entirely consumed by the earth, except only the bone called al Ajb: and that, as it was the first formed in the creation of a human being, it will also remain uncorrupted till the last day, as a seed whence the whole is to be renewed: and this it is said will be

effected by a forty days' rain sent by God, which will cover the earth to the height of twelve cubits, and cause the bodies to sprout forth like plants.

The time of the resurrection is admitted to be a perfect secret to all but God alone. But the approach of that day will be known from certain signs which are to precede it.

The lesser signs are : (1) The decay of faith among men. (2) The advancing of the meanest persons to eminent dignity. (3) A maid-servant shall become the mother of her mistress (or master); by which is meant either that towards the end of the world men shall be much given to sensuality, or that the Muhammadans shall then take many captives. (4) Tumults and seditions. (5) War with the Turks. (6) Great distress in the world, so that a man when he passes by another's grave shall say "Would to God I were in his place." (7) The provinces of Iraq and Syria shall refuse to pay their tribute. And, (8) The buildings of Madina shall reach to Ahab, or Yahab.

The greater signs are :

(1) The sun's rising in the west : which some have imagined was originally the case.

(2) The appearance of a beast, apparently similar to that in the Book of Revelations.

(3) War with the Greeks, and the taking of Constantinople by seventy thousand of the posterity of Isaac. On the division of the spoil, news will come of the appearance of Antichrist, whereupon the captors shall leave all, and return back.

(4) The coming of Antichrist, *i.e.*, the false or lying Christ. He is to be one-eyed, and marked on the

forehead with the letters C.F.R., signifying as some think the word "Kafir," or infidel.

He will bring with him the resemblance of Paradise and Hell, but in fact that which is supposed to be the abode of the Lost is Heaven, while that which appears as the realm of Bliss is the region of Eternal Misery. According to tradition this Antichrist is to appear first between Iraq and Syria, or according to others in the province of Khorassan; riding on an ass, he will be followed by seventy thousand Jews of Ispahan, and continue on earth forty days, of which one will be equal in length to a year, another to a month, another to a week, and the rest will be common days; he will, moreover, lay waste all places, but will not enter Mecca or Madina, which are to be guarded by angels; in the end he will be slain by Jesus, who is to encounter him at the gate of Ludd. It is said that Muhammad foretold several Antichrists, to the number of about thirty, but one of greater note than the rest.

(5) The descent of Jesus on earth. It is supposed that He is to alight near the white tower to the east of Damascus, when the people are returning from the capture of Constantinople; that He is to embrace the Muslim religion, marry a wife, get children, kill Antichrist, and at length die after remaining on earth forty or, according to others, twenty-four years. During this period there will be great security and plenty in the world, all hatred and malice being laid aside; while lions and camels, bears and sheep, will live in peace, and a child play with serpents unhurt.

(6) War with the Jews; of whom the Muham-

madans are to make a religious slaughter, the very trees and stones discovering such of the race as hide themselves, except only the tree called Gharqad, which is the tree of the Jews.

(7) The irruption of Gog and Magog, or, as they are called in the east, Yajuj and Majuj; of whom many things are related in the Quran, and the traditions of the Prophet. These barbarians having passed the lake of Tiberias, which the vanguard of their vast army will drink dry, will come to Jerusalem, and there greatly distress Jesus and His companions; till, at His request, God will destroy them, and fill the earth with their carcasses, which, after some time, God will send birds to carry away, at the prayers of Jesus and His followers. Their bows, arrows, and quivers the Muslims will burn for seven years together; and at last God will send a rain to cleanse the earth, and to make it fertile.

(8) A smoke, which shall fill the whole earth.

(9) An eclipse of the moon. Muhammad predicted that there would be three eclipses before the last hour; one to be seen in the east, another in the west, and the third in Arabia.

(10) The return of the Arabs to the worship of Allat and al Uzza, and the rest of their ancient idols. After the decease of every one in whose heart there was faith equal to a grain of mustard-seed, none but the very worst of men will be left alive. For God, they say, will send a cold odoriferous east wind, blowing from Syria which shall sweep away the souls of all the Faithful, and even the Quran itself, so that men will remain in the grossest ignorance for a hundred years.

(11) The discovery of a vast heap of gold and silver by the receding of the Euphrates; an event which will be the destruction of many persons.

(12) The demolition of the Kaba or temple of Mecca, by the Ethiopians.

(13) The speaking of beasts and inanimate things.

(14) The breaking-out of fire in the province of Hijaz; or, according to others, in Yaman.

(15) The appearance of a man of the descendants of Kahtan, who shall drive men before him with his staff.

(16) The coming of the Mahdi or director; concerning whom Muhammad prophesied that the world should not have an end till one of his own family should govern the Arabians, whose name should be the same with his own name, and whose father's name should also be the same with his father's name, and who should fill the earth with righteousness. This person some sects believe to be now alive, and concealed in a secret place, till the time of his manifestation; for they suppose him to be none other than the last of the twelve Imams, named Muhammad Abul Qasim.

(17) A wind which shall sweep away the souls of all who have but a grain of faith in their hearts, as has been mentioned under the tenth sign.

These are the greater signs, which, according to the doctrine of the followers of the Prophet of Arabia, are to precede the resurrection, the precise hour being left uncertain. The immediate token of its appearance will be the first blast of the trumpet: which latter they believe will be sounded three times. The first they call the *blast of consterna-*

tion; the second, the *blast of examination*; and the third, after forty years, the *blast of resurrection*; on this latter occasion the trumpet will be sounded by Israfil. This angel having, by the divine order, set the trumpet to his mouth, and called together all the souls from all parts, will throw them into the same, whence, on his giving the last sound, at the command of God, they will fly forth like bees, and fill the whole space between heaven and earth, and then repair to their respective bodies, which the opening earth will suffer to arise; and the first who shall so come forth, according to a tradition of Muhammad, will be himself.

The resurrection will be general, and extend to all creatures, both angels, genii, men, and animals.

Those who are destined to be partakers of eternal happiness will arise in honour and security; and those who are doomed to misery, in disgrace and under dismal apprehensions. Another tradition teaches that mankind shall be assembled at the last day, and divided into three classes. (*a*) Those who go on foot; (*b*) those who ride; and (*c*) those who creep grovelling with their faces on the ground. The first class is to consist of those believers whose good works have been few; the second of those who are in greater honour with God, and more acceptable to Him; whence Ali affirmed that the pious when they come forth from their sepulchres, shall find ready prepared for them white-winged camels, with saddles of gold; and the third class, will be composed of the infidels, whom God shall cause to make their appearance with their faces on the earth, blind, dumb, and deaf. But the ungodly will not alone be thus arranged in sections; for, there

will be ten sorts of wicked men on whom God will on that day fix certain marks. The first will appear in the form of apes,—these are the professors of Zandicism ; the second in that of swine,—these are they who have been greedy of filthy lucre, and enriched themselves by public oppression ; the third will be brought with their heads reversed and their feet distorted,—these are the usurers ; the fourth will wander about blind,—these are unjust judges ; the fifth will be deaf, dumb, and blind, understanding nothing,—these are they who glory in their own works ; the sixth will gnaw their tongues, which will hang down upon their breasts, corrupted blood flowing from their mouths like spittle, so that everybody shall detest them,—these are the learned men and doctors, whose actions contradicted their sayings ; the seventh will have their hands and feet cut off,—these are they who have injured their neighbours ; the eighth will be fixed to the trunks of palm trees or stakes of wood,—these are the false accusers and informers ; the ninth will smell worse than a corrupted corpse,—these are they who have indulged their passions and voluptuous appetites, but refused God such part of their wealth as was due to Him ; the tenth will be clothed with garments daubed with pitch,—these are the proud, the vain-glorious, and the arrogant.

The end of the resurrection the followers of Islam declare to be, that they who are so raised may give an account of their actions, and receive their eternal reward. And they believe that not only mankind, but the genii and irrational animals also, shall be judged on this great day ; to an extent that the defenceless cattle will be permitted to take vengeance

on the horned till entire satisfaction shall be given to the injured.

As to mankind, they hold that when they are all assembled together, they will not be immediately brought to judgment, but the angels will keep them in their ranks and order while they are waiting for that purpose; and this interval of suspense some declare is to last forty years, others seventy, others 300, nay, some say no less than 50,000 years, each of them vouching their Prophet's authority. During this space people will stand looking up to heaven, but without receiving thence any information or orders, and will suffer grievous torments, both the just and the unjust, though with manifest difference. For the limbs of the former, particularly those parts which they used to wash in making the ceremonial ablution before prayer, will shine gloriously, and their sufferings will be light in comparison, lasting no longer than the time necessary to say the appointed prayers; but the latter will have their faces obscured with blackness, and disfigured with all the marks of sorrow and deformity. What will then occasion not the least of their pain, is a wonderful and incredible perspiration, which will even stop their mouths, and in which they will be immersed in various degrees according to their demerits, some to the ankles only, some to the knees, some to the middle, some so high as their mouth, and others as high as their ears. And this perspiration it is supposed, will be provoked not only by that vast concourse of all sorts of creatures mutually pressing and treading on one another's feet, but by the near and unusual approach of the sun, which will then be no farther from them than the

distance of a mile, or, as some suppose, than the length of a bodkin. So that their skulls will boil like a pot, and they will all be bathed in moisture. From this inconvenience, however, the good will be protected by the shade of God's throne; but the wicked will be so miserably tormented therewith, and also with hunger, thirst, and a stifling air, that they will cry out, "Lord, deliver us from this anguish, though Thou send us into hell-fire."

When those who have risen shall have waited the fixed time, God will at length appear to judge them; Muhammad undertaking the office of intercessor, after it shall have been declined successively by Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Jesus, who one and all will beg deliverance only for their own souls. On this solemn occasion God will come in the clouds, surrounded by angels, and, producing the books wherein the actions of every person are recorded by their guardian angels, will command the prophets to bear witness against those to whom they have been respectively sent. Then every one will be examined concerning all the words and actions uttered and done in this life; not as if God needed any information in those respects, but to oblige the person to make public confession and acknowledgment of the Almighty's justice. The particulars of which they shall give an account, as the Prophet himself enumerated them, are—of their time, how they spent it; of their wealth, by what means they acquired it, and how they employed it; of their bodies, wherein they exercised them; of their knowledge and learning, what use they made of them. It is said, however, that Muhammad affirmed that no less than seventy-thousand of his followers will be

permitted to enter Paradise without any previous examination. Another advantage which on the day of judgment the Muslims will possess over less-favoured races, is that either a Jew or a Christian will be assigned to each faithful Musulman as a substitute to be cast into the everlasting pit in case the accident of an adverse sentence on the part of the Lord of Heaven should overtake the hapless follower of the Prophet!

To the above-mentioned questions each person shall answer, and make his defence in the best manner he can, endeavouring to excuse himself by casting the blame of his evil deeds on others, so that a dispute shall arise even between the soul and the body, to which of them guilt ought to be imputed, the soul saying, "O Lord, my body I received from Thee; for Thou createdst me without a hand wherewith to lay hold, a foot wherewith to walk, an eye wherewith to see, or an understanding wherewith to apprehend, till I came and entered into this body; therefore, punish it eternally, but deliver me." The body, on the other side, will make this apology:—"O Lord, Thou createdst me like a stock of wood, having neither hand with which I could lay hold, nor foot with which I could walk, till this soul, like a ray of light, entered into me, and my tongue began to speak, my eye to see, and my foot to walk; therefore punish it eternally, but deliver me." But God will propound to them the following parable of the blind man and the lame man. A certain king, having a pleasant garden, in which were ripe fruits, set two persons to keep it, one of whom was blind and the other lame, the former not being able to see what to

pick, nor the latter to gather it; the lame man, however, beholding the fruit, persuaded the blind man to take him upon his shoulders; and by that means he easily plucked the same, and they then divided it between them. The lord of the garden, coming some time after, and inquiring as to his property, each began to excuse himself; the blind man said he had no eyes to see the trees, and the lame man that he had no feet to approach them. But the king, ordering the lame man to be set on the blind, passed sentence on, and punished them both. And in the same manner will God deal with the body and the soul.

Though the Muhammadans assign a long period ere the resuscitated come up for judgment, yet they tell us the trial itself will be over in a short space of time, and, according to an impression of their Prophet, familiar enough to the Arabs, will last no longer than while one may milk an ewe, or than the period between the two milkings of a she-camel. Some, explaining those words so frequently used in the Quran, "God will be swift in taking an account," say that He will judge all creatures in the space of half a day, and others that it will be done in less time than the twinkling of an eye.

At this examination they also believe that each person will have delivered to him the book, wherein all the actions of his life are written; the righteous will receive the same in their right hand, and read with great pleasure and satisfaction; but the ungodly will be obliged to take the fatal records against their wills in their left hand, which will afterwards be bound behind their backs, its neighbour on the right being tied up to their necks.

To show the exact justice which will be observed on this great day of trial, a balance will be brought, wherein all things shall be weighed. It will be held by Gabriel, and it is of so vast a size, that its two scales, one of which hangs over Paradise, and the other over Hell, are capacious enough to contain both heaven and earth: and those whose balances laden with their good works shall be heavy will be saved, but those whose balances are light will be condemned. Nor will any have just cause to complain that God suffers any good action to pass unrewarded, because the wicked have their reward in this life, and therefore can expect no favour in the next.

This examination being passed, and every one's works weighed, as stated, in a just balance, mutual retaliation will follow, according to which all creatures will take vengeance one of another, or receive satisfaction for the injuries which have been suffered. And since there will then be no other way of returning like for like, a proportionable part of the good works of him who offered the injury will be taken away and added to the amount of him who suffered it. Which being done, if the angels (by whose ministry this is to be performed) say, "Lord, we have given to every one his due; and there remaineth of this person's good works so much as equalleth the weight of an ant," God will of His mercy cause it to be doubled unto him, that he may be admitted into Paradise; but if, on the contrary, his good works be exhausted, and there remain but evil works, and there be any who have not yet received satisfaction from him, God will order that an equal weight of their sins whom he had injured, be added unto his own, that he may be

punished for them in their stead, and he will be sent to Hell laden with this additional burden. Such will be the method of God's dealing with mankind. As to brutes, after, as previously mentioned, they shall have likewise taken vengeance of one another, He will command them to be changed into dust. Wicked men being reserved to more grievous punishment, they will cry out, on hearing the sentence passed on the brutes, "Would to God that we were dust also!" As to the genii, many are of opinion that such of them as are true believers will undergo the same fate as the irrational animals, and have no other reward than the favour of being converted into dust; but others assign them a place near the confines of Paradise, where, to a certain extent, they will enjoy felicity, though they be not admitted into the mansion of delight. But the unbelieving genii, it is universally agreed, will be punished eternally, and be thrown into Hell with the infidels of mortal race.

The trials being over and the assembly dissolved, those who are to be admitted into Paradise will be gathered on the right hand, and those who are destined to perdition (upwards, it is said, of 999 out of every 1000) on the left; but everyone must first pass the bridge, called in Arabic as Sirat, which they say is laid over the midst of Hell, and described to be finer than a hair, and sharper than the edge of a sword: so that it seems very difficult to conceive how any one shall be able to stand upon it. This bridge is beset on each side with briars and hooked thorns; which, however, will be no impediment to the good, for the latter will pass with wonderful ease and swiftness, like lightning or the wind,

Muhammad and his Muslims leading the way; whereas the wicked, what with the slipperiness and extreme narrowness of the path, the entangling of the thorns, and the extinction of the light, which directed the saved to Paradise, will soon miss their footing, and fall down headlong into the yawning abyss beneath.

Hell.—As to the punishment of the wicked, the Muhammadans are taught that Hell is divided into seven circles, one below another, designed for the reception of as many distinct classes of lost souls. The first, Jahannam, will be the receptacle of those who acknowledged one God, that is, the wicked followers of Islam, who after having there been punished according to their demerits, will at length be released. The second, named Laza, will receive the Jews; the third, named Al Hutama, the Christians; the fourth, named as Sair, the Sabians; the fifth, named as Saqar, the Magians; the sixth, named Al Jahim, the idolaters; and the seventh, Hawiyat, the lowest and worst of all, the hypocrites, or those who outwardly professed some religion, but in their hearts were without a God.

With reference to the torments of Hell, it is supposed they will dwell amid pestilential winds and in scalding water, and in the shadow of a black smoke, not cool, and horrid to behold! Draughts of boiling water will be forced down their throats. They will be dragged by the scalp and flung into the fire. Garments of flame will be fitted on to them. They will also be beaten with iron maces. So often as they endeavour to escape because of the anguish of their torments, they will be dragged back, their

tormentors exclaiming, "Taste ye the pain of burning!" When their skins are well burned, other skins will be given them in exchange, in order that they may taste the sharper torment; for "God," says the Prophet, "is mighty and wise." It has, indeed, been well said that "Fire is the divine cruelty of the Semitic religion." It must be remarked, however, that the infidels alone will be liable to eternity of damnation, for the Muslims who having embraced the true religion, have none the less been guilty of heinous sins, will be delivered thence after they shall have expiated their crimes by their sufferings.

Paradise.—The wall or partition between Paradise and Hell, seems to have been suggested by the great gulf of separation mentioned in Scripture. They call it "Al Araf," a word which signifies to *distinguish* between things, or to *part* them; though some commentators give another reason for the imposition of this name, because, they say, those who stand on this partition will know and distinguish the blessed from the lost, by their respective marks or characteristics; while others think the word properly intends anything that is high raised or elevated, as such a wall of separation must be supposed to be. The Muhammadan writers greatly differ as to the persons who are to be found on Al Araf. Some imagine it to be a sort of limbo for the patriarchs and prophets, or for the martyrs and those who have been most eminent for sanctity, among whom will be also angels in the form of men. Others place here those whose good and evil works are so equal that they exactly counterpoise each other, and, therefore, deserve neither reward nor punishment; and these,

they say, will, on the last day, be admitted into Paradise, after they shall have performed an act of adoration, which will be imputed to them as a merit, and will make the scale of their good works to over-balance. Others again, suppose this intermediate space will be a receptacle for those who have gone to war without their parents' leave, and therein suffered martyrdom; being excluded from Paradise for their disobedience, and escaping Hell because they are martyrs. The breadth of this partition wall cannot be supposed to be exceeding great, since not only those who shall stand thereon will hold conference with the inhabitants both of Paradise and of Hell, but the blessed and the damned themselves will also be able to talk to one another.

The righteous, having surmounted the difficulties, and passed the sharp bridge above mentioned, before they enter Paradise will be refreshed by drinking at the pond of their Prophet, who describes it to be an exact square, of a month's journey in compass: its water which is supplied by two pipes from one of the rivers of the celestial realms, being whiter than milk or silver and more odoriferous than musk, with as many cups set around it as there are stars in the firmament, of which water whoever drinks will thirst no more for ever. This is the first taste which the blessed will have of their future, and now near-approaching felicity.

Though Paradise is so very frequently mentioned in the Quran, yet it is a dispute among the Muhammadians whether it is already created, or is yet to be created hereafter: some sectaries asserting that there is not at present any such place, and that the

Paradise which the righteous will inhabit in the next life, will be different from that from which Adam was expelled. However the orthodox profess the contrary, maintaining that it was created even before the world, and describe it, in the following manner:—

It is situate above the seven heavens (or in the seventh heaven) and next under the throne of God: the earth thereof is composed of the finest wheat flour, or of the purest musk, or, as others suppose of saffron; its stones are pearls and jacinths, the walls of its buildings being enriched with gold and silver, while the trunks of all its trees are of the first-mentioned precious metal: the most remarkable is the tree called Tuba, or the tree of happiness. The boughs of this tree will spontaneously bend down to the hand of the person who would gather of its fruits, and it will supply the blessed not only with food, but also with silken garments, and beasts whereon to ride, ready saddled, bridled, and adorned with rich trappings which will burst forth from its fruits. It is believed that this tree, which is so large, that a person mounted on the fleetest horse would not be able to gallop from one end of its shade to the other in a hundred years, stands in the palace of Muhammad, though a branch of it will reach to the house of every true believer; that it will be laden with pomegranates, grapes, dates, and other fruits of surprising size, and of tastes unknown to mortals. So that if a man desire to eat of any particular kind of fruit, it will immediately be presented to him; or if he choose flesh, birds ready dressed will be set before him according to his wish.

As plenty of water is one of the greatest additions to the delights of an Eastern locality, the Quran often speaks of the rivers of Paradise as a principal ornament thereof; some of these streams, they say, flow with water, some with milk, some with wine, and others with honey, all taking their rise from the root of the tree "Tuba." And lest these should not be sufficient, this garden is also watered by a great number of lesser springs and fountains, whose pebbles are rubies and emeralds, while their earth consists of camphor, their beds of musk, and their sides of saffron, the most remarkable among them being "Salsabil" and "Tasnim."

But all these glories will be eclipsed by the resplendent and ravishing girls of Paradise, the enjoyment of whose company will be a principal felicity of the Faithful. These, they say, are created not of clay, as in the case of mortal women, but of pure musk: being, as the Prophet often affirms, free from all natural impurities, defects, and inconveniences incident to the sex; further, too, they will be of the strictest modesty, and secluded from public view in pavilions of hollow pearls, so large that, as some traditions have it, one of them will be no less than sixty miles long, and as many broad.

The name which the Muhammadans usually give to this happy mansion, is "the garden"; and sometimes they call it, with an addition, the "garden of Paradise," the "garden of Eden," the "garden of abode," the "garden of pleasure," and the like; by which several appellations some understand a similar number of different abodes, or at least places of various degrees of felicity (for they reckon no less

than a hundred such in all), the very meanest whereof will afford its inhabitants so many pleasures and delights, that one would conclude persons must even sink under them, had not the Prophet declared, that in order to qualify the blessed for a full enjoyment of such bliss, God will give to every one the potentialities of a hundred individuals.

Besides Muhammad's pond, already described, some authors mention two fountains, springing from under a certain tree near the gate of Paradise, and say, that the blessed will also drink of one of them, to purge their bodies and carry off all impurities, and will wash themselves in the other. When they are arrived at the gate itself, each person will there be met and saluted by the beautiful youths appointed to serve and wait upon him, one of them running before, to carry the news of his arrival to the wives destined for him; two angels will also appear, bearing presents from God, one of whom will invest him with a garment of Paradise, and the other will put a ring on each of his fingers, with inscriptions alluding to the happiness of his condition. By which of the eight gates of Paradise they are respectively to enter is not known; but it must be observed that Muhammad has declared that no person's good works will gain him admittance, and that even himself shall be saved, not by his merits, but merely by the mercy of God. It is, however, the constant doctrine of the Quran, that the felicity of each person will be proportioned to his deserts, the abodes being assorted according to varied gradations of happiness; the most eminent degree for the prophets, the second for the doctors and teachers of God's

worship, the next for the martyrs, and the lower for the rest of the righteous. There will also be some distinction made in respect to the time of admission, Muhammad (to whom the gates will first be opened) having affirmed, that the poor will enter Paradise five hundred years before the rich : nor is this the only privilege which the former will enjoy in the next life ; since the Prophet has also declared, that when he took a view of the celestial regions, he saw that the majority of its inhabitants were composed of the poor. It may also be added that when he looked down into Hell, he noticed that the greater part of the wretches confined there were women !

For the first entertainment of the blessed on their admission, the whole earth will then be as one loaf of bread, which God will reach to them with His hand, holding it like a cake ; while for meat they will have the ox Balaam, and the fish Nun, the lobes of whose livers will suffice 70,000 of the principal guests, viz., those who, to that number, as already explained, will be admitted into Paradise without examination.

From this feast every one will be dismissed to the mansion designed for him, where he will enjoy such a share of felicity as will be proportioned to his merits, but vastly exceeding comprehension or expectation ; since the very meanest will have 80,000 servants, seventy-two wives of the girls of Paradise, besides, as some suppose, the spouses he had in this world (not in all cases it may be feared an unquestionable felicity), and a tent erected for him of pearls, jacinths, and emeralds, of a very large extent. According to another tradition he will, while eating, be waited on

by 300 attendants, his food being served in dishes of gold, whereof 300 shall be set before him at once, containing each a different kind of food, the last morsel of which will be as grateful as the first; he will also be supplied with as many sorts of liquors in vessels of the same metal. To complete the entertainment, there will be no want of wine, which, though forbidden in this life, will yet be freely allowed to be consumed in the next, and without danger, since that beverage in Paradise will neither inflame nor inebriate. The flavour of this celestial potation we may conceive to be delicious beyond description, since the water of Tasnim and the other fountains which will be used to dilute it, is said to be wonderfully sweet and fragrant. If any object to these pleasures, as an impudent Jew did to Muhammad, and contend that so much eating and drinking must necessarily involve various bodily functions, it may be answered that the inhabitants of Paradise will not need even to blow their noses, for all superfluities will be discharged and carried off by perspiration, or a perspiration odoriferous as musk, after which their appetite will return afresh.

The magnificence of the garments and gems promised by the Quran to the godly in the next life, is conformable to the delicacy of their diet. For they are to be clothed in the richest silks and brocades, chiefly of green, which will burst forth from the fruits of Paradise, and will be also supplied by the leaves of the tree Tuba; they will be adorned with bracelets of gold and silver, and crowns set with pearls of incomparable lustre; and will make use of silken carpets, litters of a prodigious size, couches, pillows,

and other rich furniture embroidered with gold and precious stones.

That the inhabitants of Paradise may be the better able to taste these pleasures in their height, they will enjoy a perpetual youth ; at whatever period of life they may happen to die, they will be raised in their prime and vigour, and become as if about thirty years of age, which they will never exceed (it may also be remarked that the tortures of Hell are perpetuated to the lost souls in a precisely similar manner). When the blessed enter into bliss, they will be of the same stature with Adam, who, as is fabled, was no less than 60 cubits high. And to this age and stature their children, if they shall desire any (for the choice will be in their own hands), will immediately attain ; according to that saying of their Prophet, "If any of the Faithful in Paradise be desirous of issue, it shall be conceived, born, and grown up within the space of an hour." And in the same manner, if any one shall desire to employ himself in agriculture (which rustic pleasure may suit the fancy of some), what he shall sow will spring up and come to maturity in a moment.

Lest any of the senses should lack their proper delight, the ear will there be entertained, not only with the ravishing songs of the angel Israfil, who has the most melodious voice of all God's creatures, and with the strains of the daughters of Paradise ; but even the trees themselves will celebrate the divine praises with a harmony exceeding whatever mortals have heard ; to which will be joined the sound of the bells hanging on the branches, which latter will be put in motion by the wind proceeding from the throne

of God, so often as the blessed wish for music : nay, the very clashing of the golden-bodied trees, whose fruits are pearls and emeralds, will surpass human imagination ; so that the pleasures of this sense will not be the least of the enjoyments of the blessed.

The delights above enumerated will be common to all the inhabitants of Paradise, even those of the lowest of all the orders therein. What then, must they enjoy who shall obtain a superior degree of honour and felicity ? For these, there are prepared, besides all this, “such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.” Muhammad is reported to have said, that the meanest of them will not only see his gardens, wives, servants, furniture, and other possessions fill the space of a thousand years’ journey (for so far and farther will the blessed see in the next life), but that he will be in the highest honour with God, and behold the face of the Almighty morning and evening. This favour is supposed to be that additional or superabundant recompense, promised in the Quran, which will give such exquisite delight, that in respect thereof all the other pleasures of Paradise will be forgotten and lightly esteemed. In face of this circumstance, it can scarcely be contended, as some maintain, that the Muhammadans admit of no spiritual pleasure in the next life, but make the happiness of the blessed to consist wholly in corporeal enjoyments.

Before quitting this subject it may not be improper to observe the falsehood of a vulgar imputation on the followers of Islam, who are by several writers reported to hold that women have no souls ; or, if

they have, that they will perish, like those of brute beasts, and will not be rewarded in the next life. But whatever may be the opinion of ignorant people, it is certain that Muhammad had too great a respect for the fair sex to teach such a doctrine; and there are several passages in the Quran which affirm that women, in the next life, will not only be punished for their evil actions, but will also receive the rewards of their good deeds, just as in the case of the men, and that God will make no distinction of sexes. It is, avowedly, by no means certain that they will be admitted into the same abode with men; but whether this be so or no, it will not escape notice that their places will in any case be supplied to some extent by the nymphs (though some allow that a man will there also have the company of those who were his wives in this world, or at least such of them as he shall desire). It is by some supposed that good women will go into a separate place of happiness, where they will enjoy all sorts of delights; whether, however, one of those pleasures will be the society of agreeable male companions created for them, to complete the economy of the Muhammadan system, is nowhere decided. One circumstance relating to these beatified females, conformable to what has been asserted of the men, may be gathered from the Prophet's reply to an old woman, who, desiring him to intercede with God that she might be admitted into Paradise, was told that no old woman would enter that place; not unnaturally the poor creature commenced crying, whereupon he explained himself by saying that God would then make her young again. If this be so it is not apparent, and indeed it is

nowhere explained in the Quran, how wives when restored to everlasting youth will regard the rival claims of the resplendent Houris, whom it might be supposed they would not be likely to view with complaisance.

Can it be, that, as in this terrestrial sphere a Muhammadan wife is content to be one amongst others, she would be happy and content were she to be assigned in heaven a rôle which is but a continuation in the next world of the position allotted to her in the realm on earth? To give an answer is impossible—till the great Hereafter solves a problem of the Muslim faith which must ever remain incapable of solution on this side of the grave.

Predestination.—The sixth great point of faith, which the Muhammadans are taught by the Quran to believe, is God's absolute decree and predestination both of good and evil. For the orthodox doctrine is, that whatever hath been or shall come to pass in this world, whether it be good or whether it be bad, proceedeth entirely from the divine will, and is irrevocably fixed and recorded from all eternity in the preserved table; God having secretly predetermined not only the adverse or prosperous fortune of every person in this world, in the most minute particulars, but also his faith or infidelity, his obedience or disobedience, and consequently his everlasting happiness or misery after death; which fate it is not possible, by any foresight or wisdom, to avoid.

Of this doctrine Muhammad makes great use in his Quran for the advancement of his designs; encouraging his followers to fight without fear, and even desperately, for the propagation of their faith,

by representing to them that all their caution could not avert their inevitable destiny, or prolong their lives for a moment; and deterring them from disobeying or rejecting him, by setting before them the danger they might thereby incur of being abandoned, by the just judgment of God, to seduction, hardness of heart, and a reprobate mind, as a punishment for their obstinacy.

As this doctrine of absolute election and reprobation has been thought by many Muslim divines to be derogatory to the goodness and justice of God, and to make Him the author of evil, several subtle distinctions have been invented, and disputes raised, to moderate or soften it; and different sects have been formed, according to their several opinions or methods of explaining this point. These will be described in the chapter on minor sects.

Prayer.—Of the four fundamental points of religious practice required by the Quran, the first is prayer, which was by Muhammad thought so necessary a duty, that he used to call it the pillar of religion and the key of Paradise; and when in A.D. 631 a neighbouring tribe sent to make their submission to the Prophet, after the retention of their favourite idol had been denied them, begging that, at least, they might be excused saying the appointed prayers, he answered, “There could be no good in that religion wherein was no prayer.”

That so important a duty, therefore, might not be neglected, Muhammad obliged his followers to pray five times every twenty-four hours, at certain stated periods, viz., (1) In the morning, before sunrise; (2) When noon is past, and the sun begins to decline

from the meridian ; (3) In the afternoon, before sunset ; (4) In the evening, after sunset, and before close of day ; and (5) After the day is ended, and before the first watch of the night. For this institution he asserted that he had received the divine command from the throne of God himself, when he took his night journey to heaven ; and the duty of observing the stated times of prayer is frequently insisted on in the Quran. Accordingly, at the aforesaid periods, of which public notice is given by the Muazzin, or Crier, from the steeples of their mosques (for they use no bell), every conscientious Muslim prepares himself for prayer, which he performs either in the sanctuary or any other place (provided it be clean), after a prescribed form, and with a certain number of phrases or ejaculations (which the more scrupulous count by a string of beads), and using certain postures of worship ; it is not permissible to abridge the devotions, unless in some special cases ; as on a journey, or preparing for battle, etc.

For the regular performance of the duty of prayer among the Muhammadans, it is also requisite that they turn their faces, while they pray, towards the temple of Mecca ; the quarter where the same is situate being, for that reason, pointed out within their mosques by a niche, which they call "Al Mihrab," and without, by the situation of the doors opening into the galleries of the steeples ; in places where they have no other direction there are also tables calculated for the ready finding out their "Qibla," or part towards which they ought to pray.

But what is principally to be regarded in the discharge of this duty, is the inward disposition of

the heart, which is the life and spirit of prayer; the most punctual observance of the external rites and ceremonies before mentioned being of little or no avail, if performed without due attention, reverence, devotion and hope: so that it must not hastily be concluded that the Muhammadans, or the considerate part of them at least, content themselves with the mere formal performance of a duty; nor may it be imagined that their whole religion consists in a mere external system of devotion.

Two matters deserve mention in connection with this subject. One is, that though the Prophet bid them take their "ornaments to every mosque" the Faithful are not generally wont to address themselves to God in sumptuous apparel, though they are obliged to be decently clothed; but, as a rule, lay aside their costly habits and pompous decorations, if they wear any, when they approach the divine presence, lest they should seem proud and arrogant. The other is, that they do not admit their women to pray with them in public; that sex being obliged to perform their devotions at home, or if they visit the mosques it must be at a time when the men are not there: for the Muslims are of opinion that their presence inspires a different kind of devotion from that which is requisite in a place dedicated to the worship of God. "Church Parade" finds no place in the devotions of Islam. Under the head of prayer, are also comprehended, as has been said, those legal washings or purifications which are necessary preparations.

Of these purifications there are two degrees: (1) "Wazu" or "Abdast," the ordinary ablution in

common cases, and before prayer; it consists in washing the face from the top of the forehead to the chin, as far as the ear; in cleansing the hands and arms up to each elbow; in rubbing a fourth part of the head with the wet hand, and in wiping the feet to the ankles.

These actions may be done in silence, or prayer may be repeated: of the invocation to the Deity, used on such occasions, one example will suffice. When cleaning the teeth, the votary says, "Vouchsafe, O God, as I clean my teeth, to purify me from my faults, and accept my homage, O Lord! May the purity of my teeth be for me a pledge of the whiteness of my face at the Day of Judgment."

The other purification (2) which is known as "Ghusl," consists in an ablution of the whole body after certain defilements. The *modus operandi* is as follows: The person, having put on clean clothes and performed the "wazu," proclaims his intention to make "Ghusl" and "to put away impurity." All being ready, he pours water over the right shoulder three times, then over the left three times, and lastly on his head a like number of times; so particular and careful must he be, that it is accepted amongst Muslims that if but one hair of the body be left untouched with the water, the whole act of purification is rendered vain and useless.

When water is not procurable, or when, in case of sickness, its use might be injurious, purification by sand is allowable.

Minute regulations are laid down with regard to the water which may be used for purification: rain, water from the sea, rivers, fountains, and wells is

allowable, as also snow, and ice-water ; but, singularly enough, ice itself is not lawful. As to what constitutes impurity in water, and so renders it unfit for ablutions, it may be said, briefly, that it is universally accepted amongst the orthodox that if a dead body or any unclean thing falls into flowing water, or into a reservoir more than fifteen feet square, the liquid can be used, provided always that the colour, smell, and taste be not changed. It is for this reason that the pool near a mosque is never less than a certain size.

There are also special prayers for individual occasions, such as an eclipse of the sun or moon, times of drought, funerals (in the latter case they are always repeated in the open space in front of the mosque, or in some neighbouring spot, never in the graveyard), special work, fast of "Ramazan," etc., etc.

Alms.—The next point of the Muhammadan religion is the giving of alms, which are of two sorts, (*a*) legal ; and (*b*) voluntary. The former (*a*) are of indispensable obligation, being commanded by the law, which both directs the portion which is to be given, and determines what things ought to be bestowed ; but the latter (*b*) are left to every one's liberty to give more or less, as shall be deemed fit. Obligatory alms some think to be properly called Zakat, while voluntary alms are known as Sadaqat ; though this last-mentioned name is somewhat indiscriminately used. They are called Zakat, either because they increase a man's store, by drawing down a blessing thereon, and produce in his soul the virtue of liberality, or because they purify the remain-

ing part of his substance from pollution, and the soul from the filth of avarice; while Sadaqat indicates that they are a proof of a man's sincerity in the worship of God. Some writers have called the legal alms tithes, but improperly, since in some cases they fall short, and in others exceed the proportion of one-tenth.

The giving of alms is frequently commanded in the Quran, and often recommended therein jointly with prayer; the former being held of great efficacy in causing the latter to be heard of God: for which reason the Khalif Omar used to say, "that prayer carries us half-way to God, fasting brings us to the door of His palace, and alms procure us admission."

The traditions, also, are very severe upon persons who omit to observe the duty of charity: "To whomsoever God gives wealth," so runs the terrible denunciation, "and he does not perform the charity due from it, his wealth will be made into the shape of a serpent on the day of resurrection, which shall not have any hair upon its head, and this is a sign of its poison and long life: and it has two black spots upon its eyes, and it will be twisted round his neck like a chain on the day of resurrection: then the serpent will seize the man's jawbones, and will say, 'I am thy wealth, the charity from which thou didst not give, and I am thy treasure from which thou didst not separate any alms.'" Another tradition says, "Verily two women came to the Prophet, each having a bracelet of gold on her arm, and the Prophet said, 'Do ye perform the alms for them?' They said 'we do not.' Then the Prophet said to them, 'Do you wish that God should cause you to wear hell fire in place of them?' They eagerly responded in the

negative, whereupon he commanded them to 'Perform the alms for them.'

In any circumstances the Muhammadans esteem almsdeeds to be highly meritorious, and many of them have been illustrious for the exercise thereof. Hasan, the son of Ali, and grandson of Muhammad, in particular, is related to have twice in his life divided his substance equally between himself and the poor, and twice to have given away well-nigh all he possessed: and the generality are so addicted to acts of benevolence, that they extend their charity even to brutes.

Alms, according to the prescriptions of the Muhammadan law, are to be given of five things: (1) Of cattle, that is to say, of camels, kine, and sheep. (2) Of money. (3) Of corn. (4) Of fruits, viz., dates and raisins. And (5) Of wares sold. Of each of these a certain portion is to be bestowed in charity, being usually one part in forty, or two and a half per cent. of the value. But no alms are due for them, unless they amount to a certain quantity or number; nor until a man has been in possession of them eleven months, he not being obliged to give therefrom before the twelfth month is begun: nor are they due for cattle employed in tilling the ground, or in carrying of burdens. In some cases a much larger portion than that before-mentioned is customary: thus of what is gotten out of mines, or the sea, or by any art or profession, over and above what is sufficient for the reasonable support of a man's family, and especially where there is a mixture or suspicion of unjust gain, a fifth part ought to be given in charity. Moreover, at the end of the fast of Ramazan,

every Muslim is obliged to give in alms for himself and for everyone of his family, if he has any, a measure of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, rice, or other commonly eaten provisions.

The legal alms were at first collected by the Prophet himself, who employed them as he thought fit, in the relief of his poor relations and followers, though he chiefly applied them to the maintenance of those who served in his wars, and fought, as he termed it, in the way of God. His successors continued to do the same, till, in process of time, other taxes and tributes being imposed for the support of the government, they seem to have been weary of acting as almoners to their subjects, and to have left the latter to pay their donation according to their consciences.

Fasting.—The third point of religious practice is fasting; a duty of so great moment, that Muhammad used to say it was “the gate of religion,” and that “the odour of the mouth of him who fasteth is more grateful to God than that of musk.” According to the Muslim divines, there are three degrees of fasting: (1) The restraint of the stomach and other parts of the body from satisfying their lusts; (2) The maintenance of the ears, eyes, tongue, hands, feet, and other members free from sin; and (3) The fasting of the heart from worldly cares, and the concentration of the thoughts solely on God.

The Muhammadans are obliged, by the express command of the Quran, to fast the whole month of Ramazan, from the time the new moon first appears, till the appearance of the next new moon; during which time they must abstain from eating, drinking,

and lust, during the period from daybreak till night or sunset. If on account of dull weather, or of dust storms, the new moon be not visible, it is sufficient to act on the testimony of a trustworthy person, who may declare that Ramazan has commenced. The sacred injunction they observe so strictly, that while fasting they suffer nothing to enter their mouths, or other parts of their body, esteeming the fast broken and null if they smell perfumes, bathe, or even purposely swallow their spittle; some being so cautious that they will not open their mouths to speak, lest they should breathe the air too freely. The fast is also deemed void if a man kiss or touch a woman, or if he vomit designedly, while even should a portion of food no larger than a grain of corn, from the nightly meal remain between the teeth, or in a cavity of the mouth, the fast is destroyed. But after sunset they are allowed to refresh themselves, and to eat and drink, and enjoy the company of their wives until daybreak; though the more rigid begin the fast again at midnight. This fast is extremely rigorous and mortifying when the month of Ramazan happens to fall in summer (for the Arabian year being lunar, each month runs through all the different seasons in the course of thirty-two solar years), the length and heat of the days making the observance of it much more difficult and uneasy in such case than in winter.

Its distinctive feature is that it lasts only during light: accordingly the rich mitigate its rigours as far as possible by turning night into day: but amongst the poorer and industrial classes such a proceeding is obviously impossible; nevertheless, so strictly do they obey the injunction of the Prophet in this matter

that when Burton visited Cairo in the disguise of a Musulman doctor, he found but one patient who would break his fast, even though warned that the result of obstinacy might be death.

The reason given why Ramazan was selected for this purpose is, that on that month the Quran was sent down from heaven. But some assert that Abraham, Moses, and Jesus received their respective revelations in the same month.

From the fast of Ramazan none are excused, except only travellers and sick persons (under which last denomination the Muslims comprehend all whose health would manifestly be injured by their keeping the fast; as women with child and giving suck, elderly people, and young children); but then they are obliged, as soon as the impediment is removed, to fast an equal number of other days: the deliberate breaking of the fast is ordered to be expiated, either by setting a slave at liberty, by fasting every day for two months, or by giving sixty persons two full meals each, or one man a like number of repasts daily for sixty days: if the omission arise from the infirmity of old age the expiation consists in the bestowal of alms.

When the thirty days have expired the fast is broken, and this joyous occasion is known as the "feast of the breaking of the Fast." The reaction which sets in after so lengthened a period of restraint finds vent in every conceivable token of joy; the men lounge about happy, merry, and convivial, while the fair sex don their best jewellery and lightest attire; festive songs and loud music fill the air, friends meet, presents are distributed, and

all is life, joy, cheerful mirth, and amusement. The voluntary fasts of the Muhammadans are such as have been recommended either by the example or approbation of their Prophet; especially in regard to certain days of those months which they esteem sacred: there being a tradition that he used to say, "That a fast of one day in a sacred month was better than a fast of thirty days in another month; and that the fast of one day in Ramazan was more meritorious than a fast of thirty days in a sacred month." Among the more commendable days is that of Ashura, the tenth of the first month: regarding which it is related that when Muhammad came to Madina, and found the Jews there fasted on the day of Ashura, he asked them the reason of it; they told him it was because on that day Pharaoh and his people were drowned, Moses and those who were with him escaping: whereupon he said that he bore a nearer relation to Moses than they, and ordered his followers to fast on that day. However, it seems afterwards he was not so well pleased in having imitated the Jews; and, therefore, declared that, if he lived another year, he would alter the day, and fast on the ninth, abhorring so near an agreement with them.

While, however, on the one hand certain days are considered especially fitting for the observance of fastings, there are on the other a few occasions when it is unlawful to observe this duty; these are five in number, viz., the "feast of the breaking of the Fast," the "Kine-fête" (which will be explained hereafter), and the 11, 12, and 13 of the twelfth month of the year.

Circumcision.—It may here be stated that cir-

cumcision, though not enjoined in the Quran, is yet held by the Muhammadans to be an ancient divine institution, confirmed by the religion of Islam, not indeed so absolutely necessary but that it may be dispensed with in some cases, yet highly proper and expedient. The Arabs used this rite for many ages before the advent of the Prophet, having probably learned it from the Ishmaelites, who, in common with other tribes, practised the same. They used to circumcise their children, we are told, not on the eighth day, as is the custom of the Jews, but when about twelve or thirteen years old, at which age their father underwent that operation; and the Muhammadans imitate them so far as not to circumcise children before they be able, at least, distinctly to pronounce that profession of their faith, "There is no God but God, Muhammad is the apostle of God"; the age selected varies from six to sixteen, or thereabouts. Though the Muslim doctors are generally of opinion that this precept was originally given to Abraham, yet some have imagined that Adam was taught it by the angel Gabriel, to satisfy an oath he had made to cut off that flesh which, after his fall, had rebelled against his spirit; whence an odd argument has been drawn for the universal obligation of circumcision.

Prohibitions.—Having seen what are the fundamental points of the Muhammadan religion both as regards faith and practice, it may be well to refer to the prohibitions which are imposed upon the faithful followers of the Prophet.

Wine.—The drinking of wine, under which name all sorts of strong and inebriating liquors are com-

prehended, is forbidden in the Quran in more places than one. Some, indeed, have imagined that excess therein is alone reprehended, and contend that moderate use is allowed in the same book; but the more received opinion is, that to drink any strong liquors, either in a lesser quantity, or in a greater, is absolutely unlawful; and though libertines indulge themselves in a contrary practice, yet the more conscientious are so strict, especially if they have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, that they hold it unlawful not only to taste wine, but to press grapes for the making of it, to buy or to sell it, or even to maintain themselves with the money arising from trade in that liquor. The Persians, however, as well as the Turks, are very fond of wine; and if asked how it comes to pass that they venture to drink it, when it is so directly forbidden by their religion, they answer, that it is with them as with the Christians, who, their religion prohibiting drunkenness and profligacy as great sins, glory, notwithstanding, some in their debaucheries, and others in drinking to excess.

Several stories have been told as to the grounds on which Muhammad prohibited the drinking of wine: but the true reasons are given in the Quran, viz., because the ill qualities of that liquor surpass its powers for good, the common effects thereof being quarrels and disturbances in company, coupled with neglect in the performance of religious duties.

Coffee and Tobacco.—It has been a question whether coffee does not come under the above-mentioned prohibition, because the fumes of it have some effect on the imagination. This drink, which was first publicly used at Aden in Arabia Felix, about the sixteenth century of

the Christian era, and thence gradually introduced into Mecca, Madina, Egypt, Syria, and other parts of the Levant, has been the occasion of great disputes and disorders, having been sometimes publicly condemned and forbidden, and again declared lawful and allowed. At present the use of coffee, as of tobacco, is generally tolerated, if not permitted, though the more religious, especially the "Wahabis," make a scruple of taking the latter, not only because it inebriates, but also out of respect to a traditional saying of their Prophet, "That in the latter days there should be men who should bear the name of Muslims, but should not be really such; and that they should smoke a certain weed, which should be called TOBACCO." This prediction, however, must be received with some degree of reserve, inasmuch as the drug was not introduced into the East for many hundreds of years after the death of the Prophet. However, Eastern nations are generally so addicted to both, that they say, "A dish of coffee and a pipe of tobacco are a complete entertainment;" and the Persians have a proverb that coffee without tobacco is meat without salt; and Doughty, who travelled in Arabia about A.D. 1886, tells of a person in Najd who was wont to drink fifty cups of coffee in the twenty-four hours, and smoke a like number of pipes of tobacco.

Opium and "bhang" (which latter is the leaves of hemp in pills or conserve), though not mentioned in the Quran, are also, by the rigid Muhammadans, esteemed unlawful, because they intoxicate and disturb the understanding, yet these drugs are now commonly taken in the East; but they who are

addicted to them are generally looked upon as debauchees.

Games of Hazard.—Gaming is prohibited by the Quran in the same passages, and for the same reasons as wine. The word which is there used, signifies a particular manner of casting lots by arrows, much practised by the pagan Arabs, and performed in the following manner :—A young camel being bought and killed, and divided into parts, persons to the number of seven cast lots for them; eleven arrows are then provided, without heads or feathers, seven of which are marked, the first with one notch, the second with two, and so on, and the other four have no mark at all. These arrows are put promiscuously into a bag, and then drawn by an indifferent person, who has another near him to receive them, and to see he acts fairly; those to whom the marked arrows fall win shares in proportion to their lot, and those who draw blanks are entitled to no part of the camel at all, but obliged to pay the full price thereof. The winners, however, do not taste the flesh any more than the losers, but the whole is distributed among the poor; and this they do out of pride and ostentation it being reckoned a shame for a man to stand out, and not venture his money on such an occasion. This custom, therefore, though it was of some use to the poor, no less than a diversion to the rich, was forbidden by Muhammad as the source of great inconveniences, by occasioning quarrels and heart-burnings, which arose from the winners insulting those who lost.

Under the name of lots, commentators agree that all other games whatsoever, which are subject to hazard or chance, are comprehended and forbidden, as

dice, cards, tables, etc. And they are reckoned so ill in themselves, that the testimony of him who plays at them is, by the more rigid, judged to be of no validity in a court of justice. Chess is almost the only game which the Muslim doctors allow to be lawful (though it has been a doubt with some), because it depends wholly on skill and management, and not at all on chance : but it is only allowed under certain restrictions, viz., that it be no hindrance to the regular performance of devotions, and that no money or other stake be played for or betted ; which condition the Turks religiously observe, but the Persians neglect. But what is supposed chiefly to have been disliked in the game of chess was the carved pieces with which the pagan Arabs played, being little figures of men, elephants, horses, and dromedaries ; and these are thought, by some commentators, to be truly meant by the images prohibited in one of the passages of the Quran. That the Arabs in Muhammad the Prophet's time actually used such figures for chessmen appears from what is related of Ali, who passing accidentally by some who were playing at chess, asked, "What images they were upon which they were so intent ?" for they were perfectly new to him, that game having been but very lately introduced into Arabia, and not long before into Persia, whither it was first brought from India in the reign of Nushirwan (A.D. 530-578). Hence the Muhammadan doctors infer that the game was disapproved only for the sake of the images ; wherefore the Turks always play with plain pieces of wood or ivory ; but the Persians and Indians, who are not so scrupulous, continue to make use of the carved figures.

The Muhammadans comply with the prohibition against gaming much better than they do as regards wine; for though the common people, among the Turks more frequently, and the Persians more rarely, are addicted to play, yet the better sort are seldom guilty of such a proceeding.

Of course, Muslims, like other people in all climes and of all religions, are given to excesses—but at any rate as regards the denizens of Arabia a recent traveller (Doughty) bears testimony that “hazardry, banquetting, and many running sores and hideous sinks of our great towns are unknown to them. The Arabs, not less frugal than Spartans, are happy in the epicurean moderation of their religion.”

Divination.—Another practice of the idolatrous Arabs, also forbidden in the Quran, is that of divining by arrows. Those used for this purpose, which like others with which they cast lots had neither heads nor feathers, were kept in the temple of some idol, in whose presence they were consulted. Seven such arrows were stored in the mosque at Mecca; but generally in divination three only were used, on one of which was written, “My Lord hath commanded me;” on another, “My Lord hath forbidden me;” and the third was blank. If the first was drawn, it was looked upon as an approbation of the enterprise in question; if the second, a contrary conclusion was made; but if the third happened to be drawn, it was customary to mix them and draw over again, till a decisive answer was obtained. These divining arrows were generally consulted before anything of moment was undertaken; as when a man was about to marry, or about to go a journey, or the like.

Meats.—A distinction of meats was so general amongst eastern nations, that it is no wonder that Muhammad made some regulations in that matter. The Quran, therefore, prohibits the eating of blood, and swine's flesh, and whatever dies of itself, or is slain in the name or in honour of any idol, or is strangled, or killed by a blow or a fall, or by any other beast. In case of necessity, however, where a man may be in danger of starving, he is allowed by the law of Islam to eat any of the prohibited kinds of food.

Usury.—In the prohibition of usury, Muhammad followed the example of the Jews, who are strictly forbidden by their law to practice it among one another, though they may be guilty of it in their dealing with those of a different religion : but the Prophet of the Arabs has not made any distinction in this matter.

It may be doubted, however, whether the injunctions of the Prophet are universally followed by the Muhammadan world : at any rate in Arabia Deserta such is the recent testimony of Doughty, "the lending of usury disallowed in the Quran doctrine is practised even in these puritanical countries."

Infanticide.—The Musulman law also put a stop to the inhuman custom which had been long practised by the pagan Arabs, of burying their daughters alive, lest the parents should be reduced to poverty by providing for them, or else that they might avoid the displeasure and the disgrace which would follow, if they should happen to be made captives, or to become scandalous by their behaviour ; the birth of a daughter being, for these reasons, reckoned a great misfortune, and her death an equal happiness. The manner of practising

infanticide is differently related : some say that when an Arab had a daughter born, if he intended to bring her up, he sent her, clothed in a garment of wool or hair, to keep camels or sheep in the desert ; but if he designed to put her to death, he let her live till she became six years old, and then said to her mother, "Perfume her, and adorn her, that I may carry her to her mothers" ; which being done, the father led her to a well or pit dug for that purpose, and having bid her to look down into it, pushed her in headlong as he stood behind her, and then filling up the pit, levelled it with the rest of the ground ; but others say, that when a child was about to be born, they dug a pit ; to the brink the mother was brought, and if the child happened to be a daughter, they threw it into the pit, but if a son, they saved it alive.

This wicked practice is condemned by the Quran in several passages ; one of which, as some commentators judge, also alludes to another custom of the Arabians, altogether as wicked, and as common among other nations of old, viz., the sacrificing of their children to their idols ; as was frequently done, more particularly in satisfaction of a vow, by no means unusual, that if they had a certain number of sons born, they would offer one of them in sacrifice.

Civil and Criminal Law.—The Muhammadan civil law is founded on the precepts and determinations of the Quran. And it may be well to explain some of the more prominent usages and ordinances appertaining to this branch of the rites and institutions of Islam.

Marriage and Polygamy.—As regards polygamy,

it is a vulgar mistake to suppose that the Prophet granted to his followers an unbounded plurality of wives. The injunctions of the Quran are (Professor Palmer's translation), Chapter iv., verse 3: "Then marry what seems good to you by twos, or threes, or fours; and if ye fear that ye cannot be equitable, then only one; or what your right hands possess" (*i.e.* female slaves).

This passage seems to justify an unlimited number of female slaves, as distinguished from four legal wives: as a matter of fact, however, while the richer part of the Muslim community add, when so disposed, to the maximum number of wives, as many concubines as they think fit, the humbler classes are mostly content with a solitary spouse, though as worldly prosperity advances, they not infrequently add a few slave girls to the harem.

Slavery.—As regards slavery, the teaching of the Quran is largely directed to "female slaves." That slavery, however, is tolerated in the Quran, is evidenced from the language of Chapter ii., verse 220: "Wed not with idolatrous women until they believe, for surely a believing handmaid is better than an idolatrous woman, even though she please you. And wed not to idolatrous men until they believe, for a believing slave is better than an idolater, even though he please you." At the time of Muhammad, captives were made slaves unless they embraced Islam on the field of battle, in which case the men became free, while females generally passed into the harems of the conquerors. The Quran, however, enjoins that slaves are to be treated with kindness and granted their freedom if they "have a writing" to that effect.

As regards the condition of slaves, Doughty bears testimony that it is "always tolerable and is often happy in Arabia: bred up as poor brothers of the sons of the household, they are a manner of God's wards of the pious Muhammadan householder." Even "Africans," such is the testimony of the same traveller, "think this is the better country where they are the Lord's free men, a land of more civil life, the soil of the two sanctuaries, the land of Muhammad: for such they do give God thanks that their bodies were sometimes sold into slavery."

It must be observed that among the Muhammadians, the children of their concubines or slaves are esteemed as equally legitimate with those of their legal wives; none being accounted bastards, except such only as are born of common women, and whose fathers are unknown.

Before leaving the subject of marriages, it may be proper to take notice of some peculiar privileges in relation thereto, which, as is asserted, were granted by God to Muhammad, to the exclusion of all other Muslims. One of them was, that he might lawfully marry as many wives and have as many concubines as he pleased, without being confined to any particular number; a privilege which, he asserted, had been granted to the prophets before him. Another was, that he might alter the turns of his wives, and favour such of them as he thought fit, without being tied to that order and equality which others are obliged to observe. A third privilege was, that no man might marry any of his wives, either such as he should divorce during his lifetime, or such as he should leave widows at his death.

Divorce.—Divorce is also well known to be allowed by Muhammadan law : but it must not be overlooked that the Prophet, to prevent his followers from divorcing their wives on every light occasion, or out of an inconstant humour, ordained that, if a man divorced his wife the third time (for he might divorce her twice without being obliged to part with her, if he repented of what he had done), it should not be lawful for him to take her again until she had been first married and divorced by some second husband. It must be observed, that though a man is allowed to repudiate his wife even on the slightest disgust, yet the women are not allowed to separate themselves from their husbands unless it be for ill-usage, want of proper maintenance, neglect of conjugal duty, or some cause of equal import ; but then she generally loses her dowry, which she does not if divorced by her husband, unless she has been guilty of immodesty or notorious disobedience.

When a woman is divorced she is obliged, by the direction of the Quran, to wait three months before she marry another ; after which time she is at full liberty to dispose of herself as she pleases ; should circumstances, however, render this necessary, she must wait the birth of the child, continuing in the meantime in the husband's house, and maintained at his expense, it being forbidden to turn the woman out before the expiration of the term, unless she be guilty of impropriety. Where a man divorces a woman who has been his wife only in name, she is not obliged to wait any particular time, nor is he obliged to give her more than one half of her dower. If the divorced woman have a young child, she is to

suckle it till it be two years old ; the father, in the meantime, maintaining her in all respects : a widow is also obliged to do the same, and to wait four months and ten days before she marry again.

Immorality on the part of either single or married women was, in the beginning of Muhammadism, very severely punished ; it being ordered that such offenders should be shut up in prison till they died ; but afterwards it was ordained that an adulteress should be stoned, and an unmarried woman guilty of impropriety scourged with a hundred stripes, and banished for a year. A she-slave, if convicted of adultery, suffers but half the punishment of a free woman, viz., fifty stripes, and banishment for six months ; but is not to be put to death. To convict a woman of adultery, so as to make it capital, four witnesses are expressly required, and those, as the commentators say, ought to be men ; and if a man falsely accuse a respectable woman of disreputable behaviour of any kind, and is not able to support the charge by that number of witnesses, he is to receive fourscore stripes, and his testimony is to be held invalid for the future. Immorality, in either sex, is by the sentence of the Quran to be punished with a hundred stripes.

If a man accuse his wife of infidelity, and is not able to prove it by sufficient evidence, and will swear four times that it is true, and the fifth time imprecate God's vengeance on him if it be false, she is to be looked on as convicted, unless she will take the like oaths, and make the like imprecation, in testimony of her innocency ; which if she do, she is free from punishment though the marriage is generally dissolved.

Inheritance.—The laws of the Quran concerning

inheritances were principally designed to abolish certain practices of the pagan Arabs, who used to treat widows and orphan children with great injustice, frequently denying them any share in the inheritance of their fathers or their husbands, on pretence that the property ought to be distributed among those only who were able to bear arms, while widows were disposed of, even against their consent, as part of their husbands' possessions. To prevent such injuries for the future, the Prophet ordered that women should be respected, and orphans have no wrong done them; and in particular that the former should not be taken against their wills, as by right of inheritance, but should themselves be entitled to a distributive part, in a certain proportion, of what their parents, husbands, and near relations should leave behind them.

The general rule to be observed in the distribution of the deceased's estate is, that a male shall have twice as much as a female; but to this principle there are some few exceptions; a man's parents, for example, and also his brothers and sisters, where they are entitled not to the whole, but a small part of the inheritance, have equal shares with one another in the distribution thereof, without any difference on account of sex.

If a man dispose of part of his estate by will, two witnesses, at the least, are required to render the same valid; and such witnesses ought to be of his own tribe, and of the Muslim religion, if such persons can be found. Though there be no express law to the contrary, yet it is reckoned wrong for a man to give away any part of his substance from his family, unless it be in legacies for pious uses; and even in

that case a person ought not to bestow all he has in charity, but only a reasonable part in proportion to his substance. On the other hand, though a man make no will, and bequeath nothing for charitable uses, yet the heirs are directed, on the distribution of the estate, if the value will permit, to bestow something on the poor, especially such as are of kin to the deceased, and to the orphans.

The first law, however, laid down by Muhammad touching inheritances, was not very equitable ; for he declared that those who had fled with him from Mecca, and those who had received and assisted him at Madina should be deemed the nearest of kin, and consequently heirs to one another, preferably to, and in exclusion of, their relations by blood ; nay, though a man were a true believer, yet if he had not quitted his country for the sake of religion and joined the Prophet, he was to be looked on as a stranger ; but this law did not long continue in force, being quickly abrogated.

Contracts.—As to private contracts between man and man, the conscientious performance of them is frequently recommended in the Quran. For the preventing of disputes all contracts are directed to be made before witnesses, and in case such contracts are not immediately executed, the same ought to be reduced into writing in the presence of at least two witnesses, who should be Muslims and of the male sex ; but if two men cannot be conveniently found, then one man and two women may suffice. The same method is also directed to be taken for the security of debts to be paid at a future day ; and where a writer is not to be found, pledges are to be taken. Hence, if people trust one another without writing, witnesses, or

pledge, the party on whom the demand is made is always acquitted if he denies the charge on oath, and swears that he owes the plaintiff nothing, unless the contrary be proved by very convincing circumstances.

Murder.—Wilful murder, though forbidden by the Quran under the severest penalties to be inflicted in the next life, is yet, by the same book, allowed to be compounded for, on payment of a fine to the family of the deceased, and freeing a Muslim from captivity; but it is in the election of the next of kin, or the avenger of blood, either to accept of such satisfaction, or to refuse it; for he may, if he pleases, insist on having the murderer delivered into his hands, to be put to death in such manner as he shall think fit.

Manslaughter.—If the Muhammadan laws seem light in case of murder, they may perhaps be deemed too rigorous in case of manslaughter, or the killing of a man undesignedly, which must be redeemed by fine (unless the next of kin shall think fit to remit it out of charity), and the freeing of a captive; but if a man be not able to do this, he is to fast two months together by way of penance. The fine for a man's blood, which is set at a hundred camels, is to be distributed among the relations of the deceased, according to the laws of inheritance; but it must be observed that, though the person slain be a Muslim, yet if he be of a nation or party at enmity, or not in confederacy, with those to whom the slayer belongs, he is not then bound to pay any fine at all, the redemption of a captive being, in such case, declared a sufficient penalty.

Personal Injuries.—As to injuries done to men in their persons, the law of retaliation is approved by the Quran; but this law, which seems to have been allowed

by Muhammad to his Arabians to prevent particular revenges, being neither strictly just nor practicable in many cases, is seldom put in execution, the punishment being generally turned into a mulct or fine, which is paid to the party injured.

Theft is ordered to be punished by cutting off the hand, as the offending part, which, at first sight, seems just enough; but on reflection it will at once occur that to sever a limb would be to deprive the culprit of the means of getting his livelihood in an honest manner.

Minor Crimes.—In injuries and crimes of an inferior nature, where no particular punishment is provided by the Quran, and where a pecuniary compensation will not suffice, the Muhammadans have recourse to stripes or beating, the most common chastisement used in the East at this day, as well as formerly; the instrument wherewith the sentence is generally executed being the cudgel, which for its virtue and efficacy in keeping people in good order and within the bounds of duty, is said to have come down from heaven.

Notwithstanding the Quran is in general regarded by the followers of Islam as the fundamental part of their civil law, yet the secular tribunals do not consider themselves bound to observe the same in all cases, but frequently give judgment against those decisions which are not consonant to equity and reason; and therefore distinction is to be made between the written civil law, as administered in the ecclesiastical courts, and the law of nature or common law (so to speak) which takes place in the secular courts, and has the executive power on its side.

Wars against Infidels.—Under the head of civil

laws may be comprehended the command to war against infidels, which is repeated in several passages of the Quran, and declared to be of high merit in the sight of God, those who are slain fighting in defence of the faith being reckoned martyrs, and promised immediate admission into Paradise. Hence this duty is greatly magnified by Muslim divines, who call the sword the key of Heaven and Hell, and persuade people that the least drop of blood spilt in the way of God, as it is called, is most acceptable unto Him, and that the defence of the territories of the faithful for one night is more meritorious than a fast of two months: on the other hand, desertion, or refusing to serve in these holy wars, or to contribute towards carrying them on, if a man has ability, is accounted a most heinous crime.

While Muhammadism was in its infancy, its opponents when taken in battle were doomed to death, without mercy; but this was judged too severe to be put in practice when that religion came to be sufficiently established, and past the danger of being subverted by its enemies.

When the Muhammadans declare war against people of a different faith, they give them their choice of three offers, viz. : (1) either to embrace the faith of Islam, in which case they become not only secure in their persons, families, and fortunes, but entitled to all the privileges of other Muslims; or (2) to submit and pay tribute, by doing which they are allowed to profess their own religion, provided it be not gross idolatry or against the moral law; or else (3) to decide the quarrel by the sword, in which last case, if the followers of the Prophet prevail, the women and children which are made captives become absolute

slaves, and the men taken in the battle may either be slain, unless they turn Muhammadans, or are otherwise disposed of at the pleasure of the prince.

Division of Spoils.—On the first considerable success of Muhammad in war, the dispute which happened among his followers in relation to the division of the spoil, rendered it necessary for him to make some regulation on this point; he therefore pretended to have received the divine commission to distribute the plunder among his soldiers at his own discretion, reserving therefrom, in the first place, one-fifth part for the uses after-mentioned; and, in consequence, he considered himself authorised, on extraordinary occasions, to distribute it as he thought fit, without regard to rules and regulations.

The fifth part directed by the Quran to be taken out of the spoil before it be divided among the captors, is declared to belong to God, and to the apostle and his kindred, as well as the orphans, and the poor, and the traveller; which words are variously understood.

Immovable possessions, as lands, etc., taken in war, are subject to the same laws as the movable; excepting only that the fifth part of the former is not actually divided, but the income and profits thereof, or the price, if sold, are applied to public and pious uses, and distributed once a year; while the prince may either take the fifth part of the land itself, or a like portion of the income and produce of the whole, as he shall make his election.

Sacred Months.—It was a custom among the ancient Arabs to observe four months in the year as sacred, during which they held it unlawful to wage

war, so that taking off the heads from their spears, they used to cease from incursions and other hostilities. During those months, even when persons were surrounded by enemies, they lived in full security ; so that if a man met the murderer of his father or brother he durst not offer him any violence.

The months which the Arabs held sacred were the first, the seventh, the eleventh, and the twelfth in the year. The last mentioned of these being the time wherein they performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, not only that month, but also the preceding and the following, were for that reason kept inviolable, that every one might safely and without interruption pass and repass to and from the sacred city. The second is said to have been more strictly observed than any of the other three, probably because in that month the pagan Arabs used to fast; the ninth month, which was afterwards set apart by Muhammad for that purpose, being in the time of ignorance dedicated to drinking in excess.

The observance of the aforesaid months seemed so reasonable to the Prophet that it met with his approbation ; and the duty is accordingly confirmed and enforced by several passages of the Quran, which forbid war to be waged during those months against such as acknowledge them to be sacred, but grant, at the same time, full permission to attack alike in the sacred months as in the profane those who make no such distinction.

One practice, however, of the pagan Arabs, in relation to these sacred months, Muhammad thought proper to reform. Some of them, weary of sitting quiet for three months together, and eager to make

their accustomed incursions for plunder, used, by way of expedient, whenever it suited their inclinations or convenience, to put off the observance of the first proper month to the following month, thereby avoiding to keep the former, which they supposed it lawful for them to profane, provided they sanctified another month in lieu of it, and gave public notice thereof at the preceding pilgrimage. This custom of transferring the observation of a sacred month to a profane month is absolutely condemned in a passage of the Quran, and declared to be an impious innovation.

Sacred Day of Week.—The setting apart of one day in the week for the more peculiar attendance on God's worship, so strictly required by the Jewish and Christian religions, appeared to Muhammad to be so proper an institution, that he did not hesitate to imitate an example of which he approved; though for the sake of distinction, he obliged his followers to observe a different day from either. Several reasons are given why Friday the sixth day of the week was selected for this purpose; but Muhammad seems to have preferred the day on which the people used, long before his time, to assemble together though such gatherings were held, perhaps, rather on a civil than a religious account. However it be, Muhammadan writers bestow very extraordinary encomiums on this day, calling it the prince of days, and the most excellent day on which the sun rises, asserting also that it will be the day whereon the last judgment will be solemnised; and they esteem it a peculiar honour to Islam, that God has been pleased to appoint this same to be the feast-day of the Muslims, and to grant them the advantage of having first observed it.

Though the Muhammadans do not think themselves bound to keep their day of public worship so holy as is the case with the Jews and Christians, there being a permission, as is generally supposed, in the Quran, allowing them to return to their employments or diversions after divine service is over; yet the more devout disapprove of any part of that day being devoted to worldly affairs, and require it to be wholly dedicated to the business of the life to come.



CHAPTER XI

THE PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

“It is a duty towards God incumbent on those who are able to go thither to visit this house” [Becca or Mecca] (Quran, chapter iii., verse 90). Thus decreed the Prophet, the Lawgiver of Arabia, and for more than twelve centuries the injunction has been observed with a pious zeal and ardent fervour which put to shame the apathetic indifference of the civilised West. Volumes have been written by Muslim commentators in regard to this pilgrimage to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Madina, some laying more and some less stress upon the duty in question. Without seeking to follow in this labyrinth of sophistry and argument, it will suffice to assert that, whatever may be the *precise* value which Muhammad attached to the ceremony, he considered the discharge of the duty as all-important; and there is a tradition that he held that he who passes through life without fulfilling the injunction, “Perform the Pilgrimage of Mecca” (Quran, chapter ii., verse 192), may as well die a Jew or a Christian. Nor must it be overlooked that the Prophet of Islam made the “Hajj” one of the five

pillars or foundations of practice in the religion of Arabia.

Every Muslim is therefore bound to visit Mecca at least once during his lifetime, but there is a saving clause—provided “able” so to do. The discussions as to the definition of the elastic qualification attached to the injunction of the Prophet have been endless and undecided. As a general rule, however, intending votaries must comply with four conditions: (1) profession of the faith of Islam; (2) adolescence, generally fixed at the age of fifteen; (3) freedom from slavery; (4) mental sanity. To these some authorities add four more requirements, viz.: (1) sufficiency of provision; (2) the possession of a beast of burden, if living more than two days’ journey from Mecca; (3) security on the road; and (4) ability to walk two stages if the pilgrim have no beast. Others, again, include all conditions under two heads: (1) health, and (2) ability. It is even maintained by some, that those who have money enough, if they cannot go themselves, may hire a substitute to go to Mecca in their stead. But this privilege in the early days of Islam was very sparingly, if ever, used, and even now it is generally considered amongst the orthodox sects that pilgrimage cannot be performed by proxy. However, if a Muhammadan on his death-bed bequeath a sum of money to be paid to some person to visit Mecca on behalf of his patron, it is considered to satisfy in a way the claims of the Muslim law. It is also decreed a meritorious act to defray the expenses of those who cannot afford to obey the injunction of the Prophet. Many pilgrims, too poor to be able to collect the money which their religion requires them to spend for

this purpose, beg their way, and live upon the charity of those who are blessed with means and a benevolent heart to help their more necessitous brethren. Even women are not excused from the performance of the pilgrimage, and one portion of the temple is called "the women's sanded place," because it is appropriated to female devotees. To avoid the dangers and discomforts of the journey by land, women generally travel by sea as far as Jeddah. Perhaps they are in some cases persuaded to take this safer route, since, so says Doughty, "a man is mocked in the raw Hajj proverbs that will lead his querulous harem on pilgrimage." It may be explained that the weaker sex are forbidden to go alone; if, therefore, a fair lady have no husband or near relation to protect her, she must select some virtuous person worthy of confidence to accompany her, his expenses being charged to her account. This circumstance gives rise to a curious illustration of supply and demand. There are a class of idle and impudent scoundrels known as "guides," who besiege the pilgrim from morn till eve, obtruding advice whether it be sought or not, and sharing the votary's meals, but *not* his expenses, of which indeed they pocket a portion. These worthless vagabonds are wont, when the occasion presents itself, to let themselves out as husbands for rich old widows who repair to Mecca, or perchance now and again lend their services to some younger matrons who may have happened to lose their spouses on the road, it being meritorious and profitable to facilitate the progress of desolate ladies through the sacred territory of Arabia. The marriage under these circumstances, though formally arranged in the presence of a magistrate, is

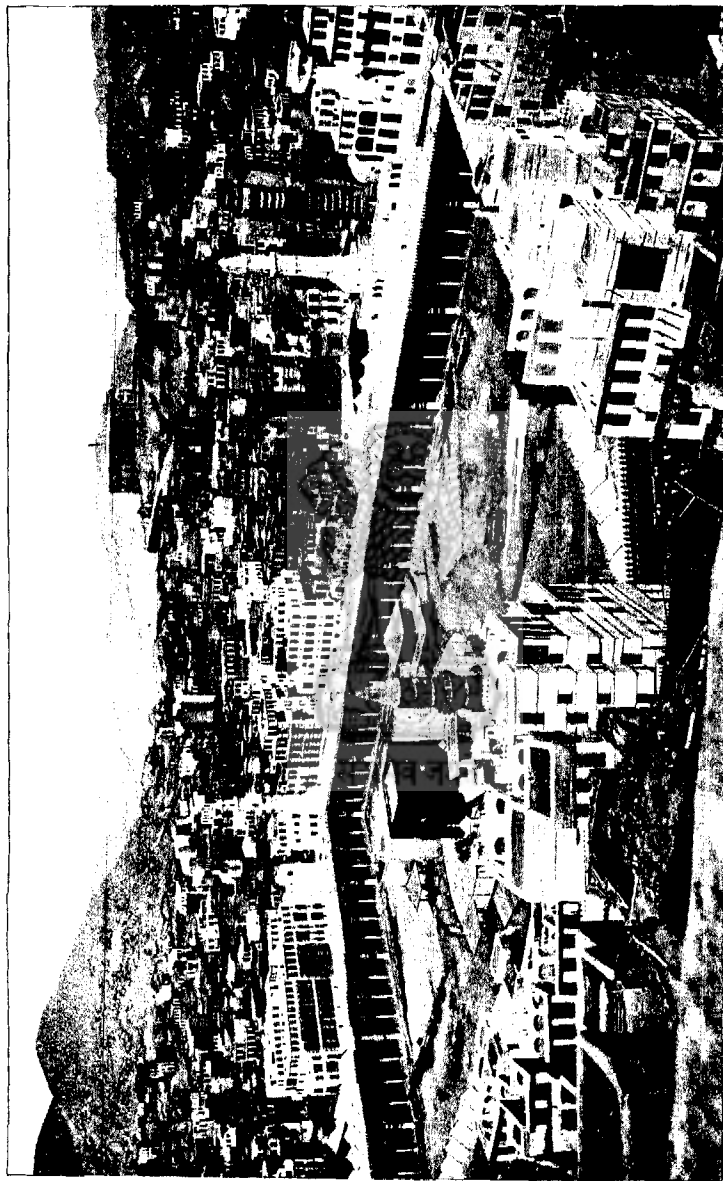
merely nominal, and a divorce is given on the return of the parties to Jeddah, or elsewhere beyond the limits of Mecca. Pilgrimage is not obligatory upon slaves, who, should they accompany their master to Mecca, must on being released from bondage again repair to the Holy City as "free men."

It need scarcely be said that Muhammad, ready as he was to impose the pilgrimage as a duty upon others, was no less willing to accept the obligation himself; while after his death the Khalifs who succeeded him gloried in following his example; though it is but fair to add that they journeyed in many cases with great pomp and luxury, at the head of a magnificent retinue. This devout practice continued certainly as late as the time of Khalif Harun ar Rashid, who early in the ninth century visited Mecca no less than nine times; on one occasion expending, it is said, a sum of upwards of £700,000 sterling! If, however, his own confession is to be accepted, the result of his piety was satisfactory, inasmuch as he gained thereby numerous victories over his enemies—a circumstance which led him to inscribe on his helmet an Arabic passage to the effect that "he who makes the pilgrimage to Mecca becomes strong and valiant."

So firmly impressed, indeed, are the Muhammadians with the impiety of neglecting the decree of their Prophet with regard to the pilgrimage, that in A.D. 931-2, when, in consequence of the proceedings of the Karmathians, who, on one occasion (A.D. 929) at that period, had slain 20,000 pilgrims, and plundered the temple of Mecca, the journey to the Holy Cities was too dangerous to be hazarded, devout Muslims, rather

than omit the duty altogether, betook themselves to Jerusalem. It is also recorded that a famous doctor, by name Hullage, was put to death for having taught certain ceremonies and prayers to supply the neglect of performing the "Hajj." Great indeed must be the merit of bowing in adoration before the mosque of the Arabian holy city, since it is taught that every step taken in the direction of the sacred precincts blots out a sin, while he who dies on his way is enrolled in the list of martyrs. In spite of all this (such is the weakness of human nature), in Burckhardt's time (about 1815), he found that Muhammadans were getting more and more lax in complying with the injunction of the Quran relative to pilgrimage, pleading the increased expense attendant on this duty, which in many cases they evade by giving a few dollars to some pious votaries to add to their own prayers some words on behalf of their errant and absent brethren.

It must not, however, be supposed that Muhammad *introduced* this rite amongst the Arabs; far otherwise, for he merely lent to an institution which he found in existence the all-potent weight of his sanction and approval. Omitting reference to primeval times, it will suffice to draw attention to the fact that, so far back as the middle of the fifth century, or upwards of 200 years before the era of the Prophet, the command of Mecca having passed into the hand of Qussai, "he maintained the Arabs," thus writes Tabari, one of the most trustworthy of native historians, "in the performance of all the prescriptive rites of pilgrimage, because he believed them in his heart to be a religion which it behoved him not to alter." Indeed, accord-



THE MOSQUE AT MECCA.

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ing to Sir W. Muir, who has carefully investigated the subject, "the religious observances thus perpetuated by Qussai were in substance the same as in the time of Muhammad, and with some modification the same as we still find practised at the present day." It is not improbable that the Arabs in turn borrowed the notion of pilgrimage from the Jews. According to Muslim divines man being but a "wayfarer," winding his steps towards another world, the "Hajj" is emblematical of his transient condition here below. The idea, though admittedly poetical, is so far borne out in practice that pilgrimage is common to all faiths of olden times. In the words of a modern writer, "the Hindus wander to Egypt, to Thibet, and to the inhospitable Caucasus; the classic philosophers visited Egypt, the Jews annually flocked to Jerusalem, and the Tartars and Mongols (Buddhists) journey to distant Lama serais. The spirit of pilgrimage was predominant in mediæval Europe, and the processions of the Roman Catholic Church are, according to her votaries, modern memorials of the effete rite."

Before entering upon any description of the mode in which the pilgrimage is carried out, it may be well to notice some incidental matters, not only in themselves worthy of attention, but in regard to which a clear understanding is necessary to make intelligible the account of the "Hajj" which will follow:—

The temple of Mecca, is an oblong square enclosed in a great wall, the measurement of which is variously estimated. Burckhardt reckons it at 440 yards long, by 352 broad, while Burton gives the dimensions as 452 yards by 370. None of the sides are quite in a straight line, though a casual observer

would not detect the irregularity. On the eastern side the open square is enclosed by a colonnade, round which are pillars in a quadruple row, being three deep on the other sides; these are united by pointed arches, every four of which support a dome plastered and whitened on the outside. These domes are 152 in number. The pillars are about 20 feet in height, and generally from one foot and a half to one foot and three quarters in diameter, being more or less irregular. Some are of white marble, granite or porphyry, but the greater number are of common stone from the mountains of Mecca. Between every three or four columns stands an octagonal pillar about four feet in thickness. On the east side are two shafts of reddish grey granite in one piece, and one of fine grey porphyry, with slabs of white felspar. On the north side is one red granite column, as well as a pillar of fine grained red porphyry. Some parts of the walls and arches are gaudily painted in stripes of yellow, red, and blue, as are also the minarets, though paintings of flowers in the usual Musulman style are nowhere seen. The floors of the colonnades are paved with large stones badly cemented together. Causeways, also paved, lead from the colonnades towards the centre; these latter are of sufficient breadth to admit four or five persons to walk abreast, and they are elevated about nine inches above the ground. Between these causeways, which are covered with fine gravel or sand, grass appears growing in several places, produced by the water oozing out of the jars, which are arranged on the ground in long rows during the day. There is a descent of eight or ten steps from the gates on the

north side into the platform of the colonnade, and of three or four steps from the gates on the south side. The whole of these buildings are studded with small domes or cupolas, while seven minarets with varied quadrangular and round steeples with gilded spires and crescents, lend to the mosque a picturesque and pleasing appearance.

Towards the middle of the area stands the Kaba, an oblong massive structure, the dimensions of which, according to Burckhardt, are as follows:—length 45 feet, breadth 35 feet, and height from 35 to 40 feet. Burton, however, gives the measurements as 55 feet by 45 feet, while it appeared to him taller than it was long. It is composed of grey Mecca stone in large blocks of different sizes. According to some authorities these latter are roughly joined together with bad cement, while others maintain that the stones are tolerably fitted, and held by excellent mortar like Roman cement. The Kaba stands upon a base 2 feet in height, composed of fine white marble slabs, polished like glass, welded in which are large brass rings for the purpose of holding down the covering. The outer roof (for there is also an inner roof) is supported from within by three octangular pillars of aloë wood, between which, on a bar of iron, hang some silver lamps. The only door which affords entrance is on the eastern side (though Burckhardt erroneously places it in the northern wall), about 7 feet above the ground. It is universally accepted that originally the door was on a level with the pavement, and no satisfactory explanation has ever been forthcoming for the hollow round the Kaba. Some chroniclers are of opinion that the Quraish tribe,

when in charge of the holy temple, raised the door to prevent devotees entering without permission, an explanation which does not, however, account for the fact that the floor of the building is on a level with the door. It is generally supposed that in days gone by there was a second door, on the side of the temple opposite the present entrance. However, there is now but one door; this, which was brought to Mecca from Constantinople in A.D. 1633, is coated with silver, and ornamented with several gilt decorations. At its threshold various small lighted wax candles and perfuming pans filled with musk, aloe wood, etc., are placed every night, and pilgrims and pious devotees collect the drippings of wax, the ashes from the aloe wood, and the dusts from the threshold, either to rub upon their foreheads or to preserve as relics.

At the south-eastern corner of the Kaba, near the door, is the famous "Black Stone," which forms a part of the sharp angle of the building at from 4 to 5 feet from the ground. It is an irregular oval about 7 inches in diameter, with an undulating surface, composed of about a dozen smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with a small quantity of cement, and perfectly well smoothed; the whole looking as if the stone had been broken into many pieces by a violent blow, and then united again. Worn away as the precious relic has been by the touches and kisses of countless myriads of pilgrims, it is hazardous to conjecture what was its original colour; at present it is a deep reddish brown, approaching to black, but it is popularly supposed amongst the Arabs themselves,

that, at first, whiter than milk, it grew black long since by the touch of an impure woman, or, as others proclaim, by the sins of mankind. The more reasonable amongst the sons of the desert, however, hold, what is probably the case, that the inside is still white, the colour of the exterior being the result of the devotions of countless worshippers; a theory which is confirmed by the experience of a recent traveller, who was bold enough to scratch the surface of the Holy Stone. It is surrounded on all sides by a border composed of a substance like pitch, mixed with gravel, of a similar but slightly different brownish colour. This border, which serves to support its detached pieces, is 2 or 3 inches in breadth and rises a little above the surface of the stone. Both the border and the stone itself are encircled by a silver band, wider below than above, and as regards two sides with a considerable swelling below, as if a part of the stone were hidden under it. The lower portion of the border is studded with silver nails.

It is asserted by Sale that when the Karmathians, a sect which rose to power about A.D. 891, took away the Black Stone, they could not be prevailed on for love or money to restore it, though the people of Mecca offered no less than 5000 pieces of gold for the precious charm (A.D. 931-2). After, however, keeping the relic for twenty-two years, seeing that they could not thereby draw the pilgrims from Mecca, they, of their own accord, sent back the worthless burden, at the same time openly declaring it not to be the true stone. It was, however, proved to be no counterfeit, so runs the legend, by its peculiar quality

of swimming on the water! It is contended by Muslims, that at the Day of Judgment this stone, then endowed with sight and speech, will bear witness in favour of all those who have touched it with sincere hearts.

In another corner of the Kaba there is a second stone about 5 feet from the ground: it is $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length and 2 inches in breadth, placed upright, and is merely common Mecca stone. As the people walk round they touch this emblem with their right hand, while others, more zealous than correct, occasionally kiss it.

The four sides of the Kaba are covered with a black silk stuff hanging down and leaving the roof bare, but secured at the bottom to the metal rings in the basement. This covering is known as the "Kiswa," an Arabic word which signifies a "robe or habit." On it are various prayers interwoven in the same colour as the stuff itself, while a little above the middle, and running round the whole building, is a zone composed of five pieces of the same material as the covering, sewn together so as to form one continuous band. This is also decorated with inscriptions in gold, the characters, which are large and elegant, being surrounded by a band of the same metal. At the end where the borders unite, there is a plentiful array of green and red silk. On the first and second pieces is inscribed in letters of gold worked into red silk, the "Throne" verselet from the Quran, and on the third and fourth the title of the reigning Sultan. That part of the "Kiswa" which covers the door is richly embroidered with gold and silver, and lined with green silk, openings being left

for the black stone and the other stone, both of which thus remain uncovered. The gold-embroidered curtain which conceals the entrance is called the "Kaba's face-veil," though the vulgar, connecting it in some way with the Prophet's daughter, term it "Fatima's face-veil." Some, however, maintain that the popular appellation is derived from the circumstance that a certain individual of that name, was the first person who sent a veil of this kind to cover the door of the Kaba. The origin of this latter curious custom is ascribed by Burton to the practice of typifying the church visible by a virgin or bride, an idea which has found its way into the poetry of the East, wherein this sacred object of veneration is elegantly styled "Mecca's Bride." It is also worthy of remark that the "Holy of Holies" is guarded by eunuchs, just as would be the case were it the abode of fair damsels, who amongst the richer classes are universally surrounded in the East by a band of those hideous monstrosities.

"The black colour of the 'Kiswa,'" says Burckhardt, "covering a large cube in the midst of a vast square, gives to the Kaba, at first sight, a very singular and imposing appearance. As it is not fastened down tightly, the slightest breeze causes it to move in slow undulations which are hailed with prayers by the congregation assembled around the building, as a sign of the presence of its guardian angels, whose wings, by their motion, are supposed to be the cause of the waving of the covering. 70,000 angels have the Kaba in their holy care, and are ordered to transport it to Paradise when the trumpet of the Last Judgment shall be sounded."

The Meccan temple was first dressed as a mark of honour by the chief of the Himyarites, and the

custom was preserved from his day amongst the Arabs, who, however, did not remove the old covering when placing a new one, till at length the weight threatened to crush the building. At the time of Qussai the cost of the veiling the Kaba was covered by subscription, till a wealthy merchant offered to provide the "Kiswa" on alternate years, an act of piety which gained for the zealous votary the name of "the Just One." The Prophet of Arabia directed that the covering should be of fine Yaman cloth, and the expense thereof paid out of the public treasury. The Khalif Omar, on the other hand, preferred Egyptian linen, and ordered that the "Kiswa" should be removed every year, and the old veil be distributed among the pilgrims. In the reign of Osman the Holy of Holies was twice clothed, in winter and summer respectively, receiving in the former season a covering of brocade, with a veil, and in the latter a suit of fine linen. Muawiya at first supplied linen and brocade, but he subsequently exchanged the former for striped Yaman stuff, and further directed that the walls should be cleaned and perfumed. At this period, too, the custom originated by the Khalif Omar of dividing the old "Kiswa" among the pilgrims became confirmed; it had been at first proposed to bury the disused covering that it might not be worn by the impure, whereupon Ayisha, the wife of the Prophet, suggested that it should be sold, and the proceeds distributed amongst the poor. The Meccans, however, followed the first half of the proposal emanating from the "Mother of the Muslims," but, anxious to benefit their own pockets, neglected the rest of the injunction. In recent years the old "Kiswa" has

not unfrequently been the perquisite of the tribe which have the custody of the holy temple, who do not scruple to "turn an honest penny" by the sale of the precious relic. As a matter of fact, however, the fees which the pious pilgrim is, as a rule, only too pleased to give for so sacred a memento of a visit to the mosque generally fall to the lot of the "guides," to whom reference has been already made.

Strictly speaking, the embroidered cloth which hangs over the door of the shrine, and the belt or zone on which the name of the Emperor of Constantinople is inscribed, belong to the Grand Sharif of Mecca; while of the rest one half goes to the keeper of the key, and the remainder to the slaves employed in the temple. Once in seven years, when the "Feast of Sacrifices" falls on a Friday, the "Kiswa" is sent in its entirety to the Sultan of Turkey.

In the ninth century the dress was changed three times a year, viz., on the 10th of the first month, when it was red brocade, on the 1st of the seventh month, on which occasion it was fine linen, and on the 1st of the tenth month, when it was white brocade. It was found, however, that the covering got spoilt by the pilgrims, whereupon two veils were supplied, and the brocade was let down as far as the pavement; but in the end a new veil was sent every two months. During the Khalifate of the Abbasides (A.D. 750-1258) this investiture came to signify sovereignty in the Hijaz. In the twelfth century the "Kiswa" was composed of black silk, and renewed by the Khalif of Baghdad annually, but it was afterwards green and gold. During the next century, two villages were assigned

by the Sultans of Egypt for the purpose of defraying the expenses attendant on providing a black covering for the outside of the Kaba, the inside of which, now, for the first time, was decked with a "Kiswa," the colour selected being red: hangings, too, were sent for the Prophet's tomb at Madina. After the Holy Cities had fallen under the power of the Turks, in A.D. 1518, considerable sums were devoted for the expenses of the "Kiswa," the colour of which was retained as before, black; the custom was also established that the inner "Kiswa" should be renewed at the accession of each Sultan. In consequence of the injury which the old curtain suffers from exposure to weather, etc., regular rules were instituted regarding the outer covering, which henceforth was taken off annually on the 25th of the eleventh month, the building is then left naked for the period of fifteen days, till the 10th of the following month, the third day of the great festival of the pilgrimage.

The outer "Kiswa" is worked at a cotton manufactory, known as "Khurunfish," at Cairo, by a hereditary family known as the Baitul Sadi. Its texture is of coarse silk mixed with cotton, this latter being introduced in consequence of the Muslim prohibition against the use of pure silk. The veil of the temple, which is composed of eight pieces, two for each face of the Kaba, the seams being concealed by the zone or girdle, is lined with white calico, and supplied with cotton ropes. There is a tradition that in days gone by all the Quran was interwoven into the "Kiswa." At the present day the inscriptions are: a verse which in English runs,

"Verily the first of houses founded for mankind is that at Bakka; blessed and a direction to all creatures"; added to this there are seven chapters from the same sacred work, namely the Cave, Mariam, the Family of Imran, Repentance, T. H., Tabarruk, and Y. S. The character of the writing is the largest style of Eastern caligraphy, and is legible from a considerable distance.

When the "Kiswa" is ready at Khurunfish it is carried in procession to the mosque at Cairo, where it is lined, sewn, and prepared for the journey. At the time of the departure of the great caravan of pilgrims from Egypt the veil is borne upon a high, flattish frame of wood, termed "Kajawa," and packed on the back of a fine camel; a procession is then formed, composed of numerous companies of darwishes with their banners and "shalishes," the latter being a pole about twenty feet in length, like a large flag-staff, with a huge conical ornament of brass on the top. Some of the people also carry flags inscribed with the profession of their faith, "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his Apostle," or with quotations from the Quran; sometimes, too, there are to be seen the names of the Prophets and the founders of the various orders which bear the banners. Occasionally some of the darwishes carry nets of various colours extended upon a framework of hoops, to denote the origin of their fraternity as fishermen. But the most curious part of the procession is in no way connected with religion or pious zeal. Quite otherwise, for it consists in a mock combat between two men armed with swords and shields; while in another direction may be seen a

fantastically dressed "Mulla" clothed in sheepskin, and wearing a high skin cap, as well as a grotesque false beard, composed of short pieces of cord or twist, apparently of wool, with moustachios formed of two long brown feathers. This *soi-disant* priest pretends from time to time to write judicial decisions, the paper being supplied by the spectators who flock around him. But a more remarkable group in the procession yet remains to be noticed, consisting of several darwishes, each of whom bears in his hand an iron spike about a foot in length, with a ball of the same metal at the thick end, having a number of small and short chains attached to it. To appearance these individuals thrust the spike in their eyes, and withdraw it without showing any mark of injury. The recompense for this piece of jugglery, for such it is, though the spectators are never disposed to acknowledge the deception, is but a few small coins or a pipeful of tobacco. The procession of the "Kiswa" takes place about three weeks before that of the Mahmil, which latter will be subsequently described, though on reaching Arafat, near Mecca, and indeed sometimes shortly after starting, the two are not infrequently united in order to add to the dignity and importance of the show. Sometimes, also, a further oblong curtain of black material, embroidered with gold, is borne in the procession, being destined to cover the "Maqam Ibrahim" in the Holy City.

The interior of the Kaba consists of a single room, the roof of which is supported by two columns, there being no other light but what is received through the door. The ceiling, the upper half of the two columns, and the side walls to within about five feet of the

floor, are hung with a thick stuff of red silk richly interwoven with flowers and inscriptions in large characters of silver; this latter, as previously stated, is renewed on the accession of each Sultan of Turkey, *not annually*, as is the case with the outer covering. The lower part of each of the above-mentioned columns is cased with carved aloe-wood, in contradistinction to that part below the silk hangings, where it is fine white marble ornamented with inscriptions, cut in relief, and with elegant arabesques, the whole being of exquisite workmanship. The floor, which as previously stated is level with the door, and therefore about seven feet above the area of the mosque, is inlaid with marble of different colours. Between the pillars numerous lamps are suspended; these, which are donations of the Faithful, are said to be made of solid gold, though there is a tradition that once upon a time the Shaikhs of Mecca, tempted by the prize, stole these costly relics, and conveyed them away in the wide sleeves of their gowns; but for the credit of Arab integrity no less than Muslim zeal for the House of their God, it may be hoped that this is but a lying legend of an embittered enemy.

The key of the Kaba is placed in a bag made indifferently in one of three colours, red, black, or green; the material being silk embroidered with golden letters; the words are "Bismillah" (in the name of God), the name of the reigning Sultan, an Arabic sentence proclaiming the circumstance that it is "the bag of the key of the Holy Kaba," and a verselet from the Quran, entitled the "Family of Imran." The bag is made at the same place as the "Kiswa."

The temple is partly surrounded at some distance by an enclosure in the shape of an irregular oval, composed of thirty-two slender gilt pillars connected at the base by a low balustrade, and at the top by bars of silver. Between every two of these are suspended seven glass lamps, which are always lighted after sunset. There is also a good pavement of marble, about eight inches below the level of the great square. This structure was erected in A.D. 1573, by order of the Sultan of Turkey. Beyond this there is a second pavement, about twelve feet broad, somewhat elevated above the first, but of coarser work; then another six inches higher, and twenty-seven feet broad, upon which stand several small buildings; further on than this the ground is gravelled, so that two broad steps may be said to lead down to the Kaba.

There are several holy spots and venerated relics in the vicinity of the Holy of Holies. Of these little more than a bare enumeration must suffice. (*a*) The four "Maqams," or "buildings," where the Imams of the orthodox Muhammadan sects, the Hanifites, Malikites, Hambalites, and Shafiites, take their station, and lead prayers for the congregation. (*b*) The Maqam Ibrahim, said to contain the sacred stone upon which Abraham stood when he built the Kaba, and which, with the help of his son Ishmael, he removed from the spot where he is supposed to have kneaded the chalk and mud required for his work, is also sacred in the eyes of the Muslims. (*c*) The "Mimbar," or pulpit of the mosque, constructed of fine white marble with many sculptured ornaments; it dates back to A.D. 1561. (*d*) The "Mizab" is the

spout through which the rain-water collected on the roof of the Kaba is discharged upon Ishmael's grave, where pilgrims are wont to stand to catch the precious liquid. This contrivance, which is about four feet in length and six inches in breadth, was sent from Constantinople in A.D. 1573, and is reported to be of pure gold.

No account of the temple at Mecca would be complete without an allusion to the famous well "Zamzam," the waters of which are held in the highest esteem, being used for drinking purposes and religious ablutions, but not for any baser objects. It is also sent in bottles to most parts of the Muslim world as a memento of the holy mosque. The Muhammadans contend that it is the identical spring which gushed out when Hagar was wandering in the desert with her son Ishmael, and some supposed that, when she spied the water, she called out in the Egyptian tongue, "Zam, Zam!" that is, "stay, stay!" Others, however, incline to the idea that the name takes its origin from the murmuring of the waters, the sound being rudely depicted by the two syllables in question. The matter must, however, remain unsettled, as it is impossible to solve the point beyond the pale of doubt. It is interesting to know that the water is said to be most efficacious on the 10th of the first month, the 15th of the eighth month, the 21st, 23rd, 25th, and 27th of the ninth month, and the 1st and 7th of the tenth month.

Allusion must not be omitted to the sacred pigeons which congregate on the mosque at Mecca, the "doves of the Kaba," as they are called. These birds are held in the deepest reverence, never being

killed for food, as elsewhere is the case. Various reasons have been assigned for the veneration with which they are regarded, the most plausible theory being that propounded by Burton, that it is connected with the tradition of the Arabs in regard to Noah's dove.

The cleansing of the sacred edifice occurs three times a year, and the mode of doing it is as follows :—The Grand Sharif and the Pasha (of whom hereafter) each fastens round his waist a shawl; after which, accompanied by two or three slaves and the “key bearer,” they enter the shrine, which they first wash thrice over, including walls, floor, pillars, and ceiling, the third time using rose-water; then they rub the walls with sandal-wood and scent, and afterwards they fumigate it with incense. The waste water is collected by the people in phials, etc., and preserved as a charm, or treasured as a sacred gift for their intimate friends and kindred on return home from the pilgrimage to Mecca. Of the shawls used by the Grand Sharif and Pasha during the process, one is given to the Keeper of the Key, and the other to the slaves. For sweeping out the shrine small brushes are used, which are afterwards thrown away outside; but even these are picked up by the people as sacred relics of the holy building. The dates on which this purification takes place are: 12th of the first month, 20th of the third month, and 20th of the eleventh month.

The temple of Mecca has been an object of veneration amongst the Arabs from time immemorial. Indeed, an antiquity is claimed for it dating back 2000 years before the creation! The tradition runs,

that when the Almighty informed the celestial throng of angels that he was about to send a vicegerent on earth they deprecated the design. "God knoweth what ye know not," was the gentle reproof. Allah thereupon created a building in heaven with four jasper pillars and a ruby roof, which done, he ordered the angels to make a like edifice (the first) for man on earth. According to some authorities a second house is supposed to have been erected by Adam when first he appeared on the earth, while others are of opinion that it was not constructed till after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, when, no longer able to hear the prayers of the angels, he was mercifully allowed a place of worship in which he might pay his devotions to his Creator. On Adam's death his tabernacle was taken to heaven—so say the Muslim legends—and a third building, composed of stone and mud, was placed in its stead by his son Seth. Some hold the view that this later Kaba was destroyed by the Deluge, while others declare that the pillars were allowed to remain. Information regarding the fourth house is more precise. Abraham and his son were ordered to erect an edifice upon the old foundations. It is supposed to have been of an irregular shape, without a roof, but with two doors level with the ground, and a hole for treasure in the interior. Gabriel brought the Black Stone from the mountains where it had been stored up, and Abraham thereupon, by direction of his angelic visitor, placed it in its present corner to mark the spot where the complicated rites of pilgrimage, into which the Patriarch was then initiated, should begin.

The Amalika, or descendants of Shem, the son of

Noah, who settled near Mecca, raised the fifth house. The sixth was built about the Christian era by the Bani Jorhom, the first of the Hebrews to abandon their mother tongue, and adopt the dialect of the Arabs, from amongst whom their founder had married a wife.

The celebrated Qussai, the forefather (in the fifth generation) of the Prophet, built the seventh house in the middle of the fifth century, according to the design which Abraham had previously adopted. He roofed it over with palm leaves, and stocking it with idols, induced his tribe to settle in its vicinity.

This last-mentioned place of worship was accidentally burnt down by a woman's censer, which set fire to the "Kiswa," or covering, and to complete the havoc the walls were destroyed by a torrent. The Quraish, who rebuilt the house, were assisted by the crew of a merchant ship wrecked at Jedda, while the vessel itself afforded material for the roof. But lacking money they curtailed its proportions, though at the same time they doubled the height of the walls; they also built a staircase in the northern side, closed the western door, and placed the eastern porch above the ground, to prevent men entering without leave. It is said that while digging the foundations the workmen came to a green stone, like a camel's hunch, which when struck with a pickaxe sent forth blinding lightning, and prevented further excavation. This eighth house was built during the time of the Prophet of Arabia (A.D. 609), who, as has been explained, was called upon to settle a dispute amongst the tribes as to the position of the Black Stone.

In A.D. 683 Abdullah bin Zubair, nephew of the Prophet's widow, Ayisha, rebuilt the next House of God, its predecessor having been injured by fire, which burnt the covering, besides splitting the Black Stone into three pieces. The edifice was, on this ninth occasion, made of cut stone and fine lime, brought from Yaman. Abdullah lengthened the building by 7 cubits, and added 9 cubits to its height, which was thereupon 27 cubits. He also roofed over the whole, reopened the western door, supported the interior with a single row of three columns, instead of the double row of six placed there by the Quraish. When finished it was perfumed internally and externally, and invested with brocade, after which Abdullah and all the citizens, going forth in procession, slew one hundred victims, and rejoiced with great festivities. In the course of a decade (A.D. 693) it was ruled that Abdullah had made unauthorised additions to, and changes in, certain of the more sacred portions of the house, and one Hajjaj bin Yusuf was charged to rebuild the edifice, the tenth of the series, one and all of which had failed to resist the attacks of fate. The greater part of the present building dates from the period of this latter house, but in A.D. 1620 a violent storm swept away the mosque, while the waters, rising above the threshold of the Kaba, carried away the lamp-posts, the Maqam Ibrahim, all the northern wall of the house, half of the eastern and one-third of the western side. The repairs, which were so considerable that some authorities deem them to constitute the eleventh house, were not finished till upwards of ten years.

The sanctity of the Kaba is, of course, a funda-

mental article of belief with every pious Muslim, and as might have been expected, no effort has been spared to prove to mankind how the Almighty has blessed the house where His honour dwelleth. The signs of divine favour—in themselves curious and interesting—are thus summarised by Captain Burton, from whose well-known work many of the foregoing particulars have been gathered :—

“The preservation of the Hajarul Aswad, and the Maqam Ibrahim, from many foes, and the miracles put forth (as in the war of the Elephant) to defend the house; the violent and terrible deaths of the sacrilegious, and the fact that, in the Deluge, the large fish did not eat the little fish in the Haram. A wonderful desire and love impel men from distant regions to visit the holy spot; and the first sight of the Kaba causes awe and fear, horripilation, and tears. Furthermore, ravenous beasts will not destroy their prey in the sanctuary land, and the pigeons and other birds never perch upon the house, except to be cured of sickness, for fear of defiling the roof. The Kaba, though small, can contain any number of devotees.* No one is ever hurt in it,† and invalids renew their health by rubbing themselves against the ‘Kiswa,’ and the Black Stone. Finally, it is observed that every day 100,000 mercies descend upon the house; and especially that if rain come up from the northern corner there is plenty in Iraq, if from the south, there is plenty in Yaman, if from the east, plenty in India, if from the western there is plenty in Syria, and if from all four angles, general plenty is presignified.”

The pilgrimage must be performed between the seventh and tenth days of the twelfth month, a visit to Mecca at any other time not having the full

* According to Burckhardt the building will contain 35,000 persons, but there are not generally more than 10,000 to be seen there.

† This fact is disputed by Burton, who said that the mosque is hardly ever opened without some accident happening.



PILGRIM DRESS, MALE AND FEMALE.



सत्यमेव जयते

merit attaching to that act of piety if undertaken at the enjoined period. Hence the Muhammadan year being lunar, while the seasons are regulated by the sun, the time of the "Hajj" varies every twelve-month, and occurs in spring, summer, autumn, or winter, as the case may be, the entire change being completed during a cycle of thirty-two solar years.

The ceremony is of three kinds: (1) the lesser pilgrimage (Umra); this is performed at any time save the appointed season; (2) the simple pilgrimage (Hajj), which must be undertaken at the appointed period; and (3) the greater pilgrimage (Hajjul Akbar); this is the usual "Hajj" carried into execution when the day of "Arafat" (of which more anon) falls on a Friday.

As regards the lesser pilgrimage it is only necessary to state that it is generally confined to a journey to a mosque about six miles from Mecca, whence, after a prayer, the votary repairs to the Holy City and performs the "Tawaf" and "Sai" (to be hereafter described); he then shaves his head, lays aside his pilgrim's garb (Ihram), and all is finished. This act of piety and devotion may be performed at any season of the year, but it is considered especially meritorious during the sacred seventh month, which forms a break in the middle of the eight secular months.

When the votary performs the "Hajj" and the "Umra" together, as was done by the Prophet, on the occasion of his last visit to Mecca, it is termed "Al Muqarinna" (the meeting); "Al Ifrad" (singulation) is when either the "Hajj" or the "Umra" is undertaken separately; but in any case the former

must precede the latter. A third description, termed "Al Tamattu" (possession), is when the pilgrim assumes the "Ihram," and does not cast it aside throughout the tenth and eleventh months and during nine days (ten nights) in the twelfth month, performing the "Hajj" and "Umra" the while.

Sir W. Muir says that, "according to the rules of Islam, the pilgrim must resolve before he assumes the pilgrim garb which pilgrimage he will perform.

The Musulman who has performed the pilgrimage is called "Haji."

Upon the votary's arrival at the last stage (of which there are five), about five or six miles from Mecca, he bathes himself and assumes the sacred robe, which is called "Ihram." This latter, however, may be taken into wear at other spots, the farther from Mecca the greater the merit; consequently, some poor wretches from India and Egypt travel the whole journey in this costume. As a rule, however, those who come from Hindustan array themselves in their befitting costume the day previous to their arrival at Jedda. The "Ihram" consists of two new cotton seamless cloths, each six feet long by three and a half broad, the colour being white with narrow red stripes and fringes. One of these garments, called "Izar," is wrapped round the loins from the waist to the knee, and knotted or tucked in at the middle; the other, known as the "Radha," which is knotted at the right side, being thrown loosely over the back, exposing the arm and shoulder, while leaving the head uncovered. It is allowable, however, to carry an umbrella, should health require such a protection against the weather. It is customary,

at least in some cases, to dispense with the "Ihram," when reason of health can be alleged, but in such instances a sheep must be sacrificed at Mecca as a "sin-offering." Women do not always wear the "Ihram," some attiring themselves in the veil usually worn by their sex in the East, while others put on, for the occasion, a large white veil, in which they envelop themselves down to their feet. The veil, in common with the "Ihram" worn by the men, being sanctified by use, is religiously kept by the pilgrim during life, in order to serve at death as a winding-sheet for the corpse of the pious owner.

Nothing is allowed upon the instep, a prohibition which precludes the use of shoes or boots. To meet the requirements of the case, sandals are made at Mecca expressly for the pilgrimage. The poorer classes cut off the upper leather of an old pair of shoes. After the pilgrims have assumed the garb enjoined by the Prophet, they must not anoint their head, shave any part of the body, pare the nails, or wear any other garment than that described above; even scratching is not permissible, lest perchance vermin be destroyed, or a hair uprooted; accordingly, it is a general practice to call the "barber" into requisition immediately before donning the "Ihram," the head is then shaved, the nails are cut and the mustachios trimmed: thus much as regards the men; the weaker sex gather up their hair and cut off about four fingers' length. It is further forbidden, while clad in the garment of sanctity, to hunt wild animals, or to kill those which were such originally; but the pilgrim may destroy five noxious creatures, viz., kites, crows, rats, scorpions, and dogs given to biting.

Trees are to be spared, as also self-growing plants, but it is allowable to cut grass. For each infraction of these ordinances it is incumbent to sacrifice a sheep, as an indication that the offender is worthy of death.

There is a peculiar custom at Mecca, that if a person engages a house he is obliged to pay a full year's rent, even should but a few weeks remain when the house is taken till the expiry of the twelfth month, which ends the Muhammadan year; and not only so, but when this latter period arrives, the occupier has either to leave the house, or become liable for another year's rent; so that not unfrequently a hapless tenant is compelled to pay two years' rent for the use of a house during the term of but a few weeks. On the occasion of the pilgrimage season, houses are generally hired furnished for a few weeks; but the poorer classes live in "free-houses," built by rich and pious votaries for the benefit of such of their fellow-countrymen as cannot afford either to pay rent or to hire rooms; it not unfrequently happens, however, that the purpose of the founder is defeated, owing to the circumstance that the occupier has to pay the manager for the privilege of living rent-free, and the highest bidder is pretty sure to win the day. Some "free-homes" are reserved for the gentle sex. The principal of these houses belong to the Javanese authorities, the rulers of Haidarabad, Bhopal, etc. The welfare of the various peoples who flock to Mecca is further promoted by the presence of agents charged with the duty of protecting the interests of the respective nations to which they belong. There is also a hospital; but the accommo-

dation is limited, and in spite of every precaution, the condition of the poor is most miserable. When they get ill, scarce a soul cares to attend to the hapless wretches, who cannot at times procure even that necessity of life, water; weak, sick, ill-fed, and houseless, they drag on a miserable existence in the streets, till death puts an end to troubles, which their fellow-creatures are unable or unwilling to assuage.

According, however, to the testimony of the traveller Doughty, it is doubtful whether as a rule, save amongst the richer part of the community, those who secure houses fare much better. His testimony is as follows :—

“The camping ground at Mecca lies too far from the place; the swarm of poor strangers must seek their hired dwelling-chambers in the Holy City, thus many are commonly stowed together in a very narrow room. The most arriving feeble from great journeys, with ill humours increased in their bodies, new and horrible disorders must needs breed among them;—from the Mecca pilgrimage has gone forth many a general pestilence, to the furthest of mankind.”

After the toilet is completed, the pilgrim, turning the face in the direction of Mecca, says aloud some Arabic words, which may be rendered, “I vow this Ihram of Hajj and the Umra to Allah Almighty.” It is also customary at this stage to recite the “Talbiya”—literally translated, it runs thus :—

“Here I am, O Allah! here am I,
No partner hast Thou, here am I,
Verily praise and beneficence are thine, and the kingdom.
No partner hast Thou, here am I.”

Immediately on arrival at Mecca the pilgrim performs the legal ablutions. Entering the Holy City by day and on foot, a visit is at once paid to the sacred mosque, taking care that when the glance first alights upon the "Kaba" (Holy of Holies), the following or some similar words are uttered: "O Allah! increase this Thy house in degree and greatness and honour and awfulness, and increase all those who have honoured it and glorified it, the Hajis and Mutamirs [Umra performers], with degree and greatness and honour and dignity." A visit is next paid to the "Black Stone," which is touched with the right hand, and then reverently kissed; that done, the "Kaba" is encompassed seven times. This latter act, called "Tawaf," is performed, commencing on the right and leaving the Holy of Holies on the left, the circuits being made thrice with a quick step or run, and four times at a slow pace. These processions are supposed to take their origin from the motions of the planets. The votary then repairs to the "Maqam Ibrahim," a hallowed and venerated spot in the temple of Mecca, and utters two prayers, after which steps are retraced to the "Black Stone," which is once again devoutly kissed. It should be stated that the devotions are performed silently by day, and aloud at night.

All visitors do not enter the "Kaba"; indeed, there is a tradition that Muhammad himself, on being questioned as to the reason why he had passed the sacred portal, replied: "I have this day done a thing which I wish I had left undone. I have entered the Holy House, and haply some of my people, pilgrims, may not be able to enter therein, and may turn back

grieved in heart ; and, in truth, the command given to me was only to encircle the Kaba, it is not incumbent on any one to enter it." Those, however, who elect to tread the hallowed floor, are mulcted in a nominal fee, equivalent to about four shillings per head, but the charge by no means exhausts the demands on the pilgrim's purse. Moreover, after visiting the sacred precincts a person is bound, amongst other things, never again to walk barefooted, to take up fire with the fingers, or to tell an untruth. The last mentioned is indeed "a consummation devoutly to be wished for," albeit it would deprive, in some cases, an Oriental of "meat and drink and the roof that covers him." It may here be mentioned that the Kaba is opened free to all comers about ten or twelve times in each year, while on other occasions the pilgrims have to collect amongst themselves a sum sufficient to tempt the guardians' cupidity. The mosque itself, there being no doors to the gateway, is open at all times, and the people of Mecca love to boast that at no hour either by day or night is the temple without a votary.

The pilgrim afterwards repairs to the gate of the temple leading to Mount Safa, whence, ascending the hill and raising the cry of "Takbir" (praise to God), it is incumbent to implore pardon for past sins. This done, a descent is made preparatory to a clamber up the hill of Marwa, a proceeding called "As Sai" (running), and repeated several times. The prayer used on this occasion is as follows : "O my Lord, pardon and pity and pass over that sin which Thou knowest : verily Thou knowest what is not known, and verily Thou art the Most Glorious, the Most Generous. O our Lord ! grant us in this world prosperity, and in

the future prosperity, and save us from the punishment of fire." It is usual, in the case of male pilgrims, to run between Safa and Marwa, because Hagar the mother of Ishmael when in these parts is supposed to have sped in haste searching after water to preserve the life of herself and her hapless infant ; but notwithstanding the example thus set by one of their own sex, the women as a rule walk the distance. Some, however, are of opinion that the custom of running arose from the circumstance that on one occasion the infidel Meccans mocked the companions of the Prophet, and said that the climate of Macina had made them weak, whereupon this vigorous method was adopted to disprove the calumny.

The eighth of the twelfth month commences with a ceremony known as "Tarwiya" (carrying water), probably in commemoration of the circumstance that in the pagan period the Arabs used to spend their time in providing themselves with this necessary of life. On this day the worshipper unites with fellow pilgrims in performing the usual services of the Muslim ritual at a spot called Mina, where he stays the night. On the morning of the ninth, a rush is made to Mount Arafat, a holy hill which, says Burton—

"Owes its name and honours to a well-known legend. When our first parents forfeited heaven by eating wheat, which deprived them of their primeval purity, they were cast down upon earth. The serpent descended at Ispahan, the peacock at Kabul, Satan at Bilbays (others say Sennar or Sistan), Eve upon Arafat, and Adam at Ceylon. The latter, determining to seek his wife, began a journey to which earth owes its present mottled appearance. Wherever our first father placed his foot—which was large—a town afterwards arose, while between the strides will always be a

‘country.’ Wandering for many years he came to the mountain of mercy, where our common mother was continually calling upon his name, and their recognition gave the place the name of Arafat. Upon its summit Adam, instructed by the archangel, erected a ‘Madah,’ or place of prayer; and between the spot and the ‘Nimra’ Mosque the pair abode till death. Others declare that after recognition the first pair returned to India, whence for forty-four years in succession they visited the Holy City at pilgrimage time.”

At Mount Arafat, after first performing early worship at the time of morn, when “a man cannot see his neighbour’s face,” the votary on arrival says two prayers with the Imam (priest), and hears the “Khutba” or sermon (which generally lasts three hours!) the preacher all the while holding in his left hand a short staff, probably emblematical of the early days of Islam, when a sword was carried as a protection against surprise. Those present appear before the priest in ordinary clothes, the “Ihram” being laid aside for the occasion. This act of devotion is so all-important, that if the luckless pilgrim be too late to listen to the homily the labour of the journey is irretrievably lost. There must also be abundant supplication, while they who repeat 11,000 times the chapter of the Quran commencing, “Say He is our God,” will obtain from Allah all that is desired!

When the sermon is finished the votary waits till sunset, preparatory to a visit to the Holy Hill. It is thought meritorious to accelerate the pace on quitting the mountain of Eve, and a strange race therefore ensues, known as “the pushing from Arafat.” It may well be imagined that a huge camp three or four miles long and from one to two miles in breadth cannot pass through a comparatively narrow gorge without affrays occurring, and on some occasions as many as

200 lives have been lost. It is a truly remarkable scene; innumerable torches are lighted, twenty-four being carried by the grandees, soldiers fire their muskets, martial bands play, sky-rockets are thrown into the air, and all the while the "Hajj" proceeds at a quick pace in the greatest disorder, amidst a deafening clamour, through the Pass of Mazaumain *en route* to Muzdalifa, at which latter place each pilgrim picks up several small pebbles, and repeats the sunset and evening prayers, after his work is done for the night.

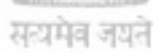
The next morning (the tenth day of the twelfth month) or third day of the pilgrimage, is the great "day of days," distinguished in the East by several names. The Turks call it "the sacrifice of Bayram"; to the Indians it is known as "the kine fête"; while the Arabs designate it indifferently, "the feast of sacrifice," "the feast of the forenoon," and "the great feast"—the last mentioned being perhaps most commonly in use.

At an early hour the pilgrim proceeds to Mina, and repairs at once in succession to three places indicated by a like number of pillars, at each of which spots he takes one of the seven small stones brought from Muzdalifa, and having repeated a particular prayer over the same, and blown upon it, he throws it at a pillar. When the largest is reached, the pilgrim exclaims as he casts the pebble, "In the name of Allah—Allah is Almighty—I do this in hatred of the Fiend and his shame." This action is repeated till all the stones are used. This curious custom, known as "the throwing of the pebbles," is supposed to have its origin in the circumstance that once upon a time



THE DEVIL'S PUNCH-BOWL AT MINA.

Reproduced by permission from C. Stenach Hargraves's "Hillier and M. K. K."

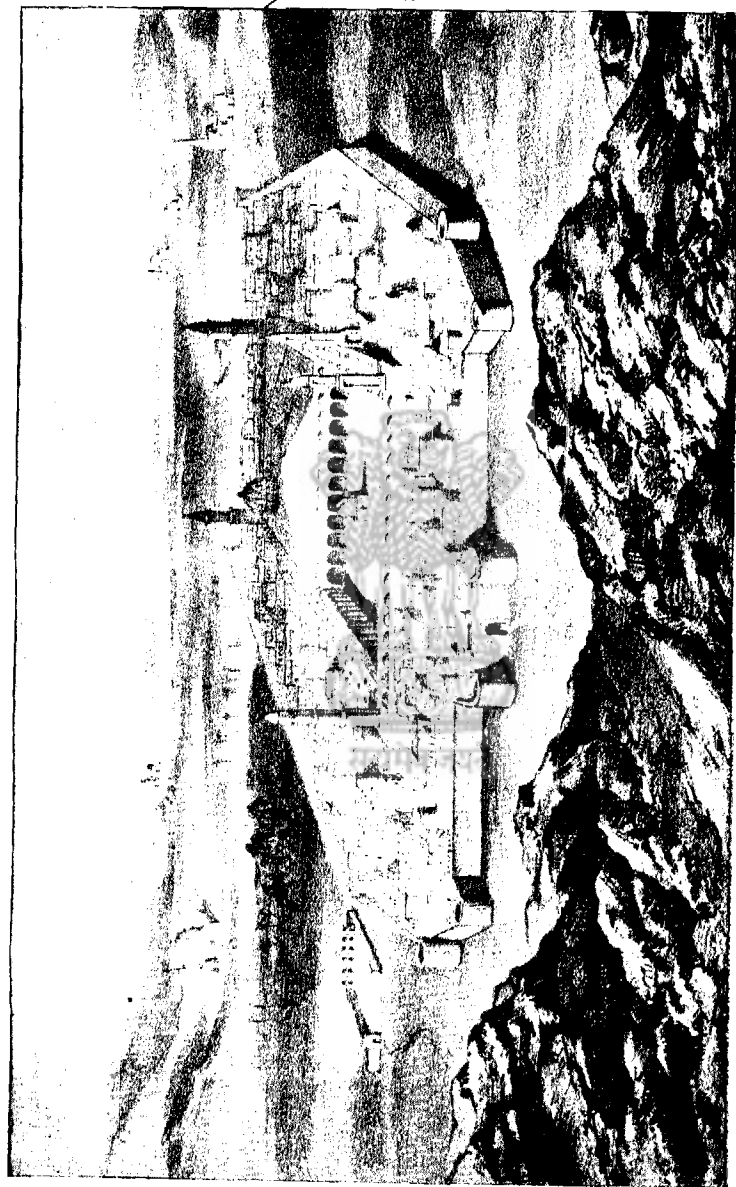


the devil, in the shape of an elderly Shaikh, appeared successively to Adam, Abraham, and Ishmael, but was driven back by the simple process, inculcated by the Angel Gabriel, of throwing stones about the size of a bean, a mode of exorcism fatal to the wiles of the enemy of mankind. The scene of these adventures is marked by pillars, one of which bears the characteristic appellation, "the Great Satan." Others incline to the view that Abraham, meeting the devil in this place, and being disturbed thereby in his devotions, and tempted to disobedience in the contemplated sacrifice of his son, was commanded by God to drive away the Fiend with stones. The "Great Satan" is a dwarf buttress of rude masonry about eight feet high by ten and a half broad, placed against a rough wall of stones at the Meccan entrance to Mina. As each devotee strives to get as near to this pillar as possible before casting a stone thereat, fights and quarrels are of frequent occurrence, and many a broken limb or injured head betokens the pious zeal of the unhappy worshipper, whom no danger or difficulty can deter from carrying out to the letter the injunctions of the Prophet.

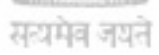
This dangerous ceremony finished, the pilgrim performs the usual sacrifice of the "feast of the forenoon." This is perhaps the most revolting spectacle which can well be pictured; thousands of animals are slaughtered in "the Devil's Punch Bowl," the number being variously estimated at from 80,000 to 200,000; the entrails are then cast about the valley in every direction, where they remain to rot and putrefy in the sun; the effluvium, as may be supposed, passes imagination. In the midst of

this loathsome scene may be beheld poor Hajjis collecting morsels of flesh with greedy avidity, while negroes and Indians not infrequently employ themselves in cutting the meat into slices and drying it for their travelling provision. Such are the horrors of the valley of Mina : a spot so wonderful that it is said occasionally to extend itself so as to provide room for the votaries present at the ceremonies of which it is annually the scene, while orthodox Muslims further assure us that vultures never carry off the slaughtered flesh, but piously leave it for the destitute but zealous pilgrims ; not even a fly, too, will settle upon food sanctified to the use of religion. Unhappily the testimony of travellers conflicts with the truth of these miracles, which exist but in the imagination. It may be added that of late years provision is made for the burial of the carcasses instead of their being allowed to putrefy and fester on the surface of the ground.

This slaughter of an animal without spot or blemish is supposed to commemorate the sacrifice of Ishmael by Abraham, hence the name (sacrifice) which it bears. It may be here explained that it is the commonly received opinion amongst the Muhammadans that the son whom the Patriarch offered was Ishmael not Isaac. Muslim commentators also assert that the "Friend of God" went so far as to draw the knife with all his strength across the lad's throat, but was miraculously hindered from hurting him. As regards the victim, some suppose it to have been a ram—the very same creature indeed which Abel sacrificed—this said animal having been brought for the occasion from



MADINA.



Paradise. Others are of opinion that it was a wild goat, the horns of which were afterwards hung up on the spout of the Kaba, where they remained till the building was consumed by fire.

The votary now gets shaved and the nails pared ; the religious garb is then removed and the "Hajj" is ended, the weary zealot being allowed a well-earned rest at Mecca during the ensuing three days, known as "the days of drying up," *i.e.*, the blood of the sacrifice. Before, however, leaving Mecca, the pilgrims should once more perform the circuit round the "Kaba," and throw seven stones at each of the sacred pillars. The total number of stones thrown differs somewhat among the various sects. The Shafiis use forty-nine, *viz.*, seven on the tenth day of the month, seven at each of the three pillars (total twenty-one) on the eleventh day, and the same on the twelfth day. The Hanafis further throw twenty-one stones on the thirteenth of the month, thus raising the number to seventy. The first seven pebbles *must* be collected at Muzdalifa, but the rest may be taken from the Mina valley ; in any case, however, each stone should be washed seven times prior to its being thrown, and there must be a total of *not less* than seven for each pillar. The Hanafis attempt to approach as near as possible to the pillar, while the Shafiis are allowed more latitude, provided they do not exceed a limit of five cubits.

Ordinary pilgrims remain at Mecca from ten to fifteen days after the completion of all the requisite ceremonial. Some, however, stay for several months, while others again dwell there for years ; but residence at the Holy City is not encouraged by

Muhammadian authorities, nominally on the ground that it tends to lessen the respect due to the house of God ; in reality, however, the difficulty of sojourning for any lengthened period in a town so ill calculated to support a large population is probably the true cause of the objections raised against such a pious proceeding as remaining constantly in sight of the Holy of Holies.

After the pilgrimage is finished, a certain amount of time is consumed in collecting mementos of the "Hajj"; these are for the most part pieces of wood off the tree called "Pilu," which are well adapted for cleaning the teeth. "Lif," a kind of grass like silk thread; white, black, and red antimony for the eyelids; barley of the species eaten by the Prophet, commonly grown in the valleys about Mecca and Madina; and dates from the latter city. After all these arrangements are completed, many of the Hajjis betake themselves to the mosque of the Prophet at Madina; this act of piety is a practice of faith, and the most effectual way of drawing near to Allah through His messenger Muhammad; though highly meritorious, it is nevertheless a voluntary undertaking, the choice being left to the individual's free will.

The mosque of the Prophet at Madina is built on much the same plan as that at Mecca, though the dimensions are considerably smaller, the edifice being but 290 feet in length, and 229 in breadth. A minute description of the building scarcely seems necessary; but it would not be possible to omit mention of the "Hujra," or sacred enclosure, a square building of black stones, supported by two pillars, in the interior

of which structure are, it is alleged, the tombs of Muhammad and his two earliest friends and immediate successors, Abu Bakr and Omar. In front of these sacred objects of veneration a curtain is drawn to the height of at least thirty feet ; there is also a small gate always kept shut, no person being permitted under any pretence to enter within the holy precincts except the chief eunuchs, who take care of the place, and who at night put on the new curtains, which latter are sent from Constantinople whenever the old covering is decayed (according to some authorities this happens about once in six years), or when a new Sultan ascends the throne. The old veils are sent to Constantinople, and serve to cover the tombs of the Sultans and princes.

The temple was founded by Muhammad himself, who erected a small chapel on the spot where his camel had first rested in the town ; this building was made of mud walls, with a roof of palm leaves, supported by pillars composed of the stems of the same description of tree. During the first century and a half after his death, the edifice was enlarged by successive Khalifs, till it attained a considerable size and corresponding splendour. From A.D. 776 till A.D. 1256 the structure remained unaltered ; but in the latter year the mosque caught fire, and was burnt to the ground, a calamity which occurred again in A.D. 1481, this time owing to its having been struck by lightning. The havoc was complete, the interior of the "Hujra" being the only portion which escaped destruction. The mosque, as it now stands, was built in A.D. 1486 by Qaid Bey, King of Egypt, who sent 300 workmen from Cairo for that purpose ; but

so great was the débris of the former building that it was with the greatest difficulty the original place of the Prophet's tomb could be ascertained.

The ceremonies on visiting them osque are as follows : —

Before entering the town the pilgrim purifies himself with total ablution, rubbing his body, if possible, with perfumes. Arrived in sight of the dome he utters some pious ejaculations, after which the "cicerone," leads him to the gate known as "Babu's Salam," the threshold of which must be passed with the right foot foremost, a custom general as regards all mosques, but especially insisted upon at Madina. Reciting some prayers as he walks, the votary then makes his way to a particular spot, where he utters a short intercession and salutes the mosque with four prostrations, repeating two short chapters of the Quran, viz., the 109th, entitled "The Unbelievers," and the 112th, which proclaims the Unity of God. The pilgrim now makes his way to the "Hujra," taking his stand beneath the western window, where, with arms half raised, he addresses his invocations to Muhammad, recapitulating as many as he can recollect of the ninety appellations by which the Prophet is characterised, and prefixing to each a few words equivalent to "I salute thee." Next, intercession is made to heaven on behalf of all those relatives and friends for whom it is considered desirable to pray, and finally a charitable hope is expressed that God will "destroy our enemies, and may the torments of hell fire be their lot." It is in consequence of this custom that letters addressed to the people of Madina invariably conclude with a

request that the writer's name may be mentioned at the Prophet's tomb.

After a few minutes spent in pressing the head close against the window in silent adoration, the visitor steps back and performs a prayer of four prostrations under a neighbouring colonnade; he then approaches the second window, on the same side, said to face the tomb of Abu Bakr, and repeats the procedure adopted on the first occasion. So also as regards the window where Omar is supposed to be buried. This done, the pilgrim betakes himself to another corner of the building, where the tomb of the daughter of Muhammad is situated; here, after four prostrations, a prayer is addressed to the "bright Fatima." Retracing his steps to the porch of departure, a prayer is uttered as a salutation to the Deity on leaving the mosque. This completes the ceremony, which lasts about twenty minutes, and the votary is then at liberty to withdraw, not, however, without having paid his fee to the numerous individuals—alike men and women—who sit with handkerchiefs spread out to receive the gifts of the Faithful.

According to Burckhardt, "the ceremonies may be repeated as often as the visitor wishes; but few perform them all, except on arriving at Madina, and when on the point of departing. It is a general practice, however, to go every day at least once to the window opposite Muhammad's tomb, and recite there a short prayer. Many persons do it whenever they enter the mosque. It is also a rule never to sit down in the mosque for any of the usual daily prayers, without having previously addressed an invocation to the Prophet, with uplifted hands, and the face turned towards his tomb. A similar practice is prevalent in many other mosques in the East, which contain the tomb of a saint. The

Muslim divines affirm that prayers recited in the mosque of Madina are peculiarly acceptable to the Deity, and incite the Faithful to perform this pilgrimage by telling them that one prayer said in sight of the "Hujra" is as efficacious as one thousand said in any other mosque except that of Mecca."

One peculiarity at Madina must not escape mention, to wit, that there are placed at the pulpit and in one or two other places in the mosque large wax candles sent from Constantinople; these, which are as thick as a man's body, and twelve feet high, are lighted in the evening by means of a ladder placed near them. The doors of the building are closed about three hours after sunset, and opened about an hour subsequent to dawn; but those who wish to pray all night can easily obtain permission from the eunuch in charge, who sleeps near the "Hujra." During the ninth month of the year the mosque is kept open all night. It may be added that the whole charge of the sacred building is entrusted to about forty or fifty eunuchs, who are much respected in Madina, assuming in consequence airs of great importance—indeed, when they pass through the bazaar it is customary for persons to kiss the guardians' hands. They have large stipends, which are sent annually from Constantinople by the Syrian caravan, and they also share in all the donations made to the mosque, while, in addition, they expect presents from every rich pilgrim, as well as fees from visitors to the "Hujra." These unfortunate creatures live together in one of the best quarters of the city, and their houses are said to be furnished in the most costly and luxurious manner. Another distinctive peculiarity, also, attaches to Madina—Burckhardt's

remarks in allusion to it are at once instructive and interesting.

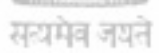
"The mosque at Mecca is visited daily by female Hajis, who have their own station assigned to them. At Madina, on the contrary, it is thought very indecorous in women to enter the mosque. Those who come here from foreign parts visit the tomb during the night after the last prayer, while the women resident in the town hardly ever venture to pass the threshold; my old landlady, who had lived close to it for fifty years, assured me that she had been only once in her life within its precincts, and that females of a low character only are daring enough to perform their prayers there. In general, women are seldom seen in the mosques in the East, although free access is not forbidden. A few are sometimes met in the most holy temples, as that of 'Azhar' at Cairo, where they offer up their thanks to Providence for any favour which they may have taken a vow thus to acknowledge. Even in their houses the women seldom pray, except devout old ladies, and it is remarked as an extraordinary accomplishment in a woman if she knows her prayers well, and has got by heart some chapters of the Quran, women being considered in the East as inferior creatures, to whom some learned commentators on the Quran deny even the entrance into Paradise; * their husbands care little about their strict observance of religious rites, and many of them even dislike it, because it raises them nearer to a level with themselves, and it is remarked that the woman makes a bad wife who can once claim the respect to which she is entitled by the regular reading of prayers."

Last, but perhaps not least, amongst the peculiarities of Madina, are the millions of insects of the most irritating description, who are only too happy to transfer their allegiance to any devout pilgrims who visit the mosque, be they rich or be they poor, for these creatures are no respecters of persons; nor does the evil end here, for the votary of necessity transfers these plagues to the lodging-houses which there swarm with vermin.

* This, as has been previously explained, is a libel upon Islam.

Grandeess and persons of wealth make the journey to Mecca with a numerous array of servants and attendants, well supplied with all the good things of this world ; but the less pretentious and the humbler classes form companies of from fifteen to twenty persons, who travel together, thereby securing their safety, and saving their pockets. The whole cavalcade then generally makes a contract with some one to supply the caravan with animals as well as food and stores, the sum being stipulated before the start is commenced. Some three or four months prior to the period of the pilgrimage, these *entrepreneurs*, many of whom amass considerable fortunes, repair to the various villages and announce the approaching departure of the votaries : this is done by beat of drum, a sort of religious chant being sung at the same time, exhorting all faithful and pious Muslims to obey the injunctions of the Prophet. The principal gathering of pilgrims, known as the Syrian Caravan, sets out from Constantinople on the 12th of the seventh month, and collects the votaries of northern Asia in its passage through Anatolia and Syria, until it reaches Damascus, where it remains for several weeks, being placed under the charge of the Pasha of the Province, who, in virtue of the duties which fall to his share, assumes the title and dignity of "Chief of the Hajj." As the early Khalifs for many years discharged personally this high and important office, and placed themselves at the head of the pilgrims, it may well be imagined that this position is at once respected and coveted ; nor is it cause for astonishment that in such circumstances the Pasha of Damascus is surrounded with considerable pomp when





he commences to march with the pilgrims. There are generally a large number of officers and soldiers clad in coats of mail, or covered with the skins of tigers, some carrying shields and quivers decked with silver, or it may be gold, and occasionally even with precious stones: while others bear lances and pikes, either gilt or silvered, as the case may be, and ornamented with streamers. The grandees of the country, as well as the citizens and common people of the town, accompany the caravan, bestowing pious wishes for the auspicious termination of the journey, while at every station caravanserais and public fountains have been constructed by former Sultans to accommodate it on its passage, which for some stages is attended with continual festivities and rejoicings. But at Damascus it is necessary to make arrangements for a thirty days' journey across the desert to Madina, and the animals which carry the burdens thus far have to be changed, since the Anatolian camel is not able to bear the fatigues of such a journey. This, however, presents no difficulty, seeing that almost every town in the eastern part of Syria furnishes beasts for the purpose; these latter are, of necessity, very numerous, seeing that they have to carry not only water and provisions for the "Hajis" and soldiers, their horses, and the spare animals brought to supply such as may fail on the road, but also daily food for the camels themselves, as well as provisions which are stored in repositories on the route to provide a supply for the return journey. It has been asserted that, on one occasion, when the mother of the last of the Abbasides performed the pilgrimage, in A.D. 1233, her caravan

was composed of 120,000 camels. It is also related that it took 900 camels to transport the wardrobe of Sulaiman Ibn Abdul Malik (A.D. 715). But far eclipsing these was the pilgrimage of a Sultan of Egypt in A.D. 1319, when 500 camels were hired to convey sweetmeats and confectionery alone, and 280 were laden with pomegranates, almonds, and other fruits, while the travelling larder could boast of 1000 geese and 3000 fowls! Truly might this be termed pilgrimage made easy! The splendour of the cavalcade is subsequently enhanced by the presence of the Pasha of Tripoli, and minor officials, at the head of a large body of troops for the protection of the caravan, lest it should be molested by brigands, more especially in the deserts of Syria and Arabia. On more than one occasion, notwithstanding all these precautions, the pilgrims have been attacked and robbed, sometimes even massacred, by the Nomad tribes, through whose regions they had to pass; but as such calamities are more sorely felt by the nation at large than even the defeat of their troops in war, the authorities are perforce compelled to take every pains to ensure, as far as possible, the safety of the pilgrims, who are escorted till within three stages from Madina.

The journey is performed between three o'clock in the afternoon and an hour or two after sunrise on the following day, torches being lighted at night. The Bedouins, however, who carry the provisions for the troops, travel only by day, and in advance of the caravan, the encampment of which they pass in the morning, being in turn overtaken by the latter on the following night at their own resting-place. The

journey with these tribes, though less fatiguing, as ensuring a night's rest, is seldom attempted, owing to the questionable character which the children of the desert enjoy in the East.

At every watering-place on the route there is a small castle with a large tank attached to it, at which the camels water. These buildings are inhabited by a few persons, who remain there the whole year, to protect the provisions made over to their charge. At the watering-places which belong to the Bedouins, the Shaikhs of the tribes meet the caravan and receive the accustomed tribute. Water is procurable on the route, the stations being nowhere more distant than eleven or twelve hours' march; while in winter pools of rain-water are frequently found. Pilgrims who travel with "litters," or on commodious camel-saddles, suffer comparatively little inconvenience; but the poorer classes, who follow the caravan on foot, often die on the road from exhaustion and fatigue.

The Egyptian caravan, which assembles near Cairo on the 25th of the tenth month, and starts on the 27th of that month, is under the same regulations as the Syrian cavalcade, but is composed solely of Egyptians. The journey, which occupies thirty-seven days, is along the shore of the Red Sea, and leads through the territories of wild and warlike tribes of Bedouins, who not unfrequently attack the caravan. The watering-places also are much fewer than on the Damascus route—three days occasionally intervening between the wells, which are, moreover, seldom copious, and often brackish. So dangerous, indeed, is this route, that on one occasion, in 1814, the pilgrims took the route *viâ* Suez, leaving the Egyptian caravan com-

posed solely of soldiers. It is sometimes accompanied by parties of public women and dancing girls, whose tents and equipage are generally amongst the most splendid in the caravan. Female "Hajis," of a similar class, are also to be found in the Syrian caravan. Both the great cavalcades from Constantinople and Cairo return from Mecca on 23rd of the twelfth month, after a stay of some days in the Holy City.

One custom, peculiar to both nations, remains to be noticed—the procession of the "Mahmil." This term, which means "that by which anything is supported," is universally applied in the East to the litter which accompanies the pilgrims to Mecca. Not infrequently, however, and with reason, it is used to designate the camel which bears the burden in question.

It is composed of a square skeleton frame of wood, with a pyramidal top, and has a covering of black brocade, richly worked with inscriptions and ornamental embroidery in gold, in some parts upon a ground of green or red silk, and bordered with a fringe of silk, with tassels, surmounted by silver balls. Its covering is not always made after the same pattern with regard to the decorations, being sometimes a fine silk brocade, adorned with ostrich feathers. But generally, if not invariably, on the upper part of the front, a view of the temple of Mecca is worked in gold, and over it the Sultan's cipher. As a rule, it contains nothing in the interior, but has two copies of the Quran attached externally at the top—one a small scroll, and the other in the usual form of a book, also small, each enclosed in a case of gilt silver. The

Egyptian Mahmil, however, in place of the two copies of the Quran attached to the cover, has a small book of prayer, and some charms packed within the litter. The five balls, with crescents, which ornament the Mahmil are of gilt silver. The whole is borne by a fine tall camel, which is generally indulged with exemption from every kind of labour during the remainder of its life. On the line the Mahmil is stripped of its embroidered cover, the frame of wood being carried on a camel's back. Even the gilt silver balls and crescent are exchanged for similar articles in brass.

The most commonly accepted version as to the origin of the procession of the Mahmil is, that about the middle of the thirteenth century a beautiful Turkish female slave, after the death of the ruler of Egypt, whom she had married, caused herself to be acknowledged as queen of that kingdom, and performed the pilgrimage in a magnificent covered litter borne by a camel. After this, for several successive years, her empty litter accompanied the caravan merely for the sake of State; hence succeeding princes of Egypt sent with each year's caravan of pilgrims a Mahmil, as an emblem of royalty. This legend would not in any case apply to the Turkish cavalcade which starts from Constantinople.

Burckhardt believes the custom to have arisen from the circumstance that the Bedouins from time immemorial were in the habit of carrying banners in battle, a practice which gave rise to the idea of a Mahmil, which indeed they most resemble. D'Ohsson, on the other hand, is of opinion that the custom is intended to perpetuate the memory of the camel upon

which the Prophet of Arabia used to travel, and on which a species of throne was erected, from which latter he was wont to dispense justice to the people. Burekhardt and Burton, however, demur to this view, and are not disposed to attach any peculiar sanctity to what they are led to think is a mere act of regal state. The point some time since (A.D. 1882) assumed considerable importance, owing to the circumstance that the British troops in Egypt were present at the ceremony, which took place at Cairo, on the occasion of the departure of the "Mahmil," and their presence evoked much criticism on the part of a section of the public of this country, while, to add to the difficulties with which the case was surrounded, the procession of the "Kiswa" took place on this occasion simultaneously with that of the "Mahmil," in consequence of the disturbed state of the country, which rendered impracticable its departure at the proper date.

The day of the departure of "Mahmil" from Constantinople is a sort of religious fête. The ceremony on this occasion is very quaint and merits notice. The representative of the Sultan repairs at the head of a great cortège to the palace to receive the orders of his monarch, as well as the "Mahmil" and treasure. The sovereign seats himself under a great, gaily decked pavilion in the middle of a vast corridor adjoining the portion of the palace set apart for the ladies. After this the Imams of the Imperial mosques and other high personages are introduced and form a semicircle around His Majesty, sitting on small rugs placed upon the larger carpet, which covers the floor of the pavilion. At their head is one of the

fourteen shaikhs of the Imperial mosques, who enjoy the honour alternately every year, according to seniority. The dignitary whose turn it is to take the lead commences by chanting different songs in praise of the Prophet (the other prelates joining him from time to time), and finishes with good wishes for His Majesty's health. On the termination of this part of the ceremony the principal members of the body of black eunuchs present themselves in the midst of the court with a camel magnificently draped, having a silver chain round its neck. An officer then advances and, placing his hand on the camel, kisses the latter respectfully. This done he leads the animal about before the Sultan, after which he consigns it to the charge of the functionary destined to take it *en route* to Mecca, who is thereupon decorated with a vest of honour; while the first-mentioned officer also receives from the grand master of the ceremonies a sable fur with a gold-cloth vest. The treasure is then loaded upon eight mules, of whom five carry cases decorated with green velvet. The documents relating to the distribution of the money annually sent by the Sultan for the support of the holy mosque, said to amount to upwards of £70,000, are then sealed and placed, in the presence of the Sultan, in the hands of the leader of the cortège. After these preliminaries are finished, the Chief Chancellor of the Empire produces a letter from the Sultan to the Grand Sharif of Mecca, which, too, is handed with great state to the attendant in charge of the "Mahmil." All is now completed, and the latter personage carries the Sultan's letter in a gold-cloth purse, as far as the second door of the palace, accompanied the while to

the precincts of the first court by a high officer of state, the compliment being paid rather to the "Mahmil" than to the man. All the prelates now follow the cavalcade, which marches thence through the streets of Constantinople, presenting a most extraordinary and imposing sight. First of all there are the numerous functionaries of dignity and importance in full uniform, both preceding and coming after the camel, which, it may be added, is followed by a second to replace the first in case of accident, as also by eight mules laden with treasure. After this sedate and serious procession there follows a body of buffoons and jesters playing antics and making fun to indicate their joy at the approaching pilgrimage. The procession is also accompanied by numerous mules carrying peculiar-looking boxes, of various shapes and sizes, decorated with banners and feathers. These animals laden with treasure are conveyed in a galley to the Asiatic side of the water, but the camels are stripped of their ornaments on the quay and led back without any ceremony to the palace, where they are carefully tended. They are not taken to Mecca, for fear they should succumb to the fatigues of so long a journey, their place being supplied at the sacred city by two others, supposed to have descended from the animal which carried the Prophet. Of these one is kept in Syria by the Pasha of Damascus, who sends it every year to Mecca; the other is sent from Egypt by one of the Beys of the province charged with the care of the pilgrims.

A similar procession takes place at Cairo when the "Mahmil" passes through the metropolis. This usually happens about the 23rd of the tenth month,

though the final departure of the caravan does not occur till the 27th of that month. For the first time, probably, in the history of Muhammadanism, the cavalcade in the autumn of 1882, instead of journeying the usual caravan route through the desert, went by special train to Suez, and thence by steamer to Jedda.

The Persian caravan sets out from Baghdad *viâ* Aleppo and Damascus, but the pilgrims being "sectaries" (Shias), and in many cases men of property, it is apt to suffer so much molestation and imposition during the route, that great numbers of the people go by sea, embarking at Bussora for Mocha, where, if the wind be favourable, they go to Jedda, if not they form themselves into a caravan, and come by land along the coast of Yaman. Sometimes they swell the numbers of the Syrian caravan; from which they are, however, easily distinguishable, owing to the circumstance that their camel-drivers hail from Baghdad. Pilgrims from the out-of-the-way regions of Persia take nearly twelve months to complete the pilgrimage; and Doughty in his "Travels in Arabia Deserta" tells of a man who was in every year eleven in the twelve months "footing upon the great road." The Persians being heretics, who conceal their doctrine during the "Hajj," were not always permitted to come to the Holy City. "In A.D. 1634," writes Burckhardt, "a few years after the temple of Mecca had been rebuilt, Sultan Murad IV. commanded that no Persian of the sect of Ali (Shias) should be allowed to perform the pilgrimage or enter the house of God. This prohibition was complied with for several years, but the money expended by the Persians soon re-opened the way

to Arafat, and the Kaba." It is said that in A.D. 1625 a sectary of Ali was impaled alive at Mecca because he would not "abjure his creed." Failing a pilgrimage to Mecca, where an outward manifestation of respect to the memory of the first Khalifs is rigorously enforced, the mass of the population of Persia content themselves with a visit to the sepulchres of Ali and his son Husain, whose remains are deposited respectively at Najaf, near Kufa, and Karbala, or to the tomb of the Imam Ali Riza at Mashhad. When a Persian journeys to the Holy City he not unfrequently contrives on entering the mosque to pollute the tombs of the detested Khalifs Abu Bakr and Omar, "an act of foolish fanaticism which has cost many an innocent life, for on such occasions the Arabs seize their sabres, and cut down every Persian they see"; in any case rarely do the Shia votaries escape without an unmerciful beating at the hands of their Sunni rivals. To avoid these dangers the Shias deem themselves entitled to put in practice a pious fraud, and pass themselves off for Sunnis, an act of hypocrisy which the latter severely condemn as unworthy of true followers of the Prophet of Arabia.

In former times there used to be a Maghrabi caravan, starting from Morocco and proceeding by way of Tunis and Tripoli to Alexandria and thence to Cairo, after which it followed the common pilgrim route; but for many years this caravan has ceased to be regular, and pilgrims from Barbary usually proceed by sea to Alexandria and Jedda, in parties of from 50 to 100 at a time.

There are minor caravans, which ordinarily come when the roads are open, and the country is tranquil;

but they are from time to time discontinued, and need not be more than mentioned: such as the Yaman caravan, which either starts from Sada in Yaman, and takes its course along the mountains to Tayif and Mecca, or follows a line along the coast. Now and again also small parties of pilgrims, consisting of Indians, Persians, and Arab beggars, arrive in the Hijaz by way of Muskat and Najd.

Of all the poor pilgrims who annually repair to the sacred cities of Arabia, none bear a higher name than the negroes who come *viâ* Massowa, Suakim, and Cosseir. A most industrious class of men, some employ themselves as porters, labourers, or water-carriers, while others make small hearths of clay, painted with yellow and red, which they sell to the pilgrims, who boil their coffee-pots upon them. Many again manufacture small baskets, and mats of date leaves, or prepare an intoxicating drink called "Buza." They generally manage during their stay in the Hijaz to scrape together a small sum of money which enables them, on their return, to start some slight venture on their own account.

When once the pilgrims reach the confines of Arabia they are under the care of the Grand Sharif of Mecca, who is supposed to be answerable for them, a regulation which is perhaps more honoured in the breach than in the observance. This worthy, who enjoys entire religious power in the Hijaz, is appointed by the Sultan of Turkey; but the latter, in view of the dignity being nominally hereditary, generally confines his selection to members of two powerful families. On his attaining office the Grand Sharif is invested with a gold embroidered mantle edged with marten

sable, which, together with a diploma of creation, the Sultan sends from Constantinople. This ceremony used for many years to be repeated annually, but it is believed that the custom has fallen into disuse. This high dignitary, who is clad in white, is always distinguishable by a peculiar turban of the same colour, ornamented with large tufts, the gold threads of which hang down upon the shoulders. His only symbol of office is a large green satin umbrella, carried by an attendant. His salary, which is paid by the Sultan, is nominally £15,000 per annum, but it is open to question whether this amount ever really reaches the Grand Sharif's pocket.

The secular authority centres chiefly in the Pasha of Jedda, who, in common with the governor of Madina, bears the title of "Governor of the Holy Sanctuary." As might be supposed, the secular and sacred officers clash, and the two rivals "thwart each other on all possible occasions, quarrels are bitter and endless, there is no government, and the vessel of state is in danger of being water-logged in consequence of the squabbling between her two captains." Such is the testimony of Burton, founded upon personal experience on the spot.

Pilgrims of the better class generally come by land. These pass the interval before the "Hajj" pleasantly enough, living together in a state of freedom and equality. They keep but few, if any, servants, and divide amongst themselves the various duties of daily life. They are to be seen in scores reading the Quran, smoking in the streets or coffee-houses, praying or conversing in the mosque in full pride of being near the holy shrine, and in pleasurable

anticipation of adding to their names in due course the auspicious title of "Haji."

Few pilgrims, except mendicants, arrive without bringing some production of their respective countries for disposal, the profits on the sale of which diminish, to some extent, the heavy expenses of the journey to Mecca. The Maghrabis, for instance, bring their red bonnets and woollen cloaks; the European Turks shoes and slippers, hardware, and embroidered stuffs, sweetmeats, amber trinkets of European manufacture, knit silk purses, etc.; their kinsmen from Anatolia sell carpets, silks, and Angora shawls; the Persians deal in Kashmir shawls and large silk handkerchiefs; the Afghans barter tooth-brushes made of the spongy boughs of a tree growing in Bokhara, beads of a yellow soap-stone, and plain, coarse shawls manufactured in their own country; the Indians display the numerous productions of their rich and extensive region; the people of Yaman provide snakes for the Persian pipes, sandals, and numerous other works in leather; while the Africans trade in various articles adapted to the wants of their nation. The wares, however, are generally sold by auction, owing to the impecuniosity of the owners, who are, as a rule, compelled to accept a price much below the intrinsic value of the article.

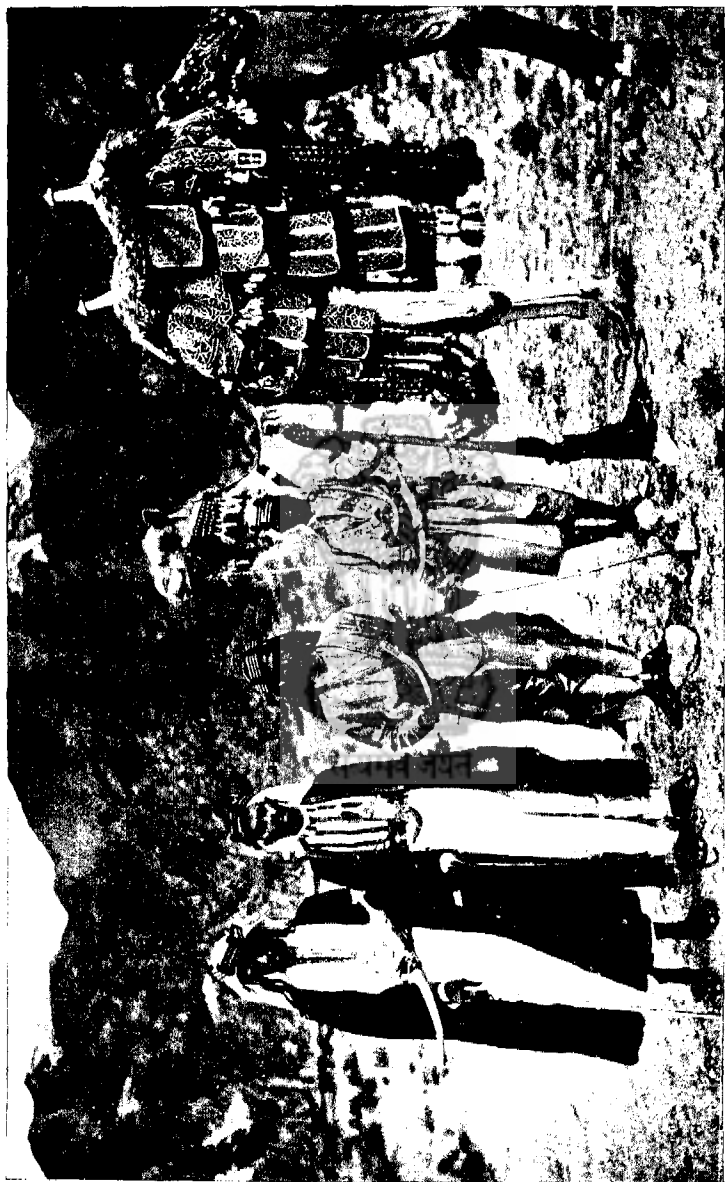
A great change, however, is likely in the near future to take place consequent upon the construction, under the auspices of the Sultan of Turkey (A.D. 1904), of a trunk railway to reach from Damascus to Mecca, with one branch line from a junction in the Jordan Valley to an outlet on the Mediterranean and another from Mecca to Medina, so as to link the two great

sacred shrines of Islam together for the benefit of the pilgrims. A portion of the line from Damascus to Maan, a distance of a little less than 300 miles, was opened for traffic during the last-mentioned year, and vigorous efforts are, it is said, to be made to continue this section as early as may be practicable.

A very considerable number of the pilgrims who annually visit Mecca travel by sea to Jedda whence they betake themselves in company to the City of Cities. The condition of these poor wretches is beyond the pale of description. Sometimes as many as 600 or 700 miserable creatures are huddled together on board a single ship, without proper accommodation, and with few or none of the decent arrangements of life, so that the condition of the vessel, after a few days have elapsed, is filthy and disgusting beyond description. That women as well as men should elect to witness such scenes as they are compelled to experience on this journey by sea to Jedda, is an additional proof of the strong hold which the religion of Islam has taken upon the millions who glory in undergoing discomforts and dangers the bare mention of which occasions a shudder of horror on the part of anyone accustomed to the proprieties and comforts of modern civilisation. Nor is the return home less distressing, for, added to the discomforts attendant on the voyage, the votaries are frequently compelled to endure great suffering while waiting at the port for a vessel to take them away. Many during this period, which is often protracted, sell everything they possess in the world, and when this is not sufficient to procure food, they are turned into the streets to starve and perish.

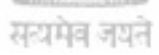
That such a state of affairs should not have escaped attention on the part of the British authorities may well be imagined; the result may be gathered from a resolution published by the Government of India, under date 21st January 1886.

For several years past the attention of the Government of India has from time to time been directed to the desirability of alleviating, so far as is possible, the discomforts and sufferings experienced by Muhammadan pilgrims during the journey from India to the Hijaz. The existence of these sufferings, more especially in the case of those of the poorer class of Muhammadans who undertake the pilgrimage, is an admitted fact; but the action taken with a view to afford relief has been necessarily of a restricted nature, owing to the unwillingness felt by the Government to undertake any direct interference with what is considered to be a religious obligation by a large section of the Muhammadan community in India. In 1880 intimation was received from Her Majesty's Secretary of State that the Turkish Government had issued orders requiring passports from all passengers and pilgrims arriving in Jedda, whether Turkish or foreign subjects, and announcing that those who came unprovided with such documents would be liable to be repelled from the ports of the Hijaz. In order to render these Turkish regulations as little irksome as possible to natives of India proceeding to the Hijaz on pilgrimage, the Government of India, after consulting Local Governments and Administrations, resolved to establish a system under which passports should be unconditionally given to every intending pilgrim, not only at the Indian ports of embarkation but also at the central stations of every district in British India, and at the headquarters of all Political Agencies in Native States. Arrangements were also made to grant informal passes to the subjects of other Governments, *e.g.*, natives of Kashghar, Russian Turkestan, Afghanistan, etc., who embark for Mecca from Indian ports, it being explained that these passes impose no responsibility on the Government of India in regard to the holders, and that the Governor-General in Council could not in any way guarantee their recognition by the officials of the Turkish or any other Foreign Government. Further, in consideration of the very large number of pilgrims who annually embark at, and return to, Bombay, and of the necessity



MECCAN CHIEFS WITH CAMEL AND ATTENDANT.

Reprinted by permission from C. Steenkamp's "Pillars of Mecca."



of making some special arrangements to meet their requirements, a Muhammadan Protector of Pilgrims was appointed at that port and instructed to supply intending pilgrims with all the information and assistance within his power in respect of every matter connected with the pilgrimage.

2. Since the above measures were undertaken, further efforts have been made by the Government of India towards the proper regulation of the India pilgrim traffic by amending the provisions of the Native Passenger Ships Act (No. VIII. of 1876) in certain important respects, and by revising the rules issued under that Act with reference to the fitting, provisioning, sanitary arrangements, etc., of pilgrim ships. These rules have been assimilated, as far as possible, with those in force for regulating the transport of emigrants to the French and British colonies, and have been widely circulated in the form of a "Manual for the guidance of officers and others concerned in the Red Sea Pilgrim Traffic." It has been made obligatory on ships conveying more than 100 pilgrims to carry a qualified medical officer, and in order to promote the welfare of Indian pilgrims during their stay in the Hijaz, an Indian Vice-Consul has been appointed at Jedda, whose special duty it is to attend to the interests and well-being of the pilgrims. In order further to afford protection and assistance to the pilgrims, especially in connection with their detention in quarantine under the orders of the Turkish Government, a Muhammadan Vice-Consul has been temporarily appointed for Hodaida and Kamaran. A dispensary has also been established at Jedda for affording relief to Indian pilgrims in the Hijaz. Lastly, in order to regulate and bring under proper control the transactions of pilgrim-brokers in the city of Bombay, it is proposed to introduce a Bill into the local Legislative Council under which the business will in future be restricted to licensed persons; and certain penalties will be imposed for any breach of the terms of the license. The action hitherto taken cannot fail to have effected a substantial improvement in the position of pilgrims during the voyage to Jedda and while staying in the Hijaz. In the course of the correspondence which has taken place with Her Majesty's Secretary of State on the subject, it was considered whether intending pilgrims should be required before proceeding on the voyage to deposit a sum of money sufficient to cover the cost of their return journey. The Government of India admitted that such a regulation would prevent much misery and suffering, but the opinion of

the local authorities was opposed to interference of this nature on the ground that it might be misunderstood and misinterpreted, and the Governor-General in Council accordingly decided that action of the kind was inadvisable. At the same time a public notice was issued in the English, Hindustani, and Persian languages warning persons who propose to undertake the pilgrimage of the difficulties to which they would be exposed owing to the imposition by the Turkish Government of quarantine for at least ten days at the Island of Kamaran (during which period pilgrims are required to pay certain fees besides arranging for their own provisions), and impressing upon intending pilgrims the desirability of not starting unless provided with sufficient funds (at least Rs. 300) in order to meet the expenses of quarantine, of the journey from Jedda to Mecca and back, and of the return journey to India.

3. In October 1884 a communication was received from Messrs Thomas Cook and Son, expressing the readiness of that firm to undertake the conveyance of pilgrims between India and Mecca. The extensive experience gained by Messrs Cook and Son in connection with requirements of schemes of a similar character, and the considerable degree of success which has attended their operations, clearly pointed to that firm as peculiarly qualified to assist the Government in still further regulating the conveyance of pilgrims between India and Arabia, and in placing the arrangements on a footing more satisfactory to the Government and more convenient to the pilgrims themselves than has hitherto been found possible. Messrs Cook and Son were accordingly informed that if they were able to make the necessary arrangements, the Governor-General in Council would be prepared to give them such assistance as might be within his power. Messrs Cook and Son have now informed the Government of India of the conditions upon which they are prepared to undertake the agency and control of the conveyance of pilgrims to and from Jedda, and the Governor-General in Council, after careful consideration and personal communication with Mr J. M. Cook, is of opinion that those conditions are such as may be accepted. The conditions contemplate the appointment of Messrs Thomas Cook and Son to be pilgrim agents for the whole of India, local officers and officers in charge of treasuries being instructed to assist that firm in making known the terms of through conveyance to Jedda and back, and in disposing of through tickets. The Bombay Govern-

ment will be requested to make over to the representatives of the firm the issue of passports in Bombay after these have been signed by the proper authorities, and to instruct the Protector of Pilgrims to work in harmony with the firm and to render it every possible assistance. On the other hand, Messrs Thomas Cook and Son agree to arrange with the railway administrations, steamship proprietors, and others concerned, for the conveyance of the pilgrims, at through fares, from all the chief stations in India to Jedda and back, and to do all in their power to secure the transit of the pilgrims in satisfactory ships supplied with proper accommodation in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Government. They are prepared to provide the requisite agency for the work, Muhammadans being appointed for this purpose in all cases where necessary ; to establish a special pilgrimage office in the most convenient position at Bombay, and possibly also at Jedda ; and to make all detailed arrangements in connection with the issue of the necessary announcements, forms of tickets, etc. Lastly, the firm has expressed its readiness to comply with the requirements and regulations which may be laid down from time to time by the Government of India precisely in the same manner as though they were in the service of the Government.

4. The Governor-General in Council feels convinced that a scheme of the nature above described cannot fail, if successfully carried out, to be productive of much benefit to Indian pilgrims to the Hijaz, but if success is to be ensured, it is essential that every assistance should be afforded to Messrs Cook and Son, not only by Local Governments and Administrations, but also by district and other officers upon whom it will devolve to give effect to the detailed arrangements. His Excellency in Council accordingly trusts that Local Governments and Administrations will see that this is done, and will direct local officers to co-operate in every possible manner with the representatives of the firm in carrying on their operations.

This arrangement with Messrs Thomas Cook and Son remained in force for seven years, but was abandoned in 1893, as it was found that in practice the scheme did not work advantageously. It must not, however, be supposed that the Government of India are indifferent to the welfare of pilgrims pro-

ceeding to the sacred cities of Arabia ; far otherwise, inasmuch as at Bombay, where people flock from all parts—men, women, and children—passages to Jedda are arranged with suitable conditions as to space and medical attendance. A camp has also been established by Government in the city (A.D. 1904) where all clothes are disinfected, and every means taken to ensure the comfort and well-being of the pilgrims. After medical examination these latter are removed to another camp at Pir Pao, eight miles distant, where they remain till they embark and commence their voyage to the Red Sea.

It is difficult to state accurately the precise number of pilgrims who annually repair to Mecca, but perhaps 40,000 to 60,000 may be taken as a fair average. Of these about one half journey by sea in the following proportions :—

Indians	8,500
Turks, Egyptians, and Syrians	8,000
Malays	7,000
Persians	3,400
Maghrabis	1,700
Soudanis and Yamanis	1,300
	<hr/>
	29,900

It will be seen that the Indian and Turkish “Hajis” are the most numerous, while the Malays come next in importance. The last are mostly Dutch subjects from Java, who are encouraged by their rulers to visit the holy places in Arabia, on the ground that “the experience gained on the journey as to the tyranny and extortion of the Musulman Government in the Hijaz tends to increase in a ‘Haji’ the sense of the advan-

tages he enjoys at home, and dissipates many of the illusions with regard to the temporal power of Muhammadanism."

Mr Blunt, taking the year 1880 as his basis, estimates the number of pilgrims as follows :—

	Sea.	Land.
Ottoman subjects, including pilgrims from Syria and Iran, but not from Egypt or Arabia		
Proper	8,500	1,000
Egyptians	5,000	1,000
Maghrabis	6,000	...
Arabs from Yaman	3,000	...
„ Oman and Hadramaut	3,000	...
„ Najd	5,000
„ Hijaz	22,000
Negroes from Soudan	2,000	...
„ Zanzibar	1,000	...
Malabarais from Cape of Good Hope	150	...
Persians	6,000	2,500
British Indians	15,000	...
Malays	12,000	...
Chinese	100	...
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	61,750	31,500
Total	93,250	

The figures for 1902 in the former column were 33,849 (5958 from India) as compared with 60,093 (5251 from India) in the previous year. It is probable that Mr Blunt's totals much exceed the truth.

CHAPTER XII

THE SECTS OF ISLAM

THE SUNNIS

It is a belief common to the whole Muslim world that Muhammad, as regards all that he said or did, was supernaturally guided from on high; hence it follows that his words and actions constitute a divine rule of faith and practice; this is the doctrine which underlies the fabric of the Sunni creed with its (say) 145,000,000 of votaries, the name itself being derived from the Arabic word "Sunna," meaning regulation. In the early days of Islam the Prophet's sayings were not, it is true, committed to writing, but handed down by word of mouth, while the record of his actions existed not save in the memories of his faithful followers. In such circumstances, it may readily be conceived that the Khalifs who immediately succeeded Muhammad, and who had all of them been friends and companions of the Lawgiver of Arabia, and as such the repertories of his utterances, attained an influence but little inferior to that of the founder of Islam himself, and their authority is a dominant

principle amongst the millions who profess the Sunni creed. To these "leaders of thought" also must be added the name of Ayisha, the favourite wife of the Prophet; nor must the companions of Muhammad, known as the "Evangelists of Islam," be omitted from the honoured list. It cannot be doubted that zealous efforts were made to hand down the traditions of the faith pure and undefiled, and indeed the Prophet himself denounced, in terrible language, the wickedness of those who purposely misrepresented his words. Yet in spite of all this care, spurious traditions imperceptibly crept in, and, so early as the second century of Islam, the evil had risen to such a height, that the most foolish and extravagant notions began to mar and disfigure the simplicity of the belief in one God, and men were taught to suppose that they would be consigned to everlasting perdition for the commission of the most trivial offence, such as, to quote one instance, wearing their trousers below the ankle. The result was the well-known "six correct books," compiled by six learned "collectors of traditions."

The first of these collections, termed *Sahihul Bukhari*, is named after Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Ismail, a native of Bukhara, who was born A.D. 809. He was a man of middle height, spare in frame, and, as a boy, totally blind. The grief of his father was, on this account, intense. But one day in a dream, he saw the patriarch Abraham, who said to him, "God, on account of thy grief and sorrow, hath granted sight to thy son." Vision being thus restored to the lad, he was sent, at the age of ten, to school, where he began to learn the traditions by

heart. When his education was finished, a famous doctor chancing to come to Bukhara, was mortified at receiving a correction at the hands of the young student; the audacity was astounding, but the stripling was undeniably more than a match for his elder companion, who had in fact to acknowledge his error. Encouraged by his success the youthful Bukhari set to work collecting and sifting the traditions, and it is said that at the early age of sixteen he was able to remember upwards of 15,000 of them. In the course of time he got together no less than 600,000, of which after careful examination he selected and approved of 7275, and recorded them in a volume which bears his name. It is said that he never sat down to examine a tradition without invoking the aid of the Almighty to prevent the occurrence of error. His memory was incredible. For instance, at Baghdad, the doctors and priests of that city determined on one occasion to put his knowledge to severe test; they accordingly selected one hundred traditions, and falsifying them, distributed them in tens to as many different persons, with directions that they should attend one of Al Bukhari's assemblies, and endeavour to entangle him in his talk. This was done, and in the midst of a large assemblage the pious doctor was called upon to pronounce his judgment. He listened in silence as one by one the questioners read their traditions, which had purposely been altered from the original text; in every instance the ejaculation was unchanged, "I am not acquainted with it." When all had finished, he repeated in succession the whole hundred traditions, as they originally stood. From that day his influence was

unbounded, and a crowd of little short of 90,000 persons are said to have attended his lectures and studied under him. For sixteen years he lived in a mosque, and died, A.D. 874, much respected, at the age of sixty-four.

The mass of traditions brought together by Al Bukhari is known as the "Authentic collection," and regarded as the highest in point of authority of the six works which are accepted by Muhammadan orthodoxy. But defects of method in the arrangement of his book rendered it so bewildering and full of perplexity as regarded purposes of consultation, that a fresh compilation on an improved and simpler plan was made by his friend and pupil, Muslim Ibn Hajjaj, a native of Khorassan, who, with indefatigable industry, collected together upwards of 300,000 traditions; eliminating from these such as rested on no sound basis, he formed the remainder into a volume, the second of the "correct books," thenceforward known as "the emendations of Muslim."

This learned doctor is said to have been a very just man, and never to have turned away those who came to him for advice. His death, if the account which has been handed down be worthy of credit, was singular. One day he was sitting as usual in the mosque, when some people came to ask him about a tradition. As he could not discover it in the books in his possession at the time, he repaired to his house to make search. Whereupon, as it was clear that the matter was a work involving much research and trouble, the people brought him a basket of dates. Muslim Ibn Hajjaj, unable to control his appetite, went on eating and searching till he died. This

strange termination of the holy man's career occurred in A.D. 874.

The third compilation, known as "Sunan-i-Abu Daud," was, as its name implies, the work of Abu Daud Sajistani, a native of Sistan. A great traveller, he visited all the principal places of Musulman learning, labouring all the time most diligently at his studies, till in the end he attained an unrivalled knowledge of the traditions, of which he collected about 500,000, and transferred 4800 to his book; his devotion and piety also gave him that authority which in all ages has attached to a pure and blameless life. He flourished from A.D. 817 till A.D. 888.

The fourth book, or "Jami-i-Tirmizi," was the work of Abu Isa Muhammad Tirmizi, a learned theologian born at Tirmiz in the year A.D. 824. But little is known of him beyond that he was a disciple of Bukhari, and a well-informed man whose exactness was proverbial.

The fifth collection of traditions, known to fame as the "Sunan-i-Nasai," was compiled by Abu Abdur Rahman Nasai, born at Nasa in Khorassan in A.D. 829. It is recorded by those who sing his praises, that this doctor was wont to fast every other day, and that he had four wives and many slaves. He met his death, which occurred in A.D. 915, at the hands of the people of Damascus, who, enraged at a pamphlet which he read to them in the mosque dilating upon the virtues of Ali, and vexed at his refusal to sing the praises of Muawiya (the deadly enemy of the latter Imam), beat the unhappy saint so severely that he died in a few days from the injuries he had received at the hands of the incensed Damascenes.

The sixth and last treatise, "Sunan-i-Ibn-Maja," contains 4000 traditions collected by one Ibn Maja, of whom all that is known is that he was born at Iraq in A.D. 824, and that he ranked as a high authority regarding the traditions, being well versed in all the sciences connected with them.

The Sunnis are subdivided into four chief sects, which, notwithstanding some differences as to legal conclusions in their interpretation of the Quran, and matters of practice, are generally acknowledged to be orthodox in matters of faith; they have each of them their several stations or oratories in the temple of Mecca.

Theoretically, it is true any Muslim can attain to the exalted degree of a leader in the faith, but in practice such a high honour is dependent on the five following conditions. (1) A knowledge of the Quran and all that is related thereto, including a complete familiarity with Arabic literature in all its branches. (2) A knowledge of the Quran by heart. (3) A knowledge of the traditions, or, at least, of 3000 of them, the more important being learned by heart. (4) A pious and austere life. (5) A profound knowledge of all the sciences of the law.

The first of the four orthodox schools of thought is that of the Hanifites, so called after their founder Abu Hanifa, born at Kufa in A.D. 700. It is said that, having dreamed one night that he was digging open the tomb of the Prophet, he sent next morning to an interpreter of visions to inquire the meaning of what had happened. The reply disclosed to him, though in somewhat ambiguous terms, the purpose of his life. "The person who had this dream will lay open a science never before discovered."

Devoting himself to the study of the Quran, the eloquence of his tongue, coupled with the sweetness of his voice, gave an irresistible charm to his utterances ; while his plain solid understanding, combined with his modesty and piety, gained for him high rank and influence amongst the expounders of the sacred volume.

He achieved, too, an immense fame by reason of his knowledge of the law, and the subtlety and acuteness he displayed in applying the method of analogical deduction. But he shrank from putting his legal knowledge to any practical use, and, indeed, when appointed a judge at Kufa, at that time a great centre of religious fervour, he refused to act. The Khalif was greatly incensed at this opposition, and ordered the recalcitrant theologian to be daily flogged in public till he should consent. So day after day ten strokes of the whip were inflicted on Abu Hanifa till the number mounted up to 110, when, finding the fortitude of the man of piety still unvanquished, an order was given that the hapless doctor should be set at liberty.

To his many mental qualifications Abu Hanifa added a quickness of retort, which on several occasions served him in good stead. The story runs, that when the Abbasides came into power, the Khalif summoned to his presence the man of God ; on entering the room a chamberlain, who bore the latter great enmity, advancing before his sovereign, said, " O Commander of the Faithful ! this Abu Hanifa maintains an opinion contrary to that which was held by your ancestors, who said that when a man takes an oath, and one or two days after puts restrictions to it, these latter are

valid. Now Abu Hanifa teaches that restrictions are not valid unless announced simultaneously with the oath." On hearing this charge Abu Hanifa said, "O Commander of the Faithful! your chamberlain has asserted that the oath of fidelity towards you which was taken by your troops may not be binding." "How so?" inquired the Khalif. "Because," answered the ready-witted theologian, "when they went back to their dwellings they might have made such restrictions as rendered their oath null." The Amir laughed, and advised his chamberlain to avoid in the future making attacks which ended in defeat. When they had retired, the defeated champion accused his victor of an intent to shed blood. "No," replied Abu Hanifa, "but you meant to bring about the shedding of mine, and I saved not only myself but you."

The discomfiture of one courtier did not prevent another of his companions from a similar attempt. The circumstances were as follows:—One day seeing Abu Hanifa enter the Khalif's presence chamber, where there was a numerous assembly, an opponent muttering to himself, "I shall have his life taken this very day," turned towards him and exclaimed, "Tell me, Abu Hanifa, if a man be ordered by the Commander of the Faithful to behead another man, without knowing anything about his conduct, is it lawful for him to obey?" "Tell me," was the ready rejoinder, "does the Commander of the Faithful order what is right, or what is wrong?" "He orders what is right," was the only reply which was possible in the presence of the Khalif. "Then," said Abu Hanifa, "let right be done and no questions asked."

"That man thought to have cast me into bonds, but I shackled him," was the triumphant exclamation of a genius whose ready wit had for a second time saved him from destruction.

But Abu Hanifa was destined to succumb at last to the tyranny of his sovereign. In A.D. 767, when the building of Baghdad had been completed, that nothing might be wanting to add to the glory of the new capital of Islam, the Commander of the Faithful determined, as on a previous occasion, to appoint the great jurisconsult of Iraq to be judge over the city. The man of God pleaded unfitness as a reason for declining the office. "You lie!" was the brusque and somewhat discourteous exclamation of the incensed Khalif; "you are fitted for it." Abu Hanifa mildly represented, "You have now decided in my favour, and against yourself. Is it lawful for you to nominate a liar as a judge over those whom God has confided to your care?" The retort was striking, but it failed in effect, and the aged offender was sent to prison, where after a lapse of six days he died (A.D. 767): not, however, before, so tradition would have it believed, he had repeated the Quran 7000 times.

His tenets are praised from their being founded more on reason than on tradition. He himself says of himself, "We select first from the Quran, then from the traditions, then from the decrees of the Companions. We act upon what the Companions agreed upon: where they doubt we doubt." His teaching, which was chiefly oral, was founded exclusively on the Quran, and claimed to be logically developed therefrom by the method of analogical

deduction. The Hanifite school of theology has been aptly described as the "High and dry party of Church and State." His enemies impute to him ignorance and presumption, quoting in support of the former charge his own confession that he was unable to decide whether a hermaphrodite could be admitted into Paradise, or a "jinn" become perceptible to the human vision; while to substantiate the latter accusation they maintain that, among other deviations from the true faith, he departed from the text of the Quran in allowing his followers to drink wine after its spirit had been somewhat evaporated by boiling. They also urge that he altered a number of practices concerning prayer and purification, which are inculcated in the sacred volume. These accusations, doubtless, owe their origin to the circumstance that in one of his works Abu Hanifa propounded his views to the effect that the Faithful, so long as they remain in the true religion, do not become enemies of God, even should they repeatedly fall into sin; which latter, according to his conception, does not arise from want of faith—in short, he taught that grace is not incompatible with wickedness.

In connection with this point the story runs that on one occasion, when Abu Hanifa was performing his devotions in the mosque at Kufa, a band of men surrounded the temple, and, advancing towards the theologian, demanded of him at the peril of his life an answer to two questions. "There are at the entrance," said they, "two corpses; one of a man, who, after drinking to excess, has died; the other of a woman who has died in childbirth with an adulterous offspring, she herself not having repented. Are the persons in

question amongst the unbelievers or the Faithful?" "Are they Jews?" demanded Abu Hanifa. "No," was the response. "Christians?" "No." "Magi?" "No." "Idolaters?" "No." "What religion, then, did they profess?" "They were Musulmans," replied the questioners. "In that case," said Abu Hanifa, "you have your answer." "How?" exclaimed the astonished inquirers. "Because," said the astute man of God, "how can you place those who have accepted Islam amongst the ranks of the disbelievers?"

When questioned on a point of doctrine Abu Hanifa always gave a satisfactory reply, in so far that nothing embarrassed him; of this an instance occurred when he was summoned by the Khalif, who wished to know how many free women a free man might legally take to wife. "Four," replied the jurist. "You hear, noble lady?" said the Khalif to his spouse. "Amir of the Faithful," interrupted Abu Hanifa, "it is permitted to you to have but one." "How so?" said the enraged and astonished Khalif; "you have just named four." "True," replied the unabashed theologian, "God has said, 'Marry amongst the women who please you, two, three, or four, but if you fear being unjust towards them espouse but one.' When you pronounced the words, 'You hear, noble lady,' I perceived that you were in a condition of mind which rendered the last portion of God's decree applicable to your case." When Abu Hanifa went forth, the wife of the Khalif sent him a present as a mark of her appreciation; but the gift was returned, with an intimation that it was not for her, but for God, that the words had been spoken.

There is a tradition that this doctor having received

a slap, said to the person who had the audacity to strike the man of God, "I could return you injury for injury, but I will not do so; I could, too, bear a complaint against you before the Khalif, but I will not do so; I could at any rate in my prayers represent to God the outrage which you have done to me, but I will not do so. Lastly, on the day of judgment, I could demand vengeance at the hands of the Almighty; but far from doing so, if that terrible period were to arrive at this very moment, and I had the opportunity of interceding for you, I would not enter Paradise save in your company." Noble sentiments were these for a man who, living in the second century of Islam, had given utterance to precepts which would have done credit to the teachings of this the twentieth century of the Christian era. Abu Hanifa was by trade a silk-mercator; one day a poor woman came to him, and begged that she might have some goods at cost price. "Take them," said he; but the sum named was so low that the woman fancied he was mocking her, till he pointed out that he had made his profit on another piece of silk of the same description, and was therefore to some extent indifferent as to his charges on this occasion.

It is well known that the Quran requires that a Muslim who apostatises shall be put to death; in the case, however, of a woman, Imam Hanifa ruled that she should be imprisoned and beaten every day. The passage runs, "Him who changes his religion kill." But it chanced that the Arabic word translated "him who" is of common gender; in these circumstances the other Sunni leaders of thought hold that the injunction refers to persons of both sexes.

Perhaps, however, notwithstanding all that has been said, the best idea of the man may be derived from the advice which he gave to the governor of a province as to the mode of rule which the latter should pursue :—

“ Live amicably with thy brethren ; testify to them thy regard, visit them, honour wise men, respect old persons, be kind to young men, show indulgence for people’s faults, cultivate the society of the virtuous, avoid the wicked, never reveal a secret, show regard for people of noble sentiment, speak little, only discuss with distinguished personages, return good for evil ; salute every one, even the lowest ; avoid chicanery, and observe perpetually in thy words the laws of sincerity ; attach thyself under all circumstances to religion. He to whom God shall give grace to practise these precepts will see strangers draw near to him, his enemies change to friends, while his discourse and words will serve as a lesson for other men, his science and life will profit the whole world. He will be universally loved, respected, praised, and lauded.”

The followers of Abu Hanifa for a lengthened period flourished for the most part in Iraq, but are now to be found chiefly amongst the Turks and Tartars.

The second orthodox school is that of Ibn Malik, who was born at Madina, in either A.D. 708, 711, 712, or 713, the precise date being unknown, and died there in either A.D. 793, 794, or 795. This doctor is said to have paid great regard to the traditions of Muhammad. In his last illness a friend going to visit him found him in tears, and asking him the reason of it, he answered, “ How should I not weep ? and who has more reason than I ? Would to God that for every question decided by me according to my own opinion, I had received so many stripes, then would my accounts be easier. Would to God I had never given any decision of my own ! ”

Being once asked his opinion as to forty-eight questions, his answer to thirty-two of them was, that he did not know; this reply is highly applauded by his followers, who deem it no easy matter that one who had no other view than God's glory should make so frank a confession of his ignorance.

At another time he refused to answer a question which had been asked, with the view of showing his ignorance :---“Tell the people that sent you,” thus did Malik enjoin the messenger, “that Maik has answered that he could not answer.” He never, if he could avoid so doing, pronounced a tradition when travelling, or standing, or when pressed for time. “I like to feel the meaning of the Prophet's words when I repeat them to others,” was his excuse on such occasions; not only so, indeed, but he used to go through a regular fixed ceremony prior to the utterance of a sacred saying. He first made an ablution, after which he seated himself in the middle of his mattress, and spreading out his beard, assumed a grave and dignified deportment. “I delight in testifying my profound respect for the sayings of the Apostle of God,” was his explanation, “and I never repeat a tradition unless I feel myself in a state of perfect purity.” In accordance with the same spirit of veneration, he never made use of a horse in Madina, even when much enfeebled and advanced in years. “I shall never ride in the city wherein the corpse of God's Apostle lies interred.”

During Ibn Malik's sojourn at Madina that city became the centre of an Aliite insurrection; the learned doctor took no part in the movement, but was understood to favour the claims of the descend-

ants of the Prophet's son-in-law ; on which ground, when peace was restored, he was summoned before the governor of the Hijaz, who was so highly incensed that he had the venerable theologian stripped and flogged, after which he caused the arm of the teacher of religion to be drawn out to such a degree that it became dislocated at the shoulder.

His system of jurisprudence—the “Low Church” school of Islam—is founded on the customs of Madina, which he arranged and systematised ; after this he embodied them with the traditions current in that city, and compiled a code embracing the whole sphere of life. He held that the doctors of the town in question would have been sure to have followed the practice and usage of their predecessors, when called upon to decide what might be done, and what should be avoided ; while these latter, in turn, might well be supposed to have borrowed their ideas from Muslims who had been ocular witnesses of the actions of the Prophet ; it was on these grounds that he made the traditions of Madina the basis of his school of theology. His treatise is known as the “beaten path,” the greater part of its contents being legal maxims, and opinions delivered by the Companions of Muhammad. It is worthy of note, that this is the first book of this nature which was committed to writing, all the traditions having hitherto been preserved orally from generation to generation.

It is related of Ibn Malik that on one occasion the Khalif Harun ar Rashid sent a messenger to the theologian, bidding him come to the palace, and bring his book with him ; but he refused, saying, “A man of wisdom is visited, but does not visit—science must

be sought, but will not seek." The Ruler of the Faithful insisted on his attendance; having no alternative, the theologian presented himself before his sovereign, who inquired as to the cause of his guest's disobedience. "Ruler of the Faithful," replied Malik, "the Prophet always honoured science; be not thou the first to abase it, for God will humble thy power." Harun felt the force of the remark, and, rising from his seat, walked with Malik to the doctor's house, where, sitting on the stairs, he made ready to listen to the words of the "beaten path";—but its author refused to read, saying, "If one removes science from the people to benefit the aristocracy, God will not make the nobles of the land to prosper." So an assistant took the place of the master. When the Khalif had listened for some time, Malik said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, thou hast come to see the wise men of our land, know that they admire modesty." The Amir was so pleased with the boldness and zeal, and, truth to tell, possibly with the flattery of Ibn Malik, that he resolved to introduce the work as a guide and direction for the subjects under his sway.

In spite of the modesty and wisdom of this doctor, he is accused by his enemies of having taught that the flesh of all animals, except swine and beings endowed with reason, may be eaten; and they also allege that he affirmed the legality of a practice which all other Muhammadan teachers have deemed infamous.

The doctrine of Malik, for a while predominant in Spain, is now chiefly followed in Barbary, and other parts of Northern Africa.

The author of the third orthodox school was Ash Shafii, born either at Gaza or Askalon, in Palestine, in A.D. 767, the same day that Abu Hanifa died; he was carried to Mecca at two years of age, and there educated. After a while he repaired to Madina, where he pursued his studies under the direction of Ibn Malik, who was so pleased with the diligence and zeal displayed by the student, that he addressed to the latter these encouraging words: "Have confidence in God, thou wilt soon become renowned; God hath placed in thy heart a flame, quench it not with sin." A few years before his death, which occurred 20th January, A.D. 820, he went to Egypt, where his fame was so great that on one occasion no less than 900 carriages were drawn up outside his door, the occupants being engaged in listening to the words of wisdom which fell from the learned theologian's mouth. This doctor is celebrated for his excellency in all parts of learning, and was much esteemed by Ibn Hambal his contemporary, who used to say that "he was as the sun to the world, and as health to the body." The latter, however, had at first so ill an opinion of Ash Shafii that he forbid his scholars to go near him; but somewhat later, one of them meeting his master hurrying on foot after the excommunicated doctor, who rode on a mule, asked Ibn Hambal how it came about that he forbid them to follow a person and yet did it himself? to which the man of God replied, "Hold thy peace; if thou but attend his mule thou wilt profit thereby."

Ash Shafii is said to have been the first who discoursed of jurisprudence, and reduced that science into a method; one wittily saying, that the relators

of the traditions of Muhammad were asleep till this theologian came and waked them.

Having carefully studied the systems of the two preceding Imams, he introduced an eclectic system of his own, though based, in a large measure, upon the doctrines of Ibn Malik. His "broad church" teaching was a reaction in fact against the tenets of Abu Hanifa, who propounded that, in the absence of a clear and direct statement, it will suffice if one passage in the Quran, or one tradition be adduced; whereas in such circumstances the Shafite will require a considerable number of traditions to support his case. Though he introduced several alterations of religious forms, he advanced but few doctrines that can be deemed innovations; indeed, the injustice of his antagonists may be judged from their accusations, the principal of which is that he departed from that text of the Quran which prohibits gambling, and allowed his disciples to indulge in the pastime of chess, to an extent not exceeding three games at a sitting.

Of a most amiable nature, pious, and generous almost to a fault, he inspired his followers with a large measure of respectful awe—but the extraordinary influence which he exercised, never filled his head with pride or arrogance, and it is related of him that he always carried a stick to remind him that he was but a traveller in this world. He used to divide the night into three parts, one for study, another for prayer, and a third for sleep; that he was diligent in the use of his time is testified by the circumstance that he left no less than 113 treatises on various matters connected with the religion and doctrine of Islam. It is related of him that he never at any

time swore by God, either to confirm a truth, or to affirm a falsehood; and that once being by chance asked his opinion, he remained silent for some time, and when the reason of his silence was demanded, he answered, "I am considering first whether it be better to speak or to hold my tongue." The following saying is also recorded of him, viz.: "Whoever pretends to love the world and its Creator at the same time is a liar."

The chief seat of Ash Shafi's system was originally Egypt, where he had passed so great a portion of his life, and where his tomb was considered a sacred spot by the Faithful, and much visited by devout pilgrims. But schools to disseminate his doctrines were founded in Iraq, Khorassan, and the regions beyond the Oxus, and shared with the Hanifite seminaries the privilege of teaching and giving opinions on questions of law. The rivalry, however, thus engendered, soon degenerated into a deep and bitter hatred, and it is recorded that when the Mongols in after years besieged the city of Rhe, one faction, the Shafites, entered into secret negotiations with the invaders to deliver up the town, upon condition that the Hanifites should be exterminated. The agreement was carried out to the letter, but the spectacle of so many Shafites remaining untouched while the carcases of their brethren lay in festering piles in the streets, was intolerable to a horde of barbarians, whose sole ambition was indiscriminate slaughter, so the fiat went forth that no distinction of religion was to stay the avenging sword; thus the traitors to their country and their faith met the just reward of their bigoted perfidy and pious

malignity. The stronghold of Shafism in the present day is at Cairo, though in India, especially at Haidarabad, and in the Bombay Presidency, the mass of the Musulman population adopt the tenets of this form of Islam.

Ibn Hambal, the founder of the fourth school, was born in A.D. 780, but as to the place of his birth there are two traditions. Some say that he first saw day at Marv, in Khorassan, where his parents were settled, and that his mother brought him thence to Baghdad at the breast; while others are of opinion that she reached that city before giving birth to her child. Ibn Hambal in process of time attained a great reputation on account of his virtue and knowledge, being so well versed in the traditions of Muhammad that it is said he could repeat no less than a million of them! He was very intimate with Ash Shafii, from whom he received most of his traditionary knowledge, having been his constant attendant till the departure of the latter for Egypt. Refusing to acknowledge the Quran to be created, that is, to be the language of man, he was, by order of the Khalif of the day, severely scourged and imprisoned. Ibn Hambal died at Baghdad on 31st July, A.D. 855, and it is alleged, was followed to his grave by 800,000 men, and 60,000 women. It is related as something very extraordinary, if not miraculous, that on the day of his death no less than 20,000 Christians, Jews, and Magians embraced the Muhammadan faith.

Ibn Hambal appears to have been bolder than any of his predecessors, and to have taught doctrines which subjected him to the most cruel persecutions. Nor need this latter circumstance occasion wonder,

seeing that he lived at a time when orthodox Islam seemed in danger of being lost amidst the rationalistic speculations and licentious practices of the Court at Baghdad: so rejecting the dangerous principles of analogical deductions, which had so weakened all the essentials of faith, he went upon the surer ground of the traditions, as these at least could not be supposed to pander to the appetites of a people steeped in luxury and self-indulgence. But to curb the passions of men, and to restrain their freedom of thought and action, is at all times difficult, and Ibn Hambal in encountering opposition, shared the fate of all reformers who seek to bring back mankind to ways of purity and faith.

So scrupulous was this theologian in his veneration for the Prophet of Arabia, that he would not eat water-melons because, although aware that the Master whom he adored indulged in them, it was uncertain whether the founder of Islam peeled off the rind, or whether he broke, bit, or cut them! In these circumstances the disciple deemed it better to refrain than to sin. Again, it is alleged that this Imam forbade a woman, who questioned him as to the propriety of the act, to spin by the light of such torches as might happen to pass along the streets at night, because the Prophet had not mentioned that it was lawful so to do. But if tradition be accepted in his case, virtue was its own reward, for the tale is told that one day, when sitting in an assembly, he alone of all present observed some formal custom authorised by the Prophet, whereupon Gabriel at once appeared and informed him that on account of this action he had been selected as a repository of the Faith!

At one time the Hambalites increased so fast, and became so powerful, that in A.D. 934, they raised a great commotion at Baghdad, entering people's houses and upsetting their wine wherever it was found : they beat, too, the singing women, and broke their instruments. But at the present day, Ibn Hambal's followers are not very numerous, and few of them are to be found beyond the limits of Arabia.

Such are the four leading schools of thought in the Sunni faith ; it must not, however, be supposed that the divergence of opinion in Islam ends here ; far otherwise ; the parties in the Muhammadan Church are well-nigh unlimited. Every reformer who can collect a few followers, establishes a new canon of faith, and the pages of history teem with the recital of the struggles, the upheavings, the heresies which have rent asunder the belief in the one God, as established by the Prophet of Arabia.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE SHIAS

THE second great division of the Muslim faith is known as the "Shia" creed, which, supplanting the religion founded by Zoroaster, who is generally supposed to have flourished about 600 years before the birth of Christ, became the national doctrine of the Persian Monarchy (A.D. 1499). The main tenets of the older faith thus banished from Iran's shores are a belief in the All-Good, whose habitation is the Kingdom of Light, and in an evil Being, who dwells in a region of darkness. The names of these two powers are respectively Ormazd and Ahriman, and the true believer is instructed so to conduct himself that he may be eternally happy hereafter with the Prince of Light, instead of inhabiting the Kingdom of the Ruler of Darkness. Fire-light and the sun are revered, if not worshipped, as symbols of the Divine nature, hence the term "fire-worshippers" by which these religionists are not infrequently designated. Prayer is also a duty most strongly enjoined, it being the prerogative of the priest to intercede alike for himself and the whole of his brethren.

At death the materials of the body are supposed by the Zoroastrians to rejoin their respective elements, earth to earth, water to water, fire to fire, and the life to the viewless air. For three days after dissolution the soul is imagined to flit round its tenement of clay in hopes of a reunion. On the fourth an angel appears, who conducts it to a structure connecting heaven and earth, whereon sits the Angel of Justice to weigh the actions of mortals: according to his decision the heavenly dog either permits the departed spirit to cross and join the souls of its ancestors in heaven, or precipitates it into the gulf of torment which yawns below. When the good deeds prevail, the soul is met on the bridge in question by a dazzling figure, which says: "I am thy good angel: I was pure originally, but thy good deeds have rendered me purer"; there-upon passing its hand over the neck of the blessed soul, it leads the latter to Paradise. If on the other hand iniquities preponderate, the doomed spirit is met by a hideous spectre, which howls out, "I am thy evil angel: impure myself, thy sins have rendered me more foul. Through thee shall we become miserable until the resurrection"; on which it drags the sinning spirit to hell, where Ahriman is waiting to taunt it with its folly and crimes. The judgment and resurrection of mankind occupy, according to the tenets of this faith, a space of fifty-seven years; at the expiration of which the elements, which have received in deposit the various substances of the body, must render up their trust, the soul will recognise its earthly companion and re-enter it, while life will be restored to man, who then becomes immortal. Then takes place the final separation of the good and the evil. Sinners who

have not in the intermediate state expiated their faults, are again sent to Hades : but not for eternal punishment. The tortures of three awful days and nights, equal to an agony of 3000 years, suffice for the purification of the most wicked. The voice of the Lost ascending to heaven, finding mercy in the soul of Ormazd, he will withdraw them from the place of torment. The world will melt with fervent heat, and the liquid and glossy metals will purify the universe, and fit all beings for everlasting felicity. To the just this ordeal is destined to prove pleasant and agreeable, while the wicked on the other hand are doomed to suffer excruciating agonies, after which they will be freed from their troubles. The abode of misery itself and all its demons will be cleansed, Ahriman, no longer irreclaimable, will be converted to goodness, and become a ministering spirit to the Most High God.

The whole fabric of this belief is based upon the three virtues of purity of speech, purity of action, and purity of thought. Truth is deemed the basis of all excellence, while virtue alone is happiness in this world, and its path the way of peace. Good actions are considered most acceptable sacrifices to God, industry being a guard to innocence, and a bar to temptation. Hospitality, philanthropy and benevolence are strongly inculcated, while untruth is paraded as the worst of sins, wickedness as the garment of shame, and idleness as the parent of want.

King Darius (B.C. 518-485) adopted the Zoroastrian religion with great ardour, and caused 12,000 cowhides to be tanned, upon which he had the doctrines of the new faith written. This collection, which bore

the name of "Zandavesta," was then deposited in a rock-hewn chamber at Persepolis, and to keep alive the faith, a priest was ordered to read the volume to the people, and expound its precepts. The followers of Zoroaster profess to suppose that the soul of the founder of their religion was created by God, and placed upon the tree from which all that is celestial has been produced. They would also have it believed that Zoroaster was permitted to visit the realms of bliss, on which occasion the good spirit gave him the "Zandavesta" for the direction of mankind; commanding him at the same time not "to soil the earth with carcases"; for this reason it is enjoined that the corpses of the dead shall be placed on the top of towers, in such a manner, that when the flesh has been eaten by birds, the bones will fall into the interior of the building. The priests of this religion were called "Magi," and hence the votaries are sometimes, even to this day, styled "Magians." During the rule of the Parthian kings of Persia the Zoroastrians were held in little respect; but in A.D. 226, on the commencement of the Sassanian dynasty, the Magian faith became firmly established as the national religion of the country, a state of things which continued till the time of the Saracens, when after the battle of Qadisiya (A.D. 637) the Muhammadans ruthlessly, but effectually, stamped out the Zoroastrian creed, and the ban remained in force for a period of little less than 900 years; isolated individuals were, it is true, left to follow the belief of their ancestors, but at the risk, or rather the certainty, of having to endure persecutions and suffer hardships, if not cruelties of every description. The flame of discord then created, continues

to the present day, with scarce abated violence, and the Sunnis exclude fire-worshippers from the list of the "people of the book," which honour is confined to Jesus, Christians and Muslims; in this respect other sects amongst the Muhammadans are more liberal-minded, in that they include the Zoroastrians in the privileged category of those who will inherit Eternal Salvation.

Ismail, the Safavi monarch, who ascended the throne in A.D. 1499, introduced the Shia faith as the national religion of Persia, and for two centuries and a half the priests of that sect exerted an overwhelming influence in directing the destinies of the nation; but in A.D. 1736, when the victorious general Nadir Shah, consequent on the splendid successes which had attended his arms, was asked to accept the throne of Persia, he told the assembled multitude that if he took the crown they must give up the Shia for the Sunni faith. This they agreed to do, though it soon became evident that the measure was so unpopular throughout the country that it would never be possible to carry it into effect. But Nadir Shah was inexorable, and issued an edict stating with reference to the Shia custom of adding to the Muhammadan formula, "There is but one God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," the words, "Ali is the friend of God"—"This is repugnant to religion, and contrary to the agreement and covenant entered into. Besides, it is evident to the world that, as the Prince of the Faithful, the Lion of God, the victorious, is elect, praised and acceptable to the Lord of Glory, his rank and interest will not be increased by vulgar testimony, nor the full moon of his power be

diminished by omitting these words. The ill-consequence of this form is, that both sects who equally acknowledge the chief and prophet of both worlds, will by this difference be provoked to animosities, which are disagreeable both to the Prophet, and to the Prince of the Faithful." Holding these views, he not unnaturally took every opportunity of insulting the Shia priesthood, and depriving them of their income. Indeed, immediately after he had been crowned, he assembled a number of the principal priests and demanded of them in what manner the immense reserves were appropriated. They replied "In supporting priests, colleges, and mosques. In the latter we continually offer up prayers to God for the success of our sovereign." "Your prayers," said Nadir, "are evidently not acceptable to the Almighty, for the empire suffered its greatest decline when your order was most encouraged. It has been rescued from destruction by my brave soldiers, who are, therefore, to be deemed God's chosen instruments, and your wealth must henceforward be applied to their support."

On the death of this mighty warrior in A.D. 1747, the country was so rent asunder with factions, consequent on the many aspirants for the throne, that religion for a while filled but a secondary place in the history of the empire; but towards the close of the eighteenth century Agha Muhammad, the founder of the present dynasty in Persia, pledged himself to the advancement of the Shia faith, by wearing a sword consecrated at the tomb of the monarch who established that belief in Iraq; and at the present day the worship of Ali and his descendants is the fixed national creed of the Persian Empire.

“ Though the personal history of Ali and his sons was the exciting cause of the Shia schism, its predisposing cause lies far deeper, in the impassable ethnological gulf which separates the Aryan and Semitic races.”

Thus writes Sir George Birdwood ; the remark exhibits a deep insight into human nature as regards the races of the East, and will probably commend itself to every reflecting reader ; none the less, pride was a powerful factor in the antagonism which has always existed between the Arab and the Persian ; the case is ably and succinctly argued by Osborne in his *Islam under the Khalifs of Baghdad*.

“ In the Quran,” so writes that intellectual and thoughtful author, “ it is repeatedly laid down that all believers are to regard each other as brethren, and that there are to be no distinctions of rank among them. This the Arabs could not bring themselves to concede. They were, in their own eyes, the most glorious and magnificent beings to be found on the surface of the earth, and in comparison with them all other nations were as the dust beneath their feet. The advanced state of civilisation attained by Persia and Byzantium, as compared with their own ignorance and barbarism, in no way diminished this exalted estimate of themselves. They had a theory which accounted for it. Their forefathers, so they affirmed, endowed by God with sublime aspirations, and sedulous to preserve themselves untainted from shame of every description, had seriously weighed the question as to where and how they should live. After mature deliberation, they had arrived at the conviction that the sedentary life of men in cities was adverse to the nobility of human nature. Only in the freedom and pure air of the desert could that nature be brought to its highest perfection. They had, therefore, chosen the latter, and the matchless excellences of the Arab testified to the wisdom of their choice. In virtue of the elevating power of this desert life the Arabs surpassed all other nations in the vigour of their character, the power of their thoughts, and the strength and beauty of their bodies. They were the “travellers of the night,

the lions of the battle, the genii of the desert, and the hosts of the solitudes." It was a further proof of this manifest superiority that God had selected from among them the greatest and last of all His Prophets, that the Arabic language was spoken in heaven, and that the temple at Mecca had been declared to be a centre of worship and holiness for all the nations of the universe.

"The Persians, in whom the pride of ancestry and the sense of their personal excellence was hardly less extreme than in the Arabs, bitterly resented this assumption of superiority. They invented a genealogy for the express purpose of confounding the arrogance of their conquerors. They asserted themselves to be descended from Isaac the son of Abraham. They taunted the Arabs as the children of a mere concubine, whereas they were the true and legitimate representatives of Abraham and Sarah. They denied that Ishmael, the father of the Arabs, had ever been thought worthy of being offered up as a sacrifice to God, as the Arabs supposed. It was Isaac to whom this privilege had been accorded. Isaac, and not Ishmael, had built the Kaba and the former monarchs of Persia had made yearly pilgrimages to the Hijaz long ere the Quraish had become guardians of the Holy Places. This rivalry between the two races was the main cause of the incessant insurrections which shook to pieces the power of the Omaiyyads. Every pretender to power could make appeal to it with the certainty of a hearty response. The Persians recruited the ranks of the Separatists, impelled thereto by the levelling character of their creed, and the merciless war they levelled against the Khalifs and their officials. They flocked over more readily to the banner of the Aliites, for here they were taught that the Arabs were a people peculiarly hateful in the eyes of God, on account of the barbarous murder of the son of the Khalif Ali on the plain of Karbala. But hatred of the Arab was the predominant motive which guided their actions, and any cause was good which held out a hope of retaliation on the victors of Qadisiya."

The Shias, who were computed by Mr Blunt (1880) to amount to 15,000,000 souls, derive their name from a word which signifies a "party" or "sect," though some are of opinion that the term takes its origin from an Arabic root indicating "disgraceful"; the

epithet having in the first instance been given as a mark of reproach. These sectaries maintain that Ali was the earliest convert to Islam, and consequently the eldest in the faith; while his nearness of kin to Muhammad, of whom he was the cousin, and his marriage with Fatima, the Prophet's only surviving daughter, gave him, they consider, an indefeasible right to succeed to the Khalifat; added to which, the same temporal and spiritual powers which they conceive should have descended to him on the death of the Lawgiver of Arabia, ought, in their opinion, to have been transmitted to his lineal descendants, and not to have formed the subject of election or choice, depending on the will of the populace, or the caprice of the people; hence they reject as usurpers the three first Khalifs, Abu Bakr, Omar, and Osman, and consider Ali and his eleven descendants to be the true successors of the Prophet. To such an extent indeed do the Shias carry their veneration for the twelve Imams, that it is an article of their faith that no one can be saved who does not admit that, after Muhammad, the most excellent of men was Ali, then Hasan, etc., and that the former of these two is endowed with the power of creation in the same manner as if he were the Almighty himself! Strange as it may seem, this doctrine is most implicitly carried into practice, for not only do the Shias assign to the hierarchy in question the attributes of the Divine Being, deeming it blasphemy to utter a word against the holy men of which it is composed, but they exalt Ali to a pitch of glory, little, if any, less than that assigned to the Prophet of Arabia; the beloved "Hand of God" is not only their idol but their Deity;

“Muhammad is a city of learning, Ali is the gate thereof,” is a comparison which accurately gauges the comparative merits of these two pillars of faith. The traditions regarding the husband of Fatima are, as might be expected in such circumstances, innumerable, all tending to glorify the hero of the Shia doctrines. Thus it is said that he never died, but was taken up alive into heaven, whence he will return in the fulness of time to fill the earth with his tenets; to some he will appear in the shape of an angel, to others in the likeness of Satan, according as the individual's actions in this world may have been good or evil. Again, as it is undeniable, so run the traditions, that there never has been a human creature more perfect than Ali, so it may be believed God has revealed Himself to mankind in the shape of His faithful servant, through whose agency He conducts the affairs of the world, which the latter had called into existence. Such a belief naturally involves the supposition that Ali existed before the creation of the world, so that by degrees the Shia sectaries have exalted their beloved Imam to the dignity of a God, and clothed him with the attributes of divinity.

It is even said that when Muhammad made his well-known ascension to heaven he was surprised, and truth to tell, somewhat mortified, to find that the name of his son-in-law seemed more familiar to the denizens of the abode of bliss than that of himself, the Prophet of Arabia. So it has happened that amongst the Shias the pen of the writer fails to describe the glory of such a hero, and the brush of the painter dares not attempt to delineate the features of a being so sacred, upon whom man indeed is not

worthy so much as to cast a glance, and the unfinished headless trunk which is not uncommonly left on the canvas betokens at once the transcendant excellency of the first Imam, and the zeal of the followers who rely upon him for intercession at that great day when,

“The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky.”

There is a tradition amongst the Muslims, that long before the creation of the world God took a ray of light from the splendour of His own glory, and united it to the body of Muhammad, proclaiming at the same time, “Thou art the elect, the chosen; I will make the members of thy family the guides to salvation.” The body of the Prophet was then in some mysterious way hidden. In due time the world was created, but not until the birth of Muhammad did this ray of glory appear. This light descended to Ali, and from him passed to the eleven true Imams, who alone can be considered the lawful successors of the Prophet—hence these sacred beings are free from original sin, their bodies being so pure and delicate that they cast no shadow: they are, indeed, the beginning and the end of all things; their commands and prohibitions, their very actions, the Almighty recognises as His own. As mediums between God and man, they hold a far higher position than the prophets, for the Grace of God, without the intervention of the holy successors of the Prophet of Islam, reaches no created beings. The Imam is the superior Pontiff, the Vicar of God on earth; the possessor of an infallible book is not sufficient, the infallible guide is needed. The wisdom and discernment which this

latter would require, could only be found—thus it is contended—amongst the descendants of the Prophet. Moreover, in the early days of the faith the possession of the Imamat conveyed the right of conducting the public services in the mosque, a sacred privilege, which, belonging in the first instance to the Prophet, was by him bequeathed to his successors. In these circumstances it will not occasion surprise that a belief that Ali received this important office direct from the hands of the Prophet of Arabia underlies the whole fabric of the Shia faith, and as a consequence it seems natural that the sober simplicity of the narrative which proclaims how this came to pass should be adorned with a halo of miraculousness and spirituality. The tradition narrates, that on the last occasion when Muhammad appeared in the mosque at Mecca, the Angel Gabriel appeared to him with a message from the Almighty, bidding him publicly to proclaim his son-in-law as his successor on the first occasion when the latter should meet him. After delivering the message the angel hastened to Ali, who happened at the time to be at Madina, and enjoined him to repair to Mecca, there to receive the sacred office at the hands of his father-in-law. It chanced that the pair met at a caravan station, midway between the two sacred cities; whereupon, at once falling round each other's neck they kissed one another, the embrace being so close, that by a supernatural union they as it were merged into one being. Next day the Prophet erected a throne, and taking Ali by the hand placed him thereon, holding him on his bosom such a length of time that for several minutes the two once again became but one soul, identical in feeling and aspira-

tion ; during this period of ecstasy the virtues and powers of the founder of Islam passed, so Persian theologians would have it believed, into the possession of the "Hand of God." Lest, however, any should entertain feelings of doubt, a voice which none could gainsay, proclaimed to the assembled multitudes, "Behold your King, the Sovereign of the whole earth, my Vicar, the Lieutenant of God, the true Pontiff and Imam whom He has chosen to succeed me ; I make over to him all my power, and constitute him my general Heir and my Testamentary Executor." It might have been supposed that in these circumstances every knee would bow in allegiance to the Lord's anointed ; but it was not so, for when Muhammad lay sick in his house, having bade Ali repair to the mosque to perform the prayers, Abu Bakr himself took possession of the pulpit, and refused to make way for the son-in-law of the Prophet ; a circumstance which so excited and vexed the Messenger of God, that, if we would believe the traditions which are handed down, he took his daughter's husband by the hand, and rising from a bed of sickness, tottered to the sacred edifice, and then and there placed his son-in-law in possession of the public functions, which made him a sovereign in things temporal no less than a guide in affairs spiritual.

The fundamental texts of the Shia sects are five in number : (1) a belief in the unity of God ; (2) an admission that He is just ; (3) a belief in the Divine Mission of all the Prophets, Muhammad being the chief ; (4) an avowal that Ali was Khalif next in order after Muhammad ; (5) a belief that Ali's descendants, from Hasan to Mahdi, the twelfth Imam, were his true

successors, and as such raised far above all other Muslims as regards character, position, and dignity. In addition to this, the Shias claim the right of free judgment in regard to the dicta of individual doctors on matters of religion, while there is a general tendency amongst them to superstitious beliefs unwarranted by the Quran, or by the written testimony of the Prophet's companions.

As the Shias reject the three first Khalifs as usurpers, it follows that this belief is hostile to the whole fabric of the Sunni school of thought, which rests on the authority of the immediate successors of the Prophet, whose very names are held in abhorrence by the former sect as being guilty of disobedience in rejecting the superior right of Ali to succeed to the Imamate.

More particularly the Khalif Omar has been singled out as a mark of the deepest aversion; and even to this day, when a Persian discharges his bow, not uncommonly a muttered execration may be heard, "May this arrow go to the heart of Omar." Lest, indeed, this spirit of hatred should gradually die away, a custom has been established of celebrating annually the death of the execrated Khalif. On this occasion a large platform is erected on which is fixed an image, disfigured and deformed as much as possible. Addressing themselves to this effigy, the assembled multitude begin to revile it for supplanting Ali, the lawful successor of Muhammad; at length, having exhausted all their expressions of abuse, they suddenly attack the image with stones and sticks, until they shatter it in pieces, when the inside being hollow and full of sweetmeats, the latter tumble out, and are

greedily devoured by the mob attendant at a ceremony which pleases their minds and gratifies their palates.

The Shias admit to some extent the legality of the "Sunna," except where its source is contaminated, but their leading principle is an obedience to the relations and descendants of Muhammad, whom they deem to have partaken in a lesser degree of the Prophet's sacred nature; and the title by which this sect love to be distinguished is that of the "friends of the family." By a strange anomaly, however, though, as just explained, they reject the "six correct books" as unworthy of that implicit faith which is placed therein by the Sunnis, yet they have substituted five works of their own, oblivious apparently of the circumstance that the same arguments which would undermine the value of the one set of books as a guide in matters of faith, would preclude the possibility of attaching weight to any other productions which are merely the "work of men's hands."

It may well be supposed that as the Shias discard the traditions on which the Sunni school of theology is based, so in like manner they refuse to pay homage to the four great exponents thereof, the leaders of thought who are received as leaders of the faith. These learned doctors, they affirm, have propagated many erroneous and impious opinions, both in matters of faith and practice; and it is contended that the worldly policy which has led to the monstrous compound of their contradictory tenets into one faith, must involve all who adopt it in inextricable difficulties. In support of this opinion, they argue that, as it is acknowledged there is only one path of truth, it becomes evident that if the followers of Hanifa or any

other Sunni saint be right, those of the remaining three must be wrong; and they ask, "After all, is it not better to trust to what we have received from God, and His Prophet, and from those who lived during his mission, and have transmitted his sayings, than to give our minds over to these pretended doctors of divinity and law, and thus to constitute their fallible works the standard of faith and the rule of our lives?" An amusing instance is recorded of this feeling of antipathy :---A Shia doctor of laws was once summoned to a meeting to discuss with four representatives of the orthodox sects an abstruse point of matrimonial usage. The learned follower of Ali, with a pretended clownish manner, instead of leaving his slippers at the door, secured them under his arm. This action produced much mirth, and the reason of so strange a proceeding was demanded. "We have a record in my family," said the man, "that one of our ancestors, who lived in the days of the Prophet, had his slippers stolen by a follower of Hanifa." All burst into laughter, and he was informed that the latter did not propagate his doctrine till a century after Muhammad's death. "It must have been a follower then of Malik." The mirth became louder: the ignorant doctor was instructed that Malik came after Hanifa. "Then it was Shafi." "But this man was still later." "It must have been Hambal," said the Shia, affecting anger. This holy man, he was apprised, did not publish his works till the second century of the Hijra. The doctor started back with pretended surprise at this information, and exclaimed, "Why, if all you say be true, these holy saints, whose opinions you wish to make our laws, lived so long after the Prophet,

that they could know no more than you or I, gentlemen, except as they might happen to be more or less learned." It will scarce occasion surprise that the Shias acknowledge no head temporal or spiritual, each congregation representing a separate unit of authority in itself. Every doctor of the sect who has taken his degree at Karbala, or Ispahan, may deliver his "opinion" on points of doctrine, and the only test of authority to preach or lead the prayer in mosques is the power of attracting a congregation. In theory, it is true, these votaries hold that there is an Imam or Khalif, but in practice they leave the title in abeyance; the advent of the Mahdi must, in the opinion of the Persians, be awaited to reunite Islam and restore its fortunes. It is somewhat singular, too, that the Shah, though absolute monarch to an extent which the more civilised nations of the West can hardly realise, is neither Imam nor Khalif—in fact, from a religious point of view, His Majesty is considered an usurper; nay more, he himself acknowledges that this is the case by the circumstance that he leases in legal form his palaces from a supposed representative of the Mahdi, with a view of enabling prayers to be offered up in their precincts to the spiritual profit of himself and other votaries; for it is a maxim amongst Muslims of all sects that prayer is not valid if made in another man's house without his permission. It is but natural that under such conditions, and in the absence of all restraining influence, the tendency to pander to popular prejudice is too great to be resisted, hence the Shias revel in the most wonderful tales of miracle and superstition. "You Christians," a Persian once said to Mr Blunt, when the latter was travelling

in Iran, "talk of your Christ as the Son of God, and think it strange: but with us the occurrence is a common one. Believe me, we have 'Sons of God' in nearly all our villages."

It will not have escaped notice that the religion of Muhammad involves the observance of a vast array of outward duties, such as fasting, praying, ablution, and many other obligations, some at least of which must of necessity be irksome and tedious. Hence the intense longing which exists amongst the Shias for the advent of their Mahdi, on whose appearance all the wearisome ceremonial of the Muslim faith will, they suppose, be swept away, and mankind will have free licence to indulge in unrestrained enjoyment of the passions and desires.

That wild, strange ideas of religious latitude are in harmony with the feelings which animate the sect at large is evidenced by the circumstance that the Persians not only teach but practise the doctrine that, in order to avoid persecution, a person may publicly profess any opinions he pleases, may deny any, or all, of the special doctrines of his sect; he may even avow himself to be an orthodox Muhammadan. And at the time of the pilgrimage to Mecca pious votaries from Iran, whose zeal for their religion has taught them to endure without a murmur all the toils, the hardships, and the dangers of a visit to the sacred city, may be heard cursing the twelve Imams whom their faith teaches them to deem as little less than God; and yet the scene of this falsehood and deceit is, as they consider, the temple of the Almighty Creator whom they have assembled together to worship and adore!

The mass, however, of the Persian population do not repair to Mecca or Madina, but are satisfied with a pilgrimage to certain spots hallowed by the sacred traditions of their faith: these are (1) the tomb of Ali at Najaf, near Kufa; this was formerly elaborately bedecked, but early in the present century the Pasha of Baghdad, on the pretence that he feared the Arabs, despoiled the shrine of its treasures, which however, alas be it told, he subsequently omitted to return. (2) The shrine of Husain at Karbala, near the ruins of Babylon. A magnificent mosque has been erected over this tomb, richly decorated with enamelled tiles, and surmounted by a gilded dome and arabesque minarets. By payment of an enormous sum a wealthy Persian can be buried in the interior of the mosque, near the tomb of the Imam; but less favoured individuals are perforce content with a resting-place in an outer court, a minor privilege for which, none the less, large sums are paid. The corpses of the poorer classes are brought into the mosque, laid for a short time on the tomb of Husain, and then buried in some neighbouring cemetery. It is popularly supposed that according to the position of the place of burial in relation to Husain's tomb will be the position of the occupant of the grave on the day of resurrection;—hence the desire to be near the Imam in his last resting-place in this world, so as to stand in proximity to him in the regions above. For which reason bodies are brought to Karbala from all parts of Persia, sometimes even in an advanced state of decomposition. In 1801 the shrine was despoiled by the Wahabis, but eighteen years later a pious Indian prince made good, at an expense of £21,000, the

ravages of his bigoted co-religionists, and decorated the shrine with a canopy studded with emeralds, the pillars being of gold, interspersed with diamonds. (3) The mausoleum near Baghdad, of Musa al Kazim the seventh Imam. (4) The cavern at Samarra near the latter city, where the twelfth and last Imam is supposed to be concealed. (5) The tomb at Mashhad, of Ali Riza, the eighth Imam, a visit to which place entitles the votary to the appellation of "Mashhadi"; and (6) The mosque at Kum, containing the tomb of Fatima, the daughter of the said Imam Ali Riza, the interior of which latter mosque is covered with gold and precious stones; 700 servants are attached thereto, and an array of candles are continually burning. So much is this sacred spot held in reverence, that many Persians pay large sums to be allowed to select a place proximate thereto where they may draw their last breath.

But in addition to these hallowed spots there are an immense number of tombs of inferior saints and martyrs, where the Persians offer up their prayers, while well-nigh every village can boast of some holy person, whose character has obtained for him a local reputation, and rendered his shrine sacred amongst the surrounding hamlets.

The Shias accuse the Sunnis of using a mutilated Quran, and state that Ali possessed the only perfect copy of that sacred book; this is supposed to have been in forty sections instead of thirty, the subdivision to which the more orthodox Muslims adhere. They also hold views totally at variance with the conceptions of their rivals in the faith, as regards the essence and attributes of God, notably in that they consider

it wrong to ascribe to the Almighty movement, quiescence, etc., for these imply the possession of a body. They maintain, too, that God can never be seen, for that which is visible is limited by space.

A zealous Persian most conscientiously believes that his neighbour in India will be consigned to everlasting perdition for crossing his hands on his breast when he is saying his prayers instead of letting them fall by his side agreeably to the practice of the followers of Ali; these latter, too, attach a peculiar efficacy to the earth of Karbala, which they make up into discs to be placed on the ground when they bow themselves in prayer, so that at every prostration they may touch their forehead with the sacred dust of the martyrs. A Sunni on these occasions makes use of the dust of Mecca, to which he attaches equal veneration. Another distinction between the two sects in connection with their devotions, relates to the mandate of the Prophet, which says, "O believers, when ye address yourselves to prayer, wash your hands up to the elbow, and *wipe* your heads, and your feet to the ankles." This injunction is carried into effect by the Shias in its literal integrity, whereas the Sunnis not only wipe but wash the portions of the body in question. So great, indeed, are the differences of thought and feeling between the two sects, that tradition has proclaimed, and the followers of Ali would have it believed, that on the occasion of the Prophet's visit to heaven, he saw some people being cast into the bottomless pit: feelings of compassion filled his heart, and he inquired as to the hapless beings about to be consigned to everlasting perdition: great was his astonishment, and it may well be conceived greater

his mortification, to find that amongst the number were some of his own followers. But—and this was the cause of their condemnation—they were Sunnis!

It will thus be seen that the divergence between Shias and Sunnis is not confined to matters of faith, but affects the routine of daily life. Scarce, indeed, a ceremony but marks the rivalry of the respective votaries: marriage, divorce, slavery, all possess their distinctive features, and at every turn the faithful follower of Ali is reminded that he is “not as other men are.” The hatred, therefore, of the sectaries needs nothing to intensify its bitterness, or add to its violence; but lest the breach should at any time be healed, and the schism of Islam be consigned to oblivion, tradition has founded the annual celebration of a religious drama, depicting the pains and anguish which the martyrs of the faith underwent on the fatal field of Karbala.

As the month Muharram draws near, preparations are made in the various cities of Persia for the celebration of the Miracle Play, and large tents, called “takyas,” are erected in the streets and open places: these are fitted up with black linen, and furnished with objects emblematical of the events connected with the massacre of Husain and his family on the field of Karbala, the expense being not infrequently borne by some rich man, anxious to conciliate his Creator by such an act of piety and devotion. The ceremonies commence on the 8th of the month, on which day “the Grand Vizier,” says Mr Morier, who himself personally witnessed this strange scene—

“invited the whole of the Embassy to attend his takya. On entering the room, we found a large assembly of Persians clad in dark-

coloured clothes, which, accompanied with their black caps, their black beards, and their dismal faces, really looked as if they were *afflicting their souls*. We observed that *no man did put on his ornaments*. They neither wore their daggers, nor any parts of their dress which they look upon as ornamental. A Mulla of high consideration sat next to the Grand Vizier, and kept him in serious conversation, whilst the remaining part of the society communicated with each other in whispers. After he had sat some time, the windows of the room in which we were seated were thrown open, and we then discovered a priest placed on a high chair, under the covering of a tent, surrounded by a crowd of the populace: the whole of the scene being lighted up with candles. He commenced by an exordium, in which he reminded them of the great value of each tear shed for the sake of Imam Husain, which would be an atonement for a past life of wickedness; and also informed them with much solemnity, that *whosoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted on the same day, it shall be cut off from among the people* (Lev. xxiii. 29). He then began to read from a book with a sort of nasal chant, that part of the tragic history of Husain appointed for the day, which soon produced its effect upon his audience, for he scarcely had turned over three leaves, before the Grand Vizier commenced to shake his head to and fro, to utter in a most piteous voice the usual Persian exclamation of grief, 'Vahi! vahi! vahi!' both of which acts were followed in a more or less violent manner by the rest of the audience. The chanting of the priest lasted nearly an hour, and some parts of his story were indeed pathetic, and well calculated to rouse the feelings of a superstitious and lively people. In one part of it, all the company stood up, and I observed the Grand Vizier himself towards the wall, with his hand extended before him, while he prayed. After the priest had finished, a company of actors appeared, some dressed as women, who chanted forth their parts from slips of paper, in a sort of recitative that was not displeasing even to our ears. In the very tragical parts, most of the audience appeared to cry very unaffectedly: and as I sat near the Grand Vizier, and to his neighbour the priest, I was witness to many real tears that fell from them. In some of these mournful assemblies it is the custom for a priest to go about to each person at the height of his grief, with a piece of cotton in his hand, with which he carefully collects the falling tears, and which he then squeezes into a bottle, preserving them with the greatest caution. This practically illustrates that passage in the

56th Psalm, 8th verse, *Put thou my tears into thy bottle.* Some Persians believe that in the agony of death, when all medicines have failed, a drop of tears so collected, put into the mouth of the dying man, has been known to revive him : and it is for such use that they are collected.

“On the ‘Ruz-i-Qatl,’ or ‘Day of Slaughter,’ the tenth day, the Ambassador was invited by the King to be present at the termination of the ceremonies, in which the death of Husain was to be represented. We set off after breakfast, and placed ourselves in a small tent that was pitched for our accommodation over an arched gateway, which was situated close to the room in which His Majesty was to be seated.

“We looked upon the great *maidan*, or square, which is in front of the palace, at the entrance of which we perceived a circle of Kajars, or people of the King’s own tribe, who were standing barefooted, and beating their breasts in cadence to the chanting of one who stood in the centre, and with whom they now and then joined their voices in chorus. *Smiling the breast* (St Luke xviii. 13) is an universal act throughout the mourning : and the breast is made bare for that purpose, by unbuttoning the top of the shirt. The King, in order to show his humility, ordered the Kajars, among whom were many of his own relations, to walk about without either shoes or stockings, to superintend the order of the different ceremonies about to be performed : and they were to be seen stepping tenderly over the stones, with sticks in their hands, doing the duties of menials—now keeping back a crowd, then dealing out blows with their sticks, and settling the order of the processions.

“Part of the square was partitioned off by an enclosure, which was to represent the town of Karbala, near which Husain was put to death : and close to this were two small tents, which were to represent his encampment in the desert with his family. A wooden platform, covered with carpets, upon which the actors were to perform, completed all the scenery on the occasion.

“A short time after we had reached our tent, the King appeared, and although we could not see him, yet we were soon apprised of his presence by all the people standing up, and by the bowing of his officers.

“The procession then commenced as follows:—First came a stout man, naked from the waist upwards, balancing in his girdle, a long, thick pole, surmounted by an ornament made of tin,

curiously wrought with devices from the Quran, in height altogether about thirty feet. Then another, naked like the former, balanced an ornamented pole in his girdle still more ponderous, though not so high, upon which a young dervish, resting his feet upon the bearer's girdle, had placed himself, chanting verses with all his might in praise of the king. After him a person of more strength, and more nakedness, a water-carrier, walked forward, bearing an immense leather sack, filled with water, slung over his back, on which, by way of bravado, four boys were piled one over the other. This personage, we were told, was emblematical of the great thirst which Husain suffered in the desert. A litter in the shape of a sarcophagus, which was called 'the Qabr-i-paighambar,' or 'tomb of the Prophet,' succeeded, borne on the shoulders of eight men. On its front was a large oval ornament, entirely covered with precious stones, and just above it a great diamond star. On a small projection were two tapers, placed on candlesticks enriched with jewels. The top and sides were covered with Kashmerian shawls, and on the summit rested a turban, intended to represent the head-dress of the Prophet. On each side walked two men bearing poles, from which a variety of beautiful shawls were suspended, and at the top of which were representations of Muhammad's hand, studded with jewellery.

"After this came four led horses, caparisoned in the richest manner. The fronts of their heads were ornamented with plates, entirely covered with diamonds, that emitted a thousand beautiful rays. Their bodies were dressed with shawls and gold stuffs, and on their saddles were placed some object emblematical of the death of Husain. When all these had passed, they arranged themselves in a row to the right of the King's apartment.

"After a short pause, a body of fierce-looking men, with only a loose white shirt thrown over their naked bodies, marched forward. They were all begrimed with blood; and each brandishing a sword, they sang a sort of hymn, the tones of which were very wild. These represented the sixty-two relations, or the martyrs, as the Persians call them, who accompanied Husain, and were slain in defending him. Close after them was a led white horse, covered with artificial wounds, with arrows stuck all about him, and caparisoned in black, representing the horse upon which Husain was mounted when he was killed. A band of about fifty men, sticking two pieces of wood in their hands, completed the pro-

cession. They arranged themselves in rows before the King, and, marshalled by a *maitre de ballet*, who stood in the middle to regulate their movements, they performed a dance, clapping their hands in the best possible time. The *maitre de ballet* all this time sang in recitative, to which the dancers joined at different intervals with loud shouts and clapping of their pieces of wood.

"The processions were succeeded by tragedians. Husain came forward, followed by his wives, sisters, and relatives. They performed many long and tedious acts; but as our distance from the stage was too great to hear the many affecting things which no doubt they said to each other, we will proceed at once to where the unfortunate Husain lay extended on the ground, ready to receive the death stroke from a ruffian dressed in armour, who acted the part of executioner. At this moment a burst of lamentation issued from the multitude, and sobs and real tears came from almost every one of those who were near enough to come under our inspection. The indignation of the populace wanted some object upon which to vent itself, and it fell upon those of the actors who had performed the parts of Yazid's soldiers. No sooner was Husain killed, than they were driven off the ground by a volley of stones, followed by shouts of abuse. We were informed that it is so difficult to procure performers to fill these characters, that on the present occasion a party of Russians were pressed into the army of Yazid, and they made as speedy an exit after the catastrophe as was in their power.

"The scene terminated by the burning of Karbala. Several reed huts had been constructed behind the inclosure before mentioned, which of a sudden was set on fire. The tomb of Husain was seen covered with black cloth, and upon it sat a figure disguised in a *tiger's* skin, which was intended to represent the miraculous *lion* recorded to have kept watch over his remains after he had been buried. The most extraordinary part of the whole exhibition was the representation of the dead bodies of the martyrs, who, having been decapitated, were all placed in a row, each body with a head close to it. To effect this, several Persians buried themselves alive, leaving the head out just above ground; whilst others put their heads under ground, leaving out the body. The heads and bodies were placed in such relative positions to each other, as to make it appear they had been severed. This is done by way of penance: but in hot weather the violence of the exertion has been known to produce death. The

whole ceremony was terminated by the 'Khutba,' which is an action of prayer for Muhammad, his descendants, and for the property of the King, and was delivered in a loud voice by a man, *the best crier of his time* (as Xenophon calls Tolmides), who is celebrated for his strong voice, and, indeed, deservedly so, for at about fifty yards distance from us we heard every word he said, notwithstanding the noise of the multitude which surrounded us."

To this description it is necessary to add that one of the principal personages in this singular drama is a fictitious European ambassador, probably a Byzantine, who is present when the head of Husain is exhibited to Yazid, and who loudly protests against the massacre; an act of indiscretion for which he is rewarded with the crown of martyrdom. There is always great anxiety that the costume of his Excellency should be European, and, if possible, military; but above all a cocked hat and feathers are highly prized; and it is not unfrequently the case that a uniform which has decked the breast of a valiant British son of Mars is made to do duty on the back of a stalwart actor of Iran.

The more fanatical Shias yearly hold a sort of Guy Fawkes day, when a comic "tazia" commemorative of Omar is held, and the usurper is finally conducted to the infernal regions by the Arch Fiend in person. On the other hand, the less devout make amends for the extra piety of their faithful brethren by ogling the ladies on the occasion of an interval in the performance, and sometimes, alas be it said, during the most touching and pathetic parts of the ceremonies; while the serious and sober of the assembly are compelled at times to smile at the contests of the fair dames in their struggles to secure an

eligible seat; indeed, it would be difficult to avoid being amused at the blows and scratches with which the pugnacious devotees endeavour to assert their rights. There is, truth to tell, a story current that on one occasion a stripling, destined in after years to become a high functionary of State, threw amongst the throng of tightly-packed pushing and tearing daughters of Eve, a basin of young frogs: the confusion and distress of the fair devotees may well be imagined, but their shrieks and screams, followed by the laughter of the sterner sex, must have contrasted somewhat strangely with the sad and dismal scene of woe, which the assembly had met together to celebrate.

In considering this subject, it must not be overlooked, as has been pointed out by M. Gobineau, that Husain is not only the son of Ali, he is the husband of a princess of royal blood—he, his father, all the Imams, taken collectively, represent the Persian nation, overthrown, vexed, dispirited, depopulated by their Arab conquerors: hence the emotion displayed at the performance of the Miracle Play is sacred. If any one were to remain cold and unappreciative, he would be less than a man to be insensible to cruelty and injustice. Nor would he be a Muslim, inasmuch as he would not in that case dare to despise the family of the Prophet; lastly, and above all, he would not be a Persian in so far as he had failed to recognise what he, who is the personification of his country, had suffered, and what the land itself had undergone.

The scenes, in every instance, depict some thrilling events connected with the story of "Husain and

Husain," the martyrs of Karbala, but they vary from time to time: in fact, the "impresario," of whom there are about five or six scattered throughout Persia, turns his steps at the time of the approach of the Muharram towards the great cities of the land, such as Teheran, Ispahan, Shiraz, etc., and produces out of his collection, which usually numbers one hundred scenes, such of them as are most suited to the occasion, being guided in his choice by numerous considerations of the moment. So that the Miracle Play varies in each city, and in every year. The representation lasts ten days, on each of which the audience is harassed with a fresh tale of woe.

There are no acts or scenes, properly so called, nor is there a curtain, but as each subject terminates the actors leave the stage; these latter are mostly well up in their rôles, though they carry a small scroll from which, when memory fails, they calmly read their part. In addition, however, to the professional actors there are numerous supernumeraries, mostly volunteers eager to "compound for sins they are inclined to," by assisting in an act of devotion, which they consider expiates for many a deed of ill and wickedness committed during the other months of the year.

Piety, too, prompts the orthodox to contribute to the performance articles to deck the stage; and the miscellaneous array of cups, saucers, dishes, plates, and other worldly possessions, which meet the eye, would gladden the heart of a dealer in curiosities.

The strangeness of the strange scene is considerably heightened by the circumstance that it is not deemed incumbent upon the actors to shave their faces; so that a sweet angelic cherub, supposed to

have alighted on earth from the regions of bliss, appears in some instances before the audience with a huge dark grizzly beard, entirely inconsistent with the notion of a heavenly messenger, who is universally depicted in the West with a sweet innocent face of youthful simplicity.

The pay assigned to the professional actor varies according to the talent of the individual, and the estimation in which he is held by the public; in some cases it amounts to as much as £100 or £150; the recipient of such a sum is treated with immense respect when he appears in the street, more especially by the troops of children, who are petrified at the appearance of so august a personage; amongst his companions, too, it is etiquette that he should give himself airs—so that at times he is pleasant and affable, while at others he is cross and peevish—if flattery fail in amount or quality, he will refuse to play; he is, forsooth, a star in the firmament of religious art.

The more important, however, of all those who take part in the performance is the “reciter of the traditions” concerning the martyrdom of the Imams; in fact he is the life and soul of the piece. He must be eloquent, fascinating and learned, and, as the office is both lucrative and honourable, its possessors are not unfrequently descendants of an Imam, in which case the turban and girdle are either green or black, in place of white, the ordinary colour.

Sir Lewis Pelly has published a translation of a collection of scenes in this strange “Miracle Play”; but for the information of the unenlightened it may be stated, that in addition to the slaughter and destruction of the martyrs and their families, who are murdered

amidst the wails and lamentations of an appreciative audience, the angel Gabriel descends from the skies attended by his ministering angels, all radiant in spangle wings, not, alas, to assist the band of heroes in their sore and dismal plight, but merely to deprecate the hard lot of the Prophet's offspring. The king, too, of the "Jinns," with his army appears, but, again, not to help but only to mourn; the example of the angelic band has, it would seem, proved irresistible. Moses, attired as an Arab Shaikh, Jesus Christ in rags and tatters, and even Muhammad himself gorgeously appparelled in silver silk and raiment of Kashmir—one and all revisit the earth, and are stricken with the general contagion of grief; not a soul however raises a finger in defence of the slaughtered heroes—till at length the murderer does his work amidst an universal outburst of sorrow and indignation!

The sadness of the scenes which are witnessed is in some measure counterbalanced by the comforts for the inner man which abound. Here there is to be seen the lowest of the low—for the admission is free to all, irrespective of position—resting in a seat, the elegant fittings of which but ill accord with the poverty of his garments, while he sips coffee from a cup handed to him perchance by the proudest son of the proudest nation on earth; there a cut-throat from Shiraz is perfuming his moustaches with rose-water, from an ewer borne by the flower of Persian nobility; while the pipe, on this occasion the pipe of peace, sends its fragrance through an assembly, the most motley, the most varied, the most inconceivable which imagination can depict. While all this is taking place,

others are to be seen refreshing their parched lips with iced water, a remembrance of the thirst which the martyrs of Karbala suffered ere their spirits fled to the mansions of bliss. Lest, however, there should be any failure in weeping, cakes are handed round, composed of peas, melon seeds, and millet, ground into a paste, a concoction which is said to possess the charm of producing a copious flow of tears ; lastly, but more important than all, the weaker sex eat freely of gum mastic, for the singular reason that not only does it clean the teeth, sweeten the breath, and strengthen the gums, but it predisposes them not to talk much, a virtue which at such a time it may well be imagined is of inestimable value.



CHAPTER XIV

MINOR SECTS OF ISLAM

ALIITES OR FATIMITES

THESE were established about A.D. 908 by one Abu Muhammad Obaidullah, a descendant of Ali and Fatima. Claiming to be a prophet, he overran some provinces in Africa, expelled the Idrisites from Bombay, and finally conquered Egypt, where he settled.

In A.D. 968 his great-grandson established his power in the last mentioned province, and decreed the abolition throughout the land of all forms or ceremonies which might recall the domination of the Abbasides. He removed their names from the public prayers, and called in the coin stamped with their superscription. He forbade the wearing of black—the colour of their family—and ordered that all preachers should be clothed in green, and should repeat this formula at public prayers: “O God! shed Thy blessings upon Thy chosen servant Muhammad; upon Ali, the object of Thy affection; upon Fatima, the virgin; upon Hasan and Husain, the grandsons of the Prophet whom Thou hast purified and preserved from all taint

of sin; and O my God! upon the Imams, the progenitors of the chief of believers."

The defeat of the Karmathians in A.D. 972 placed the dynasty upon a secure footing, which it maintained for a period of about 250 years, under the reigns of fourteen princes, all of whom added to their names the distinctive title of La dinullah (to the faith of God), which is the distinctive mark of the sect. The fourth Khalif (A.D. 955-978) built the city of Al Qahira, now commonly called Cairo, and transferred the seat of government to that capital.

It is noteworthy that the persecutions which the Christians suffered at the hands of the Fatimite Khalifs was one of the causes which led the former to appeal to their brethren in the West, and eventually gave rise to the Crusades.

The extinction of the Fatimite dynasty in Egypt was attended with a peculiar circumstance which merits recital. Azid, the last Khalif (A.D. 1160-1171), shortly before his deposal saw in a dream that a scorpion came forth from the mosque and stung him. The vision was explained as indicating that a man from the sacred edifice in question would deprive him of his dignity. Whereupon the Khalif, summoning to his presence the person in charge, inquired of him who dwelt there. The latter replied that the sole occupant was an aged person, who made great profession of his zeal and piety. The Khalif directed that this votary should be brought before him; but no sooner had the man appeared than the latter at once avowed that he had come to the sacred edifice for the express purpose of deposing the Khalif of the

Fatimites. Azid, seeing the fellow to be a poor, miserable wretch, deemed him incapable of such an enterprise.

So, giving the intruder some money, the Ruler of the Faithful dismissed him with a request that he would pray to God on behalf of the man he would dethrone. It happened that some time afterwards, Saladin, wishing to render himself master of Egypt, formed the resolution of suppressing the Alite Khalifat. With this object, he summoned the principal chiefs and doctors of the law to decide upon the propriety or otherwise of carrying his project into execution. The old man of the mosque hearing of this, appeared before the assembly, and spoke so strongly as to the vices and errors of the dynasty in question, that the Synod proclaimed them infidels, and abolished their Khalifat.

The Fatimites, though nominally Muhammadans, denied the fundamental tenets of the Prophet. According to Muhammad, he himself was the seal of the prophets, and the Quran a complete rule of conduct. No further communications were to be expected from God, either in writing or through the agency of prophecy. The successors of Muhammad were but the executors of a law entrusted to them; they had no authority to alter it one jot or one tittle; they were gifted with no inspiration making them wise above what was written. They were themselves bound by the mandates of the sacred book as rigidly as the meanest Muhammadans on whom they inflicted the penalties of the law. The Fatimite Khalifs, on the contrary, held themselves to be incarnations of the Divine Reason. This monstrous claim is fully

exemplified by the language ascribed to one of the Khalifs of that faith.

"My God"—such was his address to the Almighty—"I am as Thou art, great by reason of Thy Supreme Power. I am Thy power, Thy manifestation, Thy will, and Thy word! My God! grant to men that they may know me; save them, and cause Thy light to shine forth! My God! by me Thou hast created all creatures, and from me Thou hast drawn all Thy messengers, and all Thy prophets. I am Thy Son, and Thou art my Father—I am one with Thee, as the effusion of light is one with its source—I am Thy revealed power, and through me Thy striking signs are manifested."

Their doctrine was that all the phenomena of this sensible and material world were types or symbols of corresponding realities in the spiritual and unseen world. Every positive precept of the law was an allegorical statement of some unseen verity; and as one pure and universal Reason presided over the spiritual world above, so it was necessary that in this lower world also this pure Reason should be incarnate in a person. It had been so in Ismail and his descendants; it was so in the Fatimite Khalifs of Egypt. They were, to use the words of the Quran, "a fire lighted by God, which penetrated the hearts of men." They could discern that which was hidden from the eye and dwelt within. All the course of the preceding history of the world had tended to the manifestation of the Mahdi. No messenger who had been sent from heaven in bygone ages but had indicated this great event in his writings and discourses, in the emblems of his doctrine, and the allegorical figures of his teaching. To know, then, the Imam, was indispensable to a knowledge of God.

"If any among you"—was the statement of a preacher discoursing to a congregation of women—"say, 'I have acknowledged the

unity of God; I have never failed to make this confession of faith, and I can have no need of a Mediator,' the perception of the truth is hidden from that woman. Have you not heard in the conferences of wisdom that which has been spoken of a torch, which in its perfect state represents the religion of Unity, but which ceases to be a torch as soon as its several parts are divided from each other. Then the wax by itself is called 'the wax,' the wick 'the wick,' the flame 'the flame,' the chandelier 'the chandelier'; but when all are united—the wax, the wick, the flame, and the chandelier—these together constitute a complete torch. Know then, O female believer in the Unity! why this parable has been set before you. It is in order that you may know you cannot attain to a right apprehension of the religion of Unity unless you include in that apprehension all the ministers of that religion. Has it not been declared to you in these conferences that the Quran is a living being? When its chapters, its grand divisions in ten and in five parts, and its verses are all combined into one, then the Quran is complete; but when its chapters are divided and parted from one another, no one would call that a complete Quran. When entire, it is the symbol or representative of the Imam, and men call it the 'Word of God.' "

THE ASHARIANS

This sect, the followers of Abul Hasan Al Ashari (born A.D. 873), who was first a Mutazilite, and the scholar of Abu Ali al Jubbai, but disagreeing from his master in opinion as to God's being bound (as the Mutazilites assert) to do always that which is best or most expedient, left his teacher and set up a new sect for himself. The occasion of this difference was a case concerning three brothers, the first of whom lived in obedience to God, the second in rebellion against Him, and the third died an infant. Al Jubbai being asked what he thought would become of them, answered, that the first would be rewarded in paradise, the second punished in hell, and

the third neither rewarded nor punished : "But what," objected Al Ashari, "if the third say, O Lord, if Thou hadst given me longer life, that I might have entered paradise with my believing brother, it would have been better for me?" to which Al Jubbai replied, "That God would answer, 'I knew that if thou hadst lived longer, thou wouldst have been a wicked person, and therefore cast into hell.'" "Then," retorted Al Ashari, "the second will say, O Lord, why didst Thou not take me away while I was an infant, as Thou didst my brother, that I might not have deserved to be punished for my sins, nor to be cast into hell?" To which Al Jubbai could return no other answer than that God prolonged his life to give him an opportunity of obtaining the highest degree of perfection, which was best for him : but Al Ashari demanding further, why He did not for the same reason grant the other a longer life, to whom it would have been equally advantageous, Al Jubbai was so put to it, that he asked whether the devil possessed him. "No," says Al Ashari, "but the master's ass will not pass the bridge—that is, he is puzzled."

Their tenets are : (1) that the attributes of God are distinct from His essence, yet so as to forbid any comparison to be made between God and His creatures. (2) As to predestination, they maintain that God has one eternal will, which is applied to whatsoever He wisheth : that the destiny of man was written on the eternal Table before the world was created ; but whenever a man desires to do a certain thing, good or bad, the action corresponding to the desire is there and then created by God, and, as it were, fitted on to real desire. (3) As to mortal sin, the Asharians

taught that if a believer guilty of such sin die without repentance, his sentence is to be left with God, whether He pardon him out of mercy, or whether the Prophet intercede for him (according to that saying recorded of him, "My intercession shall be employed for those among my people who shall have been guilty of grievous crimes"), or whether He punish him in proportion to his demerit, and afterwards, through His mercy, admit him into paradise: but that it is not to be supposed he will remain for ever in hell with the infidels, seeing it is declared that whoever shall have faith in his heart but of the weight of an ant, shall be delivered from hell fire. And this is generally received for the orthodox doctrine on this point, and is diametrically opposite to that of the Mutazilites.

If, said Al Ashari, we contemplate this visible creation, ascending from the lowest forms of life to the highest, we become aware, from inward experience, that nothing in all this wondrous world carries within itself the power which called it into existence. Man comes into the world endowed with certain capacities—these he can use; but he can produce nothing which has not already been given to him. And what is true of man, we know must be true of all inferior types of existence. We are, therefore, constrained to place this creative power somewhere outside of the creation. This power must be almighty, intelligent, and possessed of volition, because in the structure of the visible universe we find everywhere the effects of such attributes as these. Thus we are conducted to a belief in a Creator, in whom unity of essence is co-existent with a plurality of attributes. What, then, are these attributes? They are not, so said Al Ashari,

the Deity Himself, neither are they something independent of Him; but they may be likened to the actions of men, which are neither the man himself, nor have they any existence apart from the man.

All things proceed from the will of this Creator—the good and the evil, the useful and the hurtful. His mind and purpose are incapable of change. He wrote upon the everlasting Table the destiny of man and the world, before either had been summoned into existence. Nevertheless Al Ashari admitted that there was a difference between the unintelligent growth of trees and vegetables, and the actions of men wrought with a conscious adaptation of means to ends. But he insisted that man had no power to convert will into action: he acquired action by a special creative act of God. In this way Al Ashari believed that he preserved the moral responsibility of man, without allowing that anything could come into existence without the immediate interposition of the creative Deity. It was, however, objected to this solution, that it placed the affections and desires of men beyond the control of the Creator: an objection which Al Ashari failed to meet, and which his disciples ascribed to a spirit of morbid and carping criticism which could not be too strongly reprehended.

As to the visibility of God, Al Ashari held that it was essential to a complete existence that it could be seen. God, therefore, unless He could be seen, would not fulfil the conditions of perfect existence—a supposition that was, at once, ridiculous and blasphemous. The promise that the Faithful should see God was, moreover, plainly announced in the

Quran ; as, for example, in the 22nd verse of the 75th chapter, where it is written :

“Faces on that day shall be bright, gazing on their Lord.”

Words such as these would be destitute of meaning unless God was there to be looked at, and capable of being seen. At the same time, he considered that this beatific vision was not possible to man in his normal human state. To suppose this would be to invest the Deity with a material body, and so lapse into the damnable heresy of “identity.”

Al Ashari conceived that for the enjoyment of this beatific vision a sixth sense would be bestowed upon men, whereby they would obtain, as it were, through the medium of the intellect, an immediate intuition of the glory and greatness of God. He maintained, further, that seeing and hearing are eternal attributes of God ; but the passages in the sacred writings which ascribed to Him a face and two hands, he considered to be metaphors adapted to human intelligence. Nevertheless, what the revelation makes known concerning the things of the invisible world—namely, the Pen, the Preserved Table, the Throne, the Footstool, Paradise, and Hell—he thought should be accepted in their literal signification, because in such revelations there is nothing absurd or incredible. Likewise, all that is revealed in the Traditions regarding the future life—namely, the examination in the grave, the bridge into Paradise, the division of human kind into the saved and the lost, must be received precisely as they are written, and not explained away into metaphors.

Regarding the nature of the Quran, he taught

that the Word of God exists in the mind of God, and is, of course, eternal and uncreated. The Quran is the manifestation of this Word; but the vocal sounds through which the Word was made known to the Prophet, these being subject to the conditions of time, are, necessarily, created.

But the main element in the system taught by Al Ashari is its uncompromising assertion of the sovereignty of God. He rejected, as impious, the notion that there exists in man any light or standard whereby to predict the actions of God. It is the merest folly and presumption to say that the wicked man will be punished in the next world because of his sins. His judgment rests with God, and what sentence God will pronounce upon him can be known to God alone. He may, out of mercy, forgive him; it may be that the Prophet will intercede for him, and God accept of that intercession; it may be that he will be punished for a time, and then translated into heaven; and it may be that he will be plunged into the fire of hell, and there remain for ever and ever. All these issues are possible, and there are no means of calculating which is the likeliest. Arguing in the same spirit, he rejected the notion that God must, of necessity, receive the penitent sinner into favour, or deal with any man according to what we should consider a spirit of equity. Just and unjust are terms applicable only to those who are subject to a law; and God is above all laws. True it is that the Quran teaches us to expect that the sincere repentance of a believer will be accepted by God; but we must not on that account cease to remember that to commit "injustice" is impossible

with God. For injustice means to act with arbitrary caprice in a sphere where the actor has no legitimate authority, and God is the universal ruler.

Al Ashari also emphatically rejected the contention of Freethinkers, that the unassisted reason of man can rise to a knowledge of good and evil, or have any opinions whatever as to what is necessary and what is indifferent or optional. All duties are made known through revelation. Without revelation man cannot form a conception as to what he ought to do, or what he ought not to do. Neither, apart from revelation, has he any right to infer that in the next world what he calls the good man will be rewarded, and what he calls the bad man punished. These notions are the results of a childish delusion which makes God subject to the moral laws He has imposed upon His creatures. But God is not subject to any such laws. There is no existing thing that can demand an account from Him concerning His actions. But all existing things must render an account to Him, and receive with meekness and resignation whatever His sovereign will pleases to inflict upon them. "Verily," says the Prophet, "there are none in the heavens or in the earth but shall approach the God of mercy as a slave."

THE AZARAGITES

This sect was founded by Nafi ibn Al Azrag towards the close of the seventh century.

They maintain that the Imam Ali was an infidel, and that he was rightly assassinated. Practically they were sworn enemies to all established government,

both temporal and spiritual, and particularly to the house of Omaiya. In the year 687 of the Christian era they made an irruption into Iraq till they came to Kufa, and penetrated as far as Madair. They committed all manner of outrages as they went, destroying all they met, ripping open the women, and exercising the utmost cruelty, without distinction of sex or age.

It chanced at this time that a lady of extraordinary piety as well as beauty fell into their hands. Moved with pity and compassion, one of the number would have spared her, whereupon a comrade, upbraiding him with the taunt, "What! thou art taken with her beauty, thou enemy of God, and hast denied the faith," killed the woman on the spot.

Abdul Malik sent out a force to disperse the Azaragites, who met them at a spot near Bussora, where the contending troops fought desperately and continuously for no less than eight days. They were not finally scattered till A.D. 701.

सत्यमेव जयते

BABAK

In A.D. 816, Babak, surnamed Al Khurrami, and Khurram din, either because he was of a certain district near Ardabil in Azarbaijan called Khurram, or because he instituted a merry religion, which is the signification of the word in Persian, began to assume the title of a prophet. It is doubtful as to what doctrine he taught; but it is said he professed none of the religions then known in Asia. He gained a great number of devotees in Persian Iraq, and grew powerful enough to wage

war with the Khalif Al Mamun, whose troops he often beat, killing several of his generals, and one of them with his own hand ; and by these victories he became so formidable that Al Mutasim, the successor of Al Mamun, was obliged to employ the forces of the whole empire against him. The general sent to reduce Babak was Afshid, who having overthrown him in battle, took his castles one after another with invincible patience, notwithstanding the rebels gave him great annoyance, and at last shut up the impostor in his principal fortress ; which being taken, Babak found means to escape thence in disguise, with some of his family and principal followers ; but taking refuge in the Byzantine territories, was betrayed in the following manner. Sahel, an Armenian officer, happening to know Babak, enticed him, by offers of service and respect, into his power, and treated him as a mighty prince, till, when he sat down to eat, Sahel sat himself down by him ; at which Babak, being surprised, asked him how he dared to take that liberty unasked ? "It is true, great king," replied Sahel, "I have committed a fault ; for who am I, that I should sit at your majesty's table ?" And immediately sending for a smith, he made use of this bitter sarcasm, "Stretch forth your legs, great king, that this man may put fetters on them." After this Sahel, though the captive had offered a large sum for his liberty, sent him to Afshid, having first served him in his own kind, by causing his mother, sister, and wife to be insulted before his face ; for so Babak used to treat his prisoners. Afshid, having the arch-rebel in his power, conducted him to Al Mutasim, by whose order he was carried through Baghdad on the back of an

elephant, after which he was delivered to the tender mercies of executioners, who cut off his arms and legs. This happened in A.D. 837. Babak had maintained his ground against the power of the Khalifs for twenty years, and had massacred above two hundred and fifty thousand people; it being his custom never to spare man, woman, or child, either of the Muhammadans or their allies. The sectaries of Babak who remained after his death, seem to have been entirely dispersed, there being little or no mention made of them by historians.



THE BABIS

This strange community was founded by Mirza Ali Muhammad, who was born at Shiraz on 9th Oct., A.D. 1820. For a time he assisted his uncle in mercantile pursuits, but his mind was inclined to religious meditation and speculative thoughts. Accordingly he proceeded to Karbala, where he was distinguished by his zeal for learning and his remarkably austere life. Great consideration was shown him, and his fame rapidly spread far and wide. He soon began to commit his thoughts to writing, though he laid no claim to inspiration: but it was not till he was twenty-four years of age that, in A.D. 1844, he duly proclaimed himself as a leader and guide to mankind, and assumed the name of Bab, or Gate, intimating to his followers that "Whoever wishes to approach the Lord his God and to know the true way that leads to Him, ought to do it through me."

The number of his adherents increased rapidly, and when they demanded of him a sign in proof

of his mission, he rejoined that he could pen a thousand inspired lines in one day. No doubt some persons joined the sect from self-interest, but others it may be assumed were actuated by motives of piety, while possibly some desired reform in Persia, and considered that Babiism would attain that object. But, be this as it may, when he at this time announced that he was destined to regenerate his country, the enthusiasm of the war gave life to the movement he had initiated.

In November, A.D. 1844, the Bab undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca, and after performing all the rites returned the following year to Bushire, where he soon became the centre of attraction. But the fanaticism of the Faithful was aroused, and when apostles were sent to Shiraz to preach the new gospel, the emissaries were seized on the road and the tendons of their feet cut out. "If thou desirest the extinction of this fire," so ran a letter addressed by the Mullahs to the governor of Fars, "or seekest a firm stopper for this rent and disruption, an immediate cure and decisive remedy is to kill the Bab." Accordingly, in A.D. 1846, an attack was made upon his house; however, he escaped and proceeded to Ispahan. After a while the Bab was removed to the Castle of Maku, a fortress on the north-west frontier, whence he was shortly removed to Chirik, near Urumiyya. The King of Persia, though strongly urged to do so, declined to interfere so long as the public peace was not disturbed. Converts of rank and position now began (A.D. 1848) to flock to the Babi standard, prominent amongst the humble being a lady of high family, generally known as Qurratul

Ain (Lustre of the Eye), a person of marvellous beauty, possessed of high intellectual gifts, eloquent, devoted, and fearless. She threw her whole soul into the cause she advocated, and her martyrdom in A.D. 1852, at the time of the massacre at Teheran, which followed on the attempt to kill the Shah, sheds a halo of glory round her short and active career. The Bab himself had been put to death two years previously (9th July, A.D. 1850).

The cruel persecutions which the sect suffered consequent on the aforementioned attack on the Shah, while it aroused feelings of disgust on the part of those who witnessed the frightful atrocities which characterised that reign of terror, seemed rather to increase than diminish their fame and reputation, and it is computed that the Babi faith embraces in its fold not much less than one million souls.

On the death of the Bab, the sect became divided into two branches— one known as the followers of his successor Baha (who died 16th May 1892) with headquarters at Acre, the other which recognises Ezel (resident since 1868 in Cyprus) as their chief—but, so far as is known, this schism has not hindered the spread of the faith, the more so as there are grounds for believing that the latter branch of the devotees is diminishing and is likely to become gradually extinct.

The religion of the Babis, as expounded in their “Bayan” or book of doctrine, written by the Bab himself, are mystical and to some extent obscure. In brief, these sectarians hold that God is Eternal and Unapproachable. All things come from Him and exist by Him. Man cannot approach Him except through some appointed medium. So, distinct

from God there is a Primal Will which becomes incarnate in the prophets. This Primal Will spoke in the Bab, and will speak in "him whom God shall manifest"; and after him through others, for there is no cessation in these manifestations. That which spoke in Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad, was the one and the same Primal Will. In each manifestation news has been given of the following one. Thus the Jews are told to expect a Messiah, but they rejected Him: the Christians to expect Muhammad, but, as a rule, they do not accept him. So the Muhammadans are taught to look out for Imam Mahdi—yet now the Bab has come, they persecute him.

Another point on which the *Bayan* lays much stress is that no revelation is final. This is entirely opposed to the ordinary Muhammadan view, which is that, as Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, his revelation closed the series. The Bab taught that, as the human race progresses, the Primal Will, the teacher of men, speaks in each new revelation more fully and more clearly. All these successive and progressive revelations and dispensations are simply to prepare the world for the fuller teaching of "Him whom God shall manifest."

A new prophet is not sent until the development of the human race renders this necessary. A revelation is not abrogated till it no longer suffices for the needs of mankind. There is no disagreement between the prophets: all teach the same truth, but in such measure as men can receive it. As mankind advance and progress they need fuller instruction. The instruction given by Abraham was suitable and

sufficient for the people of his day, but not for those to whom Moses was sent, while this in turn had ceased to meet the needs of those to whom Christ was sent. Yet we must not say that their religions were opposed to one another, but rather that each manifestation is more complete and more perfect than the last.

As regards the Baha, or "Coming One" (the first Baha died on 16th May, A.D. 1892), it is laid down that in every assembly of believers a vacant place must be left for him, and when his name is mentioned all must rise up. The book written by the Baha, called the "Most Holy Tablet," is held in the greatest esteem: it is devoted largely to a declaration of his majesty, and an explanation of the actions of himself in his capacity of the "Beauty of Primal Unity."

The precepts inculcated upon Babis are :—

- (1) Abolition of religious warfare.
- (2) Friendly intercourse with all sects and peoples.
- (3) Obedience to the ruler who protects them.
- (4) Submission to the laws of the country in which they live.
- (5) Confession of sin to fellow-men prohibited.
Confession must be to, and pardon sought from, God only.
- (6) The study of such sciences as tend to the welfare of mankind is encouraged.
- (7) All must learn some trade, or practice some profession.
- (8) Visits to tombs and shrines are not obligatory.

In addition to these injunctions, it is laid down that prayer is to be said three times a day, and the number of prostrations are much fewer than

those held necessary amongst Muhammadans. The worshipper no longer turns to Mecca but towards "the Most Holy Region, the Holy Place, whence issueth the command to whomsoever is in the earths and the heavens." That Acre, the headquarters of the Babis is here meant, is clear ; because it is said that when Baha dies, or, as it is put in hyperbolic language, "when the sun of truth and exhortation sets," the Kibla is to be changed to "that place which we have appointed you."

The great festival is that of the Persian New Year's Day. Instead of the Muhammadan fast of Ramazan of thirty days, a lesser period of nineteen days, during the last month of the Babi year, is appointed. Images and pictures are not allowed in places of worship. No encouragement is given to mendicants. It is said :—"The most hateful of mankind before God is he who sits and begs : take hold of the rope of means, relying on God, the Causer of Causes." The traffic in slaves is forbidden, and there are laws about great criminal offences, and civil matters such as inheritance, endowments, and so on. Shaving the head is interdicted, but the beard may be cut off. Legal impurity is abolished, and intercourse with persons of all religions is enjoined. Music is permitted, wine and opium are prohibited. The furniture of houses should be renewed every nineteen years. It is recommended that chairs should be used. No one must carry arms except in times of tumult or war. All are to read the sacred books regularly, to be kind and courteous in their conduct, to approve for others what they would like themselves, and to forgive their enemies.

THE IDRISITES

The story of this sect may well be given in the words of the author of *Islam Under the Arabs*.

"In the month of May, A.D. 786, Husain, a lineal descendant of Hasan, the son of Ali, revolted against the Abbaside Khalif Hadi. He took up arms at Mecca, and there rallied round him several members of his family, among whom was his uncle Idris. Husain was slain in battle at Fekh, a place situated about three miles from Mecca. A great number of his relatives were killed; his partisans fled, and many of them were made prisoners. Idris contrived to effect his escape, and, through the fidelity of his freedman Rashid, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Khalif, who caused diligent search to be made after him. Rashid, a man of great intelligence and courage, and remarkable as well for his physical strength, disguised Idris as his servant, and they left Mecca together, with a caravan of home-returning pilgrims. During the journey Idris scrupulously performed all the offices of a servant, and his disguise was not suspected by their fellow-travellers. Arrived at old Kairo in Egypt, they passed a well-built house, the aspect of which showed that the possessor was in easy circumstances. They sat down to rest in a shop close at hand. The master of the house, perceiving from their general appearance that they were strangers in Kairo, courteously addressed them. This man was a client of the Abbasides; nevertheless, Rashid, attracted by his look and manners, determined to make an appeal to his piety and generosity. He made known to him the true character of his seeming servant, and conjured him as a true believer to aid in preserving the life of a descendant of the Prophet. 'I am,' he added, 'conducting him to the country of the Berbers; in that remote country he will perhaps find an asylum from the vengeance of his enemies.' The appeal was not made in vain. The man took them into his house, and kept them concealed there till a caravan which was shortly to proceed to Khairwan was ready to start. There he hired a camel for them, furnished them with provisions and clothes; and when the caravan was about to set out, he said to them: 'The Governor of Egypt has military posts all along the frontier, so that no person can pass without being questioned and examined; but I am acquainted with an old deserted road; I will guide the young man along that until the

frontier is passed, and he indicated Idris with his finger. Rashid accordingly set out with the caravan; the good Egyptian and the young Idris following the circuitous route, rejoined the caravan safely at a point beyond the frontier. Here the citizen of Kairo took leave of the two men to whom he had rendered such signal service; Idris and Rashid, not daring to enter Afrikia, traversed the country occupied by the Berbers, and arrived at last in Further Maghrab, where they placed themselves under the protection of Ishak ibn Muhammad, the grand Amir of the Aureba tribe.

"Shortly after (A.D. 788), Idris announced openly his pretensions to the Imamate, in virtue of his descent, and a large number of the Berber tribes in that part of Africa acknowledged him as their chief. His authority grew apace; either by force or persuasion he brought nearly the whole of Further Maghrab under his authority, and in the following year established himself in Telemsan as his capital city. The news of the uprising of this new power having reached the Khalif Harun ar Rashid, he consulted his vizier, Yahya ibn Khalid, the Barmecide, what he should do. Yahya told him not to be troubled, that he would soon relieve him of anxiety on this score. He summoned to his presence an Arab of the tribe of Rebyah—Sulaiman ibn Horaiz—a man soft and engaging in his manners, brave upon occasion, learned in theology and eloquent in the exposition of doctrine, and not at all disinclined to commit murder if properly paid for it. Him, Yahya induced to undertake the hazardous enterprise of murdering Idris in his capital. He gave him a large sum of money, and a phial containing poison so strong and subtle that a person died by merely inhaling it. A companion of tried valour and fidelity was selected to accompany him. The two emissaries reached Maghrab in safety. Sulaiman presented himself before Idris as a refugee from the wrath of Harun on account of his devotion to the family of Ali. He was cordially received, and his engaging manners and pleasing conversation soon made him a great favourite with his intended victim. Sulaiman spared no pains to conceal the true purport of his mission.

"He held conferences with the Berbers, in which he eloquently expounded the great duty of supporting the descendants of the Prophet. In all he did or spoke he acted as an enthusiastic adherent of the House of Ali.

"One day when Rashid was absent, Sulaiman, taking with him

the poisoned flask, entered the presence of the young prince, and presented him with the phial, saying it contained a very rare and exquisite perfume, such as was not to be found in Northern Africa. He then left the apartment. For months past he had kept two horses in severe training; Sulaiman and his companion now mounted these, and rode away at full gallop. Idris in the meanwhile had inhaled the poison, and fallen on the ground senseless. His servants found him in this state, but were at first unable to divine the cause. The flight of Sulaiman, however, speedily divulged both the crime and the criminal; and Rashid, with a band of friends, set out in pursuit. One after another, the horses of his companions gave up exhausted, but the steed on which Rashid was mounted held bravely on, and at last he had the gratification of seeing the two fugitives ahead of him. He made straight at the traitor Sulaiman. With one stroke of his sword he severed the hand of the murderer, so that it dangled from his wrist by a strip of flesh; a second blow inflicted a wound on his head, a third slashed his face; but here the horse of Rashid, utterly spent, came to a dead stop; and Sulaiman, riding an animal which had been trained, was able to rejoin his companion, who, anxious only for his own safety, had not attempted to aid or protect his chief.

"Idris died at the close of the day on which he inhaled the poison (A.D. 791). The crime proved to be a useless one. Shortly after his death one of his concubines gave birth to a son, who was recognised by the Berbers of Maghrib as succeeding to all the rights of his father.

"The monarchy now passed from father to son with not more of confusion and uncertainty than is usual in Muhammadar kingdoms. In A.D. 807 the reigning prince laid the foundations of his new capital—Fez—which speedily became one of the most flourishing cities of Northern Africa.

"The Idrisites possessed sovereign power for the space of about one hundred years in the regions of Tangier, Bombay, etc., but were exterminated in A.D. 908."

THE ISMAILIANS AND ASSASSINS

This Shia sect, which was established A.D. 765 by Ismail, the eldest son of the sixth Imam, Jafarus

Sadiq, maintain that their founder was the true Imam, and not Musaul Kazim, who succeeded to that position. They also hold that God was neither existent nor non-existent, nor intelligent nor unintelligent, nor powerful nor helpless; for, said they, it is not possible for any thing or attribute to be associated with God. Seeing that He is the Maker of all things, even of names and attributes. They further hold that the world never has been, nor ever will be, without an Imam. Whoever is Imam, his father, and his grandfather have been so before him, and similarly his ancestors, until the line terminates with Adam. The son of the Imam is also Imam, and his descendants after him to the end of time. It is not possible for an Imam to die until a son has been born to him to carry on the succession. The Imam is not always visible: at times he manifests himself; at times he draws into seclusion. Where the Imam is manifest, the doctrine is concealed; when the Imam is hidden, the labours of the missionary commence. The prophets possess the gift of revelation; the Imams that of interpretation. From the time of Ali until that of the seventh Imam, the Imams were visible. Then commenced the succession of concealed Imams. The notoriety of this sect is due largely to the terrible means adopted in after years to establish their power by Hasan Sabah, who passed into history as the "Old Man of the Mountain," or, perhaps more generally, as the Chief of the Assassins.

Hasan Sabah started life as a mace-bearer to Sultan Alp Arslan, the Saljukian monarch (A.D. 1063-1072), but in consequence of a quarrel he retired

to his native country Rai, and thence passed to Syria, where he entered into the service of a chief of the Ismailites, and eventually adopted the tenets of that sect. In A.D. 1090, partly by force and partly by stratagem, he obtained possession of the Castle of Alamut (or the "Vulture's Nest," so called from its impregnable position), situated some distance north of Kasvin, and he at once made this citadel his capital. With a view of carving his way to a throne, he employed a semblance of devotion so as thereby to ingratiate himself with his subjects, whilst a free use of the dagger seemed to fix the fear of him firmly in the hearts of his enemies.

"For the purpose of winning proselytes," says the well-known writer, Major Osborn, "Hasan created a hierarchy of seven grades, which spread themselves through all Asia, doing the work of missionaries. But behind these, and concealed from the knowledge of the world—an inner circle within the larger—were carefully selected proselytes, initiated into the secret knowledge which should fit them to become the co-operators and lieutenants of the Ismailite chief. This, as at Kairo, consisted in the passing through a variety of stages up to the inculcation of the utter indifference of human actions. Hasan was himself Grand Master of the Order; next to him came his Grand Priors, or Lieutenants, scattered through Persia and Syria as the sect won adherents in those countries; then came the *Dais*, or missionaries—the teachers of the secret doctrines; the *Rafiq*, or those engaged in learning; then the *Devotees*, or those who had taken the oath of unquestioning obedience; and lastly the *Aspirants*, who waited for the permission of the Grand Master to commence the process of initiation.

"Of these different classes, the one with which history is chiefly concerned is that of the *Devotees*. These were 'the Assassins.' They were young men, selected on account of their physical strength and courage. The whole object of their training was to inspire them with a spirit of absolute submission to the Grand Master, founded upon a conviction of his divine authority. The

practice of murder in a just cause was justified by the most valid precedents. Had not the blessed Prophet slaughtered a whole Jewish tribe, numbering some seven hundred men, after they had surrendered themselves to his mercy? Had not the blessed Prophet on more than one occasion made use of the secret dagger and the midnight assassin to rid the world of enemies dangerous to himself and the true faith? Hasan ibn Sabah would not, therefore, lack instruments to execute his purposes if he could only convince them of his right to command them, and his power to reward their devotion. The Muhammadan conception of Paradise rendered this a not very difficult matter. The process of manufacturing a devotee was in truth exceedingly simple. He was asked to the table of the Grand Master, and when there, laid under the influence of a strong opiate. While still unconscious, he was conveyed to a delicious garden, and there awoke amid the perfume of flowers, and the cool splashing of fountains, with crowds of dark-eyed and obsequious damsels flitting around him. After a few days passed in this Paradise, he was again rendered insensible, and retransferred to the light of common day. To the credulous unquestioning mind of a bigoted Muhammadan, what further proof was needed of the supernatural power of the Grand Master?

"Paradise was no longer an anticipation; he had actually seen it, and tasted of its pleasures. The momentary agony of death alone divided him from their unbroken fruition. He was only asked to obey and die—a small thing when faith had been turned into sight."

संयमनं जयते

From the day he entered Alamut until that of his death, in June, A.D. 1124—a period of thirty-five years—Hasan Sabah never emerged, but upon two occasions, from the seclusion of his home. Pitiless and inscrutable as Destiny, he watched the troubled world of Oriental politics, himself invisible, and whenever he perceived a formidable foe, caused a dagger to be driven into his heart. The roll of his victims would be too long to enumerate here. Warriors, statesmen, merchants—he spared none. But to the last he enforced among his followers the most rigid adherence

to the letter of the Quran ; and one of his latest acts was the execution of his son because he had presumed to drink wine. His own time, it is said, he spent chiefly in prayer, and in the composition of treatises setting forth and defending his religious beliefs.

He was succeeded by his son, Buzurg Umaid, who reigned for twenty-four years. On his death the reins of power passed into the hands of the son of the latter, Kaia Muhammad, who exercised sovereignty for twenty-five years. The last of the race was Rukn Ud din, better known as Qahir Shah, or Khur Shah, who was made prisoner by the Tartar king, Hulaku Khan, and his strongholds dismantled. This happened A.D. 1256, from which date the power of the Assassins dwindled away and the sect passed out of history.

THE JABRIANS

This sect, which derives its name from the Arabic word "Jabr," meaning "compulsion," deny all free agency in man, and say that the latter is necessarily constrained by the force of God's eternal and immutable decree to act as he does. They hold that, as the Almighty is the absolute Lord, He can, if He so wills, admit all men into Paradise, or cast them into Hell. The difficulties which this doctrine involves may be gathered from a tradition current amongst Muslims, that Adam and Moses once maintained a debate before God ; the latter said, "Thou art that Adam whom God created, and breathed into thee His own Spirit, and made the angels bow down before thee, and placed thee in Paradise : after which thou threwest man upon the earth, from the fault

which thou didst commit." Adam rejoined, "Thou art that Moses whom God selected for His Prophet, and to converse with thee; and He gave thee twelve tables, in which are explained everything, and He made thee His confidant and the bearer of His secrets: then how long was the Bible written before I was created?" Moses, taken off his guard, promptly replied, "Forty years." "And," pursued Adam, "thou didst see therein that I disobeyed God." "Yes," was the necessary response. "Dost thou reproach me," so spake the triumphant victor, "on a matter which God wrote in the Bible forty years before creating me?"

KAISSANITES

Shortly after the dismal events on the fatal field of Karbala (A.D. 680), there arose the Kaissanites, who took their origin from Kaissan, a freed slave of Ali. These votaries held that their founder derived his knowledge from the Saiyyids Hasan and Husain, the sons of his former master; hence an exaggerated importance was attached to his universal science and learning, more particularly as regarded the hidden meaning of obscure parts of the Quran. Another peculiarity which characterised this sect was the belief in the union of the Creator with a created being, and in the return to life after death.

THE KARMATHIANS

This sect, which bore an inveterate malice against the Muhammadans, began first to raise disturbances in

A.D. 891. Their origin is not well known ; but the common tradition is, that about A.D. 887, a poor fellow, whom some call Karmata, came from Khuzistan to the villages near Kufa, and there feigned great sanctity and strictness of life, and pretended that God had enjoined him to pray fifty times a day. This way of life he continued till he had made a very great party, out of whom he chose twelve, as his apostles, to propagate his doctrines. But the governor of the province, finding men neglected their work, and their husbandry in particular, to say those fifty prayers a day, seized the fellow, and having put him into prison, swore that he should die ; which being overheard by a girl belonging to the governor, she, pitying the man, took at night the key of the dungeon from under her master's head as he slept, and having let the prisoner out, returned the key to the place whence she had removed it. The next morning the governor found the bird flown ; and the accident being publicly known, raised great admiration, his adherents giving it out that God had taken him into heaven. Afterwards he appeared in another province, and declared to a great number of people he had got about him that it was not in the power of any to do him hurt ; notwithstanding which, his courage failing him, he retired into Syria, and was not heard of any more. His sect, however, continued and increased, pretending that their master had manifested himself to be a true prophet, and had left them a new law, wherein he had changed the ceremonies and form of prayer used by the Muslims, and introduced a new kind of fast ; and that he had also allowed them to drink wine, and dispensed with several things commanded in the Quran. They also turned the precepts

of that book into allegory : teaching that prayer was the symbol of obedience to their Imam, and fasting that of silence, or concealing their dogmas from strangers ; they also believed fornication to be the sin of infidelity ; and the guilt thereof to be incurred by those who revealed the mysteries of their religion, or did not pay a blind obedience to their chief.

Towards the close of the ninth century the Karmathians, under successive leaders, gave almost continual disturbance to the Khalifs and their Muhammadan subjects for several years ; committing great disorders and outrages in Chaldea, Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia.

Their chief claim to notoriety was the dreadful outrage at Mecca in A.D. 929, on the occasion of the pilgrimage. It happened that the city was more than usually filled with devotees, and the streets and valleys were crowded with the concourse of men, horses, and camels ; each caravan striving to fall into its appointed station. Suddenly the gleam of swords and spears flashed in a line of fire above the hills overlooking Mecca. The Karmathians had marched rapidly across the desert, over the uplands of Najd, and now stood mustered in battle array, with the devoted city at their feet. The vast multitude, wedged into the narrow streets, could neither fight nor fly. The swords of the Karmathians hewed their bloody way through an unresisting mass. The slaughter did not cease till thirty thousand corpses lay rotting in the sacred valley. The holy well of Zamzam was choked with the bodies of the slain. The pavement of the house of God was torn up and the slaughtered devotees buried in the holy precincts,

in promiscuous heaps, without any of those rites which are held essential at the interment of a true believer. Mecca was pillaged; the Kiswa or the cloth covering of the Kaba removed; and the Black Stone, split in pieces by a blow from a sacrilegious Karmathian, was conveyed away to Hasa, and not restored for a space of twenty-two years. But this last outrage had the effect of inciting the orthodox against the common enemy. It became a struggle not merely for the preservation of Islam, but of society against anarchy. The conflict raged with intermittent severity till nearly the close of the tenth century, when the Karmathians yielded up the struggle. They were finally dispersed in A.D. 988, when their palace was destroyed and their followers exterminated.

THE KHARIJITES

A sect—the Nonconformists of Islam—bear this name, which signifies revolters or rebels, because they departed or revolted from the lawful prince established by public consent. The first who were so called were twelve thousand men who revolted from Ali, after they had fought under him at the battle of Saffain (A.D. 657), taking offence at his submitting to arbitration the decision of his right to the Khalifat, which Muawiya disputed with him, though they themselves had first obliged him to it. These were also called Muhakkimites, or Judiciarians; because the reason which they gave for their revolt was, that Ali had referred a matter concerning the religion of God to the judgment of men, whereas the judgment in such case belonged only unto God. The tenets of

the Kharijites consisted chiefly in two things—(1) In that they affirmed a man might be promoted to the dignity of Imam, or prince, though he was not of the tribe of Quraish, nor even a freeman, provided he was a just and pious person, and endued with the other requisite qualifications; and also held that if the Imam turned aside from the truth, he might be put to death or deposed; and that there was no absolute necessity for any Imam at all in the world. (2) In that they charged Ali with sin, for having left an affair to the judgment of men which ought to have been determined by God alone; and went so far as to declare him guilty of infidelity, and to curse him on that account.

The sect was almost annihilated by Ali, as already described. Of the survivors, however, two fled to Oman, in the Persian Gulf, and there preached the doctrine that the Imamatus was elective, not hereditary, and that in the event of misconduct the Imam might be deposed. Abdullah-ibn-Ibadh (A.D. 744) was a vigorous preacher of the doctrine, and from him the sect known as the "Ibadhiya" takes its rise.

In addition to the views which they share generally with the Kharijites as to the Imamatus, this latter people hold that, as regards predestination and free-will, God is alike the author of evil as of good, man being altogether helpless as to what happens. They also consider that a good intention is not necessary to render an act meritorious; that a man may deny the sect to which he belongs without incurring the guilt of infidelity, but that the commission of one of the greater sins places him beyond the pale of salvation. They were computed by Mr Blunt (1880) to amount to about 7,000,000 souls.

The Kharijites maintained power up to the tenth century, after which date their influence waned.

AL MUQANNA—THE VEILED PROPHET

In the reign of Al Mahdi, the third of the Abbaside Khalifs (A.D. 775-785), one Hakim Ibn Hashim, originally of Merv, in Khorassan, who had been an under-secretary to Abu Muslim, the governor of that province, and afterwards turned soldier, passed thence into Transoxiana, where he gave himself out for a prophet. He is generally named by the Arab writers Al Muqanna, and sometimes Al Burqai, that is, "the veiled," because he used to cover his face with a veil, or a gilded mask, to conceal his deformity, having lost an eye in the wars, and being otherwise of a despicable appearance; though his followers pretended he did it for the same reason as influenced Moses, viz., lest the splendour of his countenance should dazzle the eyes of the beholders. He made a great many proselytes, deluding the people with several so-called miracles, and particularly by causing the appearance of a moon to rise out of a well, for many nights together, whence he was also called, "the moonmaker." This impious impostor, not content with being reputed a prophet, arrogated divine honours to himself, pretending that the Deity resided in his person, having passed to him after the death of Abu Muslim. The faction of Al Muqanna, who had made himself master of several fortified places in the neighbourhood of the cities above mentioned, growing daily more and more powerful, the Khalif was at length obliged to send an army to reduce him; at the

approach whereof Al Muqanna retired into one of his strongest fortresses, which he had well provided for a siege, and sent his emissaries abroad to persuade people that he raised the dead to life, and knew future events. But, being straitly besieged by the Khalif's forces, when he found there was no possibility for him to escape, he gave poison, in wine, to his whole family, and all that were with him in the castle, and when they were dead he burnt their bodies, together with their clothes, and all the provisions and cattle; and then, to prevent his own body being found, he threw himself into the flames, or, as others say, into a tub of *aqua fortis*, or some other preparation, which consumed every part of him, except only his hair: so that when the besiegers entered the place, they found no creature in it, save one of Al Muqanna's concubines, who, suspecting his design, had hid herself, and discovered the whole matter. This contrivance, however, failed not to produce the effect which was designed among the remaining part of his followers; for he had promised them that his soul should transmigrate into the form of a grey-headed man riding on a greyish beast, and that after many years he would return to them, and give them the earth for their possession; the expectation of which promise kept the sect in being for several ages after his death, which occurred about A.D. 778-779.

MUHAMMAD BIN FARAJ

About the middle of the ninth century of the Christian era, an impostor named Muhammad bin

Faraj set himself up as a prophet and attracted a few followers. But Mutawakkil, the Abbaside Khalif of Baghdad, seized him, and condemned the poor wretch to perpetual imprisonment. Before, however, his incarceration, each of his followers was compelled to give his master five blows with the fist—an act of cruelty which resulted in the death of the pretended prophet (A.D. 849).

MUSAILAMA AND AL ASWAD, KNOWN AS
“THE TWO LIARS”

The former was of the tribe of Hunaifa, who inhabited the province of Yamama, and a principal man among them. He headed an embassy sent by his tribe to Muhammad in A.D. 630, and professed himself a Muslim: but on his return home, considering that he might possibly share with Muhammad in his power, the next year he set up for a prophet also, pretending to be joined with him in the commission to recall mankind from idolatry to the worship of the true God; and he published written revelations, in imitation of the Quran. Musailama, having formed a considerable party, began to think himself upon equal terms with the Prophet, and sent him a letter, offering to go halves with him, in these words: “From Musailama the apostle of God, to Muhammad the apostle of God. Now let the earth be half mine, and half thine.” But the Prophet of Arabia, thinking himself too well established to need a partner, wrote him this answer: “From Muhammad the apostle of God, to Musailama the liar. The earth is God’s; He giveth the same for inheritance

unto such of His servants as He pleaseth ; and the happy issue shall attend those who fear Him." During the few months which Muhammad lived after this revolt, Musailama rather gained than lost ground, and grew very formidable ; but Abu Bakr, his successor, sent a great army against him in A.D. 632. A bloody battle ensued, wherein the false prophet, happening to be slain, the Muslims gained an entire victory, ten thousand of the apostates being left dead on the spot, and the rest returning to Muhammadism.

Al Aswad, whose name was Aihala, was of the tribe of Ans, and governed that and certain other tribes of Arabs. This man was likewise an apostate from Muhammadism, and set up for himself the very year that the Prophet died. He was surnamed Zul Himar, or the master of the ass, because he used frequently to say, "The master of the ass is coming unto me"; and pretended to receive his revelations from two angels, named Sohaik and Shoraik. Having a good hand at legerdemain, and a smooth tongue, he gained mightily on the multitude by the strange feats which he showed them, and the eloquence of his discourse ; by these means he greatly increased his power, but after the rebellion had been carried on for about four months Al Aswad was one day surprised and his head cut off (A.D. 632).

THE MUTAZILITES

An order of separatists, founded in the year 728 of the Christian era by Wasil ibn Ata. These sectaries hold that God is eternal, and that eternity is the peculiar property of His essence ; but they

deny the existence of any eternal attributes (as distinct from His nature). For they say, He is Omniscient as to His nature ; Living as to His nature ; Almighty as to His nature ; but not through any knowledge, power, or life existing in Him as eternal attributes ; for knowledge, power, and life are part of His essence ; otherwise, if they are to be looked upon as eternal attributes of the Deity, it will give rise to a multiplicity of eternal entities.

They maintain that the knowledge of God is as much within the province of reason as that of any other entity ; that He cannot be beheld with the corporeal sight ; and, with the exception of Himself, everything else is liable to change, or to suffer extinction. They also maintain that Justice is the animating principle of human actions : Justice according to them being the dictates of Reason and the concordance of the ultimate results of this conduct of man with such dictates.

Again, they hold that there is no eternal law as regards human actions ; that the divine ordinances which regulate the conduct of men are the results of growth and development ; that God has commanded and forbidden, promised and threatened, by a law which grew gradually. At the same time, say they, he who works righteousness merits rewards, and he who works evil deserves punishment. They also say that all knowledge is attained through reason, and must necessarily be so acquired. They hold that the cognition of good and evil is also within the province of reason ; that nothing is known to be right or wrong until reason has enlightened us as to the distinction ; and that thankfulness for the blessings of

the Benefactor is made obligatory by reason, even before the promulgation of any law upon the subject. They also maintain that man has perfect freedom ; is the author of his actions both good and evil, and deserves reward or punishment hereafter accordingly.

In other words, they reject both ideas of Fate and Predestination : the first because it reduced man to a machine, the second because it involved the impiety of making God the author of evil.

As regards the Imamatus, they were of opinion that God and His Prophet had not designated any special Imam, whose election was the duty and privilege of the entire body of the Faithful. They denied that he need be of the tribe of Quraish : provided he was a true believer, the family origin was not a matter of importance. The sincerest and best Muslim was spiritually the Imam or leader of the Faithful, and therefore as such ought to be elected to that office.

As regards the Quran, they protested against the intellectual servitude of those who thought that it is the Word of God, co-eternal with Himself—the pure and perfect revelation of the Divine will : all that it contains being above criticism. The only right attitude of mind towards God being a complete and absolute submission, like that of a corpse in the hands of those who perform the last funeral rites upon it. They did not even spare the Prophet, who they asserted was far from perfect, particularly as regarded his inordinate sensuality, and the number of his wives.

This sect is still in existence at the present day.

THE QUADRIANS

These peoples deny "Al Qadr," or God's absolute decree, and maintain that evil and injustice ought not to be attributed to God, but to man, who is altogether a free agent. "What happens," pertinently inquire their opponents, "if a man wills to move his body, and God at the same time wills it to be steady?" It is asserted that on an inquiry being made as to the Quadrians, the Prophet of Arabia described them as "those who assert that God predestinated them to be guilty of rebellion, and yet punishes them for it."

SAFRIANS

This sect was founded towards the close of the seventh century by one Salih, a man much given to devotion. His principal tenet was to be 'clear of Ali and his sectaries.' To enforce their views, they rose in A.D. 695 and made war against those "jarring people," and those erroneous and unjust Imams. Salih fell in battle, but Shabil his companion in arms carried on the contest, and it was not till the following year (A.D. 696) that he was defeated. During the retreat he accidentally, while crossing a bridge, fell into the water and was drowned. His body being drawn up with a net, the head was thereupon struck off, and set up as a trophy.

THE SIFATIANS

This sect held the opposite opinion to the Mutazilites in respect to the eternal attributes of

God which they affirmed: making no distinction between the essential attributes and those of operation; and hence they were named Sifatians, or Attributists. Their doctrine was that of the first Muhammadans, who were not yet acquainted with the subtle distinctions of later years; but this sect afterwards introduced another species of declarative attributes, or such as were necessarily used in historical narrative, as hands, face, eyes, etc.; they did not offer to explain, but contented themselves with saying these were in the law, and that they called them declarative attributes. However, at length, by giving various explications and interpretations of their attributes, they divided into many different opinions; some, by taking the words in the literal sense, fell into the notion of a likeness or similitude between God and created beings; others explained them in another manner, saying that no creature was like God, but that they neither understood nor thought it necessary to explain the precise signification of the words, which seem to affirm the same of both; it being sufficient to believe that God hath no companion or similitude. Of this opinion was Malik Ibn Ans, who declared as to the expression of God's sitting on His throne, in particular, that though the meaning is known, yet the manner is unknown; and that it is necessary to believe it, but heresy to make any questions about it.

SUFIS

Amongst the Shias there are a numerous class known as "Sufis," a name the origin of which has

never been authoritatively settled. Some are of opinion that it is derived from an Arabic word signifying pure; others incline to the view that the "Suf," or coarse woollen cloak in which lazy ascetics were clothed, gave the name to these devotees. While a third party have conjectured that the term is derived from the Greek word "Sophos," signifying wise.

The dreamy mysticism which is the groundwork of Sufism, first assumed prominence about A.D. 650-700, when a woman named Rabia taught that God must be loved above all things, and that everything here below must be sacrificed in the hope of one day attaining to union with God. About a hundred years later, a certain Abu Said advised his disciples to forsake the world and embrace a monastic life, in order to devote themselves exclusively to meditation and contemplation. The movement advanced with rapid strides, but its adherents did not find favour in high places, and a reign of persecution commenced which continued for many years.

The doctrines of Sufism are briefly these. The Almighty God is diffused throughout creation, while the essence of His divinity, emanating from Him continually, as rays from the sun, vivifies all nature; which done, it is reabsorbed. The souls of men are imbued with this essence, and therefore on an equality with the Lord of Heaven. In these circumstances it is the duty of mankind to be constantly engaged in searching after truth, and admiring the perfection of the Deity. An ardent but mystical love of the Creator, which frequently breaks forth in the most extravagant manner, and towards the most extraordinary objects, in which they fancy the Divine image to be

reflected, is the basis of their creed, and reunion with this their ultimate object; they yearn to have the corporeal veil removed, when the emancipated soul will mix again with the glorious essence from which it has been separated, but not divided. To attain this desirable consummation the aspirant must pass through four stages. First, "humanity," which requires perfect obedience to all the observances of the established religion, as a useful discipline to prepare for advancing to the second stage; this latter is termed "the path," in the course to which the votary gains strength to acquire more exalted eminence, and is admitted within the pale of Sufism. The disciple may now abandon practical for spiritual worship; but at this point he has also reached a more laborious and thorny part of his journey, which can only be safely trodden by those who are distinguished for their piety, virtue, and fortitude. Led by a suitable teacher, the young Sufi in due time attains the third stage, when he is held to be inspired and equal to the angels. The fourth implies his perfect union with the Deity. It is calculated that there are between 200,000 and 300,000 professed members of this creed in Persia; but probably this falls far short of the number of those who are secretly inclined to mysticism in this or some cognate shape.

THE WAHABIS

Of the numerous sects which from time to time sprang into being, some had a temporary and transient existence, while others took root and brought forth fruit. Of this latter category few examples are more

conspicuous than the Wahabis, founded by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab, who was born at Najd, in Central Arabia, in A.D. 1691. After going through a course of Arabic literature, he studied jurisprudence under a teacher of the Hanifa school, and then set out in company with his father to perform the Hajj. After this he went to Madina, where he received further instruction in law, and then repaired to Ispahan to spend some time in the society of the learned men who resided at that city. On his return to his native town he assumed the position of a religious teacher, but was shocked to find how the people had departed from the simplicity of their faith. Luxury in the form of rich dresses and silken garments, superstition in the use of omens, auguries, and the like, pilgrimages to shrines and tombs, seemed to be altering the character of the religion as given by the Prophet of Arabia, while the great doctrine of the Unity of God was obscured by the veneration paid to saints and holy men. So his soul was roused within him, and he determined to purify the religion which had grown so corrupt, and to start a school of his own. Girding his loins for the great enterprise which he had taken in hand, he set forth on his mission, proclaiming to the people these stirring words :—

“The Muslim pilgrim adores the tomb of the Prophet, and the sepulchre of Ali, and of other saints who have died in the odour of sanctity. They run there to pay the tribute of their fervent prayers. By this means they think that they can satisfy their spiritual and temporal needs. From what do they seek this benefit? From walls made of mud and stones? From corpses deposited in tombs? If you speak to them, they will reply, ‘We do not call these monuments God, we turn to them in prayer, and we pray the saints to intercede for us on high.’ Now the true way

of salvation is to prostrate oneself before Him who is ever present, and to venerate Him—the One without associate or equal.”

With such and similar language he aroused against him the passions of the multitude, who sought to rid themselves of a man thus preaching against their indulgences and follies; but Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab found a protector in the person of a local chief, named Muhammad Ibn Said, and the latter threw in his lot with the young reformer. Assisted by the soldiers which his patron brought to his aid, matters soon assumed a more hopeful aspect, and the new religion was inculcated at the point of the sword. The bigotry of the youthful creed was stern and uncompromising. “As soon as you seize a place, put the males to the sword”; such was the language of the new leader of the Faithful. “Plunder and pillage at your pleasure; but spare the women, and do not strike a blow at their modesty.” On the day of battle each soldier was presented with a paper, entitling the bearer to a safe-conduct to the world of bliss! The letter in question, which was addressed to the Treasurer of Paradise, was enclosed in a bag, and suspended by the warriors to their necks. The soldiers were thus persuaded that the souls of those who died in battle would go straight to heaven, without being examined by the two questioning angels in the grave. The widows and orphans of all who fell were supported by the survivors: as, therefore, the warriors who shed their blood on behalf of the new religion went direct to Paradise if slain, while if they survived a share of the booty was the reward for the dangers and toils which they had undergone, the zeal of the enthusiastic propagandists knew no bounds. In the course of

time, the daughter of Muhammad Ibn Said married the pious warrior whom her father had befriended ; thence arose the Wahabi dynasty, which continues to this day.

In 1803 both Mecca and Madina fell into the hand of the Wahabis, who stripped the mosques of their decorations, and consigned to the flames the rosaries, the silken robes, the pipes, and all else which was repugnant to the tenets of the reformers of Islam. After holding possession of the sacred cities, however, for nine years, they were expelled by the Turks, and their ruler publicly executed in the Square of St Sophia at Constantinople ; since that period the political power of the Wahabis has been confined chiefly to a small portion of North-Eastern Arabia, which still acknowledges their sway. These are to be found, however, scattered throughout India in more or less considerable numbers, and constitute a focus for intrigue in some of the more fanatical towns ; but they are not knit together in one compact commonwealth, acknowledging a supreme head and ruler, and are, as a consequence, powerless for good, even assuming that their tenets are calculated to effect the reforms which the founder of the creed proclaimed as his object and desire.

The Wahabis acknowledge as the foundation of their faith—first, the Quran ; secondly, the Traditions recorded on the authority of the Companions, so far, that is, as concerns those things in regard to which the latter were unanimous in opinion and practice. But the Unity of God is the one supreme dogma which underlies the whole of their belief, and it is because they set their faces against many of the

practices tending to obscure this doctrine that they come into collision with other Musulmans. Thus they hold it to be unlawful to call upon any saint, or to invoke his aid in time of need, instead of worshipping God, or to use any other name than that of the Almighty in attacking an enemy; nor will they allow passages to be read with the view of propitiating ought but Him, making others the object of contemplation. While admitting that on the Day of Judgment Muhammad will receive permission from God to intercede for his followers, they deny that he has that power at present. Again, prostration, bowing down, standing with folded arms, spending money in the name of an individual, fasting out of respect to his memory, proceeding to a distant shrine in a pilgrim's garb, and calling out the name of the saint whilst so going, are one and all deemed blamable; while it is thought wrong to cover the grave with a sheet, to say prayers at a shrine, to kiss any particular stone, to rub the mouth and head against the walls of any sacred edifice, etc. It is further considered folly to keep up superstitious customs, such as seeking guidance from beasts, trusting to omens, believing in lucky and unlucky days, and the like thereof. Lastly, it is forbidden to swear by the name of the Prophet or others, which is to give them the honour due to God alone.

Another common belief which the Wahabis oppose is that Musulmans can perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, say prayers, read the Quran, abide in meditation, give alms, and do other good works, the reward of which shall be credited to a person already dead.

In matters of practice they deem all innovations as objectionable, classing in this category the fine arts

in all their branches, while to wear silk garments, or "to drink the shameful," in other words to smoke tobacco, is a deadly sin which nothing can expiate, not even the mercy of God! The number of the Wahabis was estimated by Mr Blunt some years ago (1880) at 8,000,000, but it is far from improbable that these figures are unduly high.

THE ZAIDITES

These partisans of Zaid, son of the Imam Zainul Abidin, and great-grandson of Ali, flourished about the close of the seventh century of the Christian era. They maintained that the Imamatus appertains exclusively to the family of the children of Fatima, provided they be wise, pious, courageous, and generous. Should two Imams appear in different countries, obedience to both was considered obligatory, provided they possess the requisite qualifications. They further taught that the Imamatus of one who has been chosen is valid, even though there should exist a more worthy candidate for the sacred office, and instanced the case of Ali, who was set aside in favour of Abu Bakr. Holding these doctrines, it will not occasion surprise that the more zealous Shias refused to acquiesce in such teaching, it being one of the fundamental points of their religion that the first three Khalifs were usurpers.

In A.D. 739, Zaid took up arms against the reigning Khalif, but his troops were vanquished, and he himself, having been pierced in the face by an arrow, expired on the field of battle: his head was thereupon placed on a gibbet, and exposed to the

insults of the populace for a considerable time. His son Yahia continued his father's mission, and on his death the religion which had thus been taught became an established institution, and has continued up to the present day.

The sect flourishes chiefly, if not entirely, in Yaman, and its numbers, according to Mr Blunt, were in his time (1880) about 2,000,000 souls: their chief importance arises from their geographical proximity to Mecca.



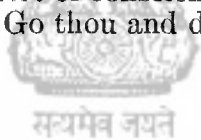
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CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

SUCH is the history of Islam, with its quaint ceremonies, its fatiguing devotions, and its trying hardships. It forms a remarkable chapter in the history of the world; for it teaches the lesson that, whether the doctrine of Muhammad be the religion of a false messenger from on high, as some assert, or the divinely inspired faith delivered by the Almighty to his Apostle, the Prophet of Arabia, as is the belief of the Muslim world, it is, at any rate, a creed which has taken deep root in the minds of a large mass of the peoples of the earth. When indeed we find, as is the case in regard to the rites of the "Hajj," that, for conscience sake, the high and mighty of the land abandon all the luxuries of life to undergo the toil, the troubles, the dangers of a journey to the Holy Cities of Arabia, is it not a striking testimony to the power of the teachings of the Quran, telling forth throughout the length and breadth of the habitable world the faith which millions upon millions of mankind feel in the doctrines they profess. Should not such earnestness, such zeal, aye, and it must be

added such piety, shame the weak-hearted devotion of modern Christians? Humiliating indeed, as is the confession, it must be avowed that the simple trust and confidence of the Musulmans in *their* God proclaim, in language which is unmistakable, that as regards fervour and honesty of purpose the devotees of the West must give place to the worshippers in the East! Does not the prayer of each votary in the mosque of Mecca, when imploring the aid, and seeking to avert the wrath of the Creator in whom the pilgrim is taught to believe, seem to resound through the vault of heaven, bidding the indifferent and half-hearted people of Christendom follow the example of zeal which the Muhammadan worship affords? May we one and all bow the head in humble submission, as the voice of conscience utters the words of gentle reproof—"Go thou and do likewise."



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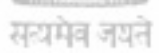
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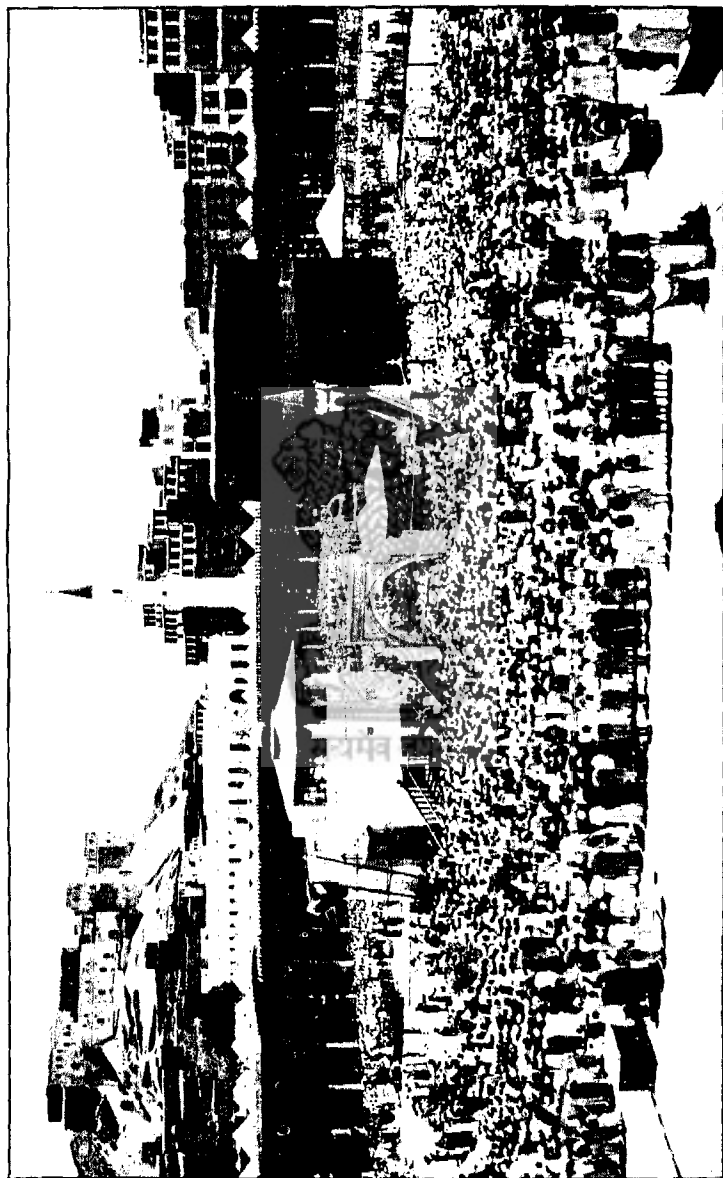
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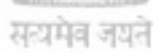
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