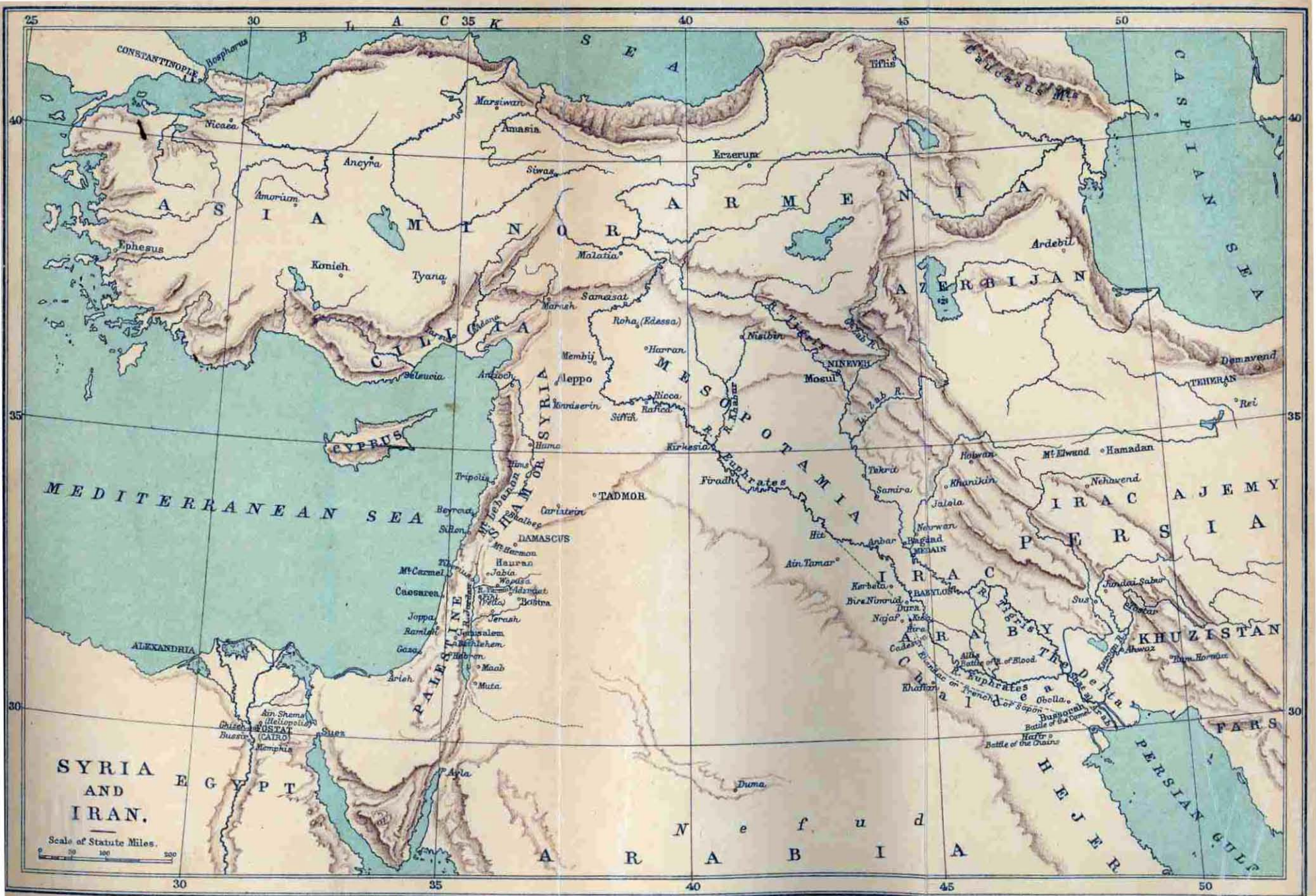


MAP
ILLUSTRATING THE
EARLY DAYS OF THE CALIPHATE.

Scale of Statute Miles.
0 50 100 150



London: Smith Elder & Co.

to storm, and Sad sat down before it. Warlike engines were brought up, but they made no impression on ramparts of sunburnt brick. The besieged issued forth in frequent sallies; it was the last occasion on which the warriors of Persia adventured themselves in single combat with the Arabs. The investment was strict, and the inhabitants reduced to great straits. The army lay for several months before the City; but Sad was not inactive in other directions. Bands were despatched wherever the great landholders failed to tender their submission. These ravaged Mesopotamia, and brought in multitudes as prisoners; but, by Omar's command, they were dismissed to their homes. Thus the country from Tekrit downwards, and from the Tigris to the Syrian desert, was brought entirely and conclusively under Moslem sway.

A.H. 15-
16.

The siege at last pressed so heavily on the western quarter, that the King sent a messenger with terms. He would give up all dominion west of the Tigris if they would leave him undisturbed on the eastern side. The offer was indignantly refused. Not long after, observing the walls no longer manned, an advance was ordered. They entered unopposed; the Persians had crossed, and carrying the ferryboats with them, entirely evacuated the City on the western bank. Not a soul was to be seen. But the farther Capital with the river between, was still defiant and secure. So the army for some weeks rested, and, occupying the deserted mansions of the western Quarter, enjoyed a foretaste of Persian luxury.

Western
quarter
evacuated,
end of
15 A.H.
Jan.
637 A.D.

On Medain being threatened, Yezdegird had despatched his family, with the regalia and treasure, to Holwan in the hilly country to the north: and now he contemplated flight himself in the same direction. The heart of Persia had sunk hopelessly; for otherwise the deep and rapid Tigris still formed ample defence against sudden assault. Indeed, the Arabs thought so themselves; for they were occupied many weeks in search of boats, which had all been removed from the western bank. Unexpectedly, a deserter apprised Sad of a place where the river could be

Capture of
Medain,
ii. 16 A.H.
March
637 A.D.

they settled largely, particularly the southern tribes, in Damascus, Hims, and other centres of administration. But the body of native Syrians, urban and rural, remained after the conquest substantially the same as before; and through long centuries of degradation they clung, as the surviving remnant still clings, to their ancestral faith. A.H. 15.

We read in later days of the "Ordinance of Omar,"¹ regulating the conditions of Christian communities throughout Islam. But it would be a libel on that tolerant Ruler to credit him with the greater part of these observances. It is true that the stamp of inferiority according to the divine injunction, *Fight against the people of the Book, Jews and Christians, until they pay tribute with their hands and are humbled*,¹ was branded on them from the first; but the worst disabilities of the intolerant "Ordinance" were not imposed till a much later period. Introduced gradually, these became, by use and habit, the law of the land. At first the exactions of the Conquerors, besides the universal tribute, were limited to the demand of a yearly supply of oil-olive and other food, and the obligation to entertain for three days Moslem travellers. But when the Caliphate was established at Damascus and at Baghdad, its pride could no longer brook even the semblance of equality, and hence the badge of inferiority at every step;—the dress of both sexes and their slaves must be distinguished by stripes of yellow; forbidden to appear on horseback; if they rode even on mule or ass, the stirrups and knobs of the saddle must be of wood; their graves level with the ground, and the mark of the devil on the lintel of their doors; the children prohibited from being taught by Moslem masters; and the race, however able or well qualified, proscribed from aspiring to any high office of emolument or trust; besides the existing churches spared at the conquest, no new building to be erected for the purposes of worship; free entry into all the Holy places allowed at pleasure to any Moslem; no cross to remain outside, nor any church bell rung. Christians were also debarred from holding processions in the street at Easter

Humilia-
tion of
Jews and
Christians.

"Ordi-
nance of
Omar," the
growth of
time.

¹ Sura ix. 30.

CHAPTER XX

EXPULSION OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS FROM ARABIA. REGISTER OF ARAB TRIBES. CIVIL AND MILITARY ADMINISTRATION. THE CORAN.

14-15 A.H. 635-636 A.D.

WE must now revert to one or two matters of domestic interest.

Arabia, as the nursery of legions devoted to fight for Islam, must be purged of strange religions. So soon therefore as victory was secured in Syria and Chaldæa, Omar proceeded to execute an act of harshness, if not of questionable equity.

In the centre of Arabia lies the province of Najran, inhabited from of old by a Christian people. Mahomet concluded a treaty with their Chiefs and Bishops, which on payment of a settled tribute secured them in the undisturbed profession of their ancestral faith. Throughout the rebellion they remained loyal to their engagements, and Abu Bekr renewed the treaty. Worthy descendants of a persecuted race, they resisted the blandishments of Islam; and as a penalty they must now quit their native soil, consecrated by the ashes of their martyred forefathers.¹ They were ordered to depart and take land in exchange elsewhere. Some migrated to Syria; but the greater part settled in the vicinity of Kufa, where the colony of Najrania long maintained the memory of their expatriation. The rights conferred by the Prophet, so far

¹ For the story of persecution and martyrdom under the tyrant Dzu Nawas, a century before Islam, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. lxxi. For the treaty of Mahomet, p. 445.

A.H. 40-
41.

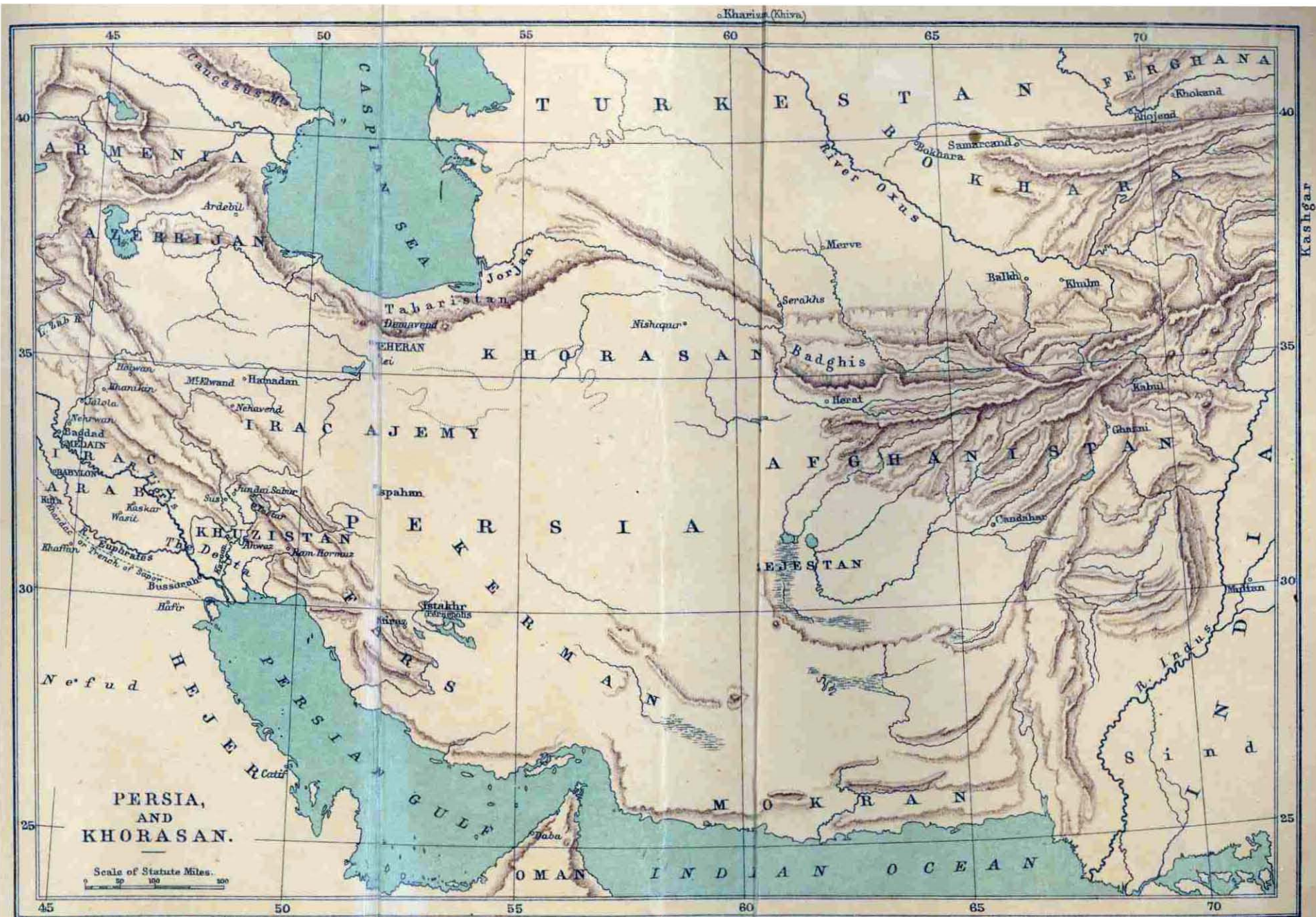
Continued
imprecation
against

Aly.

Hasan
poisoned
by his
wife.

The imprecations against the memory of Aly, his house, and his adherents, still formed part of the public service; and so, indeed, they continued throughout the Omeyyad Caliphate.

The short-lived Caliph retired to Medina, where, with ample means to gratify his ruling passion, he passed his time in ease and quietness, giving no further anxiety to Muavia. He survived eight years, and met his death by poison at the hand of one of his wives. It was a not unnatural end for "Hasan the Divorcer." Alyite tradition, indeed, would have us to believe that the lady was bribed to commit the crime, and thus exalts the libertine to the dignity of "Martyr." But Muavia had no object in ridding himself of his harmless subject; and the jealousies of Hasan's ever-changing Harem afford a sufficient and a likelier reason. Of his brother Hosein there will be more to tell.



o Kharizm (Khiva)

Kashgar

A.H. 40¹—ship of Kufa also, and his habit was to spend half the year there and half at Bussorah. A reign of terror now began. At his first address in the Mosque of Kufa, stones were cast at him. To discover the offenders, all present were put to the oath, and some fifty men who refused to swear had their hands cut off. The Alyite faction which reviled Othman abounded in both cities, and strong measures were no doubt needful to repress conspiracy; but cruelty and bloodshed went far beyond the bounds of need. Tales abound of parties refusing to curse the memory of Aly,—one especially, headed by the grandson of the famous Hatim Tay,¹—being ruthlessly beheaded; and the tyranny thus inaugurated by Ziad casts a dark stain upon his memory.

60.
And of
Kufa.

His severe
adminis-
tration.

And
splendid
Court.

From Istakhr, Ziad brought with him the pride of an Oriental court. Abroad he was followed by a crowd of silver-sticks and lictors, and at his gate 500 soldiers mounted guard. He was the most powerful Lieutenant the Caliphate yet had seen. The entire East was subject to him. From the Oxus and the Indus to the Persian Gulf his sway was absolute.² His sons held important commands in Khorasan and the frontier. One of these carried with him 50,000 citizens of Kufa, whom by a wise policy he planted in Khorasan with their wives and families. Ziad did not long enjoy the splendid position he had thus achieved. Not satisfied with the East, he coveted also charge of the Hejaz with its Holy cities. The inhabitants in terror prayed to the Lord that he might not have it; and so (says our annalist) his hand was smitten with a malignant boil, of which he died.

His death,
53 A.H.
673 A.D.

Progress in
the East.

Great progress was made by Muavia in extending his rule eastward. The conquered Peoples and their Chiefs, impatient of the tribute and restraints of Islam, were continually casting off their allegiance; but the yoke was yearly becoming more secure. Herat having rebelled was stormed A.H. 41; and two years later Kabul also was

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 422.

² He divided the East into four commands, Merve Nisabur, Merve Rudh, Herat, and Badghis.

besieged for several months, and taken after the walls had been breached by catapults. Similar operations are noticed against Ghazni, Balkh, Candahar and other strongholds. In the year A.H. 54, one of Ziad's sons, crossing the Oxus and mountain range on camels, took Bokhara; and two years later a son of Othman beat back the Turkish hordes and gained possession of Samarcand and Tirmidz. The territories in the far north and east continued long on a precarious tenure; but in the south all the country up to the banks of the Indus was gradually being consolidated under Mahometan rule or suzerainty.

The experience of Africa along its northern shore did not materially differ from that of the East, for the Berbers were ever and anon rebelling after they had tendered their submission. Indeed, the struggle was harder here, for the Roman settlements enabled the native population to offer a more stubborn resistance. And yet, in the end, the overthrow was not less complete, so that the bright seats of civilisation and of the Christian faith, were soon known only by the ruins of their temples, aqueducts, and civic buildings. Ocba, appointed by Amru A.H. 41, waged war against the Berbers, and for several years the littoral was ravaged as far as Barca and Waddan. In the year 50, strengthened by Muavia with a body of 10,000 Arabs, he founded the settlement of Cairowan, to the south of Tunis, and strongly fortified it against the Berbers. Ever since, it has been regarded as a sacred centre. Tradition tells us of the miraculous flight of wild beasts and reptiles with their young from its site at the conqueror's prayer; and also that the Berbers, convinced by the prodigy, at once accepted Islam and settled themselves upon the spot. But a few years later Ocba was surprised by a joint Roman and Berber army, and driven back on Barca, where he miserably perished with his whole army.

On the side of Armenia and Greece, hostilities suspended during the contest with Aly, were resumed by Muavia at its close, and we read of a serious defeat sustained by the Greeks, A.H. 42. The Moslem army

A.H. 40-60.

Africa.

Ocba founds Cairowan, 50 A.H. 670 A.D.

Is defeated and slain.

Hostilities with Greece.

A. H. 56. two successions: but such attempt to forestall the distant future too often provoked, instead of preventing, civil war. The practice thus begun by the Omeiyads was followed equally by the Abbassides; and proved a precedent even for later times.

Yezid and
his mother.

Muavia had other sons, but Yezid's mother, Meisun, was of noble birth, and as such her son took precedence.¹ The story of this lady has special attraction for the early Arab writers. Amid the courtly luxuries of Damascus, she pined for the freedom of the Desert, and gave vent to her longing in verse, of which the following may be taken as a specimen:—

“The tent fanned by desert breeze is dearer to me than these lofty towers.
I should ride more joyously on the young camel than on the richly caparisoned steed.
The wild blast over the sandy plain is sweeter far to me than flourish of royal trumpets.
A crust in the shade of the Bedouin tent hath better relish than these courtly viands.
The noble Arab of my tribe is more comely in my sight than the obese and bearded men around me.
O that I were once again in my desert home! I would not exchange it for all these gorgeous halls.”

The lady's verses, coming to Muavia's ears, displeased him. Like Aly, he had become from luxurious living obese and portly, and felt the taunt of his wife, as if aimed at himself. So he dismissed Yezid with his Mother to the tents of her tribe the Beni Kelb, where in boyhood he acquired his Bedouin taste for the chase and a roving life.

¹ By Mahometan law, the son of the bondwoman is equally legitimate with the son of the free. But the Arab sentiment of noble birth prevailed; and it still prevails, as we daily see in such petty principalities as Afghanistan.

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THE CALIPHATE
ITS RISE, DECLINE, AND FALL

FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

BY

SIR WILLIAM MUIR, K.C.S.I.

LL.D., D.C.L., Ph.D. (Bologna)

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF MAHOMET" "MAHOMET AND ISLAM"

ETC.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THIS volume was at first intended as an abridgment of the First Edition, or *Annals of the Early Caliphate*,¹ with continuation to the fall of the Abbassides; but I found, as I went on, the matter less compressible than I had hoped. The result, therefore, is much larger than I anticipated. I trust, however, that, its length notwithstanding, the narrative may be found not uninteresting; and I now offer it as a contribution towards the history of a period for which there are, as yet, but scanty materials in the English language.

The authorities, excepting for the later portions, are purely Arabian; indeed, for the earlier there are no other. After Tabari who died in the Fourth century A.H., Ibn Athir (*d.* 630 A.H.), a singularly impartial annalist who compiled his work from all available sources, has been my chief guide. Towards the close, and especially for the brief chapter on the Caliphate under the Mameluke dynasty, I have drawn largely on Weil's admirable *Geschichte der Chalifen*,² which indeed has been my constant companion throughout. I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the late Dr. Weil. The more his great history is studied in connection with the original authorities, the more one is impressed with the vast research, the unflinching accuracy, and the dispassionate judgment of the author.

¹ Smith & Elder, 1883.

² Vols. I.-III. Mannheim, 1846-1851; IV. and V. Stuttgart, 1860-1862.

I should mention here that the materials out of which our story is woven differ entirely from those for the Biography of Mahomet. For that, every incident of his life and every phase of his character, is illustrated by myriads of traditions of all degrees of credibility,—authoritative, uncertain, fabulous,—each tradition separate and independent, generally short and complete in itself. At his death the curtain drops at once upon the lifelike scene. Tradition collapses, and the little that remains is curt and meagre. Of the chief “Companions,” indeed, from their connection with the Prophet, we have sufficient notice, and special prominence is given to the lives of the first four Caliphs. But tradition, instead of being, as before, a congeries of separate statements, now assumes the form of connected narrative, and eventually the style of ordinary annals; and though there is now and then an exception, as in the minute and profuse description of such battles as Cadesiya, the Camel, and Siffin, the story as a rule becomes bald and jejune. These annals also are strictly divided by the year, the chapter for each year containing everything belonging to it, and as a rule nothing else. The continuity of subjects extending often over a long series of years is thus broken up, and some inconvenience and difficulty experienced in forming a connected narrative. But upon the whole, the materials are amply sufficient for the historian’s purpose.

I may be permitted here to lament the want of any full and standard work in our own language on the Crusades, and on the Mameluke dynasty and its overthrow by the Osmanlies,— chapters not only deeply interesting in themselves, but bound up with the interests of the Eastern Churches, and development of the political relations of Europe, Asia, and Egypt. I venture to express the hope that some worthy pen may supply the want.

The reader will bear in mind that the Moslem year, as

purely lunar, is eleven days shorter than the solar, and consequently loses about three years in every cycle of a hundred. The lunar month has also this peculiarity, that while, like the Jewish, the date indicates the age of the moon, the month itself gives no indication of the season of the year. The dates have usually been given throughout according to both the Moslem and the Christian notation.

The Mussulman months, being unfamiliar to the English reader, have been indicated, as I trust in a more intelligible notation, by Roman numerals in the margin thus:—

Moharram	i.	Rajab	vii.
Safar	ii.	Shaban	viii.
Rabi I.	iii.	Ramadhan or Ramzan	ix.
Rabi II.	iv.	Shawwal	x.
Jumad I.	v.	Dzul Cada	xi.
Jumad II.	vi.	Dzul Hijj	xii.

I have not been very strict, and possibly not always consistent, in the rendering of proper names. Received forms have ordinarily been adhered to. As a rule, transliteration of Arabic names has been as follows:—

ث = th	ز = z	غ = gh
ج = j	ض = dh	ق = c (or k)
ذ = dz	ظ = tz	ك = k

For the letter ع I have not in the present work assigned any diacritical mark.

W. M.

THIRD EDITION

THIS Third Edition is a simple reproduction of the Second. Occasional amendments have been made throughout. But upon the whole it is the same.

W. M.

EDINBURGH, *December 1898.*

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THE CALIPHATE:

ITS RISE, DECLINE, AND FALL

CHAPTER I

DEATH OF MAHOMET, ELECTION OF ABU BEKR

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

IT was Midsummer in the year 632 of our era when the Prophet of Arabia passed away. He had been ten years at Medina, for it was now the eleventh year of the Hegira, that is of the Flight from Mecca. Mahomet had reached the age of threescore years and three; and up to the time of his last illness which lasted but thirteen days, had been hale and vigorous. His death thus fell an unexpected shock upon Medina.

Death of
Mahomet,
13 Rabi I.
11 A.H.
8th June
632 A.D.

For some days before, a burning fever had weakened him grievously and confined him to his bed. All through Sunday of the fatal week, he lay prostrate and at times delirious. Monday morning brought temporary relief. It was the hour of early prayer, and the worshippers had assembled in the Square or court of the great Mosque, adjoining the chamber of Ayesha in which she had been tenderly nursing her husband throughout his illness. Feeling stronger that morning, he rose from the couch, drew aside the curtain from the door, and moved softly into the Court, where Abu Bekr (as commissioned by him when laid aside) was conducting the service in

Abu Bekr
absent.

A.H. 11. his place. When prayers were ended Abu Bekr, seeing his Master to all appearance better, obtained leave to visit his wife who lived in the Upper suburb of the city. After he had left, the Prophet having spoken a few kindly words to his Aunt and others crowding around him, was helped back into the chamber. Exhausted by the effort, his strength sank, and shortly after he breathed his last on the bosom of his favourite wife.

Abu Bekr's
return ;
scene in
court of
Mosque.

It was yet but little after midday. Rumour spreading, the Mosque was soon crowded with a host of bewildered followers. Amongst them was Omar who arose, and in a wild and excited strain declaimed that the Prophet was not dead but in a trance, from which he would soon arise and root out the hypocrites from the land. Abu Bekr had by this time hurried back. He crossed the Court not heeding his impetuous friend, and entered into Ayesha's chamber. Stooping down he kissed the Prophet's face. "Sweet wert thou," he said, "in life, and sweet thou art in death." Then he went forth, and finding Omar still haranguing the people, put him aside with the memorable words :— *Whoso worshippeth Mahomet, let him know that Mahomet is dead ; but whoso worshippeth God, let him know that God liveth and dieth not.* So saying, he recited certain verses from the Coran, which no doubt had long dwelt upon his mind, as signifying that Mahomet was mortal and would die as other Prophets had died before him. Recognising the sacred words to bear a meaning that had never struck him before, Omar was speechless. "My limbs trembled," he would say when speaking of that memorable hour, "and I knew of a certainty that Mahomet was dead indeed."

Men of
Medina
meet to
elect a
chief.

The assembly in the court of the Mosque had now quieted down, when a messenger ran up breathless with a report that the men of Medina had assembled to choose a ruler from amongst themselves. The moment was critical. The unity of the Faith was at stake. A divided power would fall to pieces, and all might be lost. The mantle of the Prophet must fall upon one Successor, and on one alone. The sovereignty of Islam demanded an undivided Caliphate ; and Arabia would acknowledge no

master but from amongst the Coreish. The die must be cast, and cast at once. Such, no doubt, were the thoughts that occurred to the two chief Companions of the Prophet on hearing this report; and so, accompanied by Abu Obeida another leading Chief, they hurried to the spot, if haply they might nip the conspiracy in the bud. On the way two friendly Citizens coming from the excited conclave, warned them of the risk they ran in entering it alone; but notwithstanding they hastened on. The men of Medina meanwhile, gathered in one of their rude Halls, were bent upon an independent course. "We have sheltered this nest of strangers," they cried. "It is by our good swords they have been able to plant the Faith. The Ruler of Medina shall be from amongst ourselves." They had already fixed their choice on Sad ibn Obâda leader of the Beni Khazraj, who sick of a fever lay covered up at the farther end of the Hall, when the three Companions entered. It was just in time; for had the Citizens elected Sad and pledged their troth to him, Medina might have been irretrievably compromised. Omar with his native vehemence, was about to speak, when Abu Bekr, calm and firm, anticipated him thus:—"Every word," said he, "which ye, men of Medina, have uttered in your own praise is true, and more than true; but in noble birth and influence the Coreish are paramount, and to none but them will Arabia yield obedience." "Then," cried they, "let there be one Chief amongst you and one from amongst us." "Away with you!" exclaimed Omar, "two cannot stand together"; and even Sad from beneath his covering muttered that to divide the power would only weaken it. High words ensued. Hobâb, at the side of Sad, cried out, "Hear him not! Attend to me, for I am the *well-rubbed Palm-stem*.¹ If they refuse, expel them from the city." "The Lord destroy thee!" cried Omar; and Hobâb returned the words. The altercation gaining heat and bitterness, Abu Bekr saw it must be stopped at any risk, and stepping forward said,

Met by
Abu Bekr,
Omar, and
Abu
Obeida.

¹ Meaning a palm-trunk left for the beasts to come and rub themselves upon; metaphor for a person much resorted to for counsel.

A.H. 11. "Ye see these two," pointing to Omar and Abu Obeida. "Choose ye now which of them ye will, and salute him as your Chief." "Nay," answered they both at once, "Thou hast already at the Prophet's bidding, led the Prayers; thou art our Chief. Stretch forth thine hand." He did so, and they struck their hand on his (as is the Arab custom) in token of allegiance. Others were about to follow their example, when Hobâb cried to one of the Beni Khazraj about to take the pledge, "Wilt thou cut thine own kinsman's throat?" "Not so," the person thus addressed replied; "I only yield the right to whom the right is due." Whilst they yet hesitated, the Beni Aus jealous of the rival tribe and of Sad its chief, spake among themselves:—"If this man be chosen, the rule will be for ever with the Beni Khazraj. Let us at once salute Abu Bekr as our Chief." The example set, group after group advanced to strike their hand on that of Abu Bekr, till none was left but Sad who still lay covered in the corner. Acknowledged thus by the men of Medina, there could be no doubt of Abu Bekr's acceptance by the Meccan "Refugees." He was not only one of themselves, but the Prophet when laid aside, by appointing Abu Bekr to take his place at the daily prayers, had in a manner already indicated him as his Vicegerent. And so homage was done on all sides to Abu Bekr. He was saluted as the CALIPH,¹ or *Successor* of the Prophet.

Abu Bekr
elected
Caliph.

Burial
of the
Prophet.

The night passed in preparing the dead for sepulture. The body was washed and laid out, and the grave dug in Ayesha's apartment where Mahomet had breathed his last. On the morrow the Citizens, men, women and children, thronged the chamber to look once more upon their Prophet's face. And then the remains were reverently committed to the dust.

Abu Bekr's
inaugural
address.

The funeral over, and the court of the great Mosque still crowded with the mourners, Abu Bekr ascended the pulpit and, sitting down, was acknowledged CALIPH by acclamation. Then he arose and said:—"Oh people! "Now I am Ruler over you, albeit not the best amongst

¹ In Arabic, *Khalifa*.

“you. If I do well, support me; if ill, then set me right. A.H. 11.
 “Follow the True, wherein is faithfulness; eschew the False,
 “wherein is treachery. The weaker amongst you shall be
 “as the stronger with me, until that I shall have redressed
 “his wrong; and the stronger shall be as the weaker until,
 “if the Lord will, I shall have taken from him that which
 “he hath wrested. Leave not off to fight in the ways of
 “the Lord; whosoever leaveth off, him verily shall the
 “Lord abase. Obey me as I obey the Lord and his
 “Prophet; wherein I disobey, obey me not. Now arise to
 “prayer, and the Lord be with you!” The assembly stood
 up for prayer and Abu Bekr, for the first time as Caliph,
 filled the place of Mahomet.¹

The supreme power thus passed, without let or hindrance, into the hands of Abu Bekr. Sad ibn Obâda chagrined at being superseded, held aloof. Aly is also said to have refrained from doing homage till after the death of Fatima his wife. The Alyite party pretend that he looked to the Caliphate himself. But there is nothing in his previous life, or in the attitude of the Prophet towards him, that warrants any such surmise. He had indeed a grievance, but of quite a different kind. The day after her father's death, Fatima preferred a claim to his share in the crown lands of Kheibar. Abu Bekr disallowed the claim; holding that the revenues were destined, as Mahomet had himself desired, for purposes of State. Fatima took the denial so much to heart that she held altogether aloof from the Caliph during the short remainder of her life. And hence it was only after her death that Aly recognised with any cordiality the title of Abu Bekr to the Caliphate.² Fatima

Aly delays
doing
homage.

Fatima
mother of
Hasan and
Hosein.

¹ Presidency at public prayer was ever in Islam the sign of chief command, whether in civil or in military life.

² Tradition regarding Aly is coloured and distorted by the canvass of a political faction which in the end assumed the *divine* right of succession as vested in Aly and his descendants. There is not a shadow of proof that Aly himself ever made any claim of the kind, or that any such claim was made by others for him during the Caliphates of Abu Bekr and Omar. It was not till the election of a successor on the death of Omar that he became a candidate, and even then his claim was grounded on being one of the chief Companions rather than on any supposed right in virtue of his relationship to Mahomet by marriage with his daughter.

A.H. 11. was the last surviving child of Mahomet. His other three daughters, two of whom had in succession married Othman, were already some time dead. Khadija had borne him two sons, but both died in infancy at Mecca. A third, the only other son the Prophet ever had, was born at Medina by the slave-girl Mary, and died sixteen months old. No issue of the Prophet thus survived in the male line. But two grandsons, Hasan and Hosein, were left by his daughter Fatima. They were now but six or seven years of age.

How far
Abu Bekr's
election
formed a
precedent.

With Mahomet ceased the theocratic power; but his kingly functions, as ruler over all Islam, descended. According to Arabian notions, the leader of a nation, like the Chieftain of a tribe, is the head and representative of his people, and the nomination remains invalid till confirmed by their homage. Omar, in after days, held that the irregular election of Abu Bekr (referring apparently to the scene enacted in the Hall) should not be a precedent. It was, he said, an event the happiest in its consequences for Islam, but justified only by the urgency of the moment. What might have been the issue if any son of Mahomet had survived it is useless now to speculate. But certainly the hereditary descent of kingly power was foreign to the sentiment of Arabia. As matters stood, Mahomet seems to have shrunk from anticipating the contingency of his own death, and had made no preparation for what might follow. But in so far as we may suppose him to have felt his illness mortal and death impending, the nomination of Abu Bekr to conduct the public Prayers (acknowledged mark of chief or delegated authority) may be held the natural indication of a wish that he should succeed.¹ Apart from the pretensions of the men of Medina, which immediately died away, there was in the election neither doubt nor hesitancy. The notion of divine right, or even of preferential claim, resting in the Prophet's family, was the growth of an altogether later age.

Parties at
Medina.

It may be necessary here to recall to the reader not fresh from the study of the Prophet's life, the state of

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 499.

parties at the present juncture. The *Men of Medina* were A.H. 11.
 the old inhabitants of the City who had received Mahomet on his escape from Mecca, and supported his cause;¹ they now embraced practically the whole *native* population of Medina, since the party that opposed him on his first arrival had gradually succumbed before his growing power. They were divided into two tribes, the *Beni Aus* and *Beni Khazraj*, jealous of each other as we have seen. Beside these were the *Refugees*, those namely who had followed Mahomet in exile from Mecca or elsewhere, and were now settled at Medina. Again, *Companion* was a title of honour given to all those who had enjoyed the special friendship of the Prophet. A few words may also be added here to revive the reader's recollection of the three Companions who turned the scale at the election of the Caliph.

Abu Bekr, threescore years of age, was somewhat Abu Bekr.
 short in stature, of spare frame, rounded back, and stooping gait. His face thin smooth and fair, nose aquiline and sharp, forehead high, eyes deep seated and far apart. His hair scanty; the beard, for many years white, now dyed red. His countenance still in old age handsome; the expression mild, but wise and resolute. To him faith in the Prophet had become a second nature and, now that his Master was gone, the disciple lived but to fulfil his will. It was this that nerved a disposition naturally soft and yielding, and made Abu Bekr, of all the followers of Mahomet, the truest, firmest, and most resolute.

Omar, fifteen years younger, differed from Abu Bekr Omar.
 both in frame and temperament. Broad shouldered and tall, he towered above the crowd. Somewhat dark in complexion, the face was fresh and ruddy. His head was now bald; the beard dyed like his friend's; his stride long and his presence commanding. Naturally hasty and passionate, he would twist his moustache when angry and draw it downwards to his mouth. But time had mellowed temper; and, beneath an imperious manner, he was bland and courteous. Attachment to Mahomet had, on these two friends, an effect exactly opposite. That which braced

¹ Hence called *Ansâr*, or Helpers.

A.H. 11. the soft nature of Abu Bekr, served but to abate the vehemence of Omar. Both stood in a like relation to the Prophet. Haphsa, Omar's daughter, was one of Mahomet's favourite wives; but Ayesha, the child of Abu Bekr, was Queen in his affections to the end.

Abu
Obeida.

On these two men at this moment hung the future of Islam. The third, Abu Obeida, was between them in age. Thin, tall, and sinewy, he was bald and with little beard. Mild, unassuming and unwarlike, Abu Obeida was yet destined to take a leading part in the conquest of Syria.

CHAPTER II

EXPEDITION TO SYRIAN BORDER

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

ABU BEKR had soon an occasion for showing his resolve to carry out to the utmost the will of Mahomet in things both great and small.

Syrian expedition,
11 A.H.
632 A.D.

Just before he fell sick, the Prophet had given orders for an expedition to the Syrian border. It was to avenge the disaster which three years before had befallen the Moslem arms on the field of Muta. In that reverse, Zeid, the bosom friend of Mahomet, who led the army, fell; and so, distinctly to mark the object of the expedition, his son Osâma, though still young, was nominated by Mahomet to the command, and bidden to avenge his father's death. The camp, including all available fighting men, had been formed at Jorf, a little way outside Medina on the Syrian road. During the Prophet's sickness the force remained inactive there, uncertain of the issue. When the fatal event took place, Osâma broke up the camp, and carrying back the banner received at the hands of Mahomet, planted it in the court of the great Mosque, close by the door of Ayesha's apartment.

Osâma appointed by Mahomet to command the force.

The day following his inauguration, Abu Bekr took up the banner, and restoring it to Osâma, in token that he was still commander, bade the army again assemble and encamp at Jorf as it had done before; not a man was to be left behind. Obeying his command, the fighting men of Medina and its neighbourhood all flocked to the camp, even Omar amongst the number. While yet preparing to depart, the horizon darkened suddenly. Report of the

Abu Bekr deaf to reclamations against its despatch.

A.H. 11. Prophet's illness, soon followed by tidings of his death, had spread like wildfire over the land. From every side came rumours of disloyalty, and of resolve to cast the yoke of Islam off. The sense of the army, and of Osâma himself, was strongly against leaving the City thus defenceless, and the Caliph exposed to risk of sudden danger. Omar was deputed to represent all this to Abu Bekr, and also to urge (a request which Mahomet already had refused) that, if the expedition must proceed, a more experienced general should command. To the first request Abu Bekr replied, calm and unmoved :—" Were the City swarming round with " packs of ravening wolves and I left solitary and alone, the " force should go ; not a word from my Master's lips shall " fall to the ground." At the second demand the Caliph's anger kindled :—" Thy mother be childless, O son of Khattâb!" he said, seizing Omar by the beard :—" Shall " the Prophet of the Lord appoint a man to the command " and I, deposing him, appoint another in his place?" So Omar returned, with neither object gained.

He accom- When all was ready for the march, Abu Bekr repaired panies to the camp, and accompanied the force a little way on Osâma a little way on foot, foot. " Be mounted," said Osâma to him, " or else I will dismount and walk by thee." " Not so," replied Abu Bekr ; " I will not mount ; I will walk and soil my feet a little " moment in the ways of the Lord. Verily, every step " trodden in the ways of the Lord is equal to the merit of " manifold good works and wipeth out a multitude of sins." After a while he stopped, and said to Osâma :—" If it be thy will, give Omar leave that he may return for strength and counsel with me to the city." So he gave him leave.

And gives his last instructions. The army then halted, to receive Abu Bekr's parting words. " See," said he, addressing Osâma, " that thou beware of treachery. Depart not in any wise from the right. Thou shalt mutilate none ; neither shalt thou kill child or aged man, nor any woman. Injure not the date-palm, neither burn it with fire ; and cut not down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not of the flocks or herds or camels, saving for needful sustenance. Ye

may eat of the meat which men of the land shall bring unto you in their vessels, making mention thereon of the name of the Lord. And the Monks with shaven heads, if they submit, leave them unmolested. Now march forward in the name of the Lord, and may He protect you from sword and pestilence!"

So Abu Bekr returned with Omar to Medina. Osáma marched by Wadi al Cora, in the direction of Duma and the highlands south of Syria. The brunt of his attack fell upon the Beni Codhâa and the semi-Christian tribes which under the Roman banner had discomfited and slain his father, a disaster now avenged in fire and blood. The land was ravaged far and near; and, after an absence of two months, the army, laden with spoil, was joyfully welcomed back.

Meanwhile stirring events had been transpiring at Medina.

Osáma returns victorious.

CHAPTER III

MEDINA THREATENED

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Effect of
Abu Bekr's
action ;
iv. -v.
11 A.H.
June-July
632 A.D.

IN after-days Abu Bekr was used to look back with just pride upon having despatched Osáma's force the universal reclamation notwithstanding. Public opinion was not long in justifying the act. His bold front struck the Bedouin mind with the stability of his rule. If the leaders at Medina had not been confident in strength at home they would not have sent away their army; and the Arabs reasoning thus, were restrained from much that they might otherwise have done. Still the position was critical, and at times alarming.

His
courageous
attitude.

It was indeed a thing for the brave old Caliph to be proud of. "The Arabs," we read, "were on all sides rising in rebellion. Apostasy and disaffection raised their heads; Christians and Jews began to stretch out their necks; and the Faithful were as a flock of sheep without a shepherd, their Prophet gone, their numbers few, their foes a multitude." In face of all this Abu Bekr had sent away beyond recall his only force, and left Medina open and apparently defenceless.

Insurrec-
tion
throughout
Arabia.

There was danger all around, for towards the close of Mahomet's life, three rivals laying claim to the prophetic office had already raised the standard of rebellion. In the south, insurrection was hardly quelled by the death of the "Veiled Prophet" of Yemen,¹ when, on tidings of the decease of Mahomet, it burst forth again with redoubled violence. Northwards in the centre of the

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 463.

Peninsula, Moseilama had detached the powerful tribes around Yemama from their allegiance. And to the north-east, nearer home, Toleiha the third Pretender, had become openly and dangerously hostile. From every quarter, in rapid succession, came news of spreading disaffection. The Collectors of tithe (an impost hateful to the Bedouin), the Legates and Residents of Mahomet throughout the provinces,—all, in fact, who represented the authority of Islam, fled or were expelled. The Faithful wherever found were massacred, some of the confessors suffering a cruel death. Mecca and Tayif wavered at the first; but in the end, through the strong influence of the Coreish, stood firm. They were almost alone. Here and there some few tribes, under loyal, or it might be temporising Chiefs, maintained the semblance of obedience; but they were hardly discernible amidst the seething mass of rebellion. Amru, hurrying back from Oman (whither he had been sent as an Ambassador by Mahomet at the Farewell Pilgrimage) saw, as he passed, the whole of Central Arabia either in open apostasy or ready to break away on the first demand of tithe; and his report filled the Citizens of Medina with dismay. In truth, Islam had never taken firm hold of the distant provinces; and as for the Bedouins, Mahomet himself had frequent cause to chide their fickleness. It was fear of punishment, and lust of plunder under the Prophet's banner, rather than attachment to the Faith, which hitherto had held in check these wild Sons of the desert. The restraints and obligations of Islam were ever irksome and distasteful; and now rid of them, they were again returning to their lawless life.

As report after report came in of fresh defection, Abu Bekr could but instruct his scattered officers, wherever they were able, to hold together the loyal few, bravely trusting to tide over the crisis until Osâma's force returned. For the immediate defence of Medina he took such measures as were possible. The faithful tribes in the neighbourhood were called in, and pickets posted at the various approaches to the City. The turbulent clans

Danger of
Medina.

A.H. 11. in the near desert were the first to assume a threatening attitude. The Beni Abs and Dzobian massed there in such numbers "that the land was straitened by them," and they parted into two bodies, one to Rabadza, the other to Dzul Cassa, the first station from Medina on the road to Nejd. The false prophet Toleiha sent his brother to encourage the insurgents: but they still vacillated between his claims and those of Islam. At last they bethought themselves of a compromise. A deputation offered to hold by Islam and its ritual, if only they were excused the tithe. The strangers bearing this message were welcomed by the chiefs of Medina, but by the Caliph their advances were indignantly rejected. He would relax not a tittle of the legal dues. "If ye withhold but the tether of a tithed camel," said Abu Bekr sharply, "I will fight you for it." With this refusal they retired, and also with the intelligence that the City had but few defenders left. Now was the moment, not for plunder only, but for a decisive blow upon Medina. Abu Bekr foreseeing this redoubled his precautions. He strengthened the pickets, and set over them the only three chief men remaining with him, Aly, Talha, and Zobeir. For the people at large he appointed the great Mosque a rendezvous. "The land hath rebelled against us," he said, "and they have spied out our nakedness and the weakness of our defence. Ye know not whether they will come upon you by night or come upon you by day, or which of you may be first attacked. Wherefore be ye vigilant and ready."

Attack
repelled.

And so it came to pass. They tarried but three days, when a surprise was attempted from Dzul Cassa. The outposts were on the alert and kept the assailants at bay, while the main-guard was hurried up on camels from the Mosque. The Bedouins, hardly prepared for so warm a reception, fled back upon their reserves. They were pursued; but the insurgents, blowing out their water-skins, cast them, thus inflated, before the camels of the Moslems, which unused to the stratagem took fright and fled back to the Mosque. None were killed or wounded, but the Rebels

were emboldened by the discomfiture. Abu Bekr anti- A.H. 11.
cipating renewed attack, called out every man capable of
bearing arms, and spent the night in marshalling his force.
Next morning while yet dark, he led forth the little band
himself in regular array with centre and two wings. The
enemy were taken by surprise at early dawn, and as the
sun arose were already in full flight. Abu Bekr drove
them with slaughter out of Dzul Cassa and, leaving a
portion of his little force as an outpost there, returned to
Medina.

The affair was small, but the effect was great. As Good effect
of the
victory. failure would have been disastrous perhaps fatal to Islam,
so was victory the turning-point in its favour. The power
of the Prophet's Successor to protect the City even with-
out an army was noised abroad. And soon after, the
spirits of the Moslems rose as they saw some Chiefs appear
bringing in the tithes. The tribes whom these represented
were indeed few compared with the apostate hordes; but
it was an augury of brighter days. The first thus to pre-
sent their legal offerings to the Caliph were deputations
from the Beni Temim and Beni Tay. Each was ushered
into his presence as an Embassy. "Nay," said Abu Bekr,
"they are more than that; they are Messengers of glad
"tidings, true men, and defenders of the Faith." And the
people answered:—"Even so; now the good things that
"thou didst promise do appear."

Tradition delights to ascribe with pious gratitude the Saving of
Islam due
to Abu
Bekr. preservation of Islam to the aged Caliph's faith and for-
titude. "On the death of Mahomet" (so runs our record),
"it wanted but little and the Faithful had perished utterly.
"But the Lord strengthened the heart of Abu Bekr, and
"stablished us thereby in the resolve to give place not for
"one moment to the Apostates;—giving answer to them
"but in these three words, *Submission, Exile, or the Sword.*"
It was the simple faith of Abu Bekr which fitted him for
the task, and made him carry out the law of his Master
to the letter. But for him Islam would have melted away
in compromise with the Bedouin tribes, or, likelier still,
have perished in the throes of birth.

CHAPTER IV

RETURN OF OSÂMA. EXPEDITION SENT AGAINST THE APOSTATE TRIBES THROUGHOUT ARABIA

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

Osâma's
return.
vi. 11 A.H.
Sept. 362
A.D.

OSÂMA at last returned, his army laden with booty; and Medina, for two months unprotected, was at once relieved from further danger. The royal Fifth (portion of the booty reserved by sacred ordinance for the State) was delivered to the Caliph, and by him distributed among the people.

Expedition
against
Beni Abs
and
Dzobian.

Abu Bekr lost no time in now following up the advantage he had already gained over the insurgents. Driven back from Dzul Cassa, they had retired to Rabadza and vented their anger in destroying by cruel deaths some faithful followers of the Prophet still left amongst them there. Deeply moved at their fate, Abu Bekr took an oath "that he would by the like death destroy as many "of them as they had slain, or even more."

Abu Bekr
chastises
rebel tribes
at Ra-
badza.

Leaving Osâma in command of the City and also of the army left there for a little to recruit, Abu Bekr with a small force marched out towards Rabadza. The chief men expostulated against his going forth to fight in person. Were a Commander killed in action, his place could easily be filled; but if the Caliph fell, their head and master would be gone. "Nay," replied Abu Bekr; "but I will "go forth, and will be your comrade even as one of your "own selves." So they marched on, and coming up with the enemy completely discomfited them, killing some, and taking others prisoners. The Beni Abs and Dzobian fled to Toleiha, and joined his army at Bozákha. There-

upon Abu Bekr confiscated their pasture-lands to be in all time to come, a reserve for the stud and camels of the State. The rebels after a time tendered their submission, and eventually found ample compensation in the conquered lands beyond Arabia.

A.H. 11.

Satisfied with this success, the Caliph returned to Medina. The army by this time was refitted. The tithes had begun to come in from neighbouring tribes in token of submission. Medina was no longer in peril, and the Citizens breathed freely. But a heavy burden still lay upon the Caliph. Save a remnant here and there, faith was vanishing, and the Arabs throughout the Peninsula were relapsing into apostasy. Yet Islam was to be the Faith of all Arabia;—"Throughout the land there shall be no second creed," was the behest of Mahomet upon his deathbed. False prophets must be crushed; rebels vanquished; apostates reclaimed or else exterminated; and the supremacy vindicated of Islam. It was, in short, the mission of Abu Bekr to redeem the dying Prophet's words.

Islam must be reimposed on all Arabia.

With this great purpose, Abu Bekr went forth a second time to Dzul Cassa, and summoned there the whole available forces of Islam and all the loyal Chieftains. These he divided into eleven independent Columns, and over each appointed a distinguished leader, to whom (following the example of his Master) he presented a banner. Arabia was parcelled out, and each detachment given a quarter to reclaim, with marching orders where to begin and what course to take. Thus Khalid was to subdue Toleiha; and Ikrima with Shorahbil, Moseilama. Mohajir was sent to Yemen; Ala to Bahrein; Hodzeifa to Mahra; and Amru against the Beni Codhaa. By this great scheme, in course of time no spot would be left unconquered. The troops retained at home were few; but few were needed now.

Eleven expeditions despatched to different parts of Arabia.

Having despatched the various expeditions, Abu Bekr returned to Medina. There his first concern was to publish a summons to Apostate tribes, commanding them everywhere to repent and submit themselves, on which condition they should be pardoned and received back into Islam. Such as refused would be attacked, their fighting

Proclamation to apostates to repent. viii. 11 A.H. Oct. 632 A.D.

A.H. 11. — men cut to pieces and their women and children taken captive. This summons was sent by the hand of Envoys to every province and rebellious tribe. The Adzân, or Call to prayer, was to be the test of faith: if that were heard and responded to, good and well; if not, the people were to be held as apostate and punished to the bitter end.

Abu Bekr never again went forth to fight.

Abu Bekr never again left Medina to lead his troops. Some say that he regretted this; but it is not likely that he did. Medina, the Capital, was his proper place. From it, as a central point, he was able to direct the movement of his Commanders all over the Peninsula; and with operations in so many different quarters to control, he could not have been better placed.

No chief Companion appointed to a command.

It is not quite so clear why he appointed none of the more distinguished Companions to any chief command. The same was afterwards the policy of Omar who used to say that he refrained from doing so, partly because the liability to render an account would have implied subjection inconsistent with their dignity, but chiefly to strengthen his own hands by having them about him to advise. This latter reason no doubt also weighed with Abu Bekr, who used to take counsel on all important matters with the leading Companions. Still, it is singular that men like Aly and Zobeir, so prominent in the battles of Mahomet, should now for the moment disappear from operations in the field.

CHAPTER V

RECOVERY OF ARABIA. CAMPAIGN OF KHALID

11 A.H. 632-633 A.D.

IT was indeed time for decisive action. But a few weeks before and the entire Peninsula was submissive to the claims of Mahomet both as Prophet and King. Now all was on a sudden changed, and the Arabs abjuring Islam were fast relapsing into apostasy and independence. It took a year to reclaim the Peninsula, a year of hard fighting and obstinate resistance in every corner of the land. It was the indomitable spirit breathed by Mahomet into his faithful followers, that alone crowned their efforts with victory. The Arabs at last were forced back, in sullen mood and with unwilling step, to confess the faith of Mahomet and submit themselves to his Successor.

A brief outline of the twelvemonths' campaign will suffice; for tradition, up to the Prophet's death clear and copious, now suddenly becomes curt, obscure, and disconnected. The scene of confusion that prevailed throughout the land, presents itself to us in meagre, dim, and hazy outline. With Islam struggling thus for very life, its followers thought at the moment only of the lance and sword; and when the struggle at last was over, little remained but the sense of escape from a terrible danger. No date is given for the many battles fought throughout the year. We can only guess at the sequence of events.

Such being the case, we shall begin with the campaign of Khalid on the north and east, and then take up the other Provinces in order, as they lie around the coast, from Bahrein on the Persian Gulf to Yemen on the Red Sea.

A.H. 11.

CAMPAIGN OF KHALID

I. *Against Toleiha*Khalid
ibn Welid.

After Abu Bekr and Omar, the most prominent figure in the early days of Islam is without doubt that of Khalid son of Welid. More to him than to any other is it due that the Faith so rapidly recovered its standing, and thereafter spread with such marvellous rapidity. A dashing soldier, brave even to rashness, his courage was tempered by a cool and ready judgment. His conduct on the battlefields which decided the fate of the Persian Empire, and of the Byzantine rule in Syria, ranks him as one of the greatest Generals of the world. Over and again, always with consummate skill and heroism, he cast the die in crises where loss would have been destruction to Islam. From the carnage of his arms he was named *The Sword of God*; and so little care had he for loss of life, that he would wed the widow of his enemy on the field still sodden with his own soldiers' blood. He had already distinguished himself in the annals of Islam. While fighting on the side of the Coreish, the Prophet's defeat at Ohod was due mainly to his prowess. After conversion, his was the only column which, on the capture of Mecca, disobeyed by shedding blood; and again shortly after, the cruel massacre of an unoffending tribe brought down upon him the Prophet's stern reproof. On the field of Muta he gave signal promise of his great future when, the Moslem army having been routed by Roman legions and its leaders one after another slain, he saved the shattered remnants from destruction by skilful and intrepid tactics. It was this Khalid whom Abu Bekr now sent forth against the rebel Prophets Toleiha and Moseilama.

Khalid
marches
against
Toleiha.

His column, by far the strongest, was composed of the flower both of the Refugees and of the Citizens of Medina. To divert the enemy's attention, Abu Bekr gave out his destination as for Kheibar; and, to strike the greater terror, that the Caliph himself would join it there with a fresh Contingent. Khalid, however, was not

long in quitting the northern route. Striking off to the right, he made direct for the mountain range, seat of the Beni Tai, and not distant from the scene of Toleiha's revolt among the Beni Asad. A.H. 11.

Of the doctrines of Toleiha, and the other pretenders to prophetic office, we know little; nor indeed anything at all to show wherein the secret of their influence lay. So far as appears, their worship was a mere travesty of Islam. Some doggerel verses and childish sayings are all that the contemptuous voice of tradition has transmitted of their teaching. That four Pretenders (for Sajâh the Prophetess was also such) should just then have arisen in different parts of Arabia and drawn multitudes after them, would seem to imply something deeper than senseless rhymes, and more specious than petty variations of the Moslem rite. It is not unreasonable to assume that the spiritual sense of Arabia had been quickened by the preaching of Mahomet, and that his example had both suggested the claims of others, and contributed thus rapidly to their success. Jealousy of Mecca and Medina, moreover, and impatience of the trammels of Islam, were powerful incentives for the Bedouin tribes to cast in their lot with these Pretenders. Thus the Beni Ghatafan who aforesaid were in league with the Beni Asad, had recently fallen out with them and lost some pasture-land. Oyeina their chief now counselled a return to their old relations; "Let us go back," he said, "to the ancient alliance which before Islam we had with the Beni Asad, for never since we gave it up have I known our pasture boundaries. A Prophet of our own is better than a Prophet of the Coreish. Beside all this, Mahomet is dead and Toleiha is alive." So saying, Oyeina with 700 of his warriors joined Toleiha and his army at Bozakha. Toleiha.
Bedouin
jealousy of
Mecca and
Medina.

On first hearing of Toleiha's heresy, Mahomet had sent an Envoy to rally the faithful amongst the Beni Asad and crush the Pretender thus. But the cause gaining ground, was now supported by the neighbouring Beni Tai, as well as by insurgents who flocked to Toleiha after their defeat at Rabadza; and so the Envoy had to fly. The great Beni Tai
reclaimed.

A.H. 11. family of Tai, however, was not wholly disloyal, for (as above mentioned) the legal dues had been already presented to Abu Bekr on behalf of some of them. Adi their loyal chief was therefore now sent forward by Khalid in the hope of detaching his people from Toleiha's cause. He found them in no friendly humour. "The Father of the foal!" they cried (such was the sobriquet they contemptuously used for Abu Bekr¹), "thou shalt not persuade us to do homage to him." "Think better of it," replied Adi; "an army approacheth which ye cannot withstand. Ye shall know full soon he is no foal but the lusty stallion. Wherefore see ye to it." Alarmed at his words, they begged for time to recall their fellows who had joined Toleiha; "for," said they, "he will surely hold them as hostages, or else put them to death." So Khalid halted three days, and in the end the whole tribe not only tendered submission but joined him with 1000 horse, "the flower of the land of Tai and the bravest of them."

Battle of
Bozakha.

Thus reinforced, Khalid advanced against Toleiha. On the march his army was exasperated by finding the bodies of two of their scouts, one a warrior of note named Okkâsha, who had been slain and left by Toleiha to be trampled on upon the road. The armies met at Bozakha, and the combat was hot and long. At last the tide of battle was turned by a strange utterance of Toleiha who was fighting in his prophetic garb of hair. Oyeina held on bravely with his 700 when, the situation becoming critical, he turned to Toleiha saying, "Hath any message come to thee from Gabriel?" "*Not yet,*" answered the Prophet; a second time he asked, and received the same reply. "Yes," cried Toleiha a little after, "a message now hath come." "And what is it?" inquired Oyeina eagerly. "Thus saith Gabriel to me, *Thou shalt have a millstone like unto his, and an affair shall happen that thou wilt not forget.*" "Away with thee!" cried Oyeina scornfully; "no doubt the Lord knoweth that an affair will happen that thou shalt not soon forget!"

¹ *Abu Bekr* means "Father of the young camel"; so they called him by the nickname *Ab ul Fasil*, "Father of the foal."

Ho, every man to his tent!" So they turned to go; and A.H. 11. thereupon the army fled.

Toleiha escaped with his wife to Syria. The sequel is Toleiha's sequel. curious. At the first he took refuge with another tribe on the Syrian frontier. When the Beni Asad were pardoned he returned to them, and embraced Islam. Passing Medina soon after on pilgrimage to Mecca, he was seized and carried to Abu Bekr who set him at liberty, saying, "Let him alone. The Lord hath now verily guided him into the right path." When Omar succeeded, Toleiha presented himself to do homage. At first Omar spoke roughly to him,—“Thou art he that killed Okkâsha, and his comrade too. I love thee not.” “Was it not better,” answered the quondam prophet, “that they by my hand should obtain the crown of martyrdom, rather than that I by theirs should have perished in hell-fire?” When he had sworn allegiance, the Caliph asked him concerning his oracular gift, and whether anything yet remained of it. “Ah,” he replied, “it was but a puff or two, as from a pair of bellows.” So he returned to his tribe and went forth with them to the war in Irac where in the great struggle with Persia he became a hero of renown.

After the battle of Bozakha the Beni Asad, fearing lest Repentant tribes received back into Islam. their families should fall into the conqueror's hands, submitted and were pardoned. Other important tribes in the neighbourhood which had stood aloof watching the event, now came in and received from Khalid the same terms. They resumed the profession of Islam with all its obligations, and in proof thereof brought in the tithe. A full amnesty was accorded on but one condition, that those who during the apostasy had taken the life of any Moslem should be delivered up. These were now (to carry out the Caliph's vow) put to the like death as that which they had inflicted. If they had speared their victims, cast them over precipices, drowned them in wells, or burned them in the fire, the persecutors were now subjected to the same cruel fate.

Khalid stayed at Bozakha for a month, receiving the Body of malcontents discomfited. submission of the people and their tithes. Troops of horse scoured the country, striking terror all around. In

A.H. 11. only one direction was serious opposition met. A body of malcontents from amongst the penitent tribes, unable to brook submission, assumed a defiant attitude. They had yet to learn that the grip of Islam was stern and crushing. These gathered in a great multitude around Omm Siml, daughter of a famous chieftain of the Ghatafan. Her Mother had been taken prisoner, and put to a cruel death by Mahomet. She herself had waited upon Ayesha as a captive maid in the Prophet's household; but the haughty spirit of her race survived. Mounted on her Mother's war-camel, she led the force herself and incited the insurgents to a bold resistance. Khalid proclaimed a great reward to him who should maim her camel. It was soon disabled; and, Omm Siml slain, the rout of the rebel host was easy.

Oyeina
pardoned.

A few of the leading rebels were sent prisoners to Abu Bekr. One of them, Oyeina a notable marauding chieftain, had often been the terror of Medina. When the City was besieged by the Coreish, he offered assistance to the Prophet on humiliating terms which were happily refused; and he was also one of the influential leaders "whose hearts," after the battle of Honein, "had been reconciled" by the Prophet's largesses. He was now led into Medina with the rest in chains, his hands tied behind his back. The Citizens crowded round to gaze at the fallen chief and the very children smote him with their hands crying out, "Oh enemy of the Lord, apostate!" "Not so," said Oyeina bravely; "I am no apostate and never was a believer until now." The Caliph listened patiently to the appeal of the captives. He forgave them, and commanded their release.¹

II. *Discomfiture of the Beni Temim. Story of Mâlik ibn Noweira*

Khalid's
advance,
11 A.H.
(Nov. ?)
632 A.D.

Having subdued the tribes inhabiting the hills and deserts north of Medina, Khalid bent his steps eastward,

¹ For Omm Siml's mother, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 336; and for Oyeina, *ibid.* p. 280, etc.

against the Beni Temim who occupied the plateau towards A.H. 11. the Persian Gulf.

This great tribe, partly Christian and partly heathen, had from time immemorial spread its innumerable branches over the pasture-lands between Yemama and the mouth of the Euphrates. With the rest of Arabia it acknowledged Mahomet and submitted to his claims. But the Prophet's death had produced amongst them the same apostasy as elsewhere. After Abu Bekr's first success some of its Chieftains, as we have seen, came to Medina with the tithes. Meanwhile a strange complication had arisen which embroiled the Beni Yerboa (one of their clans, commanded by the famous Mâlik ibn Noweira) in hostilities with the rest of the tribe, and eventually brought Khalid on the scene.

It was no less than the advent of the Prophetess Sajâh, at the head of a great host from Mesopotamia. Descended from the Beni Yerboa, her family had migrated north and joined the Beni Taghlib, among whom in Mesopotamia she had been brought up as a Christian. How long she had assumed the prophetic office and what were her peculiar tenets, we do not know. At the head of the Taghlib and other Christian tribes she now crossed into Arabia hoping to profit by the present confusion, and was on her way to attack Medina. Reaching the seats of the Temim, she summoned to her presence the Beni Yerboa her own clan, and promised them the kingdom should victory crown her arms. They joined her standard, with Mâlik ibn Noweira at their head. The other clans of the Temim refused to acknowledge the Prophetess; and so, diverted from her design upon Medina, she turned her arms against them. In a series of combats, though supported by Mâlik, she was worsted. Then, having made terms and exchanged prisoners, she bethought her of attacking the rival prophet Moseilama, and so passed onwards to Yemama.

As Khalid flushed with victory now approached, most of the branches of the Temim hastened to tender their submission. At this critical juncture, the withdrawal of Sajâh left Mâlik ibn Noweira with the Yerboa tribe in a

Beni
Temim.

Sajâh, the
prophetess,
invades
Central
Arabia.

Mâlik ibn
Noweira ;

A. H. 11. position of some perplexity, and he was undecided how to act. Conflicting views respecting Mâlik's loyalty divided the Moslem camp. For some reason Khalid was bent on attacking the Yerboa. The men of Medina were equally opposed to the design, for which they alleged there was no authority. It had been better for Khalid to have listened. But he replied haughtily, "I am Commander, and it is for me to decide. I will march against Mâlik with such as choose to follow me. I compel no man." So he went forward and left the malcontents behind. These, however, thinking better of it rejoined the army. Khalid then in full force, marched straight against the headquarters of Mâlik, but found not a soul upon the spot. It was utterly deserted.

Brought a
prisoner to
Khalid.

In fact, Mâlik had resolved on submission, though his proud spirit rebelled against presenting himself before Khalid. He knew the ordinance of Abu Bekr, that none but they who resisted and who refused the call to prayer should be molested. So he told his people that there was no longer use in opposing this new way, but that bowing down they should suffer the wave to pass over them. "Break up your camp," he said, "and depart every man to his house." Khalid, still bent on treating the neighbourhood as enemy's land, sent forth bands everywhere to slay and plunder and take captive all who failed to respond to the call for prayer. Amongst others, Mâlik was seized with his wife and a party of his people. When challenged, they replied that they were Moslems. "Why, then, these weapons?" it was asked. So they laid aside their arms and were led as captives to the camp. As they passed by Khalid, Mâlik cried aloud to him, "Thy Master never gave command for this." "*Thy* master," rejoined Khalid, "didst thou say? Then, rebel, by thine own admission, he is not thine!"

Mâlik ibn
Noweira
put to
death.

The captors differed in their evidence. Some averred that the prisoners had offered resistance. Others, with Abu Catâda, a citizen of Medina at their head, deposed that they had declared themselves Moslems and at once complied with the call to prayer. So the party was

remanded till morning under an armed guard. The night set in cold and stormy, and Khalid, with the view (so he averred) of protecting them from its inclemency, gave command "to *wrap* the prisoners." The word was ambiguous, signifying in another dialect "to *slay*"; and Dhirâr, commandant of the guard, taking it in that sense, began to put the prisoners, including Ibn Noweira, forthwith to the sword. Khalid, hearing the uproar, hurried forth; but all was over, and he retired exclaiming, "When the Lord hath determined a thing, the same cometh verily to pass." But the fate of Mâlik was not thus easily to be set at rest. The men of Medina who had opposed the advance were shocked at his cruel fate. Abu Catâda roundly asserted the responsibility of Khalid. "This is thy work!" he said; and though chided, persisted in the charge, declaring that never again would he serve under Khalid's banner. In company with Motammim, Ibn Noweira's brother, he set out at once for Medina, and there laid formal complaint before the Caliph. Omar, with his native impetuosity, took up the cause of the Yerboa chief. Khalid had given point to the allegations of his enemies by wedding Leila, the beautiful widow of his victim, on the spot. From this scandalous act, Omar drew the worst conclusion. "He hath conspired to slay a believer," he said, "and hath gone in unto his wife." He was instant with Abu Bekr that the offender should be degraded and put in bonds saying, "The sword of Khalid, dipped in violence and outrage, must be sheathed." "Nay!" replied the Caliph (of whom it is said that he never degraded any one of his Commanders);—"the Sword which the Lord hath made bare against the heathen, shall I sheathe it? That be far from me!" Nevertheless he summoned Khalid to answer the charge.

His widow
taken to
wife by
Khalid.

Khalid obeyed the call. On reaching Medina, he went straightway to the great Mosque and entered it in rough costume, his clothes rusty with the girded armour, and his turban, stuck with arrows, coiled rudely about the head. As he passed along the courtyard towards the Caliph's chamber, Omar met him. Unable to restrain himself, he

Khalid
exonerated
by Abu
Bekr.

A.H. 11. seized the arrows from the warrior's turban, broke them over his shoulder, and abused him as hypocrite, murderer, and adulterer. Khalid, unaware whether Abu Bekr might not be of the same mind, answered not a word but passed into the Caliph's presence. There he told his story, and the explanation was accepted by Abu Bekr; but he chided him roughly for having taken to wife his victim's widow, and run counter to Arab sentiment in incontinently celebrating his nuptials on the field of battle. As Khalid thus relieved, again passed out, he lightly rallied Omar in words which showed that he had been exonerated. Motammim then pressed his claim of blood-money for his brother's life and release of the prisoners that remained. For the release Abu Bekr gave command, but payment he declined.

But held
guilty by
Omar.

Omar, still unconvinced of Khalid's innocence, advised that he should be withdrawn from the command. He persevered in pressing this view upon Abu Bekr, who at last replied, "Omar, hold thy peace! Refrain thy tongue from Khalid. He gave an order, and the order was mis-" understood." But Omar heeded not. He neither forgave nor forgot, as in the sequel we shall see.

Scandal of
the case.

The scandal was the greater because Mâlik ibn Noweira was a chief renowned for generosity and princely virtues, as well as for poetic talent. His brother Motammim a poet also of no mean fame, commemorated his tragic end in many touching verses which Omar loved to listen to, and used to say that, "had he been himself a poet, he would have had no higher ambition than to mourn in such verse the fate of his own brother Zeid," who shortly after fell at Yemama.

The materials are too meagre for a conclusive judgment on the guilt or innocence of Khalid. But his scandalous marriage with the widow of Ibn Noweira whose blood was yet fresh upon the spot, if it gave no colour to darker suspicion, justified at anyrate the indictment of shameless indulgence and reckless disregard of the proprieties of life.

III. *Battle of Yemama*

A.H. 11.

END OF 11 A.H. BEGINNING OF 633 A.D.

But sterner work was in reserve for Khalid. In the centre of Arabia, a little towards the east, lay Yemama. The Beni Hanifa, a powerful branch of the great Bekr tribe, resided there. Partly Christian and partly heathen, they had submitted to Mahomet, but now were in rebellion 40,000 strong, around their Prophet Moseilama. It was against these that Khalid next directed his steps.

Khalid's
campaign
against
Mosei-
lama.
End of
11 A.H.
Beginning
of 633 A.D.

The beginning of Moseilama's story belongs to the life of Mahomet.¹ Small in stature, and of mean countenance, he yet had qualities which fitted him for command. He visited Medina with a deputation from his people, and it was pretended that words had then fallen from Mahomet signifying that he was destined to share with him the prophetic office. On this Moseilama advanced the claim, and was accepted by his people as their prophet. Summoned from Medina to abandon these pretensions, he sent an insolent reply claiming to divide the land. Mahomet in anger drove the ambassador from his presence, and thereupon sent Rajjâl a convert of the same tribe, to counteract the heresy and reclaim his brethren; but Rajjâl, like the rest, was gained over by the Pretender. Moseilama, we are told, deceived the people by pretended miracles, counterfeited the language of the Coran, and instituted prayers like those of Mahomet. In short, his religion was but a wretched travesty of Islam. Though strongly supported by his own people both as their Prophet and their Ruler, he now felt that the meshes of Abu Bekr began to close round him. The Caliph's Generals were steadily reclaiming the coast of the Persian Gulf, and Khalid whom he dreaded most was not far behind. At this juncture came tidings that the Prophetess Sajâh, worsted as we have seen by the Beni Temim, was coming with troops against him. In his perplexity he sent her a friendly invitation. She came, and their sentiments

Mosei-
lama.

His mar-
riage with
Sajâh,
the Pro-
phetess.

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 462.

A.H. 11. were so much alike that the Prophet of Yemama took the Prophetess of Mesopotamia to wife, and celebrated their nuptials on the spot,—the dower to be one half the revenues of Yemama. After a few days, Sajâh departed for her northern home and, like a meteor, vanished, just as she had startled Arabia by her advent. Parties of Mesopotamian horse still ranged over the land collecting her dues when Khalid's approach at once changed the scene; and Moseilama marching out with a heavy force to meet him, pitched his camp at Acraba.

Ikrima and Shorahbil's reverse.

Ikrima and Shorahbil, sent by Abu Bekr to quell the rising at Yemama, had already suffered badly at the hands of Moseilama from a hasty and ill-advised advance. The reverse was so serious that Abu Bekr wrote angrily to Ikrima,—“ I will not see thy face, nor shalt thou see mine, as now thou art. Thou shalt not return hither to dishearten the people. Depart unto the uttermost coasts, and there join the armies in the east and south.” So, skirting Yemama, Ikrima went forward to Oman, there to retrieve his tarnished reputation. Shorahbil, meanwhile, was directed to halt and await the approach of Khalid.

Khalid sets out for Yemama.

It was upon this reverse that Khalid, when summoned to Medina about the affair of Mâlik, received his commission to attack Moseilama. In anticipation of severe fighting the Caliph sent with him a fresh column of veterans from amongst the men of Mecca and Medina. Thus reinforced Khalid returned to his camp at Bitah, and advanced in strength to meet the enemy.

Mojâa taken prisoner.

While yet a march from Acraba, Khalid surprised a mounted body of the Beni Hanifa under command of their chief Mojâa. They were returning from a raid against a neighbouring tribe, unaware of his approach. But as they belonged to the enemy, they were all put to the sword excepting Mojâa, whom Khalid spared in hope of his being useful on the morrow, and kept chained in his tent under charge of Leila his lately espoused wife.

Battle of Yemama.

Next day the armies met upon the sandy plain of Acraba. The enemy rushed on with desperate bravery. “ Fight for your loved ones !” they cried,—“ it is the day of

“jealousy and vengeance; if ye be worsted, your maidens A.H. 11.
“will be ravished and your wives dragged to their foul —
“embrace!” So fierce was the shock that the Moslems
were driven back and their camp uncovered. The wild
Bedouins entered the tent of Khalid, and, but for the
chivalry of her captive, who conjured his countrymen to
spare a lady of noble birth, Leila would have perished by
their swords. “Go, fight against men,” Mojâa cried, “and
leave this woman,” on which they cut the tent-ropes and
departed. There was danger for Islam at the moment.
Defeat would have been disastrous; indeed, the Faith
could hardly have survived. But now the spirit of the
Moslems was aroused. To stimulate rivalry between the
Bedouins and City Arabs of his force, Khalid made them
to fight apart. On this they rallied one the other,—“Now,”
cried the sons of the desert, “we shall see carnage wax hot
amongst the raw levies of the town. We shall teach them
how to fight!” Prodigies of valour were fought all round.
Tradition dwells with enthusiasm on the heroic words and
deeds of the leaders, as one after another they fell in the
thick of battle. Zeid, brother of Omar, leading the men
of Mecca, singled out Rajjâl and, reproaching his apostasy,
despatched him forthwith. A furious south wind charged
with desert sand, blinded the Moslems and caused a
momentary check. Upbraiding their slackness, Zeid cried
out,—“Onwards to those that have gone before! Not a
“word will I speak till we drive these apostates back, or I
“appear to clear me before my Lord. Close your eyes and
“clench your teeth. Forward like men!” So saying, he
led the charge and fell. Abu Hodzeifa, with leaves of the
scripture stuck on the flagstaff which he bore, and calling
out, “Fight for the Coran, ye Moslems, and adorn it by
your deeds!” followed his example and shared the common
fate. His freedman seized the banner as it fell, and ex-
claiming “I were a craven bearer of the sacred text if I
“feared death,” plunged with it into the battle and was
slain. Nor were the Men of Medina far behind. Their
Commander as they gave way reproached them thus,—
“Woe to you because of this backsliding. Verily, I am

A.H. 11. clear of ye, even as I am clear of these," pointing to the apostate enemy, and so he flung himself among them and perished in their midst. Animated thus, the rank and file charged furiously. Backwards and forwards swayed the line, and heavy was the carnage. But urged by Khalid's valiant arm, and raising the battle-cry "*Ya Mohammedâ!*" the Moslem arms at length prevailed. The enemy broke and fled. "To the garden!" cried Mohakkem, a brave leader of the Beni Hanifa; "to the garden, and close the gate!" Taking his stand, he guarded their retreat as they rushed into an orchard surrounded by a strong wall, and Moseilama with them. The Moslem troops following close, swarmed round the wall but found the entrance barred. At last one cried, "Lift me aloft upon the wall." So they lifted him up. For a moment, as he looked on the surging mass below, the hero hesitated; then, boldly leaping down, he beat right and left, until he reached the gate, and threw it open. Like waters pent up, his comrades rushed in; and, as beasts of the forest snared in a trap, so wildly struggled the brave Beni Hanifa in the *Garden of Death*. Hemmed within the narrow space, hampered by the trees, arms useless from their very numbers, they were hewn down and perished to a man. The carnage was fearful, for besides the "thousands" (as tradition puts it) slain within the walls, an equal number were killed on the field, and again an equal number in the flight. The Moslems too, despite their splendid victory, had cause to remember the "Garden of Death," for their loss was beyond all previous experience. Besides those killed hand to hand in the garden, great numbers fell in the battle. The Refugees lost 360 men, and the Men of Medina 300, nearly 700 in all; while the slaughter amongst the Bedouins, though somewhat less, raised the loss beyond 1200, besides the wounded. Amongst the dead were nine-and-thirty chief Companions of the Prophet. At Medina there was hardly a house, whether of Refugees or Citizens, in which the voice of wailing was not heard.

Enemy dis-comfited.

The Garden of Death.

Terrible slaughter on both sides.

Moseilama among the slain.

Moseilama was slain by Wahshi the same negro warrior who, swinging round his head a javelin after the

savage Ethiopian style, had on the field of Ohod brought Hamza to the ground. After the battle, Khalid carried the chief Mojâa, still in chains, over the field to identify the dead. Turning the bodies over, they came upon a stalwart figure. "Look, was this your Master?" said Khalid. "Nay," replied Mojâa, "that was a nobler and a better man";—it was the brave Mohakkem who, covering the retreat, was slain by the Caliph's son. Entering the "Garden of Death," among the heaps of mangled dead they stumbled on one of insignificant mien. "This is your man," Mojâa said, as he turned the body of Moseilama on its side;—"truly ye have done for him!" "Yea," replied Khalid, "or rather it is he that hath done for you all that which he hath done."

The Mussulman horse now scoured the country and every day brought in bands of prisoners. Aware that after their crushing defeat the Beni Hanifa were incapable of resistance, their chief, Mojâa bethought him of a stratagem. He represented that the forts and fastnesses were still held in force throughout the country; in proof of which he sent to tell the aged men, the women,—all that were left behind, and even the children,—to line their battlements in warrior's disguise. Persuaded thus that the inhabitants would fight to the last, and seeing the army wearied and anxious for their homes, Khalid concluded a truce more favourable than he would otherwise have given. When Mojâa's artifice came to light, Khalid was angry; but excusing him on the ground of patriotism, in the end stood by the treaty. No sooner was it concluded than he received a despatch of unwonted severity from Abu Bekr, who, to strike terror into other apostate tribes, commanded that not a single fighting man of the rebel and ungodly race be spared. Fortunately this the truce forbade; the Beni Hanifa were received back into Islam, and a portion only of the multitude were retained as prisoners. The campaign ended, Khalid sent a deputation of the tribe to Abu Bekr who received them courteously. "Out upon you!" at first he said; "how is it that this impostor has led you all astray?" "Oh Caliph!" they answered, "thou hast heard

Truce with
the Beni
Hanifa.

A.H. 11. it all; he was one whom the Lord blessed not, nor yet his people"; and they repeated to him some of the things he used to say. "Good heavens!" exclaimed Abu Bekr; "what kind of words are these? There is neither sense in them for good nor yet for evil, but a strange fatuity to have beguiled you thus." So he dismissed them to their homes.

Many
Com-
panions
slain.

Among the slain are not a few names familiar to the student of the Prophet's life. The carnage amongst the "*Readers*" (those who had the Coran by heart) was so great as to give Omar the first idea of collecting the Sacred text, "lest any part of it should be lost." At the death of his brother Zeid who had shared with him all the dangers of the early battles of Islam, Omar was inconsolable. "Thou art returned home," he said to his son Abdallah, "safe and sound; and Zeid is dead. Wherefore wast not thou slain before him? I wish not to see thy face." "Father," was his reply, "he asked for martyrdom, and the Lord granted it. I strove after the same, but it was not given unto me." Such was the spirit of these Moslem warriors.

Khalid
takes
Mojâa's
daughter
to wife.

Khalid again signalised his victory by wedding a captive maid upon the field. "Give me thy daughter to wife," he said to Mojâa, the same who had so faithfully defended his bride in the hour of peril. "Wait," replied Mojâa; "be not so hasty; thou wilt harm thyself in the Caliph's eyes, and me likewise." "Man, give me thy daughter!" he repeated imperiously; so Mojâa gave her to him. When Abu Bekr heard of it, he wrote him a letter sprinkled with blood. "By my life! thou son of "Khalid's father, thou art a pretty fellow, living thus at "thine ease. Thou weddest a damsel, whilst the ground "beneath the nuptial couch is yet moistened with the blood "of twelve hundred!" The reproof fell lightly upon Khalid. "This is the work," he said as he read the epistle, "of that left-handed fellow," meaning Omar. The sentiment, however, was Abu Bekr's own; but the "Sword of the Lord" could not be spared.

We shall meet Khalid next in Chaldæa, by the banks of the Euphrates.

CHAPTER VI

APOSTASY AND REBELLION CRUSHED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PENINSULA

11 A.H. 632-633 A.D.

WHILE Khalid thus pursued his victorious career from the North to the Centre of Arabia, the various columns despatched by Abu Bekr were engaged with the apostate and rebellious tribes in other parts of the Peninsula. The opposition there was not less stubborn; and the success, though in many quarters slow and even at times doubtful, was in the end complete

Campaign
in East and
South of
Arabia,
11 A.H.
632-3 A. D.

Beyond Yemama, and skirting the Persian Gulf between Catif and Oman, lie the two desert provinces of Hejer and Bahrein. Mondzir, their Christian chief, had adopted Islam, and recognising the suzerainty of the Prophet had received Ala as Resident at his Court. But Mondzir died shortly after Mahomet, and the Province went into rebellion. Ala fled, but was sent back with a strong force to reclaim the apostate people. The brilliant campaign of Khalid had just then struck terror into the neighbouring country; and so, as he passed near the borders of Yemama, Ala was joined by contingents from many Chiefs anxious thus to prove their loyalty. A scion of the Hira dynasty hostile to Islam, had succeeded Mondzir, and Ala found him so well supported that, even thus strengthened, he had to entrench his army and content himself with single combats and indecisive skirmishes. At last, finding through his spies that the enemy were in a festive and drunken state, he overwhelmed them unexpectedly and took their Prince a prisoner. The discomfited host fled

Bahrein
taken by
Ala.

A.H. 11. — by ship to Darin, an island near the coast, whither they were again pursued and put utterly to the sword. The spoil was prodigious, and so was the multitude of women and children taken captive.

Miraculous lake ;
and drying
up of the
sea.

On the Prophet's death tradition ceases to indulge in the miraculous; but this expedition forms a singular exception. As the column marching from Medina reached the waterless zone of Dahna, it had nearly perished by long-protracted thirst; when in the last extremity, water suddenly shining in the horizon man and beast hurried joyfully on to slake their thirst at an extensive lake. No spring had been ever seen in that wilderness before; nor was the miraculous lake ever found again. Shortly after, while pursuing the apostate host to the isle of Darin, a second miracle parted the waves, and the Moslems after a wild invocation of the Deity, rushed on and crossed the strait as it had been a shallow beach. A pious bard has likened the passage to that of the Israélites through the Red Sea, and a monk is said to have been converted by the double miracle of waters breaking out in the wilderness, and waters drying up in the channel of the great deep.

Mothanna. While thus engaged, Ala received material help from loyal followers along the coast. Amongst those who aided in this work was Mothanna, a chief of great influence amongst the Bekr clans; following up the victory of Ala along the Persian Gulf, this warrior in his progress from Hejer northwards, reached at last the delta of the Euphrates, where he inaugurated a fresh movement that will shortly engage attention.

Oman,

The reduction of the important province of Oman followed close on that of Bahrein. Its Prince had recently tendered allegiance to Mahomet. Amru was thereupon deputed as Resident, and the tithes were, by reason of the distance, given up to the local poor. Notwithstanding this concession, Mahomet was no sooner dead than the people, led by a rebel who claimed to be a prophet, rebelled. The Prince fled to the mountains, and Amru to Medina. The task of reclaiming Oman and the adjoining province of

Mahra was committed by Abu Bekr to Hodzeifa, a convert A.H. 11. of influence in those parts. He was assisted by Ikrima, sent, as we have seen by Abu Bekr, to retrieve his reputation in this distant quarter. Arrived in Oman, they effected a junction with the loyal Prince. An engagement followed, in which the Moslems, hard pressed, were near to suffering defeat, when a strong column from the tribes recently reclaimed in Bahrein appeared on the field and turned the battle in their favour. The slaughter amongst the enemy was great, and the women placed in the rear to nerve their courage, fell a welcome prize into the believers' hands. The mart of Daba, enriched by Indian merchandise, yielded a magnificent booty, and there was at once despatched to Medina the royal Fifth of slaves and plunder. Battle of Daba.

Hodzeifa was left behind as governor of Oman. Ikrima, Mahra. having thus reached the easternmost point of Arabia, turned to the south-west; and with an army daily swelled by levies from repentant tribes, pursued his victorious course to Mahra. This province was at the moment distracted by a breach between two rival chiefs. Espousing the cause of the weaker who at once avowed the faith, Ikrima attacked the other and achieved a great victory. Among the spoil were 2000 Bactrian camels and a vast supply of arms and beasts of burden. This quarter of the Peninsula quickly subdued and restored to order, Ikrima, now in great strength, advanced as he had been instructed, to join Mohajir in the campaign against Hadhramaut and Yemen. But we must first take note of how things stood after the death of Mahomet nearer home, in the west and south of the Peninsula.

While the towns of Mecca and Tayif remained tolerably secure, the country round about was rife with violence and misrule. Hordes from the lawless tribes, ready as ever for plunder and rapine, hovered close even to the Holy City. They were attacked by the Governor, and dispersed with slaughter. Order was restored by a body of 500 men quartered within the sacred limits, and by pickets throughout the neighbourhood. But from thence The Hejaz and Tihama.

A.H. 11. — all the way to Yemen, nothing was to be seen save turmoil and alarm. Troops of bandits, remnants of the false prophet's army, ravaged Najran; and the loyal adherents of Islam were fain to fly to mountain fastnesses. The Tihama, or long strip of land skirting the shore of the Red Sea, was overrun by bands of Bedouin robbers, stopping all communication between the north and south. An army at length cleared the country of these robbers,—so effectually indeed, that the roads became again for a time unpassable, but now only from the offensive mass of carcasses strewn upon them.

Yemen
after
Aswad's
death.

Peace in Yemen was not so easily restored. The "Veiled Prophet" Aswad had been recently assassinated by conspirators in the interest of Mahomet.¹ These were Cays an Arab chief, and two others of Persian descent Feroze and Dadweih, into whose hands the government of Sanaa fell. The tidings reaching Medina just after Mahomet's death, Abu Bekr appointed Feroze to be his lieutenant. The Arab blood of Cays rebelled against serving under a Persian, and he plotted to expel the whole body of foreign immigrants. To effect this, he called in the aid of Amr ibn Madekerib, a famous poet and influential Chief who, having like others cast off the faith, ravaged the country with remnants of the false prophet's army. Dadweih was treacherously slain by this Amr at a feast, but Feroze escaped, and after much hardship secured his retreat with a friendly tribe. For a time Cays carried all before him. The family of Feroze was taken captive, and the Persian settlers, pursued in every direction, fled to the mountains, or took ship from Aden. Feroze appealed to Medina; but it was long before the Caliph had any men to send. So Feroze cast about for himself and at length, by the aid of loyal tribes, put the troops of Cays to flight, regained possession of his family and reoccupied Sanaa.

Cays and
Amr
defeated.

But more effectual help was now approaching. On one side was Mohajir. Appointed by the Prophet his lieutenant in Hadhramaut, he had been detained by sickness at Medina, perhaps also by inability earlier to obtain

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 464.

a following. Last of the Commanders to take the field, A.H. 11. it was probably ten or twelve months after the Prophet's death before he marched south, and, joined on the way by loyal tribes, approached the disturbed country at the head of a substantial force. On the other hand, Ikrima, with an ever-growing army, advanced from the east. Hastening to meet Mohajir he, for the present, left Hadhramaut aside and passed rapidly on towards Aden. Alarmed at the gathering storm, Cays and Amr joined their forces to oppose Mohajir. But soon quarrelling, they parted, sending each other, after Arab wont, lampoons in bitter verse. Opposition being now vain, Amr sought by an unworthy stratagem to gain his safety. Making a night attack on Cays, he carried him prisoner to Mohajir; but he had forgotten a safe-conduct for himself. Mohajir, therefore, seized both, and sent them in chains to Medina. The Caliph was at first minded to put Amr to death because of the murder of Dadweih; but he denied the crime, and there was no evidence to prove it. "Art thou not ashamed," said Abu Bekr to him, "that following the rebel cause, thou art ever either a fugitive or in bonds? Hadst thou been a defender of the Faith instead, then had the Lord raised thee above thy fellows." "So assuredly it is," replied the humbled chief; "I will embrace the faith, and never again desert it." The Caliph forgave them; and his clemency was not abused, for we find both these gallant and unscrupulous chiefs soon after fighting loyally in the Persian war. After this, Yemen was speedily reduced to order. And Mohajir was at liberty to pursue his march to Hadhramaut.

Yemen
restored.
End of
11 A.H.
Spring,
633 A.D.

The government of the great southern province of Hadhramaut was held with difficulty during the protracted absence of Mohajir by one Ziad, who aroused the hatred of its occupants the Beni Kinda, by exacting from them the tithe; but with the support of some still loyal clans he was able to hold his place. In one of his raids Ziad having carried off the families of a vanquished tribe, Ashath ibn Cays chief of the Beni Kinda, was moved by their cries; and, having gathered a strong force, fell upon Ziad and

Hadhra-
maut.
Ashath ibn
Cays

A.H. 11. — rescued the captives. It is the same Ashath who, when he tendered homage to Mahomet, betrothed to himself the sister of Abu Bekr.¹ Now compromised, he went into active rebellion, and roused the whole country against Ziad who, surrounded by the enemy, despatched an urgent summons for Mohajir to hasten to his deliverance.

subdued by
Mohajir
and
Ikrima.

By this time Mohajir and Ikrima, marching respectively from Sanaa and Aden, had effected a junction at Mareb, and were crossing the sandy desert which lay between them and Hadhramaut. Receiving the message, Mohajir set off in haste with a flying squadron and, joined by Ziad, fell upon Ashath and discomfited him with great slaughter. The routed enemy fled for refuge to a stronghold, which Mohajir immediately invested. Ikrima soon came up with the main body, and there were now troops enough both to besiege the city and ravage the country around. Stung at witnessing the ruin of their kindred, and preferring death to dishonour, the garrison sallied forth and fought the Moslems in the plain. After a desperate struggle, in which the approaches were filled with bodies of the dead, they were driven back. Meanwhile, Abu Bekr, apprised of their obstinate resistance, sent orders to make an example of the rebels and give no quarter. The wretched garrison, with the enemy daily increasing and no prospect of relief, were now bereft of hope. Seeing the position desperate, the wily Ashath made his way to Ikrima, and treacherously agreed to deliver up the fortress if nine lives were guaranteed. The Moslems entered, slew the fighting men, and took the women captive. When Ashath presented the list of nine to be spared,—“Thy name is not here!” cried Mohajir, exultingly; for the craven traitor had forgotten in the excitement of the moment, to enter his own name;—“The Lord be praised, who hath condemned thee out of thine own mouth.” So, having cast him into chains, he was about to order his execution when Ikrima interposed and induced him, much against his will, to refer the cause to

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 448.

Abu Bekr. The crowd of captive women, mourning the massacre of their sons and husbands, loaded the recreant as he passed by with bitter imprecation. Arrived at Medina, the Caliph abused him as a pusillanimous wretch who had neither the power to lead, nor yet the courage to defend, his people; and threatened him with death. But at last, moved by his appeal to the terms agreed upon by Ikrima, and by protestation that he would thenceforth fight bravely for the faith, Abu Bekr not only forgave him but allowed him to fulfil the marriage contract with his sister. Ashath remained for a while in idleness at Medina, and the Caliph would say that one of the few things he repented of, was having weakly spared the rebel's life. But afterwards Ashath went forth to the wars, and as we shall see, effectually redeemed his name.

A.H. 11.

Ashath
spared by
Abu Bekr.

Thus, in this the last province of the Peninsula, rebellion was finally crushed and the reign of Islam completely re-established. Mohajir elected to remain in Yemen, where he shared the government with Feroze. Ziad continued to administer Hadhramaut.

Peace
universally
restored.

A curious story is told of a lady whom Ikrima married at Aden, and carried with him in his camp. She had been betrothed to Mahomet, but the marriage had not been completed. The soldiers murmured, and questioned the propriety of Ikrima's marriage. Mohajir referred the matter to Abu Bekr, who decided that there was nothing wrong in the proceeding, as Mahomet had never fulfilled his contract with the damsel.¹

Lady
who had
been be-
trothed to
Mahomet.

I should not here omit to mention the fate of two song-stresses in Yemen, who were accused, one of satirising the Prophet, the other of ridiculing the Moslems, in their songs. Mohajir had the hands of both cut off, and also (to stay their singing for the future) their front teeth pulled out. The Caliph, on hearing of it, approved the punishment of the first; for, said he: "Crime against the Prophet is not as crime against a common man; and, indeed, had the case been first referred to me, I should, as a warning to

Two song-
stresses
mutilated.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 377. She was brought to the Prophet for her beauty, who finding some blemish, sent her home.

A.H. 11. — others, have directed her execution." But he disapproved the mutilation of the other.

A free-
booter
burned to
death.

As a rule Abu Bekr was mild in his judgments, and even generous to a fallen and submissive foe. But there were, as we have seen, exceptions. On one occasion the treachery of a rebel chief irritated him to an act of barbarous cruelty. Fujaa a leader of some note, under pretence of fighting against the insurgents in his neighbourhood, obtained from the Caliph arms and accoutrements for his band. Thus equipped, he abused the trust, and becoming a free-booter, attacked and plundered alike Moslem and apostate. Abu Bekr thereupon wrote letters to a loyal chief in that quarter to go against the brigand. Hard pressed, Fujaa challenged his adversary to a parley, and asserted that he held a commission as good as his. "If thou speakest true," answered the other, "lay aside thy weapons and accompany me to Abu Bekr." He did so, but no sooner did he appear at Medina, than the Caliph, enraged at his treachery, cried aloud: "Go forth with this traitor to the burial-ground, and there burn him with fire." So, hard by the graveyard of the City, they gathered wood and heaping it together at the place of prayer, kindled the pile and cast Fujaa on it. If the charges were well founded, which we have no ground for doubting, Fujaa deserved the fate of a bandit; but to cast him alive into the flames was a savage act, for which Abu Bekr was sorry afterwards, and used to say,—“It is one of the three things which I would I had not done.”

CHAPTER VII

REVIEW. SULLENNESS OF RECLAIMED TRIBES. CAMPAIGNS IN SYRIA AND CHALDÆA. DESPATCH OF TROOPS REKINDLES ENTHUSIASM. DOMESTIC EVENTS

11 A.H. 632 A.D.

THUS, within a year of the death of the Prophet, the sway of Islam, which for a time had clean gone, was re-established throughout the Peninsula. The circle of victory was now complete. Begun, with the avenging expedition of Osâma in the north, it was followed up by Khalid's brilliant achievements in the east and centre of Arabia. But while in the "Garden of Death" the flower of the faithful were deciding the fate of Islam then trembling in the balance, operations for a season languished elsewhere. Eventually, the campaign was carried vigorously over the other provinces, though in some quarters with limited resource and varying fortune; till, in the end, Ikrima sweeping down the eastern coast, and joined by Mohajir in the south, stamped out as we have seen the last embers of apostasy.

Review.
Reign of
Islam re-
established
in Arabia.

The rebellion was suppressed, but the Arab tribes remained sullen and averse. The Bedouin, wont to wander wild and free over his pathless deserts, chafed at the demand of tithe, and spurned obedience to Medina. Simply force and fear as yet attached him to the Caliph. The question occurs, what would have been the fortune of Islam had no great impulse arisen from without? The prospect was not encouraging. Convictions so shallow, and aspirations so low, as those of the Bedouin would soon have disappeared; force and fear would not long

The Arabs
sullen, till
roused by
war-cry
from
without.

A.H. 11. have availed to hold together such disintegrated materials as go to form the Arab nation. The South was jealous of the North; Bedouins of the desert scorned the settled population; each tribe had cause of rivalry with its neighbour, and feuds were ever arising out of the law of blood. Even in Medina, cradle of the faith, the Beni Aus were impatient of the Beni Khazraj and both were jealous of the Refugees. The only authority recognised by a Bedouin is that of his tribal Chief, and even that sits lightly. To him freedom is life; and dependence on a Central power most hateful. If nothing external had supervened, he would soon have shaken off the yoke of Islam, and Arabia would have returned to its primeval state. But fortunately for Islam, a new idea electrified the nation. No sooner was apostasy put down than, first in Chaldæa and then in Syria, collision with wild border tribes kindled the fire of foreign war; and forthwith the whole Arabian people, both Town and Bedouin, were riveted to Islam by a common bond—the love of rapine and the lust of spoil.

Islam intended for Arabia;

That the heritage of Islam is the world, was an after-thought. The idea, spite of much proleptic tradition, had been conceived but dimly, if at all, by Mahomet himself. His world was Arabia, and for it the new Dispensation was ordained. The Revelation ran in "simple Arabic" for the teaching of its people.¹ From first to last the summons was to Arabs and to them alone. It is true that some years before his death, Mahomet sent embassies to the Kings and Princes around him, calling on them to confess the faith of Islam; but the step was not in any way followed up. Nor was it otherwise with the command to fight against Jews, Christians and Idolaters; that command as announced to the Arab tribes assembled at the Farewell pilgrimage, had reference to Arabia alone, and had no immediate bearing on warfare beyond its bounds. The Prophet's dying legacy was to the same effect:—"See," said he, "that there be but this one Faith throughout Arabia." The seed of a universal creed had indeed been sown; but that it ever germinated was due to circumstance rather than

¹ CORAN XLII. v. 6; *et passim*.

design. Even Omar after splendid conquest everywhere, A.H. 11. dreaded lest his armies should proceed too far, and be cut off from succour. Therefore he set barriers (as we shall see) to the ambition of his arms beyond which they should not pass.

Still, though nowhere in the Coran distinctly com-^{spread at}manded, universal empire was altogether in accord with the ^{the call to}spirit of the Faith. "When a people leaveth off to fight in the ways of the Lord," said Abu Bekr in his inaugural address (and so saying struck the keynote of militant Islam) "the Lord casteth off that people." Thus, when the Rubicon once was crossed, the horizon enlarged in ever-widening circles till it embraced the World. It was the scent of war that now turned the sullen temper of the Arab tribes into eager loyalty: for thus the brigand spirit of the Bedouin was brought into unison with the new-born fire of Islam. The call to battle reverberated throughout the land, and was answered eagerly. The exodus began with the tribes in the north, those first reclaimed from their apostasy. Later, in the second year of the Caliphate, the war-cry spread to the south, and grew in magnitude year by year. At first the Caliph forbade that help should be received from any that had backslidden, the privilege being reserved for such only as had remained steadfast in the faith. But, step by step, as new spheres opened out, and appeal ran from shore to shore for fresh levies to fill the "Martyr" gaps, the ban was put aside and all were bidden. Warrior ^{Teeming} after warrior, column after column, whole tribes in endless ^{hosts go} succession with their women and children, issued forth to fight. And ever, at the marvellous tale, of cities conquered; of rapine rich beyond compute; of maidens parted on the very field of battle "to every man a damsel or two"; and at the sight of the Royal Fifth set forth in splendour as it reached Medina;—fresh tribes arose and went. Onward and still onward, like swarms from the hive, or flights of locusts darkening the land, tribe after tribe issued forth and hastening northward, spread in great masses to the East and to the West.

It must not, however, be overlooked that though

A.H. 11. apostasy was thus condoned, and in the blaze of victory almost lost sight of, a certain discredit still clung to the repentant backslider. His guilt was not like that of other men who had sinned before conversion. The apostate, once enlightened, had cast by his fall a deliberate slur upon Islam. Therefore no leader who had joined the great Apostasy was ever promoted to a chief command. He might fight, and welcome, in the ranks; was allowed even to head small parties of fifty or a hundred; but to the last, high post of honour was denied.

Discredit still attaching to apostasy.

Arabs the nobility of the Moslem world.

The Arabs, thus emerging from their desert-home, became the aristocracy of Islam. Conquered nations, even of much higher civilisation, when they embraced the faith fell into an altogether lower caste. Arabians were the dominant class, and they alone wheresoever they might go. It was only as "Clients," or dependants, that the people of other lands might share their privileges,—crumbs, as it were, from off the master's table. Yet great numbers of the Arabs themselves were at this early period slaves, captured during the Apostasy or in previous intertribal war, and held in bondage by their fellow-countrymen. Omar saw the inconsistency. It was not fit that any of the noble race should remain in slavery. Therefore, when succeeding to the Caliphate, he decreed their freedom. "The Lord," he said, "hath given to us of Arab blood the victory and great conquests from without. It is not meet that any "one of us, taken captive in the days of ignorance or in the "recent wars, should be holden in captivity." Slaves of Arab descent were therefore all allowed their liberty on payment of a slender ransom, excepting only bondmaids who having borne children to their owners already held as such, a place of privilege. Men that had lost their wives or children, now set out in search, if haply they might find and reclaim them. Strange tales are told of these disconsolate journeys. But some of the women captive at Medina preferred remaining with their masters.

Slaves of Arab blood set free.

This ascendancy, social, military and political, the Arab nation maintained for upwards of two centuries. Then they were gradually supplanted (as we shall see) through-

out the East by Turks and Persians. Such as had settled A.H. 11. in cities mingled with the people; the rest returned to their desert wilds, and with them departed the glory of the Caliphate. This, however, was not the case in the West; and so in Spain and Africa the prestige of Arab blood survived.

The domestic history of Medina is at this early period Medina. barren of incident. As Judge in civil causes, the Caliph nominated Omar; but warlike operations, first in the Peninsula and then in foreign lands, so occupied men's minds, that for the time the office was a sinecure.

The Presidency at the Mecca Pilgrimage is carefully Pilgrim-
age. recorded yearly by the annalists of Islam. The Caliph was now too much engrossed with the commotion throughout Arabia, to proceed thither himself, and so the Governor of the Holy city presided in his stead.

Thus ended the first year of the Caliphate.

CHAPTER VIII

CAMPAIGN IN CHALDÆA

12 A.H. 633 A.D.

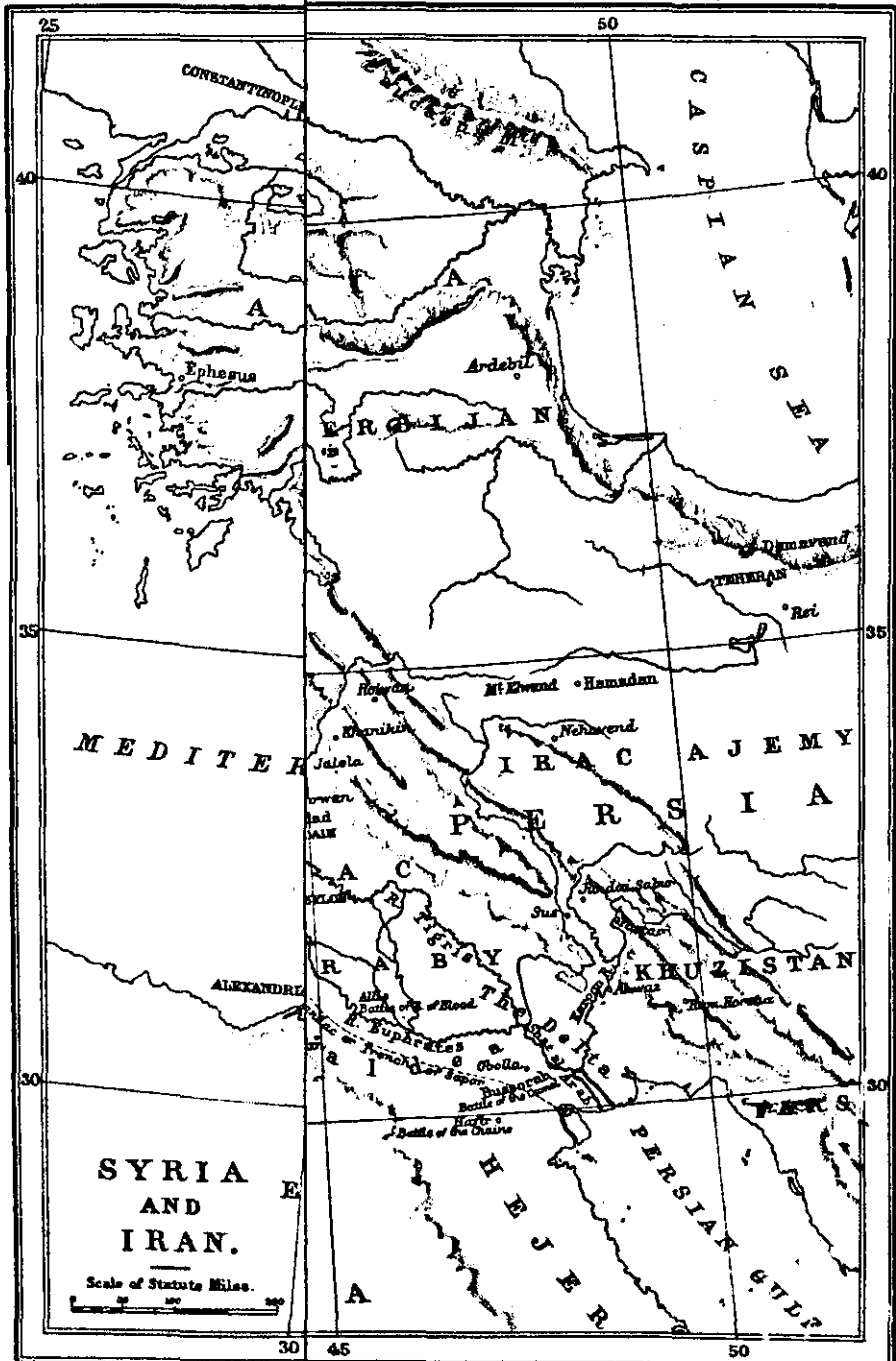
Collision
with
border
tribes led
to conflict
with Greek
and
Persian
empires.

CHALDÆA and southern Syria belong properly to Arabia. The tribes inhabiting this region, partly heathen but chiefly (at least in name) Christian, formed an integral part of the Arab race and as such fell within the immediate scope of the new Dispensation. When, however, these came into collision with the Moslem columns on the frontier, they were supported by their respective Sovereigns,—the western by the Kaiser, and the eastern by the Chosroes. Thus the struggle widened, and Islam was brought presently face to face in mortal conflict with the two great Powers of the East and of the West.

History
dependent
on purely
Arabian
sources.

It is important, especially in the early part of this history, for the student to bear in mind that Arabian sources are all he has to guide him here. Byzantine annals utterly disappear in the impending cataclysm; and it is many long years before any help whatever is available from western chronicles. The Persian empire again was altogether swallowed up in the invasion of the Arabs, and consequently it is from the Conquerors alone that we learn the events about to be told regarding it. Thus, both for East and West, we are entirely dependent on Arabian tradition, which itself at the first is but brief and fragmentary; and moreover, being entirely one-sided, we are left as best we can to draw a narrative just and impartial to all concerned.

In neither of the great Powers which Abu Bekr was about to try conclusions with, had the nerve and virtue of



earlier days survived. Luxury, corruption and oppression, religious strife and military disaster, had impaired their vigour and undermined their strength. Barbarous hordes overrunning the Western Empire, had wrested the farther provinces from Byzantine rule. Between the Kaiser and the Chosroes again, war had long prevailed. Syria and Mesopotamia, scenes of the coming warfare, being the prize, now of one, now of the other. By the last turn of fortune, Heraclius, marching from the Black Sea, had routed the Persians on the field of Nineveh, and advanced triumphantly to the very gates of the enemy's capital. Siroes, after putting to death his father and eighteen brothers, enjoyed but a few months the fruits of his parricidal crime; and (as we are told by Gibbon) "in the space of four years, the royal title was assumed by nine candidates, who disputed, with the sword or dagger, the fragments of an exhausted monarchy." Such was the condition of Persia, its Court imbecile and anarchy rampant, at the time when Abu Bekr was engaged in his struggle with the apostate tribes. Nevertheless, the Arabian armies met with a fiercer and more protracted opposition on the Persian than on the Syrian side. And the reason is that Islam aimed its blow at the very heart of Persia. Constantinople might remain, with Syria gone, ignobly safe. But if the Arabs gained Irac, Ctesiphon (Medain) close at hand, must fall, and Persia with it. To this quarter attention will be now directed.

A.H. 12.
Position of
Greek and
Persian
empires.

6 A.H.
627 A.D.

Among the chiefs who helped to reclaim Bahrein, Mothanna has been already named. Advancing along the Persian Gulf, he reduced Catif, and carried his victorious arms into the delta of the Euphrates. "Who is this Mothanna?" asked Abu Bekr, as tidings of success kept reaching Medina, "and to what clan does he belong?" Learning that he was of the great Bekr tribe which peopled that vicinity, he commanded him to "march forward fighting in the ways of the Lord." The service was such as Bedouins love; and his column was soon swelled to 8000 men. But opposition gathered in front. The Christian and heathen tribes were roused; and Abu

Mothanna
attacks
Chaldæa.

A.H. 12. Bekr, anticipating the impending struggle, resolved that "the Sword of the Lord" should be again unsheathed, and so Khalid was deputed to subdue Chaldæa.

Troops
sent
to Irac.
i. 12 A.H.
March
633 A.D.

By the beginning of the twelfth year of the Hegira rebellion had been put down throughout Arabia, excepting the South, which was also in fair way of pacification. It became now Abu Bekr's policy to turn his restless Arab columns to similar work elsewhere. He despatched two armies to the North. One, under command of Khalid joined by Mothanna, was to march on Obolla, an ancient city near the mouth of the Euphrates, and from thence, driving the enemy up the western bank, to work its way towards Hira the capital of Chaldæa. Iyadh at the head of the other, was directed to Duma (midway between the head of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf) which had cast off its allegiance, and thence to pass also on to Hira. Whichever first reached that city was to be in command of the country.¹

Khalid
joins
Mothanna
in Irac.

Iyadh hampered by his enemy, was long detained in the neighbourhood of Duma. Khalid meeting no such obstacle, was joined on his march from Yemama to Irac by large bodies of Bedouins. These were of the greater service, as his numbers had been thinned, not only by the carnage at Yemama, but also by the free permission given the army, after that arduous campaign, to proceed on furlough to their homes. Nevertheless, the expedition was so popular that when, after a flying visit to the Caliph, Khalid rejoined his camp by the Euphrates, he found himself at the head of 10,000 men; and this besides the 8000 of Mothanna, who hastened loyally to place himself under the great Leader's command.

Mesopota-
mia and
the Syrian
desert.

The country before them was in some of its features familiar to the invading army, in others new and strange. From the head of the Persian Gulf across to the Dead Sea stretches a stony desert, trackless and bereft of water. Advancing north, Nature relaxes; the plain, still a wilder-

¹ Tradition here probably anticipates the march of events. It is doubtful whether the Caliph had the city of Hira yet in view; for the aims of Khalid and his Master widened as victory led him onwards.

ness, is in season clothed with verdure, bright with flowers, instinct with the song of birds and hum of winged life. Such is the pasture-land which for hundreds of miles lies between Damascus and the Tigris. Still farther north, the desert gradually disappears, and about the latitude of Mosul blends with the hills and vales of Asia Minor. Athwart the country from Aleppo to Babylon runs the Euphrates, while the far east is bounded by the Tigris flowing under the mountain range that separates Irac Araby¹ from Persia. Between the two rivers lies Mesopotamia, full of patriarchal memories. Over this great plain there roamed (as still there roam) Bedouin tribes with flocks and herds. The greater part had long professed the Christian religion. Those on the Syrian side, as the Ghassan of Bostra, owed allegiance to the Roman Empire; those on the east were dependent upon Persia. But Nomad life tends to fickle loyalty and laxity of faith; and so, not infrequently, these northern Arabs were now led by affinity with their brethren of Arabia, as well as by the lust of plunder, to desert their ancient allies and ancestral faith, and cast in their lot with the invading columns.

The lower Euphrates, Irac Araby, is in striking contrast with the region just described. The two great rivers, while yet far from the sea approach each other; but, instead of joining, still keep apart and, for some two hundred and fifty miles running parallel, inclose the memorable plain of Dura. The country is covered with long hillocks and mounds marking the ancient channels of irrigation, and strewed with fragments of brick and pottery, remnants of a dim antiquity. The face of the land was not then, as now, a barren waste, but richly cultivated and watered by canals. On the Tigris, a little below where the two rivers first approach each other, was Medain, "the double city" (so called from Seleucia on the western bank and Ctesiphon on the eastern) then the capital of Persia. Fifty miles farther south, a mass of shapeless mounds, looking down upon the Euphrates from its eastern shore, marks the site of

Chaldea
and Delta
of the
Euphrates.

¹ Irac of the Arabs, as distinguished from *Irac Ajemy*, i.e. "foreign" or Persian Irac.

A.H. 12. Babylon, and from their summit may be descried the Birs Nimrud, or "Tower of Babel," rearing its weird head on the horizon of the verdant plain. Thirty miles yet farther south lay Hira, capital of the surrounding Arab tribes. It stood (like its successor Kufa) on a branch which issues from the Euphrates by a channel in the live rock, cut by the hand of man but of unknown antiquity. Sweeping along the west, this rival stream feeds many marshes, especially the 'great lake called the "Sea of Najaf"; and, after a wide circuit, rejoins the Euphrates above its junction with the Tigris. There was in olden times another branch called the "Trench of Sapor" which, intended as a bar to Bedouin incursions, and taking a yet wider range to the west, returned into the parent river near Obolla. This branch, now dry, originally carried a stream which like the other helped materially to widen the green belt pressed in upon by the western sandy desert. The lower Delta again, subject to tidal flow, alluvial, low and watered with ease, is covered with a sea of corn; and from its beauty has been called the "Garden of the world." Besides the familiar palm, the country abounds with the fig, mulberry and pomegranate. But the climate is close and oppressive; the fens and marshes, always liable to inundation, were aggravated by neglect of dams and sluices in those days of anarchy; and so the invading force, used to nothing but the sandy steppes of the Peninsula, gazed wonderingly at the luxuriant growth of reeds and rushes, and at the buffaloes driven by pestiferous insects to hide their unwieldy bodies beneath the water or splash lazily along the shallow waste of endless lagoons. Chaldæa from the estuary upwards was cultivated, as now, by *Fellaheen* or Arab peasantry, and these were lorded over by *Dihcans*, or district officers of the Persian Court.

Khalid
summons
Hormuz.

Such, then, was the magnificent province lying between the Desert and mountain range of Persia,—the cradle of civilisation and the arts,—which now attracted the Moslem arms. The first to oppose them was Hormuz, Satrap of the Delta, a tyrant hated by his Arab subjects. To him, as master of the tribes gathering in front, Khalid addressed

a letter in the haughty type of Moslem summons: "*Accept the Faith and thou art safe; else pay tribute, thou and thy people; which if thou refusest, thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already on thee, loving death even as thou lovest life.*" Then placing Mothanna in command of the advanced column, and Adi son of Hatim (the famous chieftain of the Beni Tay) over the second, Khalid himself bringing up the rear, advanced on Hafir the frontier station of the Persian Empire. A.H. 12.

Startled by the strange summons, Hormuz having sent word to Chosroes the King, himself set out to meet the invader with an army whose wings were commanded by Princes of the royal blood. He marched in haste, thinking to have an easy victory over untrained desert tribes; and being first to reach the water bed of Hafir, took possession of its springs. Khalid coming up, bade his force alight and at once unload their burdens. "Then," said he, "let us fight for the water forthwith; by my life! the springs shall be for the braver of the two." Thereupon Hormuz challenged Khalid to single combat and, though he treacherously posted an ambushade, was in the encounter slain. The Moslems then rushed forward and with great slaughter put the enemy to flight, pursuing them to the banks of the Euphrates. The Arabs had now a foretaste of the spoils of Persia. The share of each horseman was a thousand pieces, besides great store of arms. The jewelled tiara of Hormuz, symbol of his rank, was sent to the Caliph with the royal Fifth. An elephant taken in the field and led as part of the prize to Medina, was paraded about the town much to the wonder of the admiring citizens, but eventually sent back as unsuitable to the place. The action was called "the Battle of the Chains," from a portion of the Persian soldiers being bound together (as tradition contemptuously says) to prevent their giving way. Battle of Chains. Hormuz slain.

The defeated army fled towards the Capital, and Mothanna with his horse hastened after them. Crossing the Euphrates, he came upon a fortress called "The Lady's Castle," held by a Persian Princess. Leaving his "The Lady's Castle."

A.H. 12. — brother to besiege it, he advanced to a second fort defended by her husband. This he took by storm, and put the garrison to the sword; which, when the lady heard of, she embraced Islam and, forgetting her Persian lord, gave her hand to Mothanna's brother.

Persians
again de-
feated.

The ardour of Mothanna was near to causing a disaster. When the message of Hormuz reached Medain, the King despatched another Prince with troops to reinforce him. Rallying the defeated army, this force met Mothanna who had been stopped by the Great canal (a branch of the Tigris which runs athwart the Peninsula), and placed him with his small flying column in great peril. Khalid, apprised of the check, hastened to relieve his lieutenant, and just in time. The field was fiercely contested. Again the enemy fled; a prodigious number were either slain or drowned; the remainder escaped in boats. The deep canal stopped further pursuit, but the spoil of the camp was very great. Khalid scoured the country, killing all the men fit for war and taking their women captive. But the Fellaheen or unwarlike peasants, he left unharmed.

Victory of
Walaja,
ii. 12 A.H.
April
633 A.D.

The Court was now thoroughly aroused. Arab invaders, it was said, would best be matched by Arabs who knew their tactics; and so the King raised a great levy of the Bekr and other loyal clans, under a famous warrior of their own. He also summoned Bahman a veteran general, from the east, to command the imperial troops. The combined army in imposing force, advanced to Walaja, near the junction of the two rivers. Leaving a detachment to guard his conquests in the Delta, Khalid marched to meet the enemy. The battle, long and obstinate, was won by the tactics of the Moslem leader, who surprised the exhausted enemy by ambuscades placed in their rear. The discomfiture was complete. The Persians fled; and with them their Bedouin allies, but not until many had been taken prisoners. Flushed with success as he gazed at the scene around, Khalid thus addressed his followers: — "Ye see the riches of the land. Its paths drop fatness, so that corn and oil abound even as do the stones in our Arabian wastes. If but as a provision for this present

Khalid's
oration.

“life,—let alone the merit of fighting in the ways of the Lord,—it were well worth our while to do battle for these fair fields and banish care and penury for ever.”¹ Khalid here struck a chord delightful to the Bedouin heart. Now, also, the inducements with respect to the other sex began to tell. Persian ladies, both maids and matrons, as “captives of their right hand” were forthwith, without stint of number, and by permission which they held divine, lawful to the conqueror’s embrace; and, in the enjoyment of this privilege, they were nothing loth to execute upon the heathen “the judgment written.” Thus religious fanaticism grew along with martial ardour, both riveted by motives native to the Arab—fight and foray, spoil of war, and captive charms.

The cup, however, had but just touched their lips, and many a chance might yet dash it from them. The great family of the Beni Bekr was divided in the struggle, part holding with Khalid and part with Persia. A bitter feeling was aroused between the Bedouins of Mesopotamia and the Invaders, aggravated by defeat and by the treatment of those taken captive. Smarting under injury, the Christian tribes roused their Nomad brethren on both banks of the Euphrates, and urged the Court of Persia to revenge. Just then, Ardshir the King fell sick, and Bahman was detained at Court; but he sent an army across the Euphrates to join the loyal Bedouins, who from every side flocked to Allis, half-way between Hira and Obolla. News of this great rising forced Khalid to fall back hastily, and recross the Euphrates. Then leaving a strong detachment at Hafir to secure his rear, he boldly advanced to meet the enemy. The Arab tribes first rushed to the attack, and Khalid slew their leader. Then the Persians with a vast front came up, and the Moslems were hard pressed as they never had been before. The battle was fiercely contested, and the issue at one time was so doubtful, that Khalid vowed to the Lord that in event of victory the blood of his foes should flow as

A.H. 12.

Battle of
Allis,
iii. 12 A.H.
May
633 A.D.

¹ Khalid’s speech is quoted by Al Kindy, the Christian Apologist, S.P.C.K., 1887, p. 85.

A.H. 12. in a crimson stream. At last the Persians, unable to withstand the impetuous onset, broke and fled. To fulfil his savage oath, Khalid proclaimed that no fugitive should be slain, but all brought alive into the camp. For two days the country was scoured by the Moslem horse, and a great multitude of prisoners gathered. Then the butchery commenced in the dry bed of a canal, but the earth drank up the blood. Company after company was beheaded, and still the gory flux remained. At last, by advice of an Arab chief, Khalid had a floodgate opened, and the blood-red tide redeemed his vow. There were flour-mills upon the spot, and for three days corn for the army was ground by the reddened flood. We may hope that tradition has magnified the details of this great barbarity; but its memory lived in the name of the "River of Blood" by which thereafter the ill-omened stream was called.

The
"River of
Blood."

A Persian
supper on
the field.

The battle over, a sumptuous repast was found ready spread in the enemy's camp to which the Persians, when surprised by Khalid, were about to sit down;—a novel experience for the simple Arabs who handled the white fritters with childish delight, and devoured with avidity rich pancakes and other Eastern delicacies. Khalid ate his supper leaning on the body of a stalwart hero, "the equal of a thousand warriors," whom in single combat he had but just cut down. Tidings of the victory, with choice portion of the spoil, a welcome earnest of the royal Fifth to follow, were at once despatched to Abu Bekr. The Messenger, himself a brave warrior, described the heat and progress of the battle, the feats and prowess of its heroes, the multitude of captives and the riches of the spoil. The Caliph, overjoyed at his glowing tale, bestowed upon the envoy a beautiful damsel from amongst the captive maidens he had carried with him.

Abu Bekr's
delight.

The prin-
cipality of
Hira.

For the moment the spirit of the Persians was broken; but their Bedouin allies proved so troublesome to Khalid, and occupied a position from which they could so materially annoy his rear and communications with Medina, that he resolved on reducing the whole tract west of

the Euphrates occupied by these tribes, together with Hira, its capital. The Lakhmite dynasty had long ceased to rule over this city, which now for many years had been governed by a Persian Satrap. Partly from its interests being akin to those of the Christian tribes of Mesopotamia, partly from its being a dependency of Persia, the influence of Hira had hitherto been little felt in Arabia proper. But recent events had shown that even the Beni Bekr might combine with the border capital to resist the invader; and to prevent the recurrence of such a danger, Khalid now directed his steps to Hira. A.H. 12.

With this view he advanced rapidly up the western channel of the Euphrates, and surprised Amghisia, a town the rival of Hira in size and wealth. The inhabitants fled, and the booty was so rich that each horseman's share reached 1500 pieces. When the Fifth reached Medina, Abu Bekr was overwhelmed at the sight; "Oh ye Coreish," he exclaimed in ecstasy, "verily your lion, the lion of Islam, hath leapt upon the lion of Persia, and spoiled him of his prey. Surely the womb is exhausted. Woman shall no more bear a second Khalid!" Amghisia
sacked.

Finding boats at Amghisia, Khalid embarked his infantry and baggage, and was tracking up the stream to Hira when, the Satrap having opened some irrigating escapes above, the flotilla grounded suddenly. Apprised of the cause, Khalid hastened with a flying squadron to the canal-head, closed the sluices and enabled the boats again to ascend. Then the army, having disembarked and taken possession of the beautiful palaces of the Princes of Hira,¹ encamped before the city walls. The Satrap fled across the river; but the city, defended as it was by four citadels, refused to surrender. The ramparts were manned, and the besiegers kept at bay by the discharge of missiles. A Monastery and cloisters lay without; and at length the Monks and Clergy, exposed to the fury of the besiegers, induced the citizens to capitulate on easy terms embodied in a treaty. Then Hira
besieged
and capi-
tulates.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, 1861, vol. i. p. clxxi.

A.H. 12. they brought gifts, which Khalid accepted, and despatched them to Medina. Abu Bekr ratified the treaty and accepted the presents, but desired that their value should be deducted from the tribute.

Treaty
with Hira.

The men of Hira bound themselves to pay a yearly tribute, for which all classes, saving religious mendicants, were assessed. The Moslems, on their part, engaged to protect the city from attack. The treaty, though shortly set aside by the rising which swept over the land, is interesting as the first concluded with a principality lying without the Peninsula. One strange condition may be mentioned. The beauty of Keramat had been long proverbial, and a soldier laid claim to her on the ground that Mahomet, hearing him extol her charms, had promised (so the story runs) that when Hira was captured she should be his bride. Khalid insisted that the prophetic promise should be now fulfilled. The thing was grievous to the lady's household, but she took it lightly. "Care not for it," she said, "the fool "saw me in my youth, and hath forgotten that youth "remaineth not for ever." He soon found out that it was even so, and was glad to name a ransom, which having paid she returned to her people.

Hira
remains
Christian,
12 A.H.
633 A.D.

The occupation of Hira was the first definite step in the outward movement of Islam. Here Khalid fixed his headquarters and remained a year. It was, in fact, the earliest Moslem capital beyond the limits of Arabia. The administration was left with the heads of the city, who were at the least neutral. Khalid, indeed, expected that being of Arab descent, and themselves long ruled by a native dynasty, the inhabitants would actively have joined his cause. Adi, grandson of the poet of that name, was one of the deputation which concluded the peace. "Tell me," said Khalid, rallying him, "whether ye be of Arab or of Persian "blood?" "Judge by our speech; doth that betray "ignoble birth?" "True," answered Khalid; "then why "do ye not join our faith, and cast in your lot with "us?" "Nay," answered the Christian, "that we shall

“never do; the faith of our fathers we shall not abjure, A.H. 12.
 “but shall pay tribute unto thee.” “Beshrew the fools!”
 cried Khalid; “unbelief is as a trackless desert; and
 “the wanderer in it the silliest of mankind. Here
 “are two guides, an Arab and a stranger; and of the
 “two they choose the stranger!” The flux and reflux
 of Roman invasion had, no doubt, loosened their faith
 in Persia; but the Court of Medain was near at hand
 and, though in the last stage of senility, sufficiently strong
 to retain its hold upon a small dependency like Hira.
 The permanence of Arab conquest, too, was yet uncertain;
 the love of their ancestral faith was still predominant;
 and so the city chose to remain tributary. Several
 centuries later we find the inhabitants of the neighbour-
 hood in considerable numbers still attached to the Chris-
 tian faith.¹

Public prayer, outward symbol of the dominant faith, Prayer,
and Ser-
vice of
Victory.
 was now established; and the Citizens might hear the
 cry of the Muedzzin, as five times a day beginning
 with the earliest dawn, it resounded from the adjacent
 camp. Khalid celebrated his success in a special
Service of Victory. The occasion was memorable. Clad
 in a flowing robe girt loosely about the neck, he turned,
 when prayers were ended, to the assembly and thus

¹ The feeling of this Christian principality in losing first their native
 rulers, and then being swallowed up in the Moslem invasion, is well expressed
 in these verses sung by one of their poets. Mundzir and Noman were Princes
 of the Lakhmite dynasty:—

“Now that the Princes of the house of Mundzir are gone, shall I ever
 again behold the royal herd of camels returning at eve from the pastures
 of Khawarnac and Sedir?

Now that the horsemen of Noman are passed away, shall I ever again feed
 the young she-camel on the pastures between Mecca and Hafir?

Like a flock of goats on a stormy day, we are scattered by the Beni Maad
 (the invading Moslems), even as pieces of camels slaughtered for the feast.
 Heretofore our homes were sacred, and we like the teats of a well-filled
 udder,

Yielding tribute at the appointed times to the Chosroes, and imposts in cattle
 and gold.

Alas! even so is the changeful wheel of the well of fortune. Now the day
 ascends with joy and gladness, and now it sinks into darkness and
 distress.”

A.H. 12. extolled their bravery: "In the field of Muta, when
 — "fighting with the Greeks, nine swords were broken in my
 "hand. But I met not any there to match the foes ye have
 "encountered here; and of these none more valiant than
 "the men of Allis." The early campaign in Irac, indeed,
 is surrounded by tradition with a special halo; for the
 loss on the Moslem side had not hitherto been great, and
 the fighting here could hardly have compared with that
 of many a well-contested field in the Prophet's time.

Adminis-
 tration of
 the pro-
 vince.

While Hira was left in the hands of its chief men,
 summary rule was set up over the adjacent country.
 The *Dihcans* — great landholders and imperial tax-
 gatherers — had been waiting upon fortune. Seeing
 now that Khalid carried everything before him, many
 began to tender submission and enter into engagements
 for the revenue. Abu Bekr had wisely enjoined that
 the Fellaheen should be maintained in possession, and
 their rights as occupiers of the soil respected. The
 demand remained unchanged, with the addition only
 of a light poll-tax. In other respects, the terms, made
 with the consent and approval of the army, corresponded
 with those of Hira. Holding their ancestral faith, the
 people became *Zimmies*, or protected dependants. Khalid
 undertook to defend them, and they on their part pledged
 allegiance and bound themselves to give notice if danger
 threatened. Garrisons were quartered here and there,
 and the troops held ready in movable columns. Thus
 the country west of the Euphrates was kept in check,
 and also the lower Delta to the east. Throughout this
 region none was secure from rapine but such as had
 entered into engagements. Hostages were taken for the
 revenue; and a formal discharge given upon its payment.
 The tribute, as well as the booty, was all distributed
 amongst the army "for the strengthening of its will and
 "emboldening of its courage."

Persia
 paralysed
 by internal
 troubles.

Persia meanwhile was hopelessly distracted. Male
 progeny near the throne had been so ruthlessly massacred,
 that no heir of royal blood could anywhere be found, and
 a rapid succession of feeble claimants was set up by

the Princesses left to form the Court. Thus paralysed, A.H. 12.
 the Persians did little more than protect Medain by holding in force the country opposite as far as the Nahr-shir, a deep channel which, drawn from the Euphrates, flowed athwart the Peninsula. This line was threatened by Mothanna; but Abu Bekr gave stringent orders that no advance should be made till all was secure behind. No tidings, moreover, had as yet been received from Iyadh at Duma, with whom co-operation was imperative. Khalid fretted at remaining thus inactive, "playing," as he complained, "for so many months the woman's part." But he curbed his ardour, and contented himself with inditing two letters, in imperious tone, one to "the Princes of Persia," the other to "the Satraps and inhabitants at large."

Towards the north and west, however, aggressive Anbar.
 measures were continued. Siege was laid to Anbar, a fortress on the Euphrates some 80 miles above Babylon. The worn-out camels of the army were slain and cast into the deep fosse, which thus was crossed and the city captured. The Persian governor sued for terms, and was permitted to retire. Anbar and the well-watered neighbourhood thus secured, the army attacked Ain
Tamar.
 Tamar, a fortress on the desert border three days' journey farther west. The Persian troops were here supported by a great gathering of Arab tribes, and among them the same Taghlib levies which had followed their prophetess to Yemama. These met Khalid as he approached but were repulsed, and the Persian governor seeing the rout from the ramparts, fled and left the fugitives to defend themselves as best they could. Refused terms, they surrendered at discretion. The persistent opposition of the Christian Bedouins now led Khalid into an unwise Khalid's
severity.
 severity that embittered them against him. Their leader was beheaded in front of the city walls, and every adult male of the garrison led forth and put to death; while the women and children were made over to the soldiers or sold into slavery. In a cloister of the church hard by, were forty youths who in their terror barred the door

A.H. 12. upon the enemy. When the retreat was forced, they gave themselves up as students receiving instruction in the Gospel. Their lives, were spared, and they were distributed among the leaders. The fate of these unfortunate youths, snatched from a Nestorian seminary to be brought up as captives in the Moslem faith, must have been common enough in the rude and sanguinary tide of Saracen invasion; the reason why tradition makes special mention of these, is that amongst them were progenitors of several distinguished men, such as Ibn Ishac the historian, and Musa the conqueror of Spain.

Iyadh at
Duma.

All this while Iyadh, who ought long before to have joined Khalid, was battling unsuccessfully with enemies at Duma. The Caliph becoming anxious, sent Welid who had been deputed by Khalid to Medina in charge of royal booty, to assist Iyadh, who by his advice despatched an urgent message for help to Khalid. The courier reached just after the fall of Ain Tamar; and Khalid, with no enemy now in the field, answered Iyadh thus in martial verse—

“Wait, my friend, but for a moment, speedily shall help appear;
Cohort upon cohort follows, waving sword and glittering spear.”

Leaving Caca in command at Hira, and starting at once with the flower of his force, he crossed the intervening desert, and made good his word.

Duma
stormed by
Khalid,
vii. 12 A.H.
Sept.
633 A.D.

He was not a day too soon. Okeidar and Judi, Chiefs of Duma, were supported by the Beni Kelb and other tribes from the Syrian desert; and now the Beni Ghassan were pouring down from the north, under Jabala, the Christian prince of Bostra. The position of Iyadh thus beset, grew day by day more critical. The advent of Khalid changed the scene at once. His very name was a tower of strength. Okeidar had already felt his prowess, having several years before been taken by him prisoner to Medina.¹ Much afraid, he hastened to surrender, but on the way was taken prisoner and beheaded. Then Iyadh on the Syrian side, and Khalid on the Persian, attacked the hostile tribes and utterly routed them.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 429.

Jabala effected his flight to Bostra. But the helpless crowd that remained were hemmed in between the two forces and none escaped. The gate of the fort was battered down, and the crowded inmates put promiscuously to the sword. The women were sold to the highest bidder; and the most beautiful of them, the daughter of the unfortunate Judi, was bought by Khalid for himself. Celebrating thus fresh nuptials on the field of battle, he enjoyed a short repose at Duma, while the main body of the troops marching back to Hira, were there received with timbrels and cymbals and outward demonstrations of rejoicing.

But all was not going on smoothly in that vicinity. The absence of Khalid had encouraged the Persians and their Arab allies, especially the Beni Taghlib still smarting under the execution of their leader, to resume offensive operations. Cacao, though on the alert, was able to do no more than guard the frontier and protect Anbar from threatened inroad. At this news, Khalid hastened back; and placing Iyadh in the government of Hira, despatched Cacao across the Euphrates, while he himself appointed a rendezvous at Ain Tamar to attack the Taghlib tribe; for he had vowed that thus he would crush the viper in its nest. On the eastern bank, the Persians were routed and their leaders killed; while on the western, by a series of brilliant and well-planned night attacks, the Bedouins were repeatedly surprised as they slept secure in their desert homes, cut to pieces, and their families carried off. Thus Khalid fulfilled his vow. Multitudes of women, many of noble birth, were distributed among the army. A portion also, with rich booty, were sent to Medina, and there disposed of by sale.¹

¹ One was bought by Aly. He had recently taken into his harem another girl, one of the captives of Yemama; she was of the Hanifa tribe, and the son she bore him hence called the Hanifite, whose descendants being thus of the stock of Aly, had a political *robia* of which we shall hear hereafter. He also married in this year a granddaughter of the Prophet the child of Zeinab and niece of his deceased wife Fatima. [There may be some mistake here, for I have read nowhere else of any surviving child of Zeinab, Mahomet's daughter.—3rd Ed.]

A. H. 12. Following up his Bedouin foes, Khalid at last reached Firadh on the Syrian border, and by the river rested his army during the fast of Ramadhan and for some weeks after. But the Byzantine garrison on the frontier, uneasy at the prolonged encampment and threatening attitude of Khalid, and making common cause with the Persian outposts and neighbouring loyal tribes, advanced in imposing force to chase the invader away. They challenged Khalid to cross the river; but the wary General bade them rather come over to the eastern bank. A long and severe conflict ensued. The Moslems were victorious; the cavalry pursued the fugitives, and the carnage must have been great, for tradition places it at the fabulous number of a hundred thousand.

Battle of
Firadh.
Persians,
Greeks,
and
Bedouins
defeated,
xi. 12 A. H.
Jan.
634 A. D.

For the moment opposition was crushed, and no enemy anywhere in sight. The season for the Meccan pilgrimage being now at hand, Khalid formed the singular resolve of performing it incognito,—unknown even to his royal Master. So having recruited his army for ten days on the well-fought field, he gave orders to march slowly and by easy stages back to Hira. Then, making as though he remained behind, he set out secretly with a small escort on the pious errand. Without a guide, he traversed the devious desert route with marvellous sagacity and speed. Having accomplished the rites of Pilgrimage, he retraced his steps from Mecca with like despatch, and re-entered Hira in early spring, just as the Rear guard was marching in. So well had he kept his secret, that the army thought he had been all the while at Firadh, and now was journeying slowly back. Even Abu Bekr, who himself presided at the pilgrimage, was unaware of the presence of his great General. When, after some time, the secret visit came to his knowledge, he was much displeased. But the action which he took in consequence belongs to the succeeding year.

Khalid's
incognito
pilgrimage,
xii. 12 A. H.
Feb.
634 A. D.

CHAPTER IX

CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA. BATTLE ON THE YERMUK¹

12-13 A.H. 633-634 A.D.

THE campaign in Syria opened under a very different Khalid son of Saïd. An early convert, and as such an exile to Abyssinia, he held high place as a confessor of the faith. Employed as Envoy in the south, he was forced to retreat in the turmoil following the Prophet's death, and now claimed fresh command. Although Omar and Aly doubted his fitness, Abu Bekr overcome by importunity, sent him to rally the friendly tribes on the Syrian frontier; but unless attacked he was to take no forward step. The Byzantine garrisons, alarmed at his approach, summoned their Bedouin allies and assumed a threatening attitude. Khalid was thereupon permitted to advance, yet cautiously and so as to allow no danger in his rear. Proceeding onwards to the Dead Sea, he routed there a Syrian column; but finding himself so far away, he called urgently for reinforcements. Just then the Moslem troops, having crushed apostasy in the south, were returning in great numbers to Medina, and so were available for any other service. Ikrima with Dzul Kelaa and his Himyar followers, being the first to appear, were despatched in haste to support Khalid in the north.

Khalid ibn Saïd posted on Syrian border, 12 A.H. 633 A.D.

Ikrima sent to his support.

Two other Chiefs of note were despatched with a

¹ It is well again to remind the reader that our authorities are purely Arabian, the entire loss of Syria being recorded by the Byzantine authorities in but a few lines. Details, especially of the enemy's numbers, movements, etc., must be received simply as rumours handed down by tradition.

A.H. 12-18. similar commission. These were Amru and Welid, who were away on a joint command given them by the Prophet, in the country between Tayma and the Red Sea. Since the reduction of Duma, this tract having quieted down, Abu Bekr gave them the option either of "remaining where they were, or of engaging in a work "better for them, both in this present life, and in that "which is to come." To this Amru made answer: "I "am but an arrow in the quiver of Islam, and thou "the Archer. It is for thee to pick out the fittest shaft, "and whithersoever thou wilt, discharge it." So they were despatched, Welid to join Khalid ibn Saïd, and Amru to occupy Ayla and the tract south of the Holy Land.

Also Amru and Welid. End of 12 A.H. Jan. 634 A.D.

Khalid ibn Saïd defeated at Marj, near Sea of Tiberias. Beginning of 13 A.H. March 634 A.D. Emboldened by these reinforcements, Khalid ibn Saïd hastened in the early spring to gain the first laurels of the campaign. Forgetful of his Master's caution, he was in his eagerness decoyed by the Byzantine General towards Damascus. He had reached as far as Marj Soffar to the east of the Sea of Tiberias, when the enemy closed in upon his rear and cut off his retreat. Discomfited, he fled, leaving his camp in the enemy's hands and Ikrima to retrieve the disaster. That able leader rallied the retreating force, and with a sufficient remnant, including the brave Himyar band under Dzul Kelaa, took up a strong position on the frontier until help should come. Khalid continued his flight, but was stayed on the road by a message from the indignant Caliph. "By my life!" he wrote, "thou shalt come no "farther; thou pratest bravely when secure, but in battle "art a coward. I have no patience with thee!" To those about him he said,—“Truly Aly and Omar knew "the man better than I. Had I listened to them, this "mishap had not been." We hear no more of Khalid ibn Saïd.

Reinforcements for Syria

In the present emergency, it was fortunate for Abu Bekr that Arabia being now entirely pacified, he was able as the columns arrived to hurry them off to Syria, there to retrieve the fortunes of Islam. Duly sensible of the gravity of the enterprise,—nothing short of measuring

swords with the Kaiser,—the Caliph strained every nerve to meet it. He had thrown down the gauntlet, and was waging war at one and the same time, with the Potentates both of the East and West. The brigades now formed for this great enterprise were pitched one after another at Medina on the plain of Jorf, a little way on the Syrian road; and, as each was ready to march, the Caliph walked (as nearly two years before he had done with Osâma) by the side of its mounted Leader, and gave him thus his farewell command;—"Profession is naught without faith. The merit of a work dependeth on the purpose of the worker. The reward promised in the Book of the Lord for such as fight in His ways is great. Set this ever before thee and before thy men. But when thou haranguest them be brief, for in the multitude of words the foremost are lost in the hindermost. So striving, ye will obtain the prize, riches and honour in the present life, and in the life to come a great reward." Then with a hearty "Fare ye well," retracing his steps he returned to his simple home.

A.H. 12-13.

Addressed by Abu Bekr.

The force thus brought together differed altogether in composition from the army of Irac. That in the main consisted of Bedouin tribes, which flocked in thousands to the banners of Mothanna and Khalid; the men of Mecca and Medina were amongst them comparatively few; for most had returned to their homes after the battle of Yemama. In the Syrian army, on the contrary, there are reckoned at least a thousand "Companions," *i.e.* men who had seen and conversed with the Prophet, and no fewer than a hundred of the famous 300 of Bedr. These enrolled themselves at pleasure under the Chief of their choice; but once enrolled, they yielded to that leader implicit obedience; while he, on his part, was bound to consult their views and wishes on all occasions of importance. Sheikhs of renown, who but a few years before had wielded the whole power of Mecca, and haughty Chieftains of high descent, now joined with alacrity the column of anyone into whose hands the Caliph was pleased to present the banner of

Syrian army.

A.H. 12-13. command, however young or inferior to themselves in dignity. And the whole force, thus formed in separate detachments, held itself at the absolute disposal of the Commander of the Faithful.

Four
battalions
concentrated on
the Syrian
frontier.

Four such battalions were now despatched. *First*, Shorahbil was appointed to supersede Welid who was involved in the disgrace of Khalid ibn Saïd. Rallying the scattered fragments of the discomfited force, Shorahbil now took up the most advanced position. After him followed Yezid son of Abu Sofian, in command of the *Second* levy from Mecca, which included many chief men of the Coreish roused by the Caliph's call, and by the stirring news from Syria. His brother Muavia shortly after joined him with further remnants of the beaten army. Abu Obeida, trusted Companion of the Prophet, led the *Third* column, and posted himself near Amru, who commanded the *Fourth*, in the Wady Araba west of all the others. Many of the new troops, specially the levies from the south, travelled after Bedouin fashion with their families, ready to make the North their abode. For the marvellous conquests of Khalid's army in Chaldæa and their settlement there, had suggested the even more inviting prospect of home in the "Land of blessing and promise" as it is called in the Coran, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Their
advance.

The four battalions thus gathered in the spring of the year 634 A.D. on the Syrian border numbered 30,000, besides a reserve of 6000 under Ikrima. In their first advance they met with little opposition and, putting to flight such Arab and Greek troops as occupied the country about the Dead Sea, eventually took up ground in a sort of *écheleon*, threatening the garrisons in the south of Syria. Abu Obeida, approaching Damascus, held a position the farthest east, near to Ikrima and the scene of recent disaster. Next came Shorahbil, overawing Tiberias and the valley of the Jordan. Yezid, in the Belcaa, threatened Bostra; and Amru, in lower Palestine, Hebron. Each of these eventually found himself confronted by a Byzantine force.

For Heraclius was at last alarmed. A few years

before he had gloriously repulsed the Chosroes; but after that again relapsed into inactivity. Tidings of the invasion, an irruption, as it would seem, of barbarians from the south, now roused him from his lethargy. Repairing to Hims, he gathered an immense force, and sent it in four divisions to stem the advancing tide. The largest, numbering (as tradition has it) 90,000 men, was commanded by his brother Theodore. The Moslems, startled at this formidable array, consulted how to meet it. Amru urged the commanders to gather in one body.—“For how,” he sent to say, “can our scanty numbers, divided and apart, encounter these mighty hosts?” To this they agreed, and Abu Bekr, who had constant tidings, was of the same mind. “Draw ye all together,” was his order, “near unto the river Yermuk. Ye are the Lord’s host, and shall surely put the enemy to flight. Such as ye, shall never be discomfited by reason of the fewness of your numbers. Tens of thousands are smitten in battle because of their sins. Wherefore, do ye eschew sin. Let every man stand close by his fellow. So shall the Lord give you the victory.”

A.H. 12-13.

Four battalions oppose them.

Abu Bekr’s command to draw together.

Acting thus, the columns concentrated on a spot south of the river Yermuk, near where it was crossed by the high road from Damascus. The Greeks, suiting their tactics similarly, also drew together, and pitched their camp on the northern bank of the stream. The place was singular. The Yermuk, taking its rise in the high lands of the Hauran, runs in a deep and rugged gorge far beneath the level of the land and, descending rapidly, falls into the Jordan below the Lake of Galilee. The battle-ground was probably some 30 miles above the junction. Here the stream, by fetching a wide compass, left on its northern bank a broad plain,—the field of Wacûsa,—bounded on three sides by a sheer precipice; while the remaining part was shut in by a ravine which nearly closed the circuit. Only a narrow neck was thus available for entrance, through which the highway passing; formed the key of the position. The Greeks, tempted

The two armies at Wacûsa on the Yermuk, ii. 13 A.H. April 634 A.D.

A. H. 12-
18.

by the wide expanse, entered from the north, and spread themselves out upon the plain. Thereupon the Moslems crossed the river and encamped likewise on the northern bank, upon a spot abutting on the neck, and thus threatening the exit of the enemy. Amru seeing this, rejoiced and said: "Be of good cheer my friends; the Greeks "are shut in, and few that are shut in escape." A desultory warfare ensued, without definite result. The Byzantine troops often formed up in force, and as often were driven back; the ravine was to them a strong protection, and the Arabs gained no material advantage. In such indecisive skirmishing two months passed away, and the armies remained still facing one another.

iii. iv.
13 A. H.
May and
June
594 A. D.

Khalid
transferred
to Syria.

Abu Bekr became anxious at the delay and the urgent appeals for reinforcements. It was not so much poverty in number, as lack of fire and military genius, that disquieted him. Abu Obeida was mild even to timidity; Amru an able counsellor, but lacking military dash. The mettle of the Generals had not yet been fully tested; and their independence one of another, in the absence of a General-in-chief, was fatal to common action. When, therefore, the cry reached Medina for help, the Caliph exclaimed: "Khalid is the man for this! "By the son of Welid, with the help of the Lord, shall the "machinations of Satan and of the Greeks be overthrown." Accordingly, he sent this message to him:—"Depart and "join thyself unto the armies of the Faithful in Syria, for "they are downcast and forlorn. But beware" (referring to his stealthy pilgrimage) "that thou return not "again to do what thou hast done. The Lord helping, "thy removal shall not dishearten the followers thou "leavest in Irac. Go forward, and high resolve attend "thee! Fill up the measure of the Lord's benefits upon "mankind, and He shall fulfil the same on thee. Have "a care, lest the world and the flesh ensnaring thee, "thou stumble and thy works perish. The Lord doth "recompense!"

Sets out
with
reinforce-
ments.

This mandate disconcerted Khalid at the first. He set it down to Omar who, envying him the conquest of Irac,

would thus snatch it from his hand. There was reason for the fear. But had Abu Bekr lived, it had been otherwise, for he continued thus:—"Take with thee half the army, and leave Mothanna half. When the Lord shall give thee victory in Syria, then thou shalt return to thy command in Irac." Reconciled by the assurance, and loyal to his Chief, Khalid began by selecting the Companions and flower of the force which should accompany him to Syria. Mothanna insisted that the division should be equal, and was at last conciliated by securing a goodly portion of the Veterans. The strength of either moiety was about 9000. Mothanna accompanied the great General whom he had served so loyally, to the border of the desert, and taking a last farewell, retraced his steps to Hira.

A.H. 12-
18.

The Syrian desert lay between Khalid and his new sphere of action. He could not take the northern route, because of hostile tribes and Byzantine garrisons; therefore, turning south, he crossed a second time that waste and tumbled sea of sand, the Nefūd, and halted at Duma. Thence he took the direct road to Syria, and so would in a few more days have reached Bostra, but he feared lest the enemy opposing him there should hinder his junction with the Moslem army. He formed, therefore, the bold design to strike north, right across the waterless and pathless desert, and emerging at Tadmor, so turn the Roman flank. A council of war was held, and a Bedouin guide brought in who said;—"There is but one way,—a way so bare, and for five days so waterless, that even single horsemen shun it, lest they perish on the road." "By the same shall we go," was Khalid's prompt resolve; and when expostulated with on the wild and perilous attempt, he answered that, with divine aid and firm resolve, nothing was wild and nothing perilous. The words fired his followers, and the project was by acclamation carried. "Do this then," said the guide, "if ye will. Gather as many camels as ye can; withhold water for a while; then let them drink plentifully, and drink again a second time; afterwards, bind their

Marches
across the
Syrian
desert

by a peril-
ous route,

A.H. 12-
13.
— “ears and slit their lips so that they ruminate not. So
“haply may your water last.” At each stage across
the wilderness, ten such camels were slain for each troop
of a hundred lances. The water drawn from their bodies
was mixed with milk for the horses. The men were
given but a single draught each day. On the fifth day
a shudder crept over the host. The supply was at an
end. They had reached the neighbourhood where water
should have been, but signs were wanting and the guide
at fault. After casting anxiously about in all directions,
he cried in despair — “Search for the bramble bush;
“the bramble should be here; if ye find it not, we are
“lost!” So they searched all round. At last they came
upon a half-concealed root; and with loud shouts of
“Great is the Lord!” rushed to the spot, dug down
into the ground, and found to their joy a plentiful supply
of water.

And effects
junction
with
Syrian
army,
iv. v.
13 A.H.
June, July
634.

They were now on the Syrian side of the desert,
about a hundred miles east of Damascus. Early next
morning, Khalid fell on the astonished neighbourhood,
scattering terror all around, and attacking Tadmor which
after slight resistance yielded. Then fetching a circuit,
he skirted the Hauran within sight of Damascus, and
emerged at Adzraat. Having achieved this marvellous
journey in the course of a few weeks, and reopened
communications with the south, he sent tidings to Abu
Bekr of his safety, with the Fifth of spoil taken by
the way; and about midsummer effected a junction
with the army of Moslems which still lay inactive on
the Yermuk.

The two
armies
compared.

Fresh reinforcements had lately arrived and raised
the flagging spirits of the Byzantine army. They
numbered 240,000, of whom a portion were felons re-
leased for the occasion, and others chained in line
that they might not fly, or in token rather of resolve to
die. Such are the exaggerated, and it may be fanciful,
rumours handed down as, no doubt, current in the Moslem
ranks. But whatever abatement is made from them, so
much we may readily accept that the army with which

Heraclius sought to stay the surging tide of Saracen invasion must needs have been very large. We may also believe that though devoid of union, loyalty, and valour, it was well appointed, and elated by its achievements in the Persian war. In discipline and combined movement, and also in equipment, the Byzantine must vastly have surpassed the Arab force. But the Bedouin horse excelled in celerity and dash. Their charge, if light, was galling, and so rapidly delivered that ere the surprise was over, the troop itself might be out of sight. The Byzantine army, it is true, had Bedouin auxiliaries as numerous, perhaps, as the whole Moslem army. But their spirit widely differed. The fealty of the Syrian Arab was lax and loose. Christian in name, the yoke of his faith sat lightly on him. Indeed, throughout the empire, Christianity was eaten up of strife and rancour. With the reinforcements came a troop of Monks and Bishops who, bearing banners, waving gold crosses, and shouting that the faith was in jeopardy, sought thus to rouse the passion of the army. The passion roused was often but the scowl of hatred. Bitter schisms then rent the Church, and the cry of the Orthodox for help would strike a far different chord than that of patriotism in the Eutychian and Nestorian breast. Lastly, the social and ancestral associations of the Syrian Bedouin, alien from his Byzantine masters, were in full accord with his brethren from Arabia; and of such instinctive feeling, the invaders knew well to take advantage. With this lukewarm and disunited host, compare the Moslem in its virgin vigour, bound together as one man, and fired with a wild and fanatic fervour to "fight in the ways of the Lord," winning thus at one and the same time heavenly favour and worldly fortune. For the survivors there was endless spoil, captive maidens, fertile vales, houses which they builded not, and wells which they had not digged. Should they fall by the sword, there was the Martyr's prize of paradise, and black-eyed Houries waiting impatiently for the happy hour. The soldiers' imagination was inflamed by tales

A.H. 12-13. — of heaven opened on the very battlefield, and the expiring warrior tended by two virgins wiping away the sweat and dust from off his face, and with the wanton graces of paradise drawing him upwards in their fond embrace. Of an army, nerved by this strange combination of incentives, divine and human,—of the flesh and of the spirit, faith and rapine, heavenly devotion and passion for the sex even in the throes of death,—ten might chase a hundred of the half-hearted Greeks. The 40,000 Moslems were stronger far than the 240,000 of the enemy.

Moslem
army paralysed
by separate
com-
mands.

The Byzantine army, swollen by its reinforcements, began to overlap the Arabian camp and force it back into straitened quarters. But Khalid's energy soon caused things to mend. In a series of encounters, the enemy worsted, retired behind the ravine in front. Still the prospect otherwise was not encouraging. The battalions of the Arabian host were separately pitched; the conduct of Public prayer (mark of supreme command) was separate in each; the attacks, delivered independently from want of combination, failed. The issue hung fire. A month passed, and Khalid became impatient. To secure success, authority must be vested in a single hand. He saw the fault, and set himself to remedy it.

Khalid
obtains
Command
in chief
for the day.

Opportunity soon offered. Unusual movement on the Roman side led to a council of the Moslem chiefs, and Khalid laid his views before them. The Caliph, it was true, had commissioned them to meet each a separate Byzantine army. But the enemy was now massed in one; and Abu Bekr would surely under the altered circumstances approve the assumption of command by a single General. The merit in the sight of the Lord would be the same; not less the merit in the Caliph's eyes. "Come now," said Khalid to disarm their jealousy, "let us vary the supreme control, taking it each in succession for the day, and, if ye will, let mine be first." The proposal thus adroitly made was by acclamation carried. All expected that, with the emergency, the combined control would likewise pass away: but once

made, it proved itself so good that the supreme command in Syria was ever after held by a single hand. A.H. 12-13.

Meanwhile Khalid had sown dissension in the Enemy's camp, and gained over one of its leading men. A Greek general gained over. The facts are obscure, and the episode strange. But so much appears, that a General, Jareja by name, perhaps of Arab blood and Bedouin sympathies, was persuaded to promise that at the decisive moment, he would leave the Byzantine and join the Moslem side.

The powers conferred on Khalid were soon used to purpose. His first care was to reorganise the army. Disposition of Moslem army. "The Greeks," he said, "are a vast host, and we but few to look at. Now no disposition swelleth numbers to the eye like that of squadrons." So he divided the troops into forty squadrons, each about a thousand strong under a trusted leader. These he arranged so that one half formed the centre, under Abu Obeida. Ten squadrons were assigned to each wing, of which one was led by Amru, the other by Yezid. Abu Sofian, now well stricken in years, went about from troop to troop and roused their ardour by martial declamation.

It was soon manifest that the Byzantine captains were preparing to deliver a decisive charge. Greek army advances. Issuing from their defences, they advanced in volume, darkening both sides of the plain. A bystander, gazing at the moving field, exclaimed, "How many the Greeks, how few the Moslems!" "Nay," cried Khalid, "rather 'How many the Moslems, how few the Greeks!' for, 'if ye count aright, numbers wax by the help of the Lord, but wane if He withdraw His face. Would that the Greeks were double what ye see this day, had I but under me my good Arab!'—for the hoofs of his favourite bay had been worn down by rapid marching from Iraq. And still the Greeks kept rolling on in dense columns. The fate of Syria depended on the day.

As the enemy drew near, Khalid called upon Ikrima with his column, and Cacao with the veterans from the east, to advance. Moslems advance; tidings from Medina. Just then a messenger from Medina rode up in haste. To the inquiry of men who flocked

A.H. 12-13. — around, he answered shortly:—"All is well; reinforcements on the way." But for the General's ear he had a secret message, and he also handed to him a letter which, hastily glanced at, Khalid slipped into his quiver. Then, unruffled by the startling tidings it contained, and bidding the messenger keep close by him throughout the day, he rode forth to meet Jareja.

Battle of
Wacisa
on the
Yermuk,
viii. 13A.H.
Sept.
634 A.D.

The defection of that General was a calamity for the Greeks, but at the first it caused an unexpected issue. Followed by his escort, the traitor rode forth from the Byzantine ranks to meet Khalid. The unexpected advance was at the first mistaken for an attack upon the Moslems; and a Syrian battalion hastened to its support with such energetic charge that the Arab front was broken and thrown into confusion. Ikrima stood firm. He who in the "days of Ignorance" had measured arms even with the Prophet of the Lord, should he flee before the infidel! "Who now," cried he, "will join me in the covenant of death?" Four hundred, with his own son and the hero Dhirar, took the fatal pledge. He charged, and the battalion which had created the surprise, bewildered now at the treachery of Jareja, fell back. The ground thus clear, Khalid ordered the whole line to move on. The Grecians too advanced, and both sides drew the sword. All day long the battle raged. Fortune varied; and the carnage amongst the Moslems, as well as in the enemy's ranks, was great. Ikrima's gallant company held their ground firm as a rock, and bore the brunt of the fighting; they were slain or disabled almost to a man. So fierce were the Arabs, that even the women fought wildly in the field.

The
Moslem
victory.

Towards evening the enemy began to falter, and Khalid's quick eye perceived that their horse were declining from the infantry. Thereupon he launched his centre wedge-like between the two, and the cavalry with nothing behind them but a precipice, made a fierce charge for their lives. The Moslem front opened to let them through, and so they gained the country never to reappear. The Arabs then drove down upon the remaining

force hemmed in as it was by the surrounding chasm; and thus, pressed right and left, the Byzantine columns were "toppled over the bank even as a wall is toppled over." The battle drew on into the night, but opposition was now in vain. Those that escaped the sword were hurled in living mass into the yawning gulf. "One struggling would draw ten others with him, the free as well as chained." And so, in dire confusion and dismay, the whole multitude perished. The fatal chasm engulfed, we are told, 100,000 men. The Byzantine general and his fellow-captains, unable to bear the sight, sat down, drew their togas around them and, hiding their faces in despair and shame, awaited thus their fate.

A.H. 12-13.

Greeks driven over the chasm.

Morning found the Moslems in silent possession of the plain. They flocked into the Greek entrenchment, and Khalid took possession of Theodore's pavilion. The camp and its rich equipage yielded a booty of 1500 pieces to each horseman. More than this, the fearful fate of the army struck such terror into the Byzantine court as well as the people of the land, that the fate of Syria was sealed. The opposition that remained was poor and feeble.

Importance of the victory.

But the victory was purchased at a heavy cost;—three thousand buried on the field, besides a great multitude wounded, and among the fallen many a distinguished name. Of Ikrima's forlorn hope but few survived. The famous Dhirar, badly wounded, recovered to signalise himself on other fields. But Ikrima and his son sank under their wounds. In the morning, when near their end, they were both carried to the tent of Khalid. He laid the head of the father on his breast, and of the son upon his lap, tenderly wiped their faces, and moistened their lips with water. As they passed away, he kept fondly saying: "Alas, alas! the father and the son; who would have thought of a Martyr's death for both!"

Heavy loss.

But Khalid was no longer in command. The messenger in the field had whispered in his ear the news of Abu Bekr's death; and the letter slipped into his quiver brought the new Caliph's order that Khalid should deliver up command into the hands of Abu Obeida.

Khalid superseded.

A.H. 12-
13.
—
Date of
battle.

The battle was fought about the middle of the year 13 A.H.—that is, towards the end of August or beginning of September 634 A.D., little more than two years after the Prophet's death.

Before narrating the sequel of this great victory, we must turn for a little to what was passing elsewhere.

CHAPTER X

CAMPAIGN IN IRAC — NEED OF REINFORCEMENTS. MOTHANNA FINDS ABU BEKR ON HIS DEATHBED

FIRST HALF OF 13 A.H. MARCH—AUGUST 634 A.D.

BEFORE he left for Syria, Khalid, seeing that with a diminished force, the situation in Irac would be somewhat insecure, sent away the sick with the women and children to their homes in Arabia. On his departure, Mothanna made the best disposition in his power to strengthen the line of defences towards the Persian Capital. Fresh dangers threatened. A new Prince had succeeded to the throne, who thought to expel the invaders by an army under Hormuz 10,000 strong. Mothanna at once called in the outlying garrisons; but with every help, his force was in numbers much below the Persian. The King, confident of victory, wrote to Mothanna insultingly, that "he was about to drive him away by an army of fowl-men and swine-herds." Mothanna answered: "Thou art either a braggart or a liar. But if this be true, then blessed be the Lord that hath reduced thee to such defenders!" Having despatched this reply, he advanced to meet Hormuz. Leaving Hira, the little force crossed the Euphrates and encamped north of the shapeless mounds that mark the site of Babylon. There, some fifty miles from the Capital, he chose the battle-ground; and, placing his two brothers in charge of either wing, himself at the head of the centre awaited thus the attack of Hormuz. The Persian line was headed by an elephant, which threw the Arab ranks into confusion, and for a while paralysed their action. Mothanna, followed by an adventurous band,

Mothanna
attacked
by the
Persians.

Battle of
Babylon,
Summer,
13 A.H.
634 A.D.

A.H. 13. surrounded the great creature and brought it to the ground. Deprived of this help, the enemy gave way before the fierce onslaught of the Arabs who pursued the fugitives to the very gates of Medain. The praises of the "Hero of the Elephant" have been handed down in Arab verse.

Mothanna asks Abu Bekr for reinforcements.

The King did not long survive his defeat. His son succeeding him, was killed in a rebellion caused by the attempt to give a Princess of the royal blood in marriage to a favourite Minister. The Princess, saved from dishonour, succeeded to the throne. From a Court weakened thus by continual change and treachery, there was little, one might think, to fear, but Mothanna had to guard a frontier of great extent, and for the task his army was inadequate. The inhabitants were at the best indifferent; the Syrian Bedouins distinctly hostile. Victories might be won, but could not be followed up. The position, with so small a force, was full of risk. Accordingly, Mothanna urged upon the Caliph the pressing need of reinforcements. He also pointed out the ease with which they might be raised: "Remove the embargo from the "apostate but now repentant tribes," he wrote; "they will "flock to the war, and none more brave or eager." Answer being long delayed, Mothanna ventured to Medina, there

Abu Bekr on his deathbed desires Omar to order levy.

to urge his suit in person. He found Abu Bekr on his deathbed. The aged Caliph knew that his end was near; but the mind was clear, and he at once perceived the urgency of the appeal. "Call Omar to me," he said (for he had already named him his successor); and then addressed him thus:—"Command a levy for Mothanna. "Tarry not. If I die, as I may, this day, wait not till the "evening; if I linger on to night, wait not till the morning. "Let not sorrow for me divert thee from this service of "the Lord. Ye saw what I myself did when the Prophet "died (and there could be no greater sorrow for mankind "than that); truly if grief had stayed me then from gird- "ing my loins in the cause of the Lord and of His Pro- "phet, the Faith had fared badly; the flame of rebellion "had been surely kindled in the city. And, list thee, Omar!

“ when the Lord shall have given victory in Syria, then A.H. 13.
“ send back to Irac its army; for they are the proper
“ garrison thereof, and fittest to administer it.”

Omar was touched by the delicacy of these last words, and the allusion they contained; “ For,” said he, “ Abu Bekr knew that it grieved me when he gave the command to Khalid; therefore he bade me to send back his army to Irac, but forbore to name the name of Khalid, or bid me send him back.” He listened attentively to the dying Caliph’s words, and promised to fulfil them. Omar accepts the charge.

CHAPTER XI

DEATH OF ABU BEKR

AUGUST 13 A.H. 634 A.D.

Abu Bekr
presides
over Pil-
grimage,
xii. 12 A. H.
February
634.

AT the first yearly pilgrimage, Abu Bekr had been hindered by the pressure of rebellion from the journey to Mecca; but the following year he presided at the solemnity himself. As the party entered Mecca, the Citizens hastened to tell the Caliph's father, who, blind from great age, was sitting at his door. On his son's approach, the old man arose to greet him. Abu Bekr made the camel on which he rode kneel down at the threshold, and alighting, embraced his father who shed tears of delight, and kissed him between the eyes. The Governor and other chief men of Mecca approached and shook the Caliph by the hand. Then they did obeisance to him and to his Father also, who said: "These be our nobles; honour them, my Son, and make much of them." "Make much of them," answered Abu Bekr,— "that I do; but (mindful of his Master's teaching) as for Honour, there is none save that which cometh from the Lord alone." After bathing, he went forth in pilgrim garb, to kiss the Black stone, and encompass the Holy house. The People crowded round him; and as they made mention of the Prophet, Abu Bekr wept. It was but two years since Mahomet had been amongst them, celebrating the same rites. How much of danger and deliverance had come to pass in that short space! And so they mourned his loss. At midday, he again went through the ceremonies of the Kaaba; then, sitting down under the shadow of the Hall of assembly, he commanded

the Citizens that, if any had complaint to make, he should speak it out. All were silent; so he praised the people and their Governor. Then he arose and celebrated the Midday prayer. After a little, he bade them all farewell, and again departed for Medina. A.H. 13.

During the summer, Abu Bekr was busied with reinforcements for the Syrian campaign. Simple and temperate in habit, he was now, though over threescore years, hale and hearty. In the autumn, bathing incautiously on a cold day, fever laid him low and obliged him to make over the presidency at Public prayer to Omar. When the illness had lasted a fortnight, his friends became anxious, and said: "Shall we send for a physician?" "The Physician hath been to me already," was the solemn answer. "And what said he?" "He saith to me, *I am about to do that with thee which I purpose to do.*" They understood his meaning, and were silent. Aware that the end was near, he made preparation for a successor. The choice was fixed on Omar; but willing to fortify his own conviction by that of others, he first consulted Abd ul Rahman, one of the Prophet's foremost councillors, who praised Omar as the fittest man but withal inclined to be severe.—"Which," responded the dying Caliph, "is because he saw me soft and tender-hearted. When himself Master, he will forego much of what thou sayest. I have watched him. If I were angry with one, he would intercede in his behalf; if over lenient, then he would be severe." Othman, too, confirmed the choice;—"What is hidden of Omar," said he, "is better than that which doth appear; there is not his equal amongst us." Talha, on the other hand, expostulated: "If we have suffered so much from Omar, thou being yet with us, what will it be when thou art gone to thy Lord, there to answer for having left his people to the care of so hard a master?" "Set me up," cried the Caliph, much excited; "seekest thou to frighten me? I swear that when I meet my Lord, I will say unto Him, 'I have appointed as ruler over Thy people him that is the best amongst them.'"

Falls sick,
vi. 13 A.H.
Aug.
634. A.D.

A.H. 18. Thereupon Abu Bekr called for Othman, and dictated an ordinance appointing Omar his successor. He fainted while it was being written. Recovering, he bade Othman to read it over. Satisfied now, he praised the Lord; "for," said he, "I saw thee apprehensive lest, if I passed away, the people had been left in doubt." Upon this, he desired the ordinance to be read in the hearing of the Citizens, who had assembled in the court of the Mosque. Omar himself was present, and hushed the noise, that they might hear. Then, desiring to obtain their assent, the dying Caliph bade his wife Asma raise him to the window (for the Caliph's house looked out upon the Court); so she bore him, in her tattooed arms, to the window, from whence, with a great effort, he called out: "Are ye satisfied with him whom I have appointed over you? None of mine own kin, but Omar son of Khattab. Verily I have done my best to choose the fittest. Wherefore, ye will obey him loyally." The people answered with one voice, "Yea, we will obey."

To the end, Abu Bekr's mind was clear and vigorous. On his last day he gave audience (as we have seen) to Mothanna, and, grasping the crisis, commanded Omar to raise, with all despatch, a levy for Irac. During his illness one repeated verses from a heathen poet supposed to be appropriate. Abu Bekr was displeased, and said: "Not so; say rather" (quoting from the Coran)—*"Then the agony of death shall come in truth. This, O man, is what thou soughtest to avoid."*¹ His last act was to summon Omar to his bedside, and counsel him at great length to temper severity with mildness. Shortly after, he expired with these words on his lips:—"Lord, let me die a true believer, and make me to join the blessed ones on high!"

His death,
21st vi.
13 A.H.
22nd Aug.
634 A.D.,

And
burial.

Abu Bekr had reigned but two years and three months. According to his express desire, the body was laid out by the loving hands of Asma. He was wound in the clothes in which he died; "for," said he, "new clothes befit the living, but old the mouldering body." The same Com-

¹ *Sura v. 18.*

panions that bore the Prophet's bier, now bore that of Abu Bekr: and they laid him in the same grave, the Caliph's head close by his Master's shoulder. Omar performed the funeral service, praying, as was customary, over the bier. The funeral procession had not far to go; it had only to cross the open court of the Sanctuary; for Abu Bekr died in the house appointed him by Mahomet opposite his own.¹ A.H. 13.

During the greater part of his reign, he had occupied that house. For six months, indeed, after Mahomet's death, he continued to live partly as before in Al Sunh, a suburb of Upper Medina.² There he inhabited a simple dwelling with the family of the wife whom he married on coming to Medina, and who shortly after his death gave birth to a daughter. Every morning he rode or walked to the courtyard of the Mosque where Mahomet lived and ruled, to discharge the business of the day, and to perform the Public prayers, Omar presiding if he were absent. For the more important service of Friday, at which an address also was delivered, he stayed in the early hours at home to dye his hair and beard, and dress more carefully; and so did not appear till Midday prayer. Here, as elsewhere, he preserved the severe simplicity of early life, and even fed and milked the household goats. At the first he continued to maintain himself by merchandise; but perceiving that it interfered with the burdens of the State, he consented to forego all other occupation and to receive instead a yearly allowance of six thousand dirhems for household charge. Character.
Simple
life at
Al Sunh.

Finding Al Sunh too distant from the Mosque where, as in the time of Mahomet, public affairs were all transacted, he transferred his residence thither. The Exchequer was in those days but simple. It needed neither guard nor office of account. The tithes as they came in were given to the poor, or spent on military equipage and arms; the spoil of war also was distributed just as received, or on the following morning. All shared alike, the recent convert and the veteran, male and female, bond and free. Removes
to the great
Mosque.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 170.

² *Ibid.* p. 163.

A.H. 13. As claimant on the Moslem treasury, every believing Arab was his brother's equal. When urged to recognise precedence in the faith as ground of preference, Abu Bekr would reply, "That is for the Lord; He will fulfil the reward of such, in the world to come. These gifts are but an accident of the present life." After his death, Omar had the treasury opened; they found but a solitary golden piece, slipped out of the bags; so they lifted up their voices and wept, and blessed the departed Caliph's memory. His conscience had troubled him for taking even what he did by way of stipend from the People's chest; and on his deathbed he gave command that certain lands, his private property, should be sold and a sum equal to that received, refunded.

Mild and gentle.

In disposition Abu Bekr was singularly mild and gentle. Omar used to say there was no man for whom the people would more readily have laid down their lives. He had long been called "the Sighing" because of his tender-heartedness. He was severe in his treatment of the Apostate tribes; but excepting the solitary case in which he committed a brigand to the flames, no act of cruelty stands out against him; and for that he expressed his sorrow. "It was one of the three things which he would wish undone." The others were, that he had pardoned Ashath when he deserved death; and that when Khalid was transferred to Syria, he had not at the same time sent Omar to Irac. "Then," said he, "I should have stretched out mine arms, both the right hand and the left, in the ways of the Lord."

Wives and family.

Unlike his Master, he contented himself with but few wives. Two he had at Mecca before conversion. On arrival at Medina, he married the daughter of a Citizen; and, later on, Asma, the widow of Jafar, Aly's brother, slain at Muta. By all he left issue. There is no mention of any other wives, nor of any slave-girls in his Harem. Of his children, he loved Ayesha best and, in proof thereof, gave her a property for her own. On his deathbed, troubled at the seeming partiality, he said to her, "I wish thee, my Daughter, to return that property, to

“ be divided with the rest of the inheritance amongst you
 “ all, not forgetting the one yet unborn.” His father A.H. 13.
 survived him six months, reaching the great age of
 ninety-seven.

At his court, Abu Bekr maintained the same simple and frugal life as Mahomet. Guards and servitors there were none, nor anything approaching pomp and circumstance. Diligent in business, he leaned upon Omar as his counsellor, whose judgment had such weight, that he might even be said to have shared the government with him. Abu Bekr never spared himself, and he personally descended to the minutest things. Thus, he would sally forth by night to seek for the destitute and oppressed. Omar found him one night inquiring into the affairs of a poor blind widow, whom Omar had himself gone forth to help. The department of justice was made over to Omar, but for a whole year “hardly two suitors came before him.” The seal of State bore the legend, *God the best of Potentates*. The despatches were chiefly indited by Aly. Abu Bekr made use also of Zeid (the amanuensis of the Prophet and compiler of the Coran) and of Othman, or any other penman who might at the moment be at hand. In the choice of agents for high office or command, he was altogether free from partiality, wise and discerning in his estimate of character.

But he had not Omar's strength and decision ; nor was his sense of justice so keen and stern. This is illustrated in the matter of the two Khalids. Upon the one, though warned by Omar and Aly, he was prevailed to confer a command ; the disaster in Syria was the consequence. Again, by refusing to condemn the other Khalid for injustice, cruelty, and the scandal of marrying Ibn Noweira's widow, he became responsible for his evil deeds. Yet to this unscrupulous agent—well named *The Sword of God*—was due, more than to any other, the survival and the triumph of Islam. But Abu Bekr was not wanting in firmness when stern occasion called ; for example, the despatch of Osâma's army when Medina lay defenceless and all around was dark, showed a boldness and steadfast-

Simple,
diligent,
wise, and
impartial.

Not so
strong as
Omar.

A.H. 13. — ness of purpose that, more than anything else, helped to roll back the tide of rebellion and apostasy.

Faith in Mahomet, secret of his strength. Abu Bekr had no thought of personal aggrandisement. Endowed with sovereign and irresponsible power, he used it simply for the interests of Islam and the people's good. But the grand secret of his strength was faith in Mahomet. "Call me not *the Caliph of the Lord*," he would say, "I am " but *the Caliph of the Prophet of the Lord*." The question with him ever was, What did Mahomet command? or, What now would he have done? From this he never swerved a hair's-breadth. And so it was that he crushed Apostasy and laid secure the foundations of Islam. His reign was short but, after Mahomet himself, there is no one to whom the Faith is more beholden.

Evidence of Mahomet's sincerity. For this reason, and because his belief in the Prophet is itself a strong evidence of the sincerity of Mahomet himself, I have dwelt at some length upon his life and character. Had Mahomet begun his career a conscious impostor, he never could have won the faith and friendship of a man who was not only sagacious and wise, but throughout his life simple, consistent, and sincere.

CHAPTER XII

ACCESSION OF OMAR—REINFORCEMENTS FOR IRAC. CAMPAIGN UNDER ABU OBEID AND MOTHANNA

AUGUST TO MARCH 13-14 A.H. 634-635 A.D.

ON the morrow after Abu Bekr's death, Omar ascended the pulpit, and addressed the people assembled in the Mosque. "The Arabs," he said, "are like a rebellious camel, and it pertaineth to the driver which way to lead it. By the Lord of the Kaaba!—even thus will I guide you in the way that ye should go."

The first act of the new Caliph was to issue the despatch already mentioned, deposing Khalid. The second was, in fulfilment of Abu Bekr's dying behest, to raise a fresh levy for Mothanna. A standard was accordingly planted in the Court of the Mosque, and urgent proclamation made for soldiers to rally round it. Then followed the oath of fealty to Omar, taken by all who were in and around the City. Meanwhile, so great a fear of Persian prowess had fallen on the people, that none responded to the call. Seeing this, Mothanna, who was still at Medina, harangued them in a stirring speech. He told them of his victories, the endless plunder, the fair captives, and the fruitful fields of which they had already spoiled the enemy; "and the Lord," he added, "waiteth but to give the rest into your hands." Inflamed by his discourse, and stung by reproaches from Omar, men began at last to offer. The first to come forward was Abu Obeid, a citizen of Tayif; then, following him, numbers crowded to the standard. When a thousand were thus gathered, they said to Omar: "Now choose thee, either from the Coreish

Omar's
accession,
vi. 13 A.H.
Aug.
634 A.D.

Fresh
levies for
Irac.

A. H. 13-14. " or from the men of Medina, one of the chiefest to be our commander." " That I will not," replied the Caliph; " wherein lies the glory of a Companion but in this, that he is the first to rally round the Prophet? But now ye are backward; ye come not to the help of the Lord. Such as be forward to bear the burden, whether light or whether heavy, have the better claim. Verily I will give the command to none other but to him that first came forth." Then turning to Abu Obeid: " I appoint thee over this force, because thou wast the first to offer; and in eagerness for battle is the Arab's glory." With this emphatic declaration, he presented to him the standard; but, at the same time, earnestly enjoined upon him ever to take counsel with the other Companions and associate them with himself in the conduct of affairs. So the force started for Irac. Now also Omar removed the ban against the employment of the once Apostate tribes, and bade Abu Obeid to summon to his standard all, without distinction, who since their apostasy had made a good profession. Mothanna, with lightened heart, hastened back in advance of Abu Obeid, and re-entered Hira after the absence of a month.

Abu Obeid appointed commander.

Rustem rouses Persia against the invaders.

During this period further changes were transpiring at the unhappy Court of Persia. Prince and Princess succeeded one another amidst bloodshed and rebellion, till at last a royal lady, Buran, summoned the famous Rustem from Khorasan, and by his aid established herself upon the throne. Proclaimed supreme, the energy of Rustem was soon felt. The nobles rallied round him; great landholders rose against the invaders, and the whole country speedily cast off the Arabian yoke. Two columns were despatched from Medain, one under Jaban to cross the Euphrates and advance on Hira; the other under Narsa to occupy Kaskar on the nearer side. The people flocked to their standard, and the position of the Moslems grew precarious.

Abu Obeid's victory over the

Mothanna called in his forces, still all too few, abandoned Hira to the enemy, and falling back on the desert road to Medina, there awaited Abu Obeid. But he had

some time to wait. Swelled by Bedouin tribes on the way, and burdened by their families, it was a month before he came up. After a few days' repose, Abu Obeid took command of the combined force, and attacking Jaban, put him to flight. Then crossing the Euphrates, he surprised Narsa, strongly posted by a royal date-grove near Kaskar, routed his army and took his camp in which, with much spoil, was great store of rare dates reserved for royal use. These were distributed among the army, as common food for all. With the Fifth, Abu Obeid sent some of them to Omar: "Behold," he wrote, "the fruit wherewith the Lord hath fed us, eaten only by the kings of Persia; wilt thou see the same with thine own eyes, taste it with thine own lips, and praise the Lord for His goodness in giving us royal food to eat?" The unfortunate Delta, prey to alternate conquest and defeat, again acknowledged Moslem sway. The neighbouring Chiefs brought in their tribute and, in proof of loyalty, made a feast of good things for Abu Obeid. He declined to partake of it, unless shared equally with his soldiers. A further supply was furnished, and the army sat down with him to the repast.

Enraged at the defeat, Rustem assembled a still larger force under another great warrior, Bahman. The Imperial banner of panthers' skins was unfurled, and an array of elephants sent with the army. Before this imposing host, the Arabian army again fell back and, recrossing the Euphrates, took up ground on the western bank. Bahman encamped on the opposite shore. The field of battle was not far from Babylon, and a bridge of boats spanned the river. Bahman, in his pride, gave Abu Obeid the option of crossing unopposed, and thus of choosing either bank for the impending action. His advisers sought to dissuade him from quitting their more advantageous ground. But Abu Obeid made it a point of honour;—"Shall we fear death more than they?" he cried, as he gave the order at once to cross. They found the ground upon the farther side confined; and, though they were under 10,000, there was little room to manœuvre, and nothing but the bridge, to fall back upon. The unwieldy elephants, with jingling

A.H. 13-14.

Persians,
viii. 13 A.H.
Oct.

634 A.D.

Bahman
advances
against
Abu
Obeid.

A. H. 13-
14.

Battle of
the Bridge.
Abu Obeid
slain and
defeated,
viii. 13 A. H.
Oct.
634 A. D.

bells and barbaric trappings, spread confusion among the Arab cavalry. The riders, however, dismounting, went bravely at them, and tried, with some success, to cut the bands of the litters, and drive them from the field. Abu Obeid himself singled out the fiercest, a white elephant with great tusks, and rushed at it sword in hand. Vainly endeavouring to reach some vulnerable part, the huge beast caught him with its trunk, and trampled him to death. Consternation seized the ranks at the horrid spectacle. One after another, the captains whom Abu Obeid had named to take command in case of disaster, were slain, and the troops began to waver. Just then a soldier, appalled at the fate of his leaders, ran to the bridge, and crying,—*Die, as your Chiefs have died, or conquer*,—cut the first boat adrift. Retreat closed, the panic spread. The Moslems, hemmed in, were driven back upon the river. Many leapt into the deep swift stream, but few reached the other shore. At this eventful moment Mothanna rushed to the front. Backed by a few heroic spirits, among them a Christian chief of the Beni Tay, he seized the banner and, planting himself between the enemy and the bewildered Arabs, called out that he would hold the ground till all had passed over. Then he chided the author of the calamity, and commanded the bridge to be restored. “Destroy not your own selves,” he cried; “retire in order, and I will defend you.” While thus bravely holding the Persians at bay, the thrust of a lance imbedded the rings of his armour in a deep and dangerous wound. Heedless of it, he stood to his ground, endeavouring to calm the panic-stricken force. But in vain. The confusion increased, and before order could be restored, vast numbers had perished in the river. At last, the bridge repaired, a remnant escaped across; but 4000 were swept off by the flood, left dead upon the field, or borne wounded away. Of the new levies, some 2000, stung with remorse, fled from the terrible field back to Arabia; and Mothanna, again assuming the command, was left with only 3000 of his men. After the battle, Bahman was on the point of crossing the river to follow up his victory. Had he done

so, it would have fared badly with Mothanna and the disheartened remnants still holding their ground on the opposite bank. But fortunately at the moment, news reached Bahman of a revolt at Medain; and so, relinquishing his design, he hastened away to the distracted capital. Mothanna fell back upon Allis, farther down the river, and fixing headquarters there, bravely defended his early conquests amongst a people now not unfriendly to the Moslem cause. Jaban, unaware of Bahman's hasty recall, fell into Mothanna's hands and with his followers was beheaded. Things, no doubt, looked dark; but a hero like Mothanna was not one to despair. As on his first advance, so now he sought to recruit the diminished ranks from kindred tribes about him; and, before long, regained a firmer footing.

A.H. 13-14.

Mothanna retires with remnant to Allis.

Omar received with calmness the unhappy tidings. Abu Obeid's levies kept on their flight till they reached home; and some who belonged to Medina returning thither, covered their faces with shame. The Caliph spoke comfortably to them thus:—"Verily, I am a defence to every believer that faceth the enemy, even if trouble overtake him. The Lord have mercy on Abu Obeid, and be gracious unto him. Had he survived, and taken refuge on some sandy mound, I surely would have been his advocate and his defender." Muâdz, famous as a reciter of the Coran, was among those who fled. Shortly after, in the course of public recitation, he came to the verse: "Whosoever in the field shall give his back to the enemy (excepting again to join in battle), or shall turn aside unto another party, verily he draweth the wrath of God upon himself; his refuge shall be hell-fire—an evil end!" and he lifted up his voice and wept. Omar addressed him kindly: "Weep not, O Muâdz, thou hast not *turned aside unto another party*; thou hast turned aside to none but unto me." Such was the spirit of these Moslem heroes, even in defeat. The reverse had no other effect than to nerve the Caliph to redoubled effort. The fresh cry for a levy *en masse* soon resounded all over the Peninsula. But reinforcements in response would have

Omar's calm reception of the tidings.

Summons for a fresh levy.

A.H. 13-
14. been too late to help Mothanna if (fortunately for Islam) earlier succour had not reached him.

Numerous
reinforce-
ments join
Mothanna,

For the previous call was still drawing. Levies, from every quarter, daily reached Medina, eager—now the ban against Apostasy was removed—to show the sincerity of their repentance, and share in the rewards of victory. Each band as it came, besought Omar to send them to the favoured land of Syria. But the late victory on the Yermuk had made him easy in that direction; and every available man must now be hurried forward to Iraq. A brave levy raised under the banner of Jarir, urged that their ancestral relations were all with Syria; but Omar was firm, and at last reconciled them to set out at once for Persia by the promise that they should have one-fourth of all the royal Fifth of booty taken there. The fugitives also hastened back, seeking to retrieve their honour. But the most remarkable was a Christian tribe of the desert, which, without detriment to their faith, threw in their lot with the Moslems, and brought a contingent to their help. Thus, rapidly reinforced, Mothanna was soon stronger than ever, and ready for offensive movement. His troops were massed at first on the edge of the Arabian desert, near Khaffan. The women and children (for the practice was now common of carrying with the army house and home) were placed in security at a distance behind; some were even left with friendly citizens in Hira, although, since the last retreat, the city had been reoccupied by a Persian Satrap. Mothanna had also a trusty follower in hiding there, to give him notice of what was passing in the City.

Who
advances
against
Persian
army.

From this spy, Mothanna now learned that, matters having been settled at the Capital, a great army was in motion against him. Sending an urgent message to Jarir, now close at hand, to hurry on, he marched forward to Boweib on the western branch of the Euphrates and there, close by the future site of Kufa, and on ground approached by a bridge, awaited the enemy. Omar had cautioned him not again to risk his men by crossing the river before victory was secure; so he suffered the enemy undisturbed

to defile their troops across the bridge. The Persians advanced in three columns, an elephant defended by a company of footmen at the head of each, and all with tumult and barbaric din. It was the fast of Ramadhan; but under special dispensation the troops had been strengthened by a full repast. Mothanna, on his favourite charger (humorously called *the Rebel*, from its docility in action), rode along the lines, and exhorted his soldiers to quit them like men: "Your valour this day shall be a proverb. Be still as death, and if ye speak one to the other, speak it in a whisper. None amongst us shall give way this day. I desire not glory for myself, but glory for you all." And they answered him in like words; for he was beloved by his men.

The signal was to be the Takbir, or cry of *Great is the Lord*, repeated thrice; then, at the fourth, the general advance. But Mothanna had barely shouted the first, when the Persian myrmidons bore down; and the nearest column broke before them. Mothanna pulled his beard in trouble. Calling an officer, he bade him hasten with this message to the wavering corps: "The Ameer sendeth greeting, and saith, *Ye will not this day shame the Moslems!*" They gave answer, "Yea, we shall not!" And, as the broken ranks closed again in serried line, Mothanna smiled approvingly. The battle raged long and equally. At last, Mothanna, seeing that a desperate onset must be made, rode up to the Christian chief, and said: "Ye are one blood with us; come now, and as I charge, charge ye with me." The Persian centre quivered before the fierce onslaught, and as the dust cleared off it was seen to be giving way. The Moslem wings hitherto outflanked, now took heart, and charged. Then the Persian army fell back, and made for the bridge. Mothanna however swept before, and cut them off. In despair, they turned on their pursuers. But the fiery zeal of the Arabs, though a handful in comparison, beat back the forlorn charge. "The enemy," says an eye-witness, "driven before us, were brought up by the river and finding no escape, re-formed and charged again. One cried to our Leader to hold his

A.H. 13-
14.Battle of
Boweib,
ix. 13 A.H.
Nov.
634 A.D.

A.H. 12-
14. "banner back; *My work*, he answered, *is to move the banner on*. So forward we drove, and cut them up, "not one reaching even to the river bank." Mothanna reproached himself afterwards with having closed the bridge, and caused useless loss of his men. "I made a "grievous error," he confessed; "follow not my example "herein; it behoveth us not to close the way against such "as may be driven to turn upon us in despair." The carnage was almost unparalleled even in the annals of Islam, and it went on into the night. A hundred warriors boasted that they slew each ten men to his lance; hence the battle has been called *The field of Tens*. No engagement left marks wider or more lasting. For ages bones of the slain bleached the plain; and the men of Kufa had here, at their very door, lasting proof at once of the prowess and the mercilessness of the first invaders.

Enemy routed with terrible carnage.

Victory helped by Christian Arabs.

The victory is remarkable as gained in part by the valour of a Christian tribe. And yet further, the gallantest feat of the day was achieved by one of another Christian clan; for a party of Bedouin merchants with a string of horses for sale, arriving just as the ranks were being dressed, threw themselves into the battle on the Arab side. A youth from amongst them darting into the centre of the Persians, slew the Leader and leaping on his richly caparisoned horse, rode back crying, as he passed in triumph amidst the plaudits of the Moslem line: "I am of the Beni Taghlib. I am he that hath "slain the Chief."

Moslem loss.

The loss on the Moslem side was considerable. Mothanna mourned the death of a Brother who, when borne from the field mortally wounded, cried: "Exalt "your banners ye Beni Bekr, and the Lord will exalt "you, my men; let not my fall disturb you!" The Christian chieftain met a similar fate. Mothanna affectionately tended the last moments of both—the Christian and the Moslem—an unwonted sight on these fanatic fields. He performed the funeral service over his Brother and the other fallen Moslems, and said in his panegyric: "It assuageth my grief that they stood

"stedfast; they yielded not a step; and now here they
 "lie, the Martyrs of Boweib." A.H. 18-14.

The spoil was great. Immense stores of grain and The spoil.
 herds of cattle were captured. Supplies were sent to the
 families in their retreat; but as the convoy rode up, the
 women mistaking it for a hostile raid, rushed out with
 their wild Arab scream, and attacked it with stones
 and staves. The Leader soon made himself known, and
 praised their courageous bearing. "It well becometh the
 "Wives of such an army," he said, "thus to defend them-
 "selves." Then he told of the victory; "and lo," pointing
 to the stores of grain, "the first-fruits thereof!"

The country was now ravaged without let or hindrance Country re-occupied.
 to the very walls of Medain. The enemy's garrisons were
 driven back; and lower Mesopotamia and the Delta
 occupied anew. Parties scoured the country higher up,
 and many rich markets were ransacked. They pene-
 trated to Baghdad (then a mere village on the Tigris),
 and even as far north as Tekrit. Great booty was
 gathered in these plundering expeditions, to be divided
 in the usual way.

Mothanna lived but a few months after his last great
 victory. He never entirely recovered from his wounds
 received at the battle of the Bridge, and eventually
 succumbed. His merits have not been recognised as
 they deserve. That he did not belong to the Nobility
 of Islam was the misfortune which kept him in the back-
 ground. Jarir declined to serve under him, a common
 Bedouin like himself,—not even a Companion of the
 Prophet; and complained accordingly to the Caliph.
 Omar, as we shall see, listened to the appeal; and
 eventually appointed another Commander over both.
 But before entering on a new chapter in the Persian
 war, we must revert in our next, to the course of events
 in Syria.

The character of Mothanna, however, deserves more Mothanna.
 than a passing notice. Among the generals who secured
 the triumph of Islam, he was second only to one. Inferior
 to Khalid in dash and brilliancy of enterprise, he did not

A.H. 18-
14. yield to him in vigour and strategic skill. Free from the unscrupulous cruelty of that great Leader, we never hear of his using victory to gratify private ends. It was due alone to the cool and desperate stand which Mothanna made at the Bridge, that the Moslem force was not utterly annihilated there; while the formation so rapidly afterwards of a fresh army by which, with the help of Christian tribes (rare mark of Moslem liberality in contrast with the bigotry of later days) a prodigious host was overthrown, showed powers of administration and generalship far beyond his fellows. The repeated supersession of Mothanna cost the Caliphate much, and at one time even rendered the survival of Islam in Irac doubtful; but it never affected his loyalty to Omar. The sentiment of the day may have rendered it difficult for the Caliph to place a Bedouin of obscure origin in command of men who as Companions, had fought under the Prophet's very banner. But it is strange that no historian, jealous for the honour of the heroes of Islam, has regretted the supersession of one so distinguished in its annals, or sought to give Mothanna his deserved place as one of the great Generals of the world.

CHAPTER XIII

CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA. TAKING OF DAMASCUS. BATTLE OF FIHL

13-14 A.H. 634-635 A.D.

AFTER the terrible slaughter at Wacûsa, we left the Moslem army on the banks of the Yermuk, burying their dead, tending the wounded, and dividing the spoil.

The country in which they were now encamped,—“the land beyond Jordan on the east,”—differed from any they had previously known. Away to the south were the pastoral tracts of the Belcaa, and again to the north the pasture-lands of Jaulan. Between the two lay the hills and dales of Gilead, with fields of wheat and barley, dotted here and there with clumps of shady oak, olive and sycamore, and thickets of arbutus, myrtle, and oleander. It was emphatically “a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.” The landscape, diversified with green slopes and glens, is in season gay with carpeting of flowers and melody of birds. From the green high lands above the Yermuk may be descried the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee sparkling in the west, and away in the north the snow-capped peaks of Lebanon and Hermon;—striking contrast to the endless sands and stony plains of Arabia. Not less marked is the contrast with Chaldæa. There the marshy Delta displays a tropical luxuriance, while the plains abound with desolate sites of cities that flourished in early cycles of the world, strewn with fragments of pottery and bricks of strange device, mysterious records of bygone kingdoms. Here the pride of the Byzantine

A.H. 13-
14. empire was yet alive. Skirting the Jordan were busy cities founded by the Romans that boasted Church and Theatre and Forum. Even naval contests of the Naumachia might be witnessed in the land of Gilead. The country was populous and flourishing, inhabited by a mongrel race, half Arab half Syrian, who aspired to the privileges and aped the luxurious habits, without the chivalry or manliness, of the Roman citizen. It was altogether a civilisation of forced, and of exotic, growth. No sooner was the western prop removed than the people returned to their Bedouin life, true sons of the desert; the chariot and waggon were banished for the camel; and nothing left of Roman rule but columns and peristyles, causeways and aqueducts, great masses of ruined masonry,—which still startle the traveller as if belonging to another world. But, at the time we write of, the age of so-called civilisation was still dominant there. Such was the beautiful country, strange to the southern Arab both in natural feature and busy urban life, which was now traversed by the invading armies and soon became the beaten highway between Syria and the Moslem shrines.

Abu
 Obeida
 succeeds
 Khalid,
 viii. 13 A.H.
 Sept.
 634 A.D.

Having achieved the victory of Wacûsa, Khalid at once delivered to Abu Obeida the despatch from the new Caliph put into his hands (as we saw) at the commencement of the action, and with it surrendered the commission which he held from Abu Bekr. The other leaders were confirmed in their commands by Omar. The affront thus put upon Khalid did not damp his loyalty or zeal. He placed himself forthwith at the disposal of the new Commander, who published with reluctance the order of his deposition. Abu Obeida knew full well the rare military genius of Khalid; and, himself of a mild and unwarlike turn, was wise and magnanimous enough to ask, and as a rule implicitly to follow, his advice. Khalid, nobly putting aside the grievance, devoted his best energies to the service of the State; and, his supersession notwithstanding, remained virtually the chief Captain of Islam in the west.

The course of Moslem victory in Syria advanced with little let or hindrance. Persia's struggle was not for a limb, but for life itself. Here it was otherwise. Syria, indeed, contained the Holy places, and what was dear to the Greeks as the cradle of their faith. But after all, it was, though fair and sacred, but an outlying province of which a supine and selfish Court could without vital injury afford the loss. There were no such mortal throes in Syria as on the plains of Chaldæa.

A.H. 13-
14.
Byzantine
opposition
faint in
Syria.

Leaving a strong detachment on the Yermuk to keep communication open, the invading army resumed its northward march. On the way, news came that Damascus had been reinforced, and that in Palestine the scattered fragments of the defeated army had re-formed in the valley of the Jordan, thus threatening the Moslem rear. The moment was critical, and Abu Obeida wrote for orders to the Caliph. The answer was to strike a decisive blow at Damascus;—the Citadel of Syria gained, the rest was sure. Accordingly, a strong column was sent back to hold in check the enemy on the Jordan, while the main body advanced by the military road upon Damascus.

Advance
on Damas-
cus.

This City, the most ancient in the world, has, ever since the days of Abraham, survived through all vicissitudes the Capital of Syria. The great plain on which it stands is watered by streams issuing from adjoining mountain ranges; and the beautiful groves and rich meadows around have named it (with more reason than the Chaldæan delta) the "Garden of the world." An *entrepôt* of commerce between the east and west, it has been from age to age with varying fortuné, ever rich and populous. The city wall, twenty feet high and fifteen broad, still contains stones of cyclopean size that must have been builded in ages before our era. Over the gates and elsewhere there are turrets for defence, all of venerable structure. The traveller entering at the eastern gate may even in the present day pass through the narrow "street which is called Straight," as did St. Paul 1800 years ago. The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist still rears its great

Damascus.

A.H. 13-14. Dome, towering above all other buildings; and besides it there were, at the time of which we write, fifteen churches in the City and its suburbs. Not long before, Damascus had suffered severely from the alternating fortunes of the Persian war; but had now, in great measure, recovered its prosperity.

Damascus bursts in view of the invading army.

Such was the Capital of Syria, "Queen of Cities," which in all its radiance, surrounded far off by lofty mountains tipped with snow, now burst on the gaze of the Arab warriors. Some amongst them may perchance have visited it trading to the north; but as a whole, the army had heard of it only by report; and in beauty, richness and repose, fancy could hardly have exceeded the scene now stretched before them.

City invested, x. 13 A.H. Dec. 634 A.D.

The Arab force was strong enough to invest the city. Abu Obeida pitched his headquarters on the western plain. Khalid took ground at the eastern entrance, where the gateway was strengthened by the remains of an ancient temple. The other gates were similarly guarded. Battering-rams were drawn up against the walls; but every attempt at a breach of the massive defences failed. At first the Citizens, ignorant of the ardour and persistence inspired by the faith of Mahomet, regarded the attack as a desultory Bedouin raid like many before it, and looked for succour. The City lies two thousand feet above the sea, and the severity of the cold in spring would, no doubt, drive away the Arab tribes, used to a more genial climate. But months passed, and the host still hung obstinately around the walls. The Emperor, indeed, from Hims, attempted a diversion; but Dzul Kelaa, posted with his Himyar horse to the north of the City, kept the enemy at bay; and another column covered the besiegers from annoyance on the side of Palestine. The summer was coming on, and no relief appeared. The Moslems, instead of retiring, pressed their attack with increasing vigour; and the hopes of the Damascenes began to melt into despair.

On a certain day the Governor made a feast to the garrison. They ate and drank and, relaxing into merri-

ment, began to quit their posts. Khalid knew of the entertainment, for nothing escaped his vigilance;—"he neither slept himself, nor suffered others to fall asleep." And so, reckoning upon the season of revelry, he settled with Abu Obeida to seize it as the occasion for a general assault. The defences on Khalid's side were by far the most formidable; the moat was deeper and the walls were stronger. The garrison at the spot, holding it impregnable, were less on the alert than elsewhere; and in their negligence Khalid found his opportunity. In concert with certain daring spirits, comrades from Irac, he planned an escalade. Ladders were got in readiness, and scaling ropes with nooses to catch the projections of the castellated wall. In the darkness preceding dawn, they stealthily crossed the well-filled moat upon inflated skins; then, casting up their tackle, caught the battlements. The way thus silently secured, numbers scaled rapidly. Right and left they surprised the slumbering pickets and put them to the sword. The gate from within was forced open, and the appointed cry "*Allah Akbar!*" resounded from the walls to the expectant troops without. The Byzantine soldiery, panic-struck, fled before their assailants; and now through the gateway Khalid's column poured in, slaying and sacking all around. They had already penetrated near to the centre of the City, when their brilliant advance was brought to an unwelcome end. For on the other side a very different scene was taking place. The Governor, seeing that resistance to a general assault was hopeless, had issued from the western gate, and already tendered his submission to Abu Obeida. Terms were made upon the spot, and capitulation signed. The gates were thrown open, and the Moslem force, unopposed, kept streaming in from the western camp. As they advanced, cries of despair and appeals to stay the carnage met the ears of Abu Obeida, who no sooner heard what had transpired in the eastern quarter than he sent orders to stay the onslaught. Khalid remonstrated that the City had been fairly carried by assault, and was at their mercy; but in vain. Abu Obeida, juster and more clement, pointed to the treaty, and insisted

A.H. 18-14.

Storm and capitulation.

Summer, 14 A.H. 635 A.D.

A.H. 13-14- that its provisions should be fulfilled. Good faith was the best, as well as fairest, policy. The people were conciliated, and throughout Syria the capitulation of Damascus became the type of surrender.

Terms of capitulation.

One half of all the property, both money and buildings, private and public, was by this capitulation surrendered to the Conquerors. Besides the taxes levied under Byzantine rule, the tribute of one golden piece was imposed on every male adult who did not embrace Islam, and a measure of corn taken from every field. In this way the Arabs gained, not only large spoil and permanent revenue, without alienating the people and even with a show of moderation, but obtained also possession of buildings sufficient for their own accommodation and for the conduct of public business. And so this beautiful city, "the Eye of the East," passed from the grasp of Heraclius into the hands of the Caliph, and became "the Eden of Islam."

Church of St. John turned into a Mosque.

The churches of Damascus shared the common fate, and were equally divided between the Christians and the Conquerors. The Cathedral church of St. John the Baptist was separated into two. In one half the rites of the ancient faith continued to be celebrated, and the gospel of Jesus read; in the other half, carefully detached, the Coran was recited and the service of Islam observed; while from the dome the Muedzzin proclaimed daily the supremacy of the Arabian Prophet. For some eighty years the great Cathedral continued thus to shelter under one friendly roof the symbols and practice of both Religions. But that which was reasonable in the first beginnings of Islam, became intolerable in the rapid advance of arrogance and bigotry. One and another of the Caliphs sought, by offer of large payments, to obtain surrender of the entire Cathedral; but in vain. At last Welid, about the 90th year of the Hegira, took the law into his own hands, and summarily ejected the Christian worshippers. They complained against the injustice, and Omar II listened to their reclamation. But the Doctors of Islam declared it impossible to restore to Christian worship a place once consecrated by the Idzân and prayers of the Faithful;

and so at last the Christians consented to take, instead, A.H. 13-
14. the Churches of the City and its suburbs which had been confiscated under the equal partition of Abu Obeida. All that appeared Christian, therefore, in the style or decoration of the Cathedral church was now removed or defaced. But this wonderful edifice retains to the present hour marks of the different religions to which it has been devoted. In the massive foundations may be traced signs of a pagan Temple; these are surmounted by the architecture and embellishments of Byzantine art; and over the great entrance may still be deciphered the grand prophecy of the Psalmist, which may yet again be chanted within its walls, running thus:—

THY KINGDOM, O CHRIST, IS A KINGDOM OF
ALL AGES; AND THY DOMINION IS FROM
GENERATION

TO GENERATION.¹

All through the siege, Abul Aur guarded the army from attack on the south. He was pitched in the valley of the Jordan, near Fihl (the ancient Pella) which lay on the eastern slope of the valley, a few miles below the Lake of Tiberias. Ruins still mark the site 600 feet above the river bed. The basin of the Jordan is here broad and fertile, and the stream in many places fordable. Opposite Fihl, the vale of Jezreel, branching off from the plain of Esdraelon, opens into the Jordan valley. The broad approach is guarded on one side by the mountains of Gilboa the scene of Saul's disaster, and on the other by the frowning eminence of Beisan, to the walls of which

Greeks in valley of Jordan held in check. Spring 13 A.H. 634 A.D.

¹ The following is the inscription, being the Septuagint version of Psalm cxiv. 13, with the addition only of the words, *O Christ*:—

Η ΒΑCΙΑΕΙΑ . COT̄ Χ̄Ε ΒΑCΙΑΕΙΑ . ΠΑΝΤΩΝ . ΤΩΝ
ΑΙΩΝΩΝ . ΚΑΙ . Η . ΔΕΧΗΘΕΙΑ . COT̄ . ΕΝ . ΠΑΧ .
ΓΕΝΕΑΙ

KAI ΓΕΝΕΑΙ.

[Since the above was written the great edifice was burned down; but the inscription remains uninjured. The Mosque has been since repaired 3rd Ed.]

A.H. 13-14. — the Philistines fastened his body.¹ Mountain streams run along the valley, making it at times a sodden swamp. It was under the shadow of Beisan that the broken fragments of the Byzantine army took refuge, and were joined there by fresh supports. To secure their front, they dammed the streams, and so turned the whole vale into a marsh. At first the Arabs chafed under the stratagem, for their horses were disabled in the yielding ground. But they soon discovered that the enemy had shut himself in from exit, as well as from attack. Abul Aur securely posted, with his rear open to the fertile vale of the Jordan from which the Greeks were now cut off, was content to wait till the summer heat should dry up the quagmire. Meanwhile the enemy, 80,000 strong, was held in check, if not virtually blockaded.

Attacked
by main
army,
Summer
13 A.H.
634 A.D.,

The summer was well advanced when the Arabs broke up their camp at Damascus. They were eager to attack Heraclius at Hims (Emessa); but Omar forbade advance so long as an army was in the rear. Leaving, therefore, Yezid with a garrison of Yemen levies as Governor of Damascus, Abu Obeida hastened back with the rest of his army to Fihl. The province of the Jordan was in command of Shorahbil; to him, therefore, Abu Obeida committed the conduct of the campaign within his jurisdiction. Khalid led the van, Abu Obeida himself commanded one of the wings, Amru the other, and the famous warrior Dhirâr (of whom romance tells so many marvellous feats) directed the cavalry. Retracing their steps, they crossed the Yermuk near the hot springs of Omm Keis (the ancient Gadara), and marching down the valley of the Jordan encamped under Fihl. Abul Aur, who had held the enemy so long in check, was now detached towards Tiberias, to prevent diversion from that

¹ 1 Samuel xxxi. 7, *et seq.* *Beth-Shan* by contraction *Beisan* (the ancient Scythopolis), once a noble city, the seat of a Bishop and site of Convents, the birthplace of Cyril and Basilides. Here Alexander had his interview with Cleopatra; and Pompey took it on his way from Damascus to Judæa. Pella has a special interest, as the refuge of the Christians when Titus attacked Judæa. Both Fihl and Beisan at the time of our history were populous and flourishing cities.

quarter. And the main army, taking his place before Beisan, continued patiently the blockade. A.H. 13-14.

Reduced to straits, and mistaking inaction for remissness, the Byzantine army thought to fall upon the Arabs unawares. They little knew the vigilance of Shorahbil who night and day was on the watch. Fetching a circuit, the enemy suddenly appeared on the Moslem flank. They met a warm reception, and there ensued a battle as fierce and obstinate as any that had yet taken place. All day the Greeks held their ground; but by nightfall the impetuosity of the Arabs had its way. The Byzantine captain fell, and his army broke and fled. The greater part were caught in the marsh, and few escaped the sword. "Thus the Lord wrought for His people," writes the pious annalist; "and the morass which we thought "a curse was turned into a blessing." The plain of Esdraelon had thus again looked down upon another great and sanguinary conflict which, following that of Wacûsa, decided for many a long century the fate of Syria. The Moslem loss was trifling; the immense booty served but to sharpen the Arab appetite for further victory.

No enemy was now left in sight. Omar, therefore, remembering the behest of Abu Bekr, gave orders that the contingent of Khalid should return to Irac. Its ranks, thinned by hard fighting, were made up to former strength by transfer of volunteers from the Syrian army. Thus recruited, the troops (under command, not now of Khalid, but of Hashim son of Otba) recrossed the desert just in time to take part in the great battle of Cadesiya. Abu Obeida, with Khalid, having now in view the advance on Hims, returned to Damascus. Shorahbil and Amru were left to reduce to order the province of the Jordan, and their task was easy. The fire of patriotism had never burned brightly anywhere in Syria; and what there might have been was now extinguished by the listless cowardice of the Byzantine court. To the free Bedouin race, weary of Roman trammels, the prospect of Arabian rule was far from unwelcome. Neither were the Jews and Samaritans, unfavourable to the invaders; indeed, we find them not

and routed.
Battle of
Fihl.

Khalid's
contingent
returns to
Irac.

Province
of Jordan
reduced.

A.H. 13-
14.
— infrequently giving aid and information to the enemy. Even the Christians cared little for the maintenance of a Government which by courtly and ecclesiastical intolerance had done its best to alienate their affection.

Tiberias
and district
east of
Jordan.

Beisan for some time held out; but the garrison, when their sallies had been repeatedly repulsed, at last capitulated. Tiberias followed, and both obtained the terms of Damascus. Jerash, Maab, Bostra, and other strongholds tendered submission. And so the whole tract from the Jordan eastward to the Desert was brought under control, and safely garrisoned.

Rest of
Syria.

From Damascus Yezid extended his authority eastward as far as Tadmor. Toward the sea, his brother Muavia, meeting little opposition, reduced Sidon and Beyrut, and pushed his conquests to the north of Tripolis. Damascus itself, largely occupied by Arabs, quickly assumed the garb of a Moslem city. Christian power and influence lingered longer on the coast. Once and again, from seaward, Byzantine arms retook what the Arabs had gained. It was not, indeed, until the Moslem rulers had begun to cope with the naval forces of the Mediterranean, that their authority was riveted along the littoral, as it had long been in the interior.

Leaving Abu Obeida and Khalid to renew the campaign northward, we return for the present to stirring scenes on the plains of Chaldæa.

CHAPTER XIV

YEZDEGIRD SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE OF PERSIA. BATTLE OF CADESIYA

14 A.H. 635 A.D.

WE left Mothanna, after the great battle of Boweib, ravaging at will the terror-stricken coasts of Chaldæa. But another wave of war was about to sweep over the unhappy land. A new movement was taking place at Medain. The Persian nobles, chafing under the weakness of Rustem and the feeble Queen, began to cry out that these were dragging the Empire down to ruin. The ladies of the Court assembled to search whether any king might not yet be discovered of the royal blood. And so Yezdegird was found, saved as a child from the massacre of Siroes, now a youth of twenty-one. He was placed upon the throne. Around the young King the nobles rallied loyally, and something was rekindled of ancient patriotic fire. Troops were gathered, Mesopotamia reoccupied, and the cities as far as Hira strongly garrisoned.

Yezdegird
king of
Persia.
End of
13 A.H.
Dec.
634 A.D.

Revived
military
movement.

The people returned to their allegiance; and Mothanna, finding his diminished army unable to cope with the rising which in the Spring assumed such formidable dimensions, again withdrew behind the Euphrates. He sent an urgent message to Omar of the new perils threatening all around. The danger was met bravely by the Caliph. "I swear by the Lord," was his emphatic word, "that I will smite down the proud princes of Persia with the sword of the princes of Arabia." It was clearly impossible permanently to hold Mesopotamia while it was dominated by the Capital of Persia so close at hand. Medain must be taken

Mothanna
again falls
back.

A.H. 14. at any cost, and a great army gathered for the purpose. Orders, more stringent than ever (as already told), went forth for a new and universal levy. "Haste hither," was the command sent everywhere, "hasten speedily!" And forthwith Arabia again resounded with the call to arms. The tribes from the south were to assemble before the Caliph at Medina; those lying northward,—the demand being urgent and time precious,—were to march straight to Mothanna. So much arranged, Omar set out on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. This accomplished, he repaired to the camp outside Medina, where the Contingents as they came in were marshalled. There it was debated whether the Caliph, as he proposed, and as the people wished, should in person lead the army to Irac. The chief Companions were against it. Defeat, if Omar were on the field, might be fatal; seated at Medina, even at the worst, he could launch column after column on the enemy. Omar yielded; but the readiness he had thus shown to bear in his own person the heat and burden of the day, added new impulse to the movement.

Omar orders another levy.

Goes on pilgrimage, xii. 13 A. H. Feb. 635 A. D.

Sad appointed commander in Irac.

Who now should be the leader of this great army in Irac? Mothanna and Jarir were but Bedouin chieftains. None but a Peer could take command of the proud tribes now flocking to the field. The matter was at the moment under discussion, when there came a despatch from Sad, the Caliph's lieutenant with the Hawazin, reporting the levy of a thousand good lances from amongst that tribe. "Here is the man!" cried out the assembly. "Who?" asked the Caliph. "None but the *Ravering Lion*,"¹ was the answer,—"Sad, the son of Malik." The choice was sealed by acclamation; and Omar at once summoned Sad. Converted at Mecca while yet a boy, the new Ameer of Irac was now forty years of age. He is known as "the first who drew blood in Islam," and was a noted archer in the Prophet's wars.² He took rank also as the nephew of Mahomet's mother. Short and dark, with large head and shaggy hair, Sad was brave, but not well-favoured.

¹ A play upon the name *Sad*, or "lion."

² *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 57, 61.

The Caliph gave him advice on the momentous issues of the campaign, and warned him not to trust in his extraction. "The Lord," he said, "looketh to merit and good works, not to birth; for in His sight all men are equal." Admonished thus, Sad set out for Irac, with 4000 men the first-fruits of the new levy. According to Arab custom, these marched now with their wives and children.

As the levies kept coming in, Omar sent them on, one after another, to join Sad. The numbers swelling rapidly, embraced the chivalry of all Arabia. Toleiha, the *quondam* prophet, now an exemplary believer, and Amr ibn Maderkerib, went in command of their respective tribes; and Omar wrote that each alone was worth a thousand men. Ashath, also, the apostate rebel of the south, now joined the army with a column of his tribe. In short, Omar "left not a single person of any note or dignity in the land, whether warrior, poet, orator, or chieftain, nor any man possessed of horse or weapons, but he sent him off to Irac." Thus reinforced, Sad found himself at the head of 20,000 men, so that, with the column now on its way from Syria, the numbers were over 30,000,—by far the largest force yet mustered by the Arabs on the Chaldæan plain. The new levies, with the veterans of Mothanna, drew together at Sheraf on the borders of the desert, fifteen or twenty miles south of Hira.

Before Sad reached the appointed rendezvous, Mothanna had passed away. His brother Moanna was just returning from a mission to the Beni Bekr, whom the Court of Persia were endeavouring to gain over. He went out to meet Sad with intelligence of his having frustrated the attempt, as well as with the sad news of his brother's death. He delivered also Mothanna's dying message to the new Commander, advising that the Arabs should hold to their ground on the confines of the desert. "Fight there the enemy," was his last behest;—"Ye will be the victors; and, even if worsted, ye will have the friendly desert wastes behind: there the Persians cannot enter, and from thence ye will again return to the attack." Sad, as he received the message, blessed the memory of the great General. He

A.H. 14

Sad with
the new
levies
marches
to Irac.Death of
Mothanna,
ii. 14 A.H.
April 635.

A.H. 14. — also made the bereaved family his special care ; and, the more effectually to discharge the trust, in true Arab fashion, took to wife his widow Selma.

Sad marshals his troops,

The army was marshalled by Sad anew. Companies were formed of ten, each under a selected leader. Warriors of note were appointed to bear the standards. Columns and squadrons were made up by clans and tribes ; and thus by clans and tribes they marched, and also went into the field of battle. Departments likewise were established for the several duties incident to military service. The chief commands were given to Veterans who had fought under the Prophet's banner ; for in this army there were no fewer than 1400 Companions, of whom ninety-nine had fought at Bedr. Following Mothanna's counsel, now confirmed by Omar, Sad marched slowly to Odzeib, still keeping to the border of the Desert. There he left the women and children protected by a party of horse, and advanced to Cadesiya, a great plain washed on its farther side by the inland channel of the Euphrates already described, and bounded on the west by the Trench of Sapor (in those days a running stream) with the desert waste beyond. The plain was traversed by the highway from Arabia, which here crossed the river on a bridge of boats leading to Hira, and thence across the Peninsula to Medain. Such was the field of battle which was shortly to settle the fate of Persia. Sad, keeping still to the western bank, fixed his headquarters at Codeis, a small fortress overlooking the stream and a little way below the bridge. Here he encamped and waited patiently the movements of his enemy.

and encamps at Cadesiya, Summer 14 A. H.

The King, impatient, orders advance.

Rustem would have played the same waiting game as Sad, had not the King become impatient. The Arabs were making continual raids across the river into Mesopotamia. The castles of the nobles were attacked, and their grounds laid waste. A marriage procession was captured near to Hira, and the bride, a Satrap's daughter, carried off with her maids and trousseau into the Moslem camp. The spring passed away, and the summer came ; but with it no relief. Herds were driven from the pasture-

lands, and frequent forays served at once to furnish the Moslem army with food and punish their faithless allies. The people grew clamorous; and the great landlords at last made it known that if help were delayed, they must go over to the enemy. Moved by their cries, Yezdegird turned a deaf ear to Rustem, and insisted on immediate advance. A.H. 14.

Meanwhile, Sad kept up constant communication with Omar. When asked for a description of the camp, —“Cadesiya,” he told the Caliph, “lies between the Trench of Sapor and the river; in front is the deep stream, which on the left meanders through a verdant vale downwards from the town of Hira; a canal leads in like direction to the lake of Najaf, and upon its margin stands the palace of Khawarnac. Our right is guarded by an impassable swamp, and our rear rests on the desert.” Omar, satisfied with the report, enjoined vigilance and patience. But first, he said, Yezdegird must be summoned to embrace the Faith at the peril of his kingdom. With this commission, twenty warriors of commanding mien crossed the plain and presented themselves at the gates of Medain. As they were led to the Royal presence, the rabble crowded round, and jeered at the rough habit of the Arabs, clad in striped stuff, and armed with rude weapons of the desert,—contrasting strangely with the courtly splendour of the Regal city. “Look!” they cried, mocking, “look at the woman’s distaff,”—a Bedouin bow slung over the shoulder,—little thinking of the havoc it was soon to make amongst their crowded ranks. As the Chiefs entered the precincts, the prancing and champing of the beautiful steeds, and the wild bearing of the stalwart riders, struck awe into the heart of the King and his effeminate Nobles. Yezdegird demanded through an interpreter, wherefore, thus unprovoked, they dared invade his kingdom. One after another the Arabian spokesmen told him of the Prophet who had wrought a mighty change in their land, and of the blessings and obligations of Islam. “Embrace the Faith,” they said, “and thou shalt be even as we; or, if thou wilt, pay tribute, and come under our pro-

Sad gives Omar description of field.

Deputation summons Yezdegird to embrace Islam.

A.H. 14. "tection; which things if thou refuse, the days of thy kingdom are numbered." The King replied contemptuously: "Ye are naught, ye are naught! hungry adventurers from a naked land; come, I will give you a morsel, and ye shall depart full and content." The Arabs replied in strong but modest words. "Thou speakest truth; we are but poor and hungry; yet will the Lord enrich and satisfy us; hast thou chosen the sword? then between us shall the sword decide." The King's wrath was kindled. "If it were not that ye are Ambassadors, ye should have been put to death, all of you. Bring hither a clod of earth, and let the mightiest among them bear it as a burden from out the city gates." The Arabs embraced the happy augury. A stalwart horseman forthwith seized the load, mounted his charger, and bearing it, rode away. Rustem coming up just then, the King told him of the affront he had put upon the simple Arabs. "Simple!" cried Rustem, "it is thou that art simple"; and he sent in haste to get the burden back. But the horseman was already out of sight; hurrying back to Cadesiya, he cast the clod before his Chief, and exclaimed, "Rejoice, O Sad! for, lo, the Lord hath given thee of the soil of Persia!"

Rustem with great army advances slowly,

Rustem could no longer delay. Elephants and men had been gathered from every quarter to swell the host, now 120,000 strong. Yet, notwithstanding, he marched slowly and unwillingly. The auguries, we are told, boded some great disaster. But he cherished the hope that the Arabs, pinched in their supplies, would break up suddenly and disappear; or that, wearied with suspense, they might be drawn from their strong position across the river. After great delay upon the road, he crossed the Euphrates below Babylon. Advancing then on Hira, he chided the people for siding with the Arabs; but they replied that, deserted by the King, they had no resource but to bow before the invaders. At last, having whiled away many weeks, he came within sight of the Moslem force and pitched his camp on the opposite bank of the river.

And encamps opposite Arabs, ix. 14 A.H. Oct. 635 A.D.

During this long period of inaction, the impatience of

the Arabs was checked by the strong hand of Sad, to whom as lieutenant of the Caliph they were bound to yield implicit obedience. Excepting raids and reconnoitring expeditions nothing was attempted. Some of these, however, were sufficiently exciting. Toleiha, the *quondam* prophet, entered alone the enemy's camp by night, and carried off three horses. Hotly chased, he slew his pursuers one after another, and single-handed carried off the last, who embraced Islam and thereafter fought faithfully by his captor's side. As the Enemy drew near, the Moslem host lay couched like the tiger in its lair, ready for the fatal spring.

A.H. 14.
Sad re-
strains his
army.

The armies at last now face to face, Rustem had no more excuse for putting off the decisive day. On the morning after his arrival he rode along the river bank to reconnoitre; and, standing on an eminence by the bridge, sent for the Moslem officer guarding the passage. A colloquy ensued; and Sad consented that three of his captains should go to the Persian camp, and there explain their demands to Rustem. One after another, these presented themselves. Each held the same language: *Islam, Tribute, or the Sword*. Rustem, now contemptuous in his abuse, now cowering under the fierce words of the envoys, and scared by dreams and auguries, demanded time to consider. Three days' grace, they replied, was the limit allowed by their Prophet; and that was given.

Rustem
gets three
days' truce.

When the term was over, Rustem sent to inquire whether he or they should cross for battle. Strongly pitched, as we have seen, Sad had no thought of moving, and bade the Persian cross as best he might. Rustem advanced, but passage was denied. All night the Arabs watched the bridge. But Rustem had another scheme; he meant to cross the river by a dam. During the night his myrmidons cast fascines and earth into the channel, and morning light discovered a causeway over which it was possible to pass.

Throws
dam across
river,

At early morn, Rustem, clad in helmet and double suit of mail, leaped gaily on his horse. "By the morrow we shall have beaten them small," he cried; but apart with

And
crosses to
field of
battle.

A.H. 14. — his familiars he confessed that celestial omens were against him. And, indeed, previous mishaps and the brave bearing of the Arab chiefs were sufficient, astrology apart, to inspire grave forebodings. Crossing the dam unopposed, he marshalled his great host on the western bank, with its centre facing the fortress of Codeis. Of thirty war elephants on the field, eighteen supported the centre, the remainder being divided between the wings.¹ On a canopied golden throne by the riverside, Rustem watched the issue of the day. Messengers, posted within earshot of each other all the way to Medain, shouted continually the latest news, and kept Yezdegird informed of everything that passed.

Sad, disabled by illness, marshals army from ramparts of Codeis.

As the Persians began to cross, the advanced guard of the Arabs fell back upon Codeis, beneath which the main body was drawn up. On its ramparts, Sad, disabled by blains and boils, lay stretched upon a litter; from whence casting down his orders inscribed on scraps of paper, he guided thus the movements of the day. The troops, unused to see their leader in a place of safety, murmured; and verses lampooning him passed round the camp. That he, the archer of renown, the "first to shed blood in Islam," should be thus aspersed was insupportable, and Sad had the ringleaders imprisoned in the fortress. He then descended, and discovered to the troops the grievous malady which rendered it impossible for him even to sit upright, much less to mount his horse. They accepted his excuse; for no man could doubt his bravery; but still a certain feeling of discontent survived. Resuming his couch, he harangued the army from the battlements, and then sent his Generals, with the Orators and Poets of the force, along the ranks with stirring words to rouse their martial zeal.

Warlike texts recited before the Moslem host.

At the head of every column was recited the revelation of the thousand angels fighting on the Prophet's side, together with such texts as these:—*Stir up the Faithful unto*

¹ These were distinct from the riding elephants of the Court and nobles, and must all have been imported from India. The elephant was not used by the Assyrians in war. It rarely appears in their mural representations, and only under peaceful associations.

battle. If there be twenty steadfast among you, they shall put to flight two hundred, and a hundred shall put to flight a thousand. The Lord will cast terror into the hearts of the Infidels. Beware that ye turn not your back in battle; verily he that turneth his back shall draw down upon him the wrath of God. His abode shall be Hell-fire. The mention of "The day of Decision" at Bedr, with the Divine command to fight, never failed to fire the souls of the Moslem host; and here we are told, that upon its recital "the heart of the people was refreshed, and their eyes lightened, and they realised the Divine peace¹ that followeth thereupon."

A.H. 14.

The word passed round that, till midday prayer, no one should stir. The Commander-in-chief would give the first signal by the Takbir, or war-cry, ALLAH AKBAR, *Great is the Lord!* and the host would then take up the shout three successive times from him. At the second and third shout, they were to gird their weapons on and make their horses ready. At the fourth, the ranks were to rush in one body forward with the watchword, *Our help is from the Lord!* The order was deranged by the enemy, who, hearing the first shout, advanced at once; whereupon impatient warriors from the Moslem front stepped out and, challenging to single combat, did prodigies of valour. The heroic feats of Bedr were re-enacted on this field, and the spoil, stripped from the fallen champions, was beyond description rich. Thus Amr ibn Madekerib carried off triumphantly the bracelets and jewelled girdle of a princely victim. Another, shouting gaily the praises of his mistress,² closed with Hormuz, "a prince of the Gate," and bore him with his diadem captive to Sad. A leader of the Beni Temîm, singing like verses, pursued his adversary through the enemy's ranks; there he seized a mule-driver, and carried him with his laden beast to the

Battle of
Cadesiya,
ix. 14 A.H.
Nov. 635.

First day;
called
Armath.

¹ Same word as *Shechina*, divine influence overshadowing the heart: Suras viii. and xlviii. The practice of reciting such Suras or portions of them before battle, has been handed down to the present day.

² His song, of the ordinary type, ran thus:—

"The maid, with hanging tresses, milk-white breast and fingers tapering,
Knoweth full well the hero who will lay the warriors low."

A.H. 14. Moslem lines; it was the King's baker with a load of royal viands. More remarkable still is the story of Abu Mihjan. A ringleader in the detraction of Sad, his offence was aggravated by drunkenness. Bound a prisoner in the fortress, under charge of Selma the General's wife, he was seized by an irrepressible ardour to join the battle. At his earnest entreaty, and under pledge of early return, the lady set him free, and mounted him on her husband's white mare. An unknown figure, he dashed now into the enemy's host, and now in circuits round it, performing marvels of bravery. Some thought it might be the chief of the Syrian contingent expected that day. Others opined that it was Al Khizr, precursor of the angelic band. But Sad himself said, "If it were not that Abu Mihjan is safe in durance under Selma's care, I could swear it were he, and the mare my own." According to promise, the hero, satisfied with his exploits, returned to Selma, who reimposed his fetters as before, and shortly after secured his release.¹ Now the elephants bore down upon the Bedouin lines. The brunt of the onset fell upon the Beni Bajila. The huge beasts swaying to and fro,—
 The elephants. "their *howdas*, manned with warriors and banners, like "moving castles,"—affrighted the Arab horses, which broke away at the horrid sight. The Beni Asad diverted the attack upon themselves, and in the heroic act left four hundred dead upon the field. Then the elephants attacked the wings, spreading consternation all around; and the enemy, profiting by the confusion, pressed forward. The position was critical; and Sad, as a last resource, bade Asim rid them from the danger at whatever cost. At once that gallant chief chose a band of archers and of

¹ He confessed to Selma that in his cups he had been singing these verses:—

"Bury me when I die by the roots of the vine;
 The moisture thereof will distil into my bones;
 Bury me not in the open plain, for then I much fear
 That no more shall I taste again the sweet grape."

But he pledged his word to her that he would not again indulge in drinking, nor abuse the Ameer. Selma then obtained his release, and he joined his comrades on the last great day.

agile skirmishers, who, drawing near, picked their riders from off the elephants, and boldly cut the girths. The howdas fell, and the great beasts, with none to guide them, fled. Thus relieved, the Arabs regained their ground. But the shades of darkness were falling, and both armies retired for the night. A.H. 14.

The Moslem force was downcast. The uncertain issue added point to the invectives against Sad, and, what was still harder for him to bear, the taunts of Selma. During the day, as seated by her lord, they watched together from the ramparts the deadly conflict, she exclaimed, "O for an hour of Mothanna! Alas, alas, there is no Mothanna this day!" Stung by the words, Sad struck her on the face, and pointing to Asim and his band, said, "What of Mothanna? Was he anything at all compared with these?" "Jealousy and cowardice!" cried the high-spirited dame, faithful to her first husband's memory. "Not so," said Sad, somewhat softened; "I swear that no man will this day excuse me if thou dost not, who seest in what plight I lie." The people sided with the lady; but Sad was no coward, and he lived the contumely down. Sad up-braided by his wife.

The morning was occupied with the wounded and the dead; and the day drew on before fighting recommenced. Just then the first column of the Contingent sent back from Syria came in view. It was led by Cacao, who, leaving Hashim to bring up the main body of five thousand on the following day, hurried forward with a thousand men. By skilful disposition Cacao magnified his force, in the eyes of both friend and foe. He arranged his men in squadrons of a hundred, each a little distance behind the other. Advancing, he saluted Sad and his comrades, and bade them joy of the coming help. Then calling on the rest to follow, he at once rode forth to defy the enemy. The "hero of the Bridge"¹ accepted the challenge. Cacao recognised his Royal foe; and crying out, "Now will I avenge Abu Obeid and those that perished at the Bridge," rushed on his man and cut him to the ground. Second day; called Aghwath. Return of first Syrian brigade.

¹ Bahman; see p. 92.

A.H. 14. As each squadron came up, it charged with all the appearance of a fresh and independent force across the plain in sight of both armies, and shouted the Takbir, which was answered by the same ringing cheer, *Allah Akbar*, from the Moslem line. The spirits of the Arabs rose. They forgot the disasters of yesterday; and by so much the heart of the Persians sank, who saw their heroes slain, one after another, at the hands of Cacao and his fellows. They had no elephants this day, for the gear was not yet repaired. Pressed on all sides, their horse gave way, and Rustem was only saved by a desperate rally. But the Persian infantry stood their ground, and the day closed, the issue still trembling in the balance. The fighting was severe and the carnage great. Two thousand Moslems lay dead or wounded on the field, and ten thousand Persians. All night through the Arabs kept shouting the names and lineage of their several tribes. There was shouting, too, in the Persian camp. And so, encouraging themselves, each side awaited the final struggle.

Third day;
called
Ghimas.

On the third morning, the army was engaged in the mournful task of removing their fallen comrades from the field. The space of a mile between the two lines was strewn with them. The wounded were made over to the women to nurse, if perchance they might survive, or rather,—in the language of Islam—"until the Lord should "decide whether to grant, or to withhold, the crown of "Martyrdom." The dead were borne to Odzeib, a valley in the rear, where the women and children hastily dug graves for them in the sandy soil. The wounded, too, were carried thither. For the suffering sick it was a weary way under the burning sun. A solitary palm-tree stood on the road, and under its welcome shade they were for a moment laid. Its memory is consecrated in such plaintive verse as this:—

"Hail to the grateful palm that waves between Cadesiya and Odzeib.
Around thee grow the wild sprigs of camomile and hyssop.
May dew and shower refresh thy leaves for evermore,
And let never a palm-tree be wanting in thy dry and heated waste!"

A day and night of unceasing conflict was still before

the combatants. The spirit of the Persians, whose dead lay unburied on the field, flagged at the disasters of the preceding day, but much was looked for from the elephants, which, now refitted, appeared upon the field, each protected by a company of horse and foot. The battle was about to open, when suddenly Hashim came in sight with the main body of his Syrian contingent. Sweeping across the plain, he charged right into the enemy, pierced their ranks, and reaching the river bank, turned and rode triumphantly back, amidst shouts of welcome. The fighting was again severe, and the day balanced by alternate victory and repulse. Yezdegird, alive to the crisis, sent his bodyguard into the field. The elephants were the terror of the Arabs, and again threatened to paralyse their efforts. In this emergency, Cacao had recourse to Cacao, who was achieving marvels, and had already slain thirty Persians in single combat; so that the annalists gratefully acknowledge that "had it not been for what the Lord put it into the heart of Cacao to do, we surely had been that day worsted." Sad now learned that the eye and trunk were the only vulnerable parts of the elephant: "Aim at these," he said, "and we shall be rid of this calamity." So Cacao with his brother Asim and a band of followers issued on the perilous enterprise. There were two huge elephants, the leaders of the herd. Dismounting, Cacao boldly advanced, and into the eye of one, the "great White elephant" it was called, he thrust his lance. Smarting at the pain, it shook fearfully its head, threw the Mahout to the ground, and swaying its trunk to and fro, hurled Cacao to a distance. The other fared still worse, for they pierced both its eyes, and slashed its trunk. Uttering a shrill scream of agony, the blinded, maddened creature darted forward on the Arab ranks. Shouts and lances drove it back upon the Persians. Thus kept rushing wildly to and fro between the armies, and followed at last by the other elephants, it charged right into the Persian line; and so the whole herd of huge animals,—their trunks aloft, trumpeting as they rushed, and trampling all before them,—plunged into the river

A.H. 14.

—
Fighting resumed:
Syrian contingent comes up.

The elephants put to flight.

A.H. 14. — and disappeared on the farther shore. For the moment the din of war was hushed as both lines gazed at the portentous sight. But soon the battle was resumed, and they fought on till darkness again closed on the combatants with the issue still in doubt.

The Night of Clangour: fight till morning.

The third night brought rest to neither side. It was a struggle for life. At first there was a pause, as the light faded away; and Sad, fearing lest the vast host should overlap his rear, sent parties to watch the fords. There had as yet been hardly time for even momentary repose when, early in the night, it occurred to some of the Arab leaders to rally their tribes with the view of harassing the enemy. The movement, made at the first without Sad's cognisance, drew on a general engagement in the dark. The screams of the combatants and din of arms made *The Night of Clangour*,¹ as it is called, without parallel in the annals of Islam. It could only be compared to "the clang of the blacksmith's forge." Sad betook himself to prayer, for no sure tidings reached him all night through. Morning broke on the two hosts, worn and weary. Then arose Cacao, crying out that one more vigorous charge must turn the tide, "for victory is ever his that persevereth to the end." Four-and-twenty hours long the Arabs had fought unceasingly. And now they issued forth with all the freshness and alacrity of a new attack. The Persian wings began to waver. A fierce onslaught shook their centre, which opened and laid bare the bank with Rustem on his throne. Tempestuous wind arose, and the canopy, no longer guarded, was blown into the river. The wretched Prince had barely time to fly and crouch beneath a sumpter mule, when the chance blow of a passer-by brought down its load upon his back. He crawled into the river and attempted there to hide himself. But a soldier saw and recognised his royal foe,

Persians routed and Rustem slain.

¹ *Bartr.* Each day had its name, as given in margin. The first and third have no apparent meaning, perhaps names of places. The second may refer to the "succour" brought by the Syrian contingent. See C. de Perceval, vol. iii. p. 481. Gibbon (chap. li.) ignores the first day, and names the other three, as *Succour*, *Concussion*, and *Barking*.

and drawing him out, slew him on the spot; then mounting on his throne, he loudly proclaimed the conquered Prince's end. A.H. 14.

No sooner was their leader slain, than rout and slaughter of the Persian host began. Some of the columns succeeded in passing the dam; but it was soon cut (probably by themselves to prevent pursuit), and swept away with a multitude upon it, by the pent-up stream. To the right and left, up the river bank and down, the Mussulmans chased the fugitives relentlessly. The plain, far and wide, was strewn with dead. The fugitive multitude, hunted into the fens and marshes, were everywhere put mercilessly to the sword. But the army was too exhausted to carry on the pursuit. Destruction of Persian host.

The Mussulman loss far exceeded that of any previous engagement. In the final conflict 6000 fell, besides 2500 in the days before. No sooner was the battle ended, than the women and children, with clubs and pitchers of water, issued forth on a double mission of mercy and of vengeance. Every fallen Mussulman, still warm and breathing, they gently raised and wetted his lips with water. But towards the wounded Persians they knew no mercy; for them they had another errand—to raise their clubs and give the *coup de grâce*. Thus had Islam for the moment extinguished pity, and implanted in the breasts of women, and even of little children, cold-blooded cruelty. Moslem loss.

The spoil was great beyond all parallel, both in amount and costliness. Each soldier had six thousand pieces, besides the special gifts for veterans and such as showed extraordinary valour. The jewels stripped from Rustem's body were worth 70,000 pieces, although its most costly portion, the Tiara, had been swept away. The great banner of the Empire was captured on the field, made of panthers' skins, and so richly garnished with gems as to be valued at 100,000 pieces. Thus did the needy Arabs revel in the treasures of the East, the preciousness of which exceeded almost their power to comprehend. Vastness of booty.

For the enemy the defeat was fateful and decisive. Little more than thirty months had passed since Khalid

A.H. 14. set foot in Irac; and already that Empire,—which fifteen years before had humbled the Byzantine arms, ravaged Syria, and encamped triumphantly on the Bosphorus,—was crumbling under the blows of an enemy whose strength never exceeded thirty or forty thousand Arabs rudely armed. The battle of Cadesiya reveals the secret. On one side there was lukewarm, servile following; on the other, an indomitable spirit, which after long and weary hours of fighting nerved the Moslems for the final charge. The vast host, on which the last efforts of Persia had been lavished, was totally discomfited; and, though broken columns escaped across the river, the military power of Persia never again gathered into formidable and dangerous shape. The country far and wide was terror-struck. The Bedouins on either side of the Euphrates hesitated no longer. Many of them, though Christian, had fought in the Moslem ranks. These came to Sad and said: “The tribes which at the first embraced “Islam were wiser than we. Now that Rustem hath been “slain, we will accept the new belief.” And so, many of them came over and made profession of the Faith.

Tidings,
how re-
ceived by
Omar.

The battle had been so long impending, and the preparations on so grand a scale, that the issue was watched everywhere, “from Odzeib away south to Aden, “and from Obolla across to Jerusalem,” as about to decide the fate of Islam. The Caliph used to issue forth alone from the gates of Medina early in the morning, if perchance he might meet some messenger from the field. At last a camel-rider arrived outside the city, who to Omar’s question replied shortly, “The Lord hath discomfited the Persian host.” Unrecognised, Omar followed him on foot, and gleaned the outline of the great battle. Entering Medina, the people crowded round the Caliph, and, saluting, wished him joy of the triumph. The courier, abashed, cried out, “O Commander of the Faithful, why “didst thou not tell me?” “It is well, my brother,” was the Caliph’s simple answer. Such was the unpretending mien of one who at that moment was greater than either the Kaiser or the Chosroes.

CHAPTER XV

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF CADESIYA. CAPTURE OF MEDAIN

A.H. 15-16. A.D. 636-637

By desire of the Caliph, Sad paused for a while to let the weary troops refit. Fragments of the defeated host escaped in the direction of Babylon, and rallied there. After two months' rest, Sad, now recovered from sickness, advanced to attack them. On the march he re-entered Hira. It was the third time the unfortunate City had been taken. Punishment for the last helpless defection, was now the doubling of its tribute. Soon supplanted by Kufa, a few miles distant, the once Royal city of Hira speedily dwindled into insignificance. But the neighbouring palace of Khawarnac, beautiful residence of a bygone Dynasty, was still left standing by the Lake of Najaf, and was sometimes visited as a country-seat by the Caliphs and their Court in after days.

Sad reoccupies Hira, end of 14 A.H. Jan. 636 A.D.

The scattered Persian troops rallied first at the Tower of Babel, and then, recrossing the Euphrates, halted under the great mound of Babylon. Driven from thence, they fell back upon the Tigris. Sad pitched a standing camp at Babylon, from whence he cleared the plain of Dura, fifty miles broad, from the Euphrates to the Tigris. The territorial chiefs from all sides now came in, some as converts, some as tributaries; and throughout the tract between the two rivers, Moslem rule again became supreme. Several months passed; and at last, in the summer, Sad found himself able, with the full consent of Omar,

Plain of Dura cleared.

A.H. 15- now in the second year of his reign, to advance upon
16. Medain.

Medain,
capital of
Persia.

The royal City was built on both banks of the Tigris, at a sharp double bend of the river, fifteen miles below the modern Baghdad. Seleucia, on the right bank, was the seat of the Alexandrian conquerors. On the opposite shore had grown up Ctesiphon, residence of the Persian monarchs. The combined City had for ages superseded Babylon as the capital of Chaldæa. Repeatedly taken by the Romans, it was now great and prosperous, but helplessly torn by intrigue and enervated by luxury. The main City, with its Royal palaces, was on the eastern side, where the noble arch, the *Tāk i Kesra*, still arrests the traveller's eye as he sails down the Tigris. Sad now directed his march to the Quarter which lay upon the nearer side. On the way he was attacked by the Queen-mother. Animated by the ancient spirit of her race, and with a great oath that so long as the Dynasty survived the empire was invincible, she took the field with an army commanded by a veteran General, "the lion of Chosroes." She was utterly discomfited, and her champion slain by the hand of Hashim.

Queen-
mother
discom-
fited.

Sad then marched forward; and, drawing a lesson from the vainglorious boast of the vanquished Princess, publicly recited before the assembled troops this passage from the sacred text:—

"Did ye not swear aforetime that ye would never pass away? Yet ye inhabited the dwellings of a people that had dealt unjustly by their own souls; and ye saw how We dealt with them. We made them a warning and example unto you."—(*Sura xiv. v. 44.*)

Siege laid
to western
quarter.
Summer
15 A.H.
636 A.D.

In this spirit they came upon the river; and lo! the famous Iwân, with its great hall of white marble, stood close before them on the farther shore. "Good heavens!" exclaimed Sad, dazzled at the sight; "*Allah Akbar!* What is this but the White pavilion of Chosroes! Now hath the Lord fulfilled the promise which He made unto His Prophet." And each company shouted *Allah Akbar!* *Great is the Lord!* as it came up and gazed at the Palace, almost within their grasp. But the City was too strong

A.H. 15-
16.

swum or forded. But the stream, always swift, was then upon the rise, and they feared lest the horses should be carried down by the turbid flood. Just then, tidings coming of the intended flight of Yezdegird, Sad at once resolved upon the enterprise. Gathering his force, he said to them:—"We are now at the mercy of the enemy, who, with the river at command, is able to attack us unawares. Now, the Lord hath shown unto one amongst us a vision of the faithful upon horses, crossing the stream triumphantly. Arise, let us stem the flood!" The desperate venture was voted by acclamation. Six hundred picked cavalry were drawn up in bands of sixty. The foremost plunged in, and bravely battled with the rapid flood. Down and across they had already neared the other shore, when a hostile picket dashed into the water, and vainly endeavoured to beat them back. "Raise your lances," shouted Asim; "bear right into their eyes." So they drove them back, and safely reached dry land. Sad no sooner saw them safe on shore, than he called on the rest to follow; and thus, with the cry—"Allah! triumph to thy people; Destruction to thine enemies!"—troop after troop leaped into the river, so thick and close, that the water was hidden from their view; and, treading as it had been solid ground, without a single loss, all gained the farther side. The Persians, taken by surprise, fled panic-stricken. The rapid passage afforded them time barely to escape. The few remaining, submitted themselves as tributaries. The Moslems pursued the fugitives; but soon hastened back to share the royal spoil. They wandered over the gorgeous pavilions of a Court into which the East had been long pouring forth its treasures, and revelled in gardens decked with flowers and laden with fruit. The Conqueror established himself in the Palace of the Chosroes. But first he was minded to render thanks in a Service of praise. The princely building was turned for this end into a House of prayer; and there, followed by as many as could be spared, Sad ascribed the victory to the Lord of hosts. The lesson was a passage of the Coran which speaks of Pharaoh overwhelmed in

Service of
Victory.

the Red Sea; and also this verse, thought peculiarly appropriate:—

A.H. 15-
16.

“ How many Gardens and Fountains did they leave behind,
And Fields of corn, and Dwelling-places fair,
And Pleasant things which they enjoyed !
Even thus We made another people to inherit all.”

(*Sura* xliv. v. 25.)

The booty was rich beyond conception. Besides millions of treasure, there was countless store of silver and golden vessels, gorgeous vestments and garniture,—precious things of untold rarity and cost. The lucky capture of a train of mules disclosed an unexpected prize consisting of the tiara, robes, and girdle of the King. The Arabs gazed in wonder at the crown, jewelled swords, and splendour of the throne; and, among other marvels, at a camel of silver, large as life, with rider of gold; and a golden horse, with emeralds for teeth, its neck set with rubies, and its trappings of gold. The precious metals lost their value, for gold was plentiful as silver. Rich works of art in sandal-wood and amber were in the hands of everyone, hoards of musk and spicy products of the East. Camphor lay about in sacks, and was at first by mistake kneaded with the cakes as salt. The prize agents had a heavy task, for each man's share (and the army now numbered 60,000) was twelve thousand pieces,¹ besides special largesses for the more distinguished. The army forwarded to Medina, beyond the royal Fifth, such rare and precious things as might stir the wonder of the simple Citizens at home. To the Caliph they sent, as fitting gift, the regalia of the Empire, and the sword of the Chosroes.² But the spectacle of the day was the Royal banqueting carpet, seventy cubits long and sixty broad. It represented a garden, the ground wrought in gold, and the walks in silver; meadows

Spoil of
Medain.

¹ Say £400 or £500 sterling for each soldier; from which (adding also the Fifth) the entire value of the booty may be gathered. The treasure alone is put at 1500 million pieces, a like sum having been taken away by Rustem for the Cadesiya campaign.

² Four other swords were taken: that of the Kaiser kept by Sad, and of Bahram by Cacao; a third, of the Khâcân of the Turks; and a fourth, of the “King of Hind.”

A.H. 15-
16. of emeralds, and rivulets of pearls ; trees, flowers, and fruits of sparkling diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones. When the rest of the spoil had been disposed of, Omar took counsel what should be done with the carpet. The most advised to keep it as a trophy of Islam. But Aly, reflecting on the instability of earthly things, objected ; and the Caliph, accepting his advice, had it cut in pieces and distributed with the other booty. The part which fell to Aly's lot fetched twenty thousand dirhems.

Medain offering every convenience for the seat of government, Sad now established himself there. The Palaces and Mansions of the fugitive nobles were divided amongst his followers. The Royal residence he occupied himself. The grand Hall, its garnishing unchanged, was consecrated as a place of Prayer, and here the Friday, or Cathedral, service of Islam was first celebrated in the land of Persia.

CHAPTER XVI

BATTLE OF JALOLA. REDUCTION OF MESOPOTAMIA. KUFA AND BUSSORAH FOUNDED

16 A.H. 637 A.D.

OMAR was satisfied, as well he might be, with the success achieved. His old spirit of caution revived, and beyond the plain skirted by the hilly range to the east, he strictly forbade a forward movement. Summer of the 16th year of the Hegira was passed in repose at Medain. The King, with his broken troops, had fled into the Persian mountains; and the people on either bank of the Tigris, seeing opposition vain, readily submitted to the conqueror. In the autumn, the Persians, resolving again to try the chance of arms, flocked in great numbers to Yezdegird at Holwan, about one hundred miles north of Medain. From thence part of the force advanced to Jalola, a fortress held to be impregnable, surrounded by a deep trench, and the outlets guarded by *chevaux de frise* and spikes of iron. With Omar's sanction, Sad pushed forward Hashim and Cacao at the head of 12,000 men, including the flower of Mecca and Medina; and they sat down in front of the Citadel. The garrison, reinforced from time to time by the army at Holwan, attacked the besiegers with desperate bravery. Fresh troops were despatched from Medain, and the siege was prolonged for eighty days. At length, during a vigorous sally, a storm darkened the air; and the Persian columns, losing their way, were pursued to the battlements by Cacao, who seized one of the gates. Thus cut off, they turned in despair upon the Arabs, and a general engagement ensued, which was not

Persian
advance.

Battle of
Jalola.

A.H. 16. "surpassed by the *Night of Clangour*, excepting that it "was shorter." Beaten at every point, many Persians in the attempt to flee were caught by the iron spikes. They were pursued, and the country strewn with corpses. Followed by the fragments of his army, Yezdegird fled to Rei, in the direction of the Caspian Sea. Cacao then advanced to Holwan, and defeating the enemy, left that stronghold garrisoned with Arab levies as the farthest Moslem outpost to the north.

Persians routed and Jalola taken. End of 16 A.H. Dec. 637 A.D.

The spoil. The spoil again was rich and plentiful. Multitudes of captive women, many of gentle birth, were distributed, a much loved prize, part on the spot, and part sent to the troops at Medain. The booty was valued at thirty million dirhems, besides vast numbers of fine Persian horses, which formed a welcome acquisition to the army, nine falling to the lot of every combatant. In charge of the Fifth, Sad despatched to Medina a youth named Ziad, of doubtful parentage (of which more hereafter), but of singular readiness and address. In presence of the Caliph, he harangued the Citizens, and recounted in glowing words the prize of Persia, rich lands, endless spoil, slave-girls, and captive princesses. Omar praised his speech, and declared that the troops of Sad surpassed the traditions even of Arab bravery. But next morning, when distributing the rubies, emeralds, and vast store of precious things, he was seen to weep. "What!" exclaimed Abd al Rahman; "a time of "joy and thankfulness, and thou sheddest tears!" "Yea," replied the simple-minded Caliph; "it is not for this I "weep, but I foresee that the riches which the Lord "bestoweth on us will be a spring of worldliness and "envy, and in the end a calamity to my people."

Ziad sent with the Fifth to Omar.

Omar refuses an advance on Persia.

Ziad was also the bearer of a petition for leave to pursue the fugitives across the border into Khorasan. Omar, content with the present, forbade the enterprise. "I desire," he replied, "that between Mesopotamia and "countries beyond, the hills shall be a barrier, so that the "Persians shall not be able to get at us, nor we at them. "The plain of Irac sufficeth for our wants. I would rather "the safety of my people than thousands of spoil and

“further conquest.” The thought of a world-wide mission was yet in embryo; obligation to enforce Islam by a universal Crusade had not yet dawned upon the Moslem mind; and, in good truth, an empire embracing Syria, Chaldæa, and Arabia might have satisfied the ambition even of an Assyrian or Babylonian monarch. The equal mind of Omar, far from being unsteadied by the flush and giddiness of victory, cared first to consolidate and secure the prize already in his hands. A.H. 16.

Nothing now threatening on the Persian side, the ambition of Sad and his generals, checked by the Caliph's interdict, was for the present confined to the reduction of Mesopotamia. For this end, troops were sent up the Tigris as far as Tekrit,—a stronghold about a hundred miles above Medain, held by a mixed garrison of Greek troops and Christian Bedouins. These bravely resisted attack. After forty days the Greeks thought to desert their native allies and escape by boat. The Bedouins, on the other hand, gained secretly over by the Moslems, seized the Water-gate; and so the Greeks, taken on both sides, were put to the sword. The column, joined by the newly converted allies, pressed forward to Mosul, which surrendered and became tributary. On the Euphrates, the Moslem arms met with equal success. The Bedouin tribes in Mesopotamia urged by the Byzantine court to attack the invaders then threatening Hims, Sad was charged by Omar to draw them off by a diversion from his side. The fortress of Hit on the Euphrates was accordingly besieged; but it was too strong to carry by assault. Half of the force were left before the town, and the rest marched rapidly up the river to Kirkesia, at its junction with the Khabur, and took it by surprise. The garrison of Hit, when they heard of this, capitulated on condition of being allowed to retire. Thus, the lower half of Mesopotamia, from one river to the other, was reduced, the strongholds garrisoned, and the Bedouins either converted to the faith or brought under subjection.

Operations
in Mesopo-
tania.
Hit and
Kirkesia
taken.
Summer,
16 A.H.
637 A.D.

From the junction of the two rivers also, downwards on either side of the Shat al Arab to the shores of the Persian

A.H. 16. Gulf, the rule of Islam was now thoroughly established. This tract had been exposed, with various fortune, to Arab raids ever since the invasion of Mothanna. Omar saw that, to secure Irac, it was needful to occupy the head of the Gulf as far as the range of hills on its eastern side. About the period, therefore, of Sad's campaign, he deputed Otba, a Companion of note, with a party from Bahrein, to capture the flourishing seaport of Obolla. The garrison was defeated, and the inhabitants, chiefly Indian merchants, effected their escape by sea. The Persians rallied in force on the eastern bank of the river, and many encounters took place before the Arabs succeeded in securing their position. On one occasion, the women of the Moslem camp turning their veils into flags, and marching in martial array to the battlefield, were mistaken thus for fresh reinforcements, and contributed at a critical moment to victory. Otba remained at Obolla as governor; and, as we shall see, carried on successful operations during the next three years, against Khuzistan and the Persian border. Meanwhile Obolla gave place to the new capital of Bussorah.

Persian
Gulf; delta
occupied;
Otba
governor
of Obolla,
14 A.H.
635 A.D.

Bussorah
founded,
17 A.H.
638 A.D.,

On the ruins of Obolla when first captured, there had arisen a small town of huts constructed of reeds, with a Mosque of the same material. The settlement grew in size and importance by constant arrivals from Arabia. But the climate was inhospitable. The tide rises close to the level of the alluvial plain, which, irrigated thus with ease, stretches far and wide a sea of verdure. Groves of pomegranate, acacia, and shady trees abound; and a wide belt of the familiar date-palm fringing the river might reconcile the immigrant of the Hejaz to his new abode. But the moisture exhaled by so damp a soil was ill-suited to the Arabian humour; pestilential vapours followed the periodical inundations, and gnats everywhere settled in intolerable swarms.¹ Three times the site was changed; at last the pleasant spot of Bussorah, near the river, which supplied a stream of running

¹ The traveller of to-day still complains of the pest of mosquitoes issuing from the groves of the Delta in gigantic swarms.

water, was fixed upon; and here a flourishing city rapidly grew up. It was laid out about the same time, and after the same fashion, as its rival Kufa. But, partly from a better climate, partly from a larger endowment of conquered lands, the northern city took the lead, as well in numbers as in influence and riches. A.H. 16.

The founding of Kufa was on this wise. The Arabs had been in occupation of Medain for some months, when a deputation visited Medina. The Caliph, startled by their sallow and unwholesome look, asked the cause. They replied that the city air did not suit the Arab temperament. Whereupon, he ordered inquiry for some more healthy and congenial spot; such as, approaching nearer the desert air, and well supplied with wholesome water, would not be cut off from ready help in any time of need. After diligent search along the desert outskirts, they found no place answering so well as the plain of Kufa, not far from Hira, on the banks of the western branch of the Euphrates. Omar confirmed the choice, and left it open for each man either to remain at Medain, or transfer his habitation thither. The new Capital suited the Arabs well, and to it accordingly they migrated in great numbers. The dwellings, as at Bussorah, were made at first of reeds. But fires were frequent; and after a disastrous conflagration, the Caliph gave permission that both cities might be built of brick. "The fitting camp," he wrote, "is the warrior's proper place. But if ye must have a permanent abode, be it so; only let no man have more houses than three for his wives and children, nor exceed the modest exemplar of the Prophet's dwelling-place." So the City was rebuilt, and the streets laid out in regular lines. The centre was kept an open square, in which was erected a Mosque with a portico for shade; and, for ornament, pillars of marble brought away from Hira. Sad built himself a spacious edifice, and reared in front of it a gateway, to prevent intrusion from the market-place hard by. The rumour of "the Castle of Sad" troubled the simple-minded Caliph, and he sent a Companion with a rescript commanding that the gateway should be pulled down. Arrived at and Kufa,

x. 18 A.H.
Oct.
638 A.D.

Omar bids
Sad pull
down the
gateway of
his palace.

A.H. 16. Kufa, the envoy, invited by Sad to enter his mansion as a guest, declined. Sad came forth, and received this letter at his hands:—"It hath been reported to me that thou hast "buiided for thyself a palace, and people call it *The Castle of Sad*; moreover thou hast reared a gateway betwixt "thee and the people. It is not thy castle; rather is it "the castle of perdition. What is needful for the treasury, "that thou mayest guard and lock; but the gateway which "shutteth out the people from thee, that thou shalt break "down." Sad obeyed the order; but he protested that his object in building the portal had been falsely reported, and Omar accepted the excuse.

The Sawād
settled
with the
Fellaheen.

The settlement of the land was the next concern. The *Sawād*, or rich plain of Chaldæa, having been taken, with some few exceptions, by force of arms, was claimed by the Arab soldiery as prize of war. The judgment and equity of Omar is conspicuous in the abatement of this demand. After counsel held with his advisers at Medina, the Caliph ordered that cultivators who had fled during the operations in Irac, as well as those who had kept to their holdings throughout, should be treated as *Zimmies*, or protected subjects, and confirmed in possession on moderate tribute. Royal forests and domains, lands of the nobles and of those who had opposed the Moslem arms, and the endowments of Fire-temples, were confiscated; but the demand for their division as ordinary prize was denied. Equitable distribution was impossible, and the attempt would have bred bad blood amongst the people. The necessities also of the great system of canals, and of the postal and other services, as first charge upon the revenues, demanded that the public land should be kept intact. Such were the ostensible reasons. But a cause more weighty underlay the order. Omar would maintain the martial spirit of his followers at any cost, and render it perpetual. With him it was of first necessity that the Arabs should not settle anywhere but in the field, or other place of arms; nor engage at all in husbandry, lest becoming fixed to the soil, the temper militant should wane. The people of Arabia must in every land be men

of arms, ready at a moment's notice for the field, a race distinct and dominant. Therefore, much to the army's discontent, not only were the confiscated lands held undivided, but, from the border of the Syrian desert to the mountain range of Persia, the sale of any portion of the soil, whether confiscated or not, was forbidden. Thus there arose a double protection to the native tenantry, who under no pretext could be evicted from their lands. The country also, remaining in the hands of its own cultivators, was nursed, and became a rich and permanent source of revenue.

The confiscated lands scattered over the province were administered by Crown agents, and the profits shared between the captors and the state. The prize domains of Kufa,—conquered by the armies of Khalid and of Sad, —were much more extensive than those of Bussorah. Shortly after its foundation, the inhabitants of Bussorah sent representatives to urge that their endowments should be increased, and their income made more adequate to their responsibilities. "Kufa," said their spokesman, "is a well-watered garden which yieldeth in season its harvest of dates, while ours is brackish land. Part bordereth on the desert, and part upon the sea, which laveth it with a briny flood. Compared with Kufa, our poor are many, and our rich are few. Grant us, therefore, of thy bounty." Recognising the justice of the plea, Omar made substantial addition to their endowments from the Crown lands of the Chosroes. But, although Kufa was richer, it had heavier obligations to discharge than the sister City. Its government had a wider range; and the charge of garrisons at various points, as Holwan, Mosul, and Kirkesia, had to be provided from the resources at the command of Sad.

Kufa and Bussorah, unique in their origin, had a singular influence on the destinies of the Caliphate and of Islam at large. The vast majority of the population were of pure Arabian blood. The tribes which, scenting from afar the prey of Chaldæa and Persia, kept streaming into Chaldæa from every corner of Arabia, settled chiefly there.

Crown
lands and
endow-
ments of
Kufa and
Bussorah.

Influence
of the two
cities on
the future
of Islam.

A.H. 16. At Kufa the races coming from the south of Arabia predominated; at Bussorah, those coming from the north. Rapidly they grew into two great and luxurious Capitals, with an Arab population each of from 150,000 to 200,000 souls. On the literature, theology, and politics of Islam, the two cities had a greater influence than the whole Moslem world besides. There was abundance of time and opportunity. Service in the field being desultory and intermittent, the intervals were often long and frequent, but too readily spent in listless idleness. Excepting when enlivened by the fruits of some new victory, secluded harems afforded their lords little variety of recreation or amusement. Otherwise the time was whiled away in the converse of social knots; and in these, while they discussed the problems of the day, they loved still more to live in the past, to recall the marvellous story of their Faith, and fight their battles over again. Hence Tradition, and the two great Schools of Bussorah and Kufa. But the debates and gossip of these clubs too often degenerated into tribal rivalry and domestic scandal. The people grew petulant and factious; and both Cities became hotbeds of turbulence and sedition. The Bedouin element, conscious of its strength, was jealous of the Coreish, and impatient at whatever checked its own capricious humour. Thus factions sprang up which, controlled by the strong and wise arm of Omar, at length broke loose under weaker Caliphs, rent the unity of Islam, and brought on disastrous days which, but for its marvellous vitality, must have proved fatal to the Faith.

CHAPTER XVII

CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN SYRIA

A.H. 15. A.D. 636

To recover the thread of Syrian warfare we must go back to the great victory on the banks of the Jordan. At the close of the 14th year of the Hegira, Abu Obeida, leaving Amru to follow up the success in Palestine, and Yezid as governor of Damascus, marched with the rest of his force northward upon Hims, the ancient Emessa, where the Emperor watched the progress of his enemies. Dazul Kelaa, who with his Himyar column had been ever since covering Damascus from attack on the north, now joined his chief. They had advanced but a little way, when they were stopped by two columns. Theodore, who commanded one of these, seeing Damascus no longer guarded, thought to make a sudden dash upon it. But Yezid, issuing with his garrison, assailed him in front; and Khalid's flying column was immediately in pursuit. Taken thus before and behind, Theodore's army was cut to pieces. The other column was put to flight by Abu Obeida. Meeting no further opposition, the Arabs continued their march, storming Balbek by the way.

Abu Obeida advanced straight upon Hims, and closely invested it. Heraclius, on the defeat of Theodore, retired hastily on Roha (Edessa), where he endeavoured to raise the Bedouins of Mesopotamia, and thus effect a diversion. The effort (as we have seen)¹ was defeated by Sad, who, making an inroad on Kirkesia, recalled the tribes to the defence of their desert homes. The siege of Hims,

Abu
Obeida's
advance on
northern
Syria,
14 A.H.
635 A.D.

Hims
besieged.
End of
14 A.H.
Jan.
636 A.D.

¹ P. 131.

A. H. 15. prosecuted with vigour, was bravely resisted. But the expectation of succour died away; the severity of winter failed to make the Arabs retire, the sallies of the beleaguered garrison became less frequent, and their spirits fell. When the siege had been protracted many weeks, an earthquake breached the battlements. The Governor, finding the position no longer tenable, offered to capitulate; and the Moslems, unaware of the full extent of mischief, readily gave the same terms as to Damascus. In answer to the despatch announcing the capture, Omar bade Abu Obeida press boldly forward; and, promising further reinforcements, counselled him to gain the powerful tribes on the border, and strengthen thus his army.

Capitulates.
Spring,
15 A. H.
636 A. D.

March
northward.
Antioch
taken.

Leaving a garrison in Hims, Abu Obeida resumed his northward march. Hama, and other towns of inferior note, tendered submission. The fortified city of Laodicea alone showed an obstinate front; but the Arabs made a feint to withdraw, and then darting back in early morning through an open portal, seized the defences and overpowered the garrison. Advancing still to the north, Khalid, with great slaughter, defeated the Greeks near Kinnisrin (Chalcis), which was seized and dismantled. Aleppo next fell, after a brief resistance; and then Abu Obeida turned his arms westward upon Antioch. In this famous emporium of merchandise, art, and luxury, the broken troops of the Empire had rallied. And here, at length, within the great lines of circumvallation which ran along the surrounding heights, we might have expected Heraclius to make a bold stand. But no effort befitting the crisis seems even to have been thought of. A heavy battle, indeed, was fought on the wooded plain outside the walls; but the garrison was driven back, and the City, surrounded on all sides, capitulated. Such are the details, comprised as they are within a few lines, which tell us all we know of the loss to the Greeks of Northern Syria, from Damascus up to the hilly range of Asia Minor.

Northern
Syria
reduced.

Eastward, the Greeks made a last but feeble attempt to regain their footing. They were again hopelessly beaten, their leaders slain, and great numbers taken

prisoners. The arm of the Empire was for the moment A.H. 15
 paralysed, and Syria, from the Euphrates to the seashore,
 brought under the sway of Islam. The Nomad tribes,
 as well as the settled inhabitants, became tributary and
 bound by engagements to keep their conquerors informed
 of any movements by the enemy. Before long, the
 Bedouins, who have ever sat loose to the trammels of
 religion, went for the most part over to the Moslem faith.
 But the Urban population, as a whole, resisted the induce-
 ments to abandon Christianity; and, although reduced, Christian
popula-
tion.
 as the Coran demands, to an humbled and degraded state,
 they were yet treated with moderation, their Churches
 spared, and their worship respected. They either re-
 conciled themselves to their unhappy fate, or retired
 unmolested into Byzantine territory.

When Heraclius beheld his armies, one after another, Heraclius
retires to
Constan-
tinople.
 defeated, and his efforts to rally the Bedouin tribes end
 only in secession and hostile risings throughout Mesopo-
 tamia, he gave up Syria as lost, and fell back upon Samsat.
 But he was in peril even there. For, after reducing Membij
 and other fortresses within the Syrian frontier, Khalid
 made a dash into Cilicia, and ravaged Marash with the
 surrounding country. The Emperor, alarmed at his line
 of retreat thus threatened, retired altogether from the
 scene; and, relinquishing to the enemy the fairest and
 best loved Provinces of his realm, resolved to recross the
 Bosphorus. Wending his sad way westward, Heraclius
 (so the Arabian annalists tell us) ascended an eminence
 whence might be had a last glimpse of the wooded hills
 and sunny plains of Syria, now vanishing in the southern
 horizon. He turned to gaze: "Peace be with thee, Holy
 " and Blessed land!" he said; "Syria, fare thee well!
 " There is for me no more returning unto thee; neither
 " shall any Roman visit thee for ever, but in fear and
 " trembling, until the accursed Antichrist shall come."
 It was but ten years before, that the same Emperor, per-
 forming on foot a pilgrimage to Jerusalem through the
 same lovely province, to commemorate the recovery of the
 " true Cross " and his own signal victories in the East,

A.H. 15. had cast aside a rude missive from the Arabian Prophet demanding submission to Islam. What seemed then the wild phantasy of a maniac was now an accomplished fact.¹

Jabala, the Ghassanide Prince.

A similar despatch from Mahomet had been at the same time received by Jabala, last Prince of the Ghassanide dynasty; who thereupon had asked the Emperor's leave to chastise the insolent Arab, but was bidden instead to swell the imperial train at Jerusalem. And now Jabala was to share his Master's fate. At the head of the Beni Ghassân, he had fought loyally on the Byzantine side; but now, disheartened by the flight of Heraclius, he turned to Abu Obeida, and embraced Islam. Shortly after, splendidly clad, and with a pompous following, he visited Medina, where the people, familiar with the illustrious name, received him with peculiar honours. Thence he accompanied the Caliph on pilgrimage to Mecca. There a Bedouin chancing to tread on his flowing robe, caused him to stumble and fall. The haughty Prince struck the offender on the face. To his amazement he was summoned before the Caliph, who ordered, under the law of retaliation, that the Bedouin should have his satisfaction by returning the blow. "What!" cried Jabala; "I, the Prince of the " Ghassân, and he a common Bedouin of the desert!" "Yea," replied Omar; "for in Islam all are equal." Stung by the affront, Jabala retired at once to Constantinople; where, returning to the Christian faith, he was hospitably entertained at the Byzantine Court. The tale has been garnished by touches of romance, such as that, pining after his old haunts, he offered again to embrace Islam, if Omar would but give him one of his daughters to wife; so much, however, is certain that he died in exile, and left behind him at Constantinople a colony of Arab followers.

Exchange of gifts between Empress and Omar's wife.

It is interesting to be told that friendly relations subsisted at times between the Caliph and the Byzantine Court. Omar's wife sent to the Empress a royal gift of frankincense, and precious things fit for the toilet of a

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 357. The reader is again reminded that the history of the Byzantine war is taken exclusively from Arabian sources, and these but fragmentary and brief.

lady; and the Empress in return sent her a beautiful necklace. Omar doubted whether the gift should be accepted, or whether it should not rather be held public property. Some said, "The Empress is not a subject; she hath sent a present for Omm Kolthum; let her keep it"; others said, "It is but a gift in return for a gift." But Omar replied: "It was an embassy at the cost of the Moslems, and they have got this in return." So it was made over to the treasury; but he gave his wife the value of it from the privy purse. A.H. 15

In this campaign, the conduct and chivalry of Khalid made such an impression upon Omar that he received him back into favour, and appointed him to the government of Kinnisrin. "Verily," he said, "Khalid hath proved himself a prince among men. Blessed be the memory of Abu Bekr, for verily he knew mankind better than I." The reconciliation, however, was not of long duration. Omar reconciled to Khalid.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONQUEST OF PALESTINE

15 A.H. 636 A.D.

Territorial
division of
Palestine.

PALESTINE, according to the Arabs, is the tract that lies due west of the Dead sea. A line drawn from it to Mount Carmel, would be the northern boundary. North of that, again, the country, with the valley watered by the river, was called the province of the *Jordan*. Still farther north is *Syria* (*Shâm*), and to the east of Jordan, again, is the *Hauran*.

Palestine
invaded.

The first inroads of the Arabs were, as we have seen, on the Hauran. Issuing from Arabia, their northward course had been along the highway to Damascus, the pilgrim route of the present day, east of the Dead sea. The base of operations throughout the Syrian campaign was at Jabia, a town on the high land to the east of the Sea of Galilee; from whence columns could be forwarded, by the great military roads, either to Damascus and the north, or westward to Tiberias, the Jordan, and Palestine. Soon after the siege of Damascus and battle of Fihl, the greater part of the Jordan province fell rapidly under the arms of Amru and Shorahbil. In Palestine proper, with Egypt in its rear and Cæsarea open to the sea, the Byzantine power was still unbroken. Gaza, Ramleh, and Jerusalem were heavily garrisoned. The Patrician Artabun, commanding in Palestine, guarded Jerusalem with part of his army. With the remainder, taking his stand at Ajnadein, some distance to the west, he sought to hold the invaders now advancing from Beisan in check. This foolhardy general invited Amru to a conference, having laid

an ambush on the way to slay him. But he was outwitted by the wily Arab; and before long, cut off from his communications, was defeated in a decisive engagement, which took place at Ajnadein. Of the details we know little, and are simply told that "the battle of Ajnadein was fierce and bloody as that of Wacûsa." After great slaughter, Artabun was driven back on Jerusalem. Amru encamped on the battlefield, his way being now clear to the Holy city. But he took the precaution first to secure his rear, still bristling with garrisons. One after another, Gaza, Lydda, Joppa, and other places, fell before his arms. Jerusalem, Ramleh, and Cæsarea alone held out.

Towards Jerusalem, full of associations sacred to the Moslems, Amru first directed his steps. On his approach, Artabun retired with his army into Egypt. The Patriarch sued for peace. One condition he made, that Omar should himself come to the Holy city, and there in person settle the capitulation. The Caliph, braving the objections of his court, at once set out, journeying direct for Jabia. It was a memorable occasion, the first progress of a Caliph beyond the limits of Arabia. Abu Obeida, Yezid, and Khalid hastened from the North to welcome him. A brilliant cavalcade, dressed in rich Syrian stuff, and gaily mounted, they rode forth to meet their Master on the border of Arabia. At sight of all their finery, Omar's spirit was stirred within him. He stooped down, and, gathering a handful of gravel,—“Avaunt!” he cried, “is it thus attired ye come out to meet me, changed in two short years! Verily, had it been two hundred, ye would have deserved this;” as he flung the gravel at them. “Commander of the Faithful!” they replied; “this that thou seest is but the outside; beneath it” (and they drew aside their robes), “behold our armour.” “Enough,” said Omar, still displeased; “Go forward.” So journeying onwards, they alighted at Jabia. Shortly after, the camp was startled by the appearance of a strange troop of horse. It was a deputation from the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Terms were soon settled, and the treaty, duly

A.H. 15.
Battle of
Ajnadein.
Spring,
15 A.H.
636 A.D.

Jerusalem
capitulates.
End of
15 A.H.,
and of
636 A.D.

Omar's
journey to
Jabia

A.H. 15. — witnessed, was carried by the envoys back to their Master ; whereupon the gates of Jerusalem, and of Ramleh, were thrown open to the invading force. Amru and Shorahbil thus relieved, left their camp and presented themselves at Jabia. Omar rode forth to meet them ; they kissed his stirrup, while he, dismounting, affectionately embraced them both.

And Jeru-
salem.

Dismissing the other generals to their respective commands, the Caliph, with Amru and Shorahbil, crossed the Jordan below the Lake of Tiberias, and journeyed onward to Jerusalem. They gave him a palfrey to ride on, which pranced with jingling bells after the Syrian fashion. He disliked the motion. "What aileth the animal?" he said ; "I know not who hath taught it this strange gait." So he dismounted and rode upon his own horse again. Arrived at Jerusalem, Omar received the Patriarch and Citizens with kindness and condescension. He granted the same privileges as to the most favoured cities ; imposed an easy tribute, and confirmed possession of all the shrines and churches. Jerusalem was to the Moslem an object of intense veneration, not only as the cradle of Judaism and Christianity, but as the first *Kibla* of Islam, or sacred spot to which the Faithful turn in prayer ; and also the shrine at which Mahomet alighted on the heavenly journey which he performed by night. At the crest of the Sacred mount is a rock, or stony projection, which tradition marked as Jacob's pillow. The Moslems fondly fancy this to be the spot in the "Farther Temple," from which the winged steed of Mahomet took its upward flight ; and the eye of faith still traces an outline of the Prophet's foot imprinted on the rock as he sprang into his airy saddle. It was here that Omar laid the foundation of the Mosque which, to this day, bears his name.¹

¹ Ali Bey, the traveller, tells us that when Mahomet stood upon it, the rock, "sensible of the happiness of bearing the holy burden, depressed itself, "and becoming soft like wax, received the print of his holy foot upon the "upper part. . . . This print is now covered with a large sort of cage of gilt "metal wire, worked in such a manner that the print cannot be seen on "account of the darkness within, but it may be touched with the hand "through a hole made on purpose. The believers, after having touched the

Mahometan tradition gives no further detail respecting this memorable visit. But Christian writers say that Omar accompanied the Patriarch over the city, visited the various places of Pilgrimage, and graciously inquired into their history. At the appointed hour, the Patriarch bade the Caliph perform his orisons in the church of the Resurrection, where they chanced to be. But he declined to pray either there, or in the church of Constantine where a carpet had been spread for him, saying kindly that if he did so his followers would take possession of the church for ever as a place where Moslem prayer had once been offered up. Omar also visited Bethlehem; and having prayed in the church of the Nativity, left a rescript with the Patriarch, who accompanied him on the pious errand, securing the Christians in possession of the building, with the condition that not more than one Mussulman should ever enter at a time. The stipulation was disregarded, and a Mosque was eventually erected there, as well as on the site of the church of Constantine.

A.H. 15.
Christian
tradition
regarding
the visit.

“print, proceed to sanctify themselves by passing the hand over the face and beard.” (*Travels of Ali Bey*, vol. ii. p. 220.)

The heavenly journey is thus referred to in the Coran: “Praise be to Him, who carried His servant by night to the FARTHER TEMPLE, the environs of which we have blessed.” *Sura*, xvii. (The “Farther Temple,” in contradistinction to the “Nearer Temple,” *i.e.* the Kaaba.) Jerusalem was the Kibla of Mahomet and his followers, up to the time of his flight from Mecca. In the second year after settling at Medina, he was suddenly instructed while at prayer to turn instead towards Mecca, and ever since, the Kaaba, and not Jerusalem, has been the Kibla of the Moslems. (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 117.)

The *Haram* is the sacred inclosure on the south-east corner of Mount Zion. The *Kubbet al Sakhra*, or “Dome of the Stone,” has been built polygonal, to meet the shape of the “Stone,” or rock referred to in the text, which gives its name to the Dome. This rock rises to a height of six or seven feet from a base, according to Ali Bey, 33 feet in diameter, or, according to others, 57 feet long and 43 wide. The architecture is Byzantine, and Greek builders were no doubt engaged in its construction. There is probably little, if anything, of Christian remains in the present Haram.

[Further inquiry into *Omar's Mosque*, might be of interest. The following is the opinion of an architect who has studied the question:—“What is commonly called the Mosque of Omar, built on the site of Solomon's Temple, is not really the place where Omar went to pray. The real spot is near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and it is a misnomer to speak of the *Aksa* as the Mosque of Omar.” 3rd. Ed.]

A.H. 15.

Omar
returns to
Medina.

Whatever the truth in these traditions, Omar did not prolong his stay in Jerusalem. Having settled the matter for which he came, the only other duty he performed was to divide Palestine into two provinces; one he attached to Jerusalem, and the other to Ramleh. He then returned by the way he came back again to Medina.

Causes
facilitating
conquest of
Syria.

Thus was Syria, from the farthest north to the border of Egypt, within the space of three years, lost to Christendom. One reflects with wonder at the feeble resistance of the Byzantine power, military and naval, and of its renowned strongholds, to this sudden inroad. The affinity of the Syrian Bedouins to the Arabs no doubt facilitated the conquest. There was also an element of weakness in the settled population; luxurious living had made the race effeminate, and unable to resist the onset of wild and fanatic invaders. Still worse, they had no heart to fight. What patriotic vigour might have still survived, was lost in religious strife, and rival sects rejoiced each in the humiliation of its neighbour. Loyalty was smothered by bitter jealousies, and there are not wanting instances of active assistance rendered by Jews and Christians to the enemy. There may have been even a sense of relief in the equal, though contemptuous, licence which the haughty conquerors conceded to all alike. But there was a deeper cause,—the decrepitude of the Roman empire. The virtue and vigour needed to repel the shock of barbarian invasion were gone. And while northern hordes gradually amalgamated with the nations which they overran, the exclusive faith and intolerant teaching of Islam kept the Arabs a race distinct and dominant.

The Arabs
do not
settle in
Syria as in
Chaldæa.

The conquerors did not spread themselves abroad in Syria as in Chaldæa. They founded here no such Arabian towns and military settlements as Bussorah and Kufa. The country and climate were also less congenial. Though a land of brooks of water, of vines and fig-trees, of oil-olive and honey, still the Syrian shores offered fewer attractions to the Arabian than the hot and sandy plains of Irac with their familiar garb of tamarisk and date. The Arabs came to Syria as conquerors; and as conquerors

A.H. 15. — and other solemn seasons; in short, they must abstain from everything, whether by outward symbol, word, or deed, in rivalry or derogation of the royal faith. Such was the so-called *Code of Omar*. Gradually infringing the just rights of Jews and Christians, and enforced with more or less stringency in different lands and under various dynasties, it was, and still, at least in name, remains the law of Islam. One must admire the rare tenacity of the subject Faith, which, with but scanty light and hope, held its ground through weary ages of insult and depression, and still survives to see the dawning of a brighter day.

East cut off
from the
West.

I have spoken of the loss of Syria as the dismemberment of a limb from the Byzantine empire. In one respect it was something more. For their own safety, the Greeks dismantled a broad belt on the border of hostile and now barbarous Syria. The towns and fortresses within this tract were razed, and the inhabitants withdrawn. And so the neutral zone became a barrier against travel to and fro. For all purposes, social, religious, and commercial, the road was for generations closed. Pilgrimage, it is true, and commerce, from the West, could be maintained by sea; but in respect of communication by land, the East for the time was severed from the West.

Silence of
Byzantine
annalists.

“The abomination of desolation stood in the Holy place.” The cradle of Christianity, Zion, the joy of the whole earth, was trodden under foot, and utterly cut off from the sight of its devoted worshippers. And all is told by the Byzantine writers in a few short lines; while the pen of the Christian annalist refused, as well it might, to write the sad story of cowardice and shame.

CHAPTER XIX

RISING IN NORTHERN SYRIA

17 A.H. 638 A.D.

IN the sixth year of Omar's Caliphate, a desperate effort was made by the Greeks, at one moment not without some prospect of success, to shake off the Moslem yoke and recover possession of Northern Syria.

Rising in
Northern
Syria.

The movement is attributed to an appeal from the Christian tribes of Upper Mesopotamia, who besought the Emperor to save them from falling under the adversary's sway. Although the strongholds of Mesopotamia had fallen into the hands of Sad, yet their garrisons had little control over the wandering Bedouins; and many of the Christian tribes still looked for support to the Persian or Byzantine rule. The maritime power of the West was yet untouched. Cæsarea with its naval supports remained proof against landward attack; and the whole seacoast was kept unsettled by the fear, or by the hope, that a fleet might at any time appear. The Emperor now promised the dwellers in Mesopotamia to second their efforts by way of the sea. An expedition was directed from Alexandria against Antioch, while the Bedouins gathered in great hordes around Hims. Thus seriously threatened, Abu Obeida called in his outlying garrisons. But finding the enemy too strong to be dispersed by the force at his disposal, he sent an urgent summons for assistance to Medina. Thereupon Omar ordered Sad to despatch at once a strong column from Kufa under Cacia for the relief of Hims; and likewise to effect a diversion in Upper Mesopotamia. Meanwhile the Greeks had landed from

Greeks
support
Bedouin
rising,
17 A.H.
638 A.D.

A.H. 17. — their ships. Antioch threw open her gates to them; and Kinnisrin, Aleppo, and other towns in the north, were in full revolt. A council of war was called. Khalid was for giving battle, but Abu Obeida, feeling too weak to cope with the now combined forces of the Bedouins and Greeks, retired to Hims; and there, hemmed in by enemies, awaited the succour advancing from Kufa. So grave did Omar himself regard the crisis, that, quitting Medina for the second time, he journeyed to Jabia, intending to march in person with the reinforcements northwards. But while on his journey, a change had already come over the scene. Their prolonged absence in the distant north had alarmed the Bedouins for the safety of their desert homes, so that, returning south, they began to forsake the Emperor's cause. Seeing now his opportunity, Abu Obeida issued from his fortress, and after a severe engagement routed the enemy, who fled in confusion, and before the arrival of Cacao were already totally dispersed. Omar returned to Medina, delighted at the result. He specially commended the alacrity of the Kufa column:—"The Lord reward them," he wrote to Sad, "for their ready gathering and speedy march to the succour of their beleaguered brethren."

Abu
Obeida
puts enemy
to flight.

Campaign
in North-
ern Meso-
potamia,
17 A. H.
638 A. D.

It was the last effort of Constantinople to expel the invader from Syria, whose yoke was now plainly not to be shaken off. The diversion attempted in Mesopotamia had also the opposite effect of reducing that province to its farthest limits. Not content with this, the infant faith, becoming conscious of its giant strength, began to stretch itself still farther north. Success in Mesopotamia was followed up by a campaign in Asia Minor; and the name of Iyadh, under whom even Khalid did not disdain to serve, begins to figure as one of terror in the brief Byzantine record. Nisibin, Roha, and other strong places on the frontier were taken or recaptured, and part even of Armenia overrun.

Christian
tribes.
Beni
Iyadh.

Most of the Bedouin tribes in Mesopotamia embraced Islam. There were exceptions, and the story of Beni Iyadh is singular. They migrated to the north, and found

an asylum in Byzantine territory. But Omar, nettled at their disappearance, and fearing lest they should remain a thorn in his side, demanded their extradition, on pain of expelling all Christian tribes living under his protection. The Emperor, unwilling to expose these to ill-treatment, complied with the demand. Equally remarkable is the tale of the Beni Taghlib. They tendered submission to Welid, who, solicitous for the adhesion of this famous race, pressed them with some rigour to abjure their ancient faith. Omar was displeased;—"Leave them," he wrote, "in the profession of the Gospel. It is only within the Arabian peninsula, where are the Holy places, that none but a Moslem tribe is to remain." Welid was removed from his command; and it was enjoined on his successor to stipulate only that the usual tribute should be paid, that no member should be hindered from embracing Islam, and that children should not be educated in the Christian faith. The tribe, deeming in its pride the payment of "tribute" an indignity, sent a deputation to the Caliph:—They were willing, they said, to pay the tax, if only it were levied under the same name as that taken from the Moslems. The liberality of Omar allowed the concession; and the Beni Taghlib enjoyed the singular privilege of being assessed as Christians at a "double *Tithe*," instead of paying the obnoxious badge of subjugation.

A.H. 17.

Beni Taghlib allowed to pay tithe.

The last place to hold out in Syria was Cæsarea. It fell in the fifth year of Omar's Caliphate. Amru had sat long before it. But, being open to the sea, and the battlements landward strong and well manned, it resisted his efforts; and although Yezid sent his brother Muavia with reinforcements from Damascus, the siege was prolonged for several years. Sallies persistently made by the garrison, were driven back with equal constancy: but in the end, the treachery of a Jew revealed a weak point in the defences; the city was carried by storm and with prodigious carnage. Four thousand prisoners of either sex were despatched with the royal booty to Medina, and there sold into slavery.¹

Fall of Cæsarea, 17 A.H. 638 A.D.

¹ The Jew betrayed the town by showing the Arabs an aqueduct, through which they effected an entrance. The population was mixed; 70,000 Greeks;

A.H. 17.

Khalid
brought
to trial,
17-18 A.H.
638-9 A.D.

The unfortunate Khalid again incurred Omar's displeasure. He came back from the campaign in the north to his seat of government at Kinnisrin greatly enriched with the spoils of war. In hopes of his bounty, many old friends flocked around him. Amongst them was Ashath the Kinda chieftain, to whom he gave the princely largess of one thousand pieces of gold. Again, at Amida, Khalid had indulged in the luxury of a bath mingled with wine, the odour whereof as he came forth still clung about his person. On both charges he was arraigned. About the second, there could be no question; the use of wine, even in a bath, was a forbidden thing, and Khalid now forswore the indulgence. The other offence was graver in the Caliph's eyes. Either the gift was booty of the army; or, if Khalid's own to give away, he was guilty of culpable extravagance. Whichever it was, he deserved to be deposed from his command. In such terms a rescript was addressed to Abu Obeida, and sent by the hands of a courier charged to see that the command was fully carried out. Khalid was to be accused publicly; his helmet taken off; his hands bound with his head-kerchief; and so arraigned he was to declare the truth.

Arraigned
for malver-
sation be-
fore Abu
Obeida.

Abu Obeida had an ungracious task, seeing that to the degraded warrior he was beholden for his victories in Syria. But Omar's word was law. And so he summoned Khalid from Kinnisrin, proclaimed an assembly in the Mosque of Hims, and, standing in the pulpit, placed Khalid in their midst. Then the courier put the Caliph's question—From whence the money given to Ashath came? Khalid, confounded at the unexpected charge, made no reply. Pressed by his friends, still he remained silent. Abu Obeida himself embarrassed, a painful pause

30,000 Samaritans; and 200,000 (?) Jews. It was a sad fate that of the captives. Multitudes of Greeks, men and women, pined miserably in strange lands in hopeless servitude. Amongst these must have been many women of gentle birth degraded now to menial office; or if young and fair to look upon, reserved for a worse fate,—liable, when their masters became tired of them, to be sold into other hands. No wonder that Al Kindy in his *Apology* inveighs, with scathing denunciation, against the proceedings of the Moslems in these early wars.

ensued. At last Bilâl, privileged as the Muedzzin of the Prophet, stepped forth, and with stentorian voice cried, *Thus and thus hath the Commander of the Faithful said, and it is incumbent on us to obey*; so saying, he unwound the kerchief from the head of Khalid, bound his hands therewith, and took his helmet off. The great warrior, to whom Islam so greatly owed its conquests, stood as a felon before the congregation. Bilâl repeated the question, and Khalid at length replied, "The money was my own." At once Bilâl unbound his hands, and, replacing the helmet on his head, wound round the kerchief as before, and said, "We honour thee still, even as we did honour thee before, one of our chiefest captains." But Abu Obeida was silent; and Khalid, stunned by the disgrace, stood speechless and bewildered. Abu Obeida had not the heart to proclaim his deposition; but still spoke kindly to him as one who had his confidence. Omar, informed of what had passed, made allowance for Abu Obeida's delicacy, and summoned Khalid to Medina. Prompt to obey, though sore at heart, Khalid first returned to his seat of Government; and both there and at Hims, bidding adieu to his friends and people, complained of the ingratitude of the Caliph, who scrupled not to use him in times of difficulty, but cast him aside when, through his aid, he had reached the summit of his Sovereign power. Arrived in the Caliph's presence, Khalid broke out in bitter reproach:—"I swear that thou hast treated despitefully a faithful servant to whom thou owest much. I appeal from thee to the whole body of the Faithful." "Whence came that money?" was Omar's only answer. The question was repeated day by day; till at last, galled by the charge, Khalid made answer: "I have naught but the spoil which the Lord hath given me in the days of Abu Bekr, as well as in thine own. Whatever thou findest over 60,000 pieces, hath been gained in thy Caliphate; take it if thou wilt." So his effects were valued, and the estimate reaching 80,000, Omar confiscated the difference. But he still affected to hold the great General in honour and

A.H. 17.

Sum-
moned to
Medina,

A.H. 17. regard. Accordingly, he sent a rescript to the various
 and _____ provinces, announcing that he had deposed Khalid from
 deposed. his government, not because of tyranny or fraud, but
 because he deemed it needful to remove a stumbling-
 block out of the way of the people, who were tempted to
 put their trust in an arm of flesh, instead of looking alone
 to the Giver of all victory.

Dies in
 penury and
 neglect,
 21 A.H.
 642 A.D.

So closed the career of Khalid. The first beginning
 of Omar's alienation was the affair of Mālik ibn Noweira,
 followed by acts of tyranny in Chaldæa which grated on
 his sense of clemency and justice. But these acts had
 long since been condoned; and therefore his conduct now
 was both ungenerous and unjust. He used the "Sword
 of God" so long as he had the need, and when victory
 was gained, he cast the same ungratefully away. Khalid
 retired to Hims, and did not long survive. His manner
 of life when in the full tide of prosperity, may be gathered
 from the brief notice that in the Plague, from which he
 fled with his family to the desert, he is said to have lost
 no fewer than forty sons. Soon after, in the eighth year
 of Omar's caliphate, he died. In his last illness he kept
 showing the scars which covered his body, marks of
 bravery and unflinching prowess. "And now," he said,
 "I die even as a coward dieth, or as the camel breatheth
 its last breath." His end illustrates forcibly the insta-
 bility of this world's fame. The hero who had borne
 Islam aloft to the crest of victory and glory, ended his
 days in penury and neglect.

A.H. 14-15. as the altered circumstances might admit, were respected by successive Rulers; and the tribute, with decreasing numbers, lightened from time to time. Some years after, the Jews of Kheibar, a rich vale two or three days north of Medina, met a similar fate. Their claim was not so strong; for, conquered by Mahomet, they had been left on sufferance with their fields at a rent of half the produce. In lieu of this partial right, they received a money payment, and were sent away to Syria. Various pretexts are urged for the expatriation in either case. But underlying is the dogma, founded on the supposed dying behest of Mahomet,—*In Arabia there shall be no faith but the faith of Islam.* The recruiting field of Islam must be sacred ground.¹

Arabs share in spoil of war and revenues of conquered lands.

The Arabian nation was the champion of Islam; and to fight its battles every Arab was jealously reserved. He must be soldier, and nothing else. He might not settle down in any conquered lands as owner of the soil; while for merchandise or other labour, a warlike life offered little leisure. Neither was there any need. The Arabs lived on the fat of conquered provinces, and subject peoples served them. Of booty taken in war, four-fifths were distributed to the army on the field, the remaining Fifth reserved for the State; and even that, after public obligations were discharged, shared among the Arabian people. In the reign of Abu Bekr this was a simple matter. But under Omar the spoil of Syria and of Persia, in ever-increasing volume, poured into the treasury of Medina, where it was distributed almost as soon as received. What was easy in small beginnings, by equal sharing or discretionary preference, became now a heavy task. And there arose, also, new sources of revenue in the land assessment and poll-tax of conquered countries, the surplus of which, after defraying civil and military charges, became equally with spoil of war, patrimony of the Arab nation.

At length, in the second or third year of his Caliphate, Omar determined that the distribution should be regulated

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 475.

on a fixed and systematic scale. The income of the Commonwealth was to be divided, as heretofore, amongst the Faithful as their heritage, but upon rules of precedence befitting the military and theocratic groundwork of Islam. For this end three points were considered:—priority of conversion, relationship to the Prophet, and military service. The widows of Mahomet,—"Mothers of the Faithful,"—took precedence with an annual allowance of 10,000 pieces each;¹ and so also all his kinsmen on a scale corresponding with their affinity. The famous Three hundred of Bedr had 5000 each;² presence at Hodeibia and the *Pledge of the Tree*³ gave a claim to 4000; those engaged in quelling the Rebellion had 3000; those who had fought in the great battles of Syria and Chaldæa, and also sons of "the men of Bedr," had 2000; and such as took the field after the actions of Cadesiya and the Yermuk, 1000. Warriors of distinction received an extra grant of 500. And so they graduated downwards to 200 pieces for the latest levies. Nor were the households forgotten. Women had the tenth of a man's share. Wives, widows, and children had each their proper stipend; and in the register, every new-born infant had a title to be entered with an allowance of ten pieces, rising with its age. Even Arab slaves (so long as any of the blood remained in slavery) had their portion.

Thus every soul was rated at its worth. But the privilege was confined to those of Arab blood. A very few exceptions there were of distinguished Persian chiefs; but their mention only proves the stringency of the rule. The whole nation, man, woman and child, of the militant Arab race, was subsidised. In theory, the rights of all Believers of what blood soever are the same. "Ye are "one brotherhood," said Mahomet at the Farewell pilgrimage; and as he spake placed two fingers of one

¹ Ayesha was allotted 2000 extra, "for the love the Prophet bare her," but some say she declined it. Mahomet's two slave-concubines were at first rated only at 6000; but at the desire of the other widows were placed on an equality with them. The grandsons had 5000 each.

² *Life of Mahomet*, p. 226.

Ibid. pp. 346, 402.

A.H. 14-
15.
New rule
of distribu-
tion.

All other
races form
a lower
caste.

A.H. 14-
15. hand upon the other, to enforce the absolute equality ruling in Islam.¹ But in point of fact, the equality was limited to the Arab nation. The right of any brother of alien race was but a dole of food sufficient for subsistence, and no more.

Omar's
rule dis-
arms Arab
jealousies.

A people dividing amongst them the whole revenues, spoil, and conquests of the State, on the basis of an equal brotherhood, is a spectacle probably without parallel in the world. The distinction also of early conversion was well conceived. In no other way could the susceptibilities of tribal rivalry have been reconciled. The proud chiefs of the Coreish, who did not join the Prophet till after the fall of Mecca, refused any allowance but the highest: "We know of none nobler than ourselves," they said; "and less than other we will not take." "Not so," answered Omar; "I give it by priority of faith, and not for noble birth." "It is well," they replied; and no reason but this would have satisfied them. There were two further sources of danger: first, the rivalry between the Bedouin tribes and the "Companions" or men of Mecca and Medina; and, second, the jealousies that sprang up between the house of Hashim (the Prophet's kinsman) on the one hand, and the Omeyyads and other branches of the Coreish on the other;—jealousies which by and by developed into larger proportions, and threatened the very existence of the Caliphate; but which, held in check by Omar, were now for a time allayed by assuming an acknowledged test as the ground of precedence.

Arabs the
aristocracy
of the Mos-
lem world.

The blue blood of Arabia was universally recognised as the aristocracy of the Moslem world. Rank and stipend now assigned, and even rewards for special gallantry in the field, descended by inheritance. Implied in this inheritance was the continuing obligation to fight for the Faith: by it martial genius was maintained, and employment perpetuated for the standing army of the Caliphate. A nation composed thus of ennobled soldiery, pampered, factious and turbulent, formed too often a

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 458.

dangerous element of sedition and intrigue. But, nevertheless, it was the real backbone of Islam, the secret of conquest, the stay of the Caliphate. Crowded harems multiplied the race with marvellous rapidity. The progeny of the Arab sire (whatever the mother) was kept sedulously distinct, so as never to mingle with the conquered races. Wherever Arabs went they formed a class apart and dominant,—the Nobles and Rulers of the land. Subject peoples, even if they embraced Islam, were of a lower caste; they could aspire to nothing higher than, as “Clients” of some Arab chief or tribe, to court patronage and protection. Thus the Arabians set themselves apart, as a nation militant, for the sacred task of propagating Islam. Even after the new-born zeal of the Faith had evaporated, the chivalry of the Arabs as a race wholly devoted to arms, was, owing mainly to Omar’s foresight, maintained in full activity for two centuries and a half. The Nation was, and continued to be, an army mobilised; the camp, and not the city, their home; their business, arms;—a people whose calling it was to be ready for warlike expedition at a moment’s notice.

A.H. 14-
15.

To carry out this vast design, a Register was kept of every man, woman and child, entitled to a stipend from the State—in other words, of the whole Arab race employed in the interests of Islam. This was easy enough for the upper ranks, but a herculean task for the hundreds of thousands of ordinary families which kept streaming forth to war from the Peninsula, and which, by free indulgence in polygamy, were multiplying rapidly. The task, however, was simplified by the strictly tribal disposition of the forces. Men of a tribe fought together; and the several Corps and Brigades being thus territorially arranged in clans, the Register assumed the same form. Every soul was entered under the tribe and clan whose lineage it claimed. And to this exhaustive classification we owe the elaborate, and to some extent artificial, genealogies and tribal traditions of Arabia before Islam.

Register of
all Arabs
entitled to
stipend.

The Roll itself, as well as the office for its mainten-

A.H. 14-
15.
The
Dewan
of Omar.

ance and for pensionary account, was called the *Dewan* or Exchequer. The State had by this time an income swollen by tribute of conquered cities, poll-tax of subjugated peoples, land assessments, spoil of war, and tithes. The first charge was for the Revenue and Civil administration; the next for Military requirements, which soon assumed a sustained and permanent form; the surplus was for the support of the Nation. The entire revenues of Islam were thus expended as soon almost as received; and Omar took special pride in seeing the treasury emptied to the last dirhem. The accounts of the various provinces were at the first kept by natives of the country in the character to which they were accustomed — in Syria by Greeks, and in Chaldæa by Persians. At Kufa this lasted till the time of Hajjāj, when, an Arab assistant having learned the art, the Arabic system of record and notation was introduced.

Vastness
of Arab
exodus.

We are not told the number enrolled on the *Dewan* of Omar, but the population of Kufa and Bussorah may give us some idea of the vast exodus in progress from Arabia, and the rapid strides by which the crowded harems multiplied the race. Arab ladies, as a rule, married only Arab husbands; but the other sex, besides unlimited concubinage with slave-girls, were free to contract marriage with the women of conquered lands, whether converts or "People of the Book." And although wives of Arab blood took precedence in virtue of rank and birth, the children of every Arab father, whether the mother were slave or free, Moslem, Jew, or Christian, were equal in legitimacy. And so the nation multiplied. Looking also to the further drain upon Arabia to meet continuing war, we shall not greatly err if we assume that before Omar's death the Arabs beyond the limits of Arabia proper, numbered half a million, and before long were doubled, and perhaps quadrupled.

Provincial
adminis-
tration.

Civil administration followed close on conquest. In Chaldæa, the great network of canals was early taken in hand. The long-neglected embankments of the Tigris and Euphrates were placed under special officers. Syria

and Irac were measured field by field: and the assessment established on a uniform basis. In Irac, the agency of the great landholders was taken advantage of, as under the previous Dynasty, for the maintenance of order and collection of the revenue. In addition to the armies in the field, a reserve of cavalry was maintained at the headquarters of the several provinces, ready for emergency. The corps at Kufa numbered 4000 lances, and there were eight such centres. Reserves for forage were also set apart. The cost of these measures formed a first charge upon provincial revenue.

A.H. 14-
15.
Reserves
of cavalry.

The "Collection" of the Coran—that is, gathering into one the various "Revelations" of Mahomet—belongs to the early years of this reign. The task was already begun by Abu Bekr, at the instance of Omar himself, who seeing that many of the "Readers" (those who had the Coran by heart) had perished at the "Garden of Death," feared lest otherwise "much of the sacred text might be lost." The duty was assigned to Zeid who, as well as others, had from time to time, taken down passages direct from Mahomet's dictation. Many of the "Suras," or chapters, were already used privately, and for the Public services, in a complete and settled form. In addition, Zeid now sought out from every possible quarter, whatever had at any time emanated from the Prophet, in the way of revelation, from the earliest period of his ministry—"whether inscribed on date-leaves, shreds of leather, shoulder-blades, stony tablets, or the hearts of men." Having gathered exhaustively the diverse and often fugitive materials, he carefully and with reverent hand dovetailed them together, just as they were found, in continuous form. A certain regard to time and subject was no doubt observed in the pious task; but still evidently with a good deal of haphazard collocation; and to this may be ascribed much of the obscurity and incoherence that occasionally pervade the sacred text. The original manuscript thus completed was committed to Haphsa, Omar's daughter, one of the Prophet's widows, and continued to be the standard text until the time of Othman.

Coran,
how
collected.

CHAPTER XXI

FAMINE AND PLAGUE

18 A.H. 639 A.D.

*The Year
of Ashes,
18 A.H.
639 A.D.*

THE fifth year of Omar's Caliphate was darkened by the double calamity of pestilence and famine. It is called "The Year of Ashes," for the dry air of the Hejaz was so charged with unslaked dust from the parched and sandy soil as to obscure the light of heaven by a thick and sultry haze.

*Famine in
Arabia.*

In the northern half of the Peninsula the drought was so severe that Nature languished. Wild and timid creatures of the desert, tamed by want, came seeking food at the hand of man. Flocks and herds died of starvation, or became too attenuated for human food. Markets were deserted, and the people suffered extremities like those of a garrison long besieged. Crowds of Bedouins, driven by hunger, flocked to Medina, and aggravated the distress. Omar, with characteristic self-denial, refused any indulgence not shared with those about him. He swore that he would taste neither meat nor butter, nor even milk, until the people had food enough and to spare. On one occasion his servant obtained at a great price a skin filled with milk, and another with butter. Omar sent both away in alms. "I will not eat," he said, "of that which costeth much; for how then should I know the trouble of my people, if I suffer not even as they?" From coarse fare and oil-olive instead of milk and butter, the Caliph's countenance, naturally fresh and bright, became sallow and haggard.

Every effort was made to alleviate distress, and effective

aid at last came from abroad. Abu Obeida brought 4000 A.H. 18. beasts of burden laden with corn from Syria, which he distributed himself amongst the famished people. Amru despatched food from Palestine by camels, and also by shipping from the port of Ayla. Supplies came likewise from Chaldæa. The beasts that bore the burden were slain by twenties daily, and served, together with their freight, to feed the citizens of Medina. After nine months of sore trial, a solemn Assembly was called by Omar; and in answer (we are told) to a prayer offered up by Abbas, the Prophet's aged uncle, the heavens were overcast and rain descending in heavy showers drenched the land. Grass sprang rapidly, the Bedouins were sent back to their pasture-lands, and plenty again prevailed. Out of the calamity there grew a permanent traffic with the north, and the markets of the Hejaz continued long to be supplied from Syria, and eventually by sea from Egypt.

Grain imported from Syria and elsewhere.

The famine was followed, but in a different region, by an evil of still greater magnitude. The plague broke out in Syria; and, attacking with special virulence the Arabs at Hims and Damascus, devastated the whole province. Crossing the desert, it spread even as far as Bussorah. Consternation seized every rank. High and low fell equally before the scourge. Men were struck down and died as by a sudden blow. Omar's first impulse was to summon Abu Obeida to Medina for the time, lest he too should fall a victim to the fell disease. Knowing his chivalrous spirit, Omar veiled the purpose, and simply ordered him to come "on an urgent affair." Abu Obeida divined the cause, and choosing rather to share the danger with his people, begged to be excused. Omar, as he read the answer, burst into tears. "Is Abu Obeida dead?" they asked. "No, he is not dead," said Omar, "but it is "as if he were." The Caliph then set out himself for Syria, but was met on the confines by Abu Obeida and others from the scene of the disaster. A council was called, and Omar yielded to the wish of the majority that he should return home again. "What," cried some of his courtiers, "and flee from the decree of God?" "Yea,"

Plague in Syria.

Omar holds Council on Syrian border.

A.H. 18. — replied the Caliph, wiser than they,—“if we flee, it is but “from the decree of God unto the decree of God.” He then commanded Abu Obeida to carry the Arab population in a body out of the infected cities into the desert; and himself wended his way back to Medina.¹

Arabs fly
to Hauran.

Death of
Abu
Obeida.

Acting on the Caliph's wish, Abu Obeida lost no time in making the people fly to the high lands of the Hauran. He had reached as far as Jabia, when he too was struck down, and with his son fell a victim to the pestilence. Moadz, designated to succeed, died almost immediately after; and it was left for Amru to lead the panic-stricken folks to the hill-country, where the pestilence abated. Not less than five-and-twenty thousand perished in the visitation. Of a single family which had emigrated seventy in number from Medina, but four were left. Such was the deadliness of the scourge.

Omar's
journey
to Syria,
autumn,
18 A.H.
639 A.D.

The country was disabled, and fears were entertained of an attack from the Roman armies. The terrible extent of the calamity showed itself in another way. A vast amount of property was left by the dead, and the gaps amongst the survivors caused much embarrassment in the succeeding claims. The difficulty grew so serious, that to settle this and other matters, Omar resolved on making a progress through his dominions. At first he thought of visiting Chaldæa, and thence by Mesopotamia, entering Syria from the north; but he abandoned the larger project, and confining his resolution to Syria, took the usual route. The way lay through the Christian town of Ayla, at the head of the Gulf of Acaba; and his visit here brings out well the simplicity and kindly feeling which he evinced toward his Christian subjects. He

Visits the
Bishop of
Ayla.

¹ During the discussion *Ald al Rahman* quoted a saying of *Mahomet* :—“If pestilence break out in a land, go not thither; if thou art there, flee not from it.” Omar's views were more reasonable, and he justified them by this illustration :—“Suppose (he said) that ye alight in a valley, whereof one side is green with pasture, and the other bare and barren, whichever side ye let loose your camels upon, it would be by the decree of God; but ye would choose the brow that was green.” And so he judged that in removing the people from the scene of danger to a healthier locality, he was making no attempt to flee from the decree of God.

rode on a camel with small pomp and following; and, minded to enter the village unrecognised, changed places with his servant, putting him in front. "Where is the Ameer?" cried the eager Citizens, streaming forth to witness the Caliph's advent. "He is *before* you," replied Omar with double meaning, as the camel moved slowly on. So the crowd hurried forward, thinking that the great Ruler was still beyond, and left Omar to alight unobserved at the house of the Bishop, with whom he lodged during the heat of the day. His coat, rent upon the journey, was given to his Host to mend. This the Bishop not only did, but had a lighter garment made for him, more suited to the oppressive travel of the season. Omar, however, preferred to wear his own.

Proceeding onwards, the Caliph made the circuit of Syria. He visited the chief Moslem settlements, gave instructions for the disposal of the estates of the multitudes swept away by the plague, and himself decided doubtful claims. As both Abu Obeida and Yezid had perished in the pestilence, Omar now appointed Muavia, another son of Abu Sofian, to the Chief command in Syria, and thus laid the foundation of the Omeyyad dynasty. Muavia was a man of unbounded ambition, but wise and able withal; and he turned to good account his new position. The factions which glorified the claims of Aly and Abbas, and spurned the Omeyyad blood of Muavia, were yet unknown. Both Aly and Abbas had hitherto remained inactive at Medina. The latter, always weak and wavering, was now enfeebled by old age. The former, honoured, indeed, as the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, and also for his wit and wisdom, was amongst the trusted counsellors of the Caliph, but possessed no special power or influence, nor any apparent ambition beyond a life of quiet indulgence in the charms of a Harem, varied ever and anon by fresh arrivals. Neither is there any reason to suppose that the bygone opposition to Islam of Abu Sofian and Hind, parents of Muavia, was now remembered against them. Sins preceding conversion, if followed by a consistent profession, left no stain upon the Believer. It was not

A.H. 18.

Omar in
Syria.Appoints
Muavia
governor.

A. H. 18. till the fires of civil strife burst forth that abuse was heaped upon the Omeyyad race for ancient misdeeds and enmity towards the Prophet, and political capital made of them. The accession, therefore, of Muavia at the present time to the Chief command in Syria excited no jealousy or opposition. It passed, indeed, as a thing of course, without remark.

Bilâl performs office of Muedzzin.

As Omar prepared to take final leave of Syria, a scene occurred which stirred to their depths the hearts of the Faithful. It was the voice of Bilâl, the Muedzzin of the Prophet, proclaiming the hour of prayer. The stentorian call of the aged African had not been heard since the death of Mahomet; for he refused to perform the duty for any other. He followed the army to Syria, and there, honoured for the office he had so long discharged at Medina, lived in retirement. The Chief citizens of Damascus now petitioned Omar that on this last occasion, Bilâl should be asked once more to perform the Call to prayer. The aged man consented, and as from the top of the Great mosque the well-known voice arose clear and loud with the accustomed cry, the whole assembly, recalling vividly the Prophet at daily prayers, was melted into tears, and strong warriors, with Omar at their head, lifted up their voices and sobbed aloud. Bilâl died two years after.¹

Pilgrimage, xii. 18 A. H. Dec. 639 A. D.

On returning to Medina, Omar set out on the annual Pilgrimage to Mecca, at which he presided every year of his Caliphate. But this was the last journey which he made beyond the limits of Arabia.

¹ For Bilâl and his office of Muedzzin, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 189.

CHAPTER XXII

CONQUEST OF EGYPT

19-20 A.H. 640-641 A.D.

THE year following was one of comparative repose. Islam ^{19 A.H.} continued to push its way now steadily into Persia. ^{640 A.D.} Reserving the advance in that direction, we shall first narrate the conquest of Egypt.

The project is due to Amru. After the fall of Cæsarea, Amru casts an eye on Egypt. the able and ambitious general chafed at a life of inaction in Palestine. On the Caliph's visit to Syria, he urged a descent upon Egypt, at once to enfeeble the Enemy's power and augment their own. The advice was good; for Egypt, once the granary of Rome, now fed Constantinople with corn. Alexandria, though inhabited largely by Natives, drew its population from every quarter. It was the second City in the empire, the seat of commerce, luxury, and letters. Romans and Greeks, Arabs and Copts, Christians, Jews, and Gentiles, mingled here on common ground. But the life was essentially Byzantine; although the government was ever and anon interrupted by revolt and by the uprising of the native Egyptians, both among themselves, and against their foreign rulers. The vast population was provided, in unexampled profusion, with theatres, baths, and places of amusement.¹ A forest of ships congregated in its safe and spacious harbour, from whence communication was maintained with all the seaports of the realm.

¹ The male population alone is given at 600,000. There were 70,000 (according to others 40,000) male Jews of an age to pay the poll-tax, and 200,000 Greeks, of whom 30,000 effected their escape by sea before the siege; 4000 baths, 400 theatres, and 12,000 vessels of various size.

A.H. 19-20. Alexandria was thus a European, rather than an Egyptian, city.

Egypt disaffected towards Byzantine rule.

It was otherwise with the rich valley beyond. Emerging from the luxurious city, the traveller dropped at once from the pinnacle of civilisation to the dreary wastes of Monasticism, and the depths of poverty and squalor. Egypt was then, as ever, the servant of nations. The overflowing produce of well-watered fields served but to feed the great cities of the empire. And the people of the soil, ground down by exaction and oppression, were ever ready to rise against their rulers. Hatred was embittered here, as elsewhere, by the never-ceasing endeavour of the Byzantine rulers to convert the inhabitants to Orthodoxy, while the Copts held tenaciously by the Monophysite creed.¹ Chronic disaffection pervaded the land, and the people courted deliverance from the overbearance of Byzantine rule. There were at the time in Egypt no Bedouin tribes with Arabian sympathies for Moslem conquest; but elements of even greater danger had long been here at work, which made the change of yoke at first sight not unwelcome.

Amru invades Egypt, 19 or 20 A.H. 640-1 A.D.

It was in the nineteenth or twentieth year of the Hegira that Amru, having obtained the hesitating consent of the Caliph, set out from Palestine for Egypt. His army, even with bands of Bedouins, lured on the way by hope of plunder, did not exceed 4000. Soon after he had left, Omar, concerned at the smallness of his force, would have recalled him; but finding that he was already too far gone, sent Zobeir with heavy reinforcements after him. The army of Amru was thus swelled at last to an imposing array of some 15,000, many of them veterans and warriors of renown.

Reduces Upper Egypt.

Amru entered Egypt by Arish, and then turning to the left, passed onward through the desert, and so, after the siege and capture of Belbeis reached the easternmost estuary of the Nile. Along this branch of the river he marched towards Upper Egypt, where Mucucus, the Copt, was governor,—the same who sent Mary, the Egyptian

¹ See Palmer's *Origines Liturgicae*, vol. i. p. 82; and *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, vol. i., noticed below.

slave-girl, and her sister as a gift to Mahomet.¹ On the way he routed several columns attempting to arrest the inroad; amongst them one commanded by his Syrian antagonist Artabun, who was slain in the encounter. Marching along the vale of the Nile, with channels from the swelling river, verdant fields, and groves of the fig-tree and acacia, Amru, towards the close of the year, reached at last the obelisks and ruined temples of Ain Shems (Heliopolis). There the Bishop procured for Mucoccus a truce of four days. At its close, an action took place, in which the Egyptians were driven back into the City, and the Byzantine force into their fortress, which was deemed impregnable. The opposition was at one time warm, for the Yemen troops gave way. Reproached for their cowardice, one replied, "We are but men, not iron or stone." "Be quiet, thou yelping dog!" cried Amru. "If we are dogs," answered the angry Arab, "then what art thou but the commander of dogs?" Amru made no reply, but called on a column of veterans to step forth; and before their fiery onset the Egyptians fled. "What chance," said the Copts one to another, "have we against men that have beaten both the Chosroes and the Kaiser?" And, in truth, they deemed it little loss to be rid of the Byzantine yoke. The siege had already lasted several months, when a general assault was made. Zobeir with desperate valour, had successfully scaled the walls, when a deputation sent by Mucoccus obtained terms from Amru. The people were left free; but a capitation-tax was fixed of two dinars on every male adult who refused Islam, with other impositions similar to those of Syria. Many prisoners had been taken; and a

A.H. 19-
20.

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 359. Mrs. Butcher gives us the origin of the name in the word *μεγαυχη*, similar to "His Excellency,"—a title of the *Pagarchs* or Native rulers recognised by the Byzantine government. The Arab pronunciation turns soft g into k or c (as in the case of Gupt or Egyptian into Copt), and the name consequently from *Megauches* into *Mucoccus*. She tells us there were several Pagarchs at the invasion; our Mucoccus, apparently the chief, being Governor of Babylon or Heliopolis in Upper Egypt. I gladly refer the reader to Mrs. Butcher's admirable work for details of the Arab invasion,—though many of the traditions which she gives from works of after-ages are to be received with caution. See *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, by E. L. Butcher. Smith, Elder & Co., 1897. Vol. i. ch. xxxii.

A. H. 19-
20.
—
Fifth part of these and of the spoil was sent to Medina. The same conditions were given to the Greek and Nubian settlers in Upper Egypt. But the Greeks, fallen now to the level of those over whom they used to domineer, and hated by them, were glad to make their escape towards the seacoast.

Marches
on Alex-
andria,

Amru lost no time in marching on Alexandria, so as to reach it before the Greek troops could rally there for its defence. On the way he put to flight several columns which sought to hinder his advance; and at last, towards the close of the year 640, presented himself before the City walls, which, offering on the land side a narrow and well-fortified front, was capable of obstinate resistance. From the sea also it was open to succour at the pleasure of the Byzantine court. But during the siege Heraclius died, and the opportunity slipped away. Some of the outworks on the narrow isthmus were taken by storm; and, there appearing no prospect of succour, the spirit of the garrison began to flag. The Greeks took to their ships, and pusillanimously deserted the beleaguered city. And so things lasted throughout the greater part of the year. At last Mucoccus, who had retired to Alexandria, finding the place too weak for prolonged defence, offered to capitulate, on the terms given to Upper Egypt, and on condition that the prisoners taken throughout the campaign were set free. The Caliph was referred to, and readily agreed. "Tribute," he replied, "is better than booty; for it continueth, whereas spoil soon vanisheth, as if it had not been. Touching the captives, such as remain, except those taken in battle, shall be restored." And so the City escaped sack, and the Egyptian people became tributary to the Conquerors.¹

Which
capitu-
lates,
20 A. H.
641 A. D.

¹ The remarks of Mrs. Butcher on the conquest are so apt and true, that I cannot forbear quoting them here:—

"Thus, in the December of the year 641, Egypt passed under the Moslem yoke, from which—whether under Arab, Circassian, or Turk—she has never since been able to free herself, and which slowly but surely has crushed out her art, her civilisation, her learning, her religion, and well-nigh her very life; for of the four (rather eight) millions who make up the present population of Egypt, there are barely seven (rather nine) hundred thousand who can

Amru wished to fix his seat of government at Alexandria, but Omar would not allow him to remain so far away from his camp. So he returned to Upper Egypt. For several years his followers were engaged against the Nubians, and at last brought them under subjection in the direction of Dongola. A body of the Arabs crossed the Nile and settled in Ghizeh, on the western bank,—a movement which Omar permitted only on condition that a strong fortress was constructed there to prevent the possibility of surprise. The headquarters of the army were pitched near Memphis. Around them grew up a military station, called from its origin, *Fostat*, or “the Encampment.” It expanded rapidly into the Capital of Egypt, the modern Cairo. And there Amru laid the foundation of a great Mosque on the site of that which still bears his name.¹

Zobeir urged Amru to enforce the right of conquest, and divide the land among his followers. Amru refused; and the Caliph confirmed the judgment. “Leave it,” was his wise reply, “in the people’s hands, to nurse and fructify.” As elsewhere, Omar would not allow the Arabs to become proprietors of a single acre. Even Amru was refused ground whereon to build a mansion for himself. He had a dwelling-place, the Caliph reminded him, at Medina, and that should suffice. So the land of Egypt, left in the hands of its ancestral occupants, became a rich granary for Arabia, just as in bygone times it had been the granary of the Roman empire.

A memorable work, set on foot by Amru after his

“claim beyond dispute to be the true descendants of the ancient Egyptians, and “the enduring witnesses through centuries of persecution for the faith of Christ” (vol. i. p. 370).

[Thank God that all this has now changed into a brighter prospect since the glorious victory of Khartum. 3rd Ed.]

¹ An interesting history of the Mosque with illustrations appears in the *Asiatic Journal* for October 1890, p. 759. Amru (Amr) is there described, from a tradition of Makrizi, as “a short thick-set man with a large head and “black eyes, and a good-humoured expression.” The tradition adds a sermon given by Amru in this Mosque, which of course, like much else that we read about this campaign, is mere fiction.

A. H. 19-20. — return to Fostat, facilitated the transport of corn from Egypt to the Hejaz. It was nothing less than the reopening of the ancient communication between the waters of the Nile in Upper Egypt and those of the Red Sea at Suez.¹ The channel left the eastern branch of the river at Belbeis, then turned to the right, and, striking the salt lakes near Timseh, reached the Red Sea by what is now the lower portion of the Suez Canal. Long disused, the bed was choked with silt; but the obstructions could not have been very formidable, for within a year navigation was restored, and the Caliph, at Yenbo (the port of Medina), witnessed vessels discharge their burdens which had been freighted under the very shadow of the Pyramids. The canal remained navigable for some Eighty years, when, choked with sand, it was again abandoned.

Amru would teach Egyptians to respect the Arabs.

Finding that the Egyptians, used to delicate and luxurious living, looked down upon the Arabs for their frugal fare, Amru, famed for mother-wit, chose a singular expedient to disabuse them. First he had a feast prepared of slaughtered camels, after the Bedouin fashion, and the Egyptians looked on with wonder while the army satisfied their hunger with the rude repast. Next day a sumptuous banquet was set out, with all the dainties of the Egyptian table; here again the warriors fell to with equal zest. On the third day the troops were paraded in battle array, when Amru thus addressed the crowds who flocked to the spectacle:—"The first day's entertainment was to let you see the simple manner of our life at home; the second to show that we can enjoy the good things of the conquered lands, and yet retain, as ye see this day, our martial vigour notwithstanding." The Copts retired,

¹ The attempt was first made by Pharaoh Necho, and subsequently by Darius, who opened communication from Bubastis, on the eastern estuary of the Nile, to the head of the Red Sea. A second canal was made by the Ptolemies at Tel Fakhus, nearer to the Mediterranean. This took the line of lagoons (the modern fresh-water canal) to the Red Sea, and was too shallow to be of much use, excepting in high flood. One of these lines eventually, deepened by Trajan, remained navigable to the end of the Third century of our era. It was the same canal, no doubt, now cleared out and deepened by Amru.

saying one to the other, "See ye not that the Arabs
 "have but to raise their heel upon us, and it is enough." A.H. 19-20.
 Omar was delighted at his lieutenant's device, and said of
 him, "Of a truth it is on wisdom and resolve, as well as
 "upon force, that warfare doth depend."

A curious tale is told of the rising of the Nile. The Fable of maiden sacrifice to Nile.
 yearly flood having been long delayed, the Copts, accord-
 ing to custom, sought leave to cast into the river a maiden
 beautifully attired, or rather, as we may suppose, the
 effigy of such a one.¹ When referred to, the Caliph
 inclosed this singular letter in a despatch to Amru:—

"The Commander of the Faithful to the River Nile, greeting.

"If in times past thou hast risen of thine own will, then stay thy flood;
 "but if by will of Almighty God, then to Him we pray that thy waters may
 "rise and overspread the land."

"Cast this letter," wrote the Caliph, "into the stream, and
 "it is enough." It was done, and the fertilising tide began
 to rise abundantly.

Amru, with the restless spirit of the faith, soon pushed Alexandria retaken; finally reduced, 25 A.H. 646 A.D.
 his conquests westward, established himself in Barca, and
 reached even to Tripoli. The subject races were taxed
 in fixed tribute of Berber slaves, thus early sanctioning in
 that unhappy land, traffic in human flesh and blood. The
 maritime settlements received little aid from the Byzantine
 fleets. But, a few years after, in the Caliphate of
 Othman, a desperate attempt was made to regain possession
 of Alexandria. The Moslems, busy with their conquests
 elsewhere, had left the city insufficiently protected. The
 Greek and other inhabitants, already weary of the Moslem
 rule, conspired with the Byzantine Court; and a fleet of
 300 ships, under command of Manuel, drove out the garrison
 and took possession of the city. Amru hastened to its
 rescue. A great battle was fought outside the walls: the
 Greeks were defeated, and the town subjected to the miseries
 of a second and longer siege. It

¹ The tradition is not given by our early authorities, but may nevertheless
 be grounded on fact, for Lane tells us it is the custom to cast year by year
 such a figure into the river, calling it *The Bride of the Nile*.

A.H. 19-
20. was at last taken by storm and given up to plunder. To obviate the recurrence of similar mishap, Amru razed the fortifications, and quartered in the vicinity a strong garrison, which twice a year was relieved from Upper Egypt. The Moslem court was transferred to Fostat, and Alexandria ceased to be the capital of Egypt.

CHAPTER XXIII

ADVANCE ON THE SOUTH OF PERSIA. HORMUZAN TAKEN PRISONER

16-20 A.H. 637-641 A.D.

TURNING once more to the eastern provinces of the Caliphate, we find the cautious policy of Omar still tending to restrain the Moslem arms within the limits of Irac-Araby, or the country bounded by the western slopes of the Persian range. But they were soon, by the force of events, to burst the barrier.

Barrier fixed by Omar eastward.

To the north of Medain, the Moslem border was securely defended by Holwan and other strongholds planted along the hilly range. In Lower Irac, Otba had, after repeated encounters, established himself at Bussorah, from whence he held securely the country at the head of the Gulf. But the Persian satraps were still in strength at Ahwaz and Ram Hormuz, within a hundred miles of him.

Situation in Lower Irac.

Hostilities in this direction were precipitated by a rash and unsuccessful raid upon Persepolis. Ala, who had distinguished himself by crushing the rebellion in Bahrein, saw with jealous eye the conquests in Irac of Sad and Otba. Tempted by the nearness of the Persian shore across the narrow strait, he set on foot an expedition to seize the district lying opposite. This was done, not only without permission, but against the known unwillingness of Omar to trust the treacherous element. Success might have justified the project; but it fell out otherwise. The troops landing on the Persian coast, met for a time with no check in their advance upon Persepolis. But before long they were drawn into a trap. Advancing altogether,

Governor of Bahrein attacks Persepolis.

A. H. 16-20. — they had neglected to secure their base, and were cut off by the enemy from their ships. After a severe engagement, unable to disperse the gathering enemy, and turning as a last resource towards Bussorah, they found the road in that direction barred. Messengers were hurried to Medina, and Omar, incensed with Ala for his foolhardiness, despatched urgent command to Otba to relieve the beleaguered army. A force of 12,000 men set out immediately; and forming, not without difficulty, a junction with Ala, beat back the Persians, and then retired on Bussorah. The troops of Otba gained a great name in this affair, and the special thanks of Omar.

Meets a check, but is relieved from Bussorah.

Campaign in Khuzistan, 17 A. H. 638 A. D.

But the retreat, conducted with whatever skill and bravery, put heart into the hostile border. Hormuzan, a Persian satrap, had escaped from Cadesiya to his own province of Ahwaz, on the lower mountain range, at no great distance from Bussorah. He began now to make raids upon the Arab outposts, and Otba resolved to attack him. Reinforcements were obtained from Kufa, and Otba was fortunate enough to gain over a Bedouin tribe, which, though long settled near Ahwaz, was by blood and sympathy allied to the garrison of Bussorah. Thus strengthened, he dislodged the enemy from Ahwaz, and drove him across the Karoon river. A truce was called; and Ahwaz, ceded to the Moslems, was placed by Otba in the hands of his Bedouin allies. After one of his victories, the girdle of the defeated Mirzuban, or Persian noble, was sent as a trophy to the Caliph. The envoy, pressed by Omar, confessed that the Moslems were becoming luxurious in foreign parts;—"The love of this present life," he said, "increaseth upon them, gold and silver dazzling their sight." Concerned at the unwelcome avowal, Omar summoned Otba, who came leaving a Bedouin chief in charge at Bussorah. The arrangement was highly distasteful to Omar,—“What!” he cried, “hast thou put a man of the Desert over the Companions of the Prophet? That may never be!” So Moghira was placed in charge; and Otba dying on his journey back from pilgrimage, Moghira became Governor in his stead. Thus early do we see the

Moghira succeeds Otba at Bussorah.

spirit of antagonism rapidly breeding between the Bedouin chiefs and the men of Mecca and Medina. A.H. 16-20.

In the following year, a dispute as to their boundary arose between the Bedouin tribe and Hormuzan; and the latter, dissatisfied with the Moslem general's decision, again raised his hostile standard. He was put to flight by the Moslems, who reduced the rebellious province, and sought permission to follow up the victory by a farther advance. But Omar, withholding permission, bade them rather busy themselves where they were in restoring the irrigation works, and so resuscitate the deserted fields of Khuzistan. Hormuzan fled farther east, and was, for the second time, granted an amnesty. Hostility of Hormuzan, 18 A.H. 639 A.D.

Not long after, emissaries from Yezdegird at Merve were found at work stirring the people up to fresh rebellion. The attitude of Hormuzan became once more doubtful; and the Caliph, suspecting serious opposition, ordered a powerful army to assemble from Kufa and Bussorah, of which he gave command to Noman. Hormuzan, with a great Persian following, was pursued by it; again routed at Ram Hormuz, he fled to Tostar, fifty miles north of Ahwaz, a stronghold which, obstinately defended by the Persians, kept the Moslems for several months at bay. In the end, but not without considerable loss, it was stormed, and Hormuzan, with the garrison, surrendered at the discretion of the Caliph, and was accordingly sent to the Court at Medina. Ram Hormuz and Tostar captured, 19 A.H. 640 A.D.

Siege was then laid to Sus, the royal Shushan of ancient memory; still a formidable city, it was planted between two rivers, on a verdant plain with snow-clad mountains in the distance. The army succeeded here in drawing over a body of Persian nobles with a large native following; these were at once admitted to confidence, and commands conferred upon them, with the singular honour of a well-portioned place upon the tribal list. Still, it was not till after a protracted siege and conflict that Sus was taken. Omar gave orders for the reverential maintenance of the tomb of Daniel in this the scene of his memorable vision "by the river of Ulai"; and here, to the present Sus, or Shushan. Tomb of Daniel.

A.H. 16-
20.
— day, the pious care of succeeding generations has preserved his shrine through thirteen centuries of succeeding change.

Jundai-
Sabur. The important city of Jundai-Sabur, with surrounding country, was also reduced by Noman, and an advance threatened on Ispahan. . But events were now transpiring in Khorasan, which at length opened the way to an advance upon the heart of Persia, and called that Leader to more stirring work.

Hormuzan
spared by
Omar. The deputation which, along with the spoil of Tostar, carried Hormuzan a prisoner to Medina, throws light upon the reasons that weighed with the Caliph to withdraw his long-standing embargo on a forward movement. As the party drew near Medina, they dressed out the captive in his brocaded vestments, to show to the Citizens the fashion of a Persian noble. Wearied with the reception of a deputation from Kufa (for in this way he transacted much of the provincial business), Omar had fallen asleep, whip in hand, on his cushioned carpet in the great Mosque. When the captive Prince entered the precincts of the court, "Where is the Caliph?" he cried, looking round, "and where his guards and warders?" It was indeed a contrast between the sumptuous palaces of the Chosroes, to which he had been used, and the simple surroundings of the mightier Caliph! Disturbed by the noise, Omar started up, and, divining who the stranger was, exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath humbled this man and the like of him!" He made them disrobe the prisoner and clothe him in coarse raiment. Then, still whip in hand, he upbraided Hormuzan, and (Moghira interpreting) bade him justify the repeated breach of his engagements. The captive made as if fain to reply; then gasping, like one faint from thirst, begged for a draught of water. "Give it," said the Caliph, "and let him drink in peace." "Nay," said the captive, trembling, "I fear to drink, lest some one slay me unawares." "Thy life is safe," said Omar, "until thou hast drunk the water up." The words were no sooner spoken than Hormuzan poured the contents upon the ground. "I wanted not the water," he said, "but

quarter, and now thou hast given it me." "Liar!" cried Omar angrily, "thy life is forfeit." "But not," interposed the bystanders, "until he drink the water up." "Strange," said Omar, foiled for once, "the fellow hath deceived me, and yet I cannot spare the life of one who hath slain so many of the faithful by reiterated treachery. I swear that thou shalt not gain by thy deceit, unless thou embrace Islam." Hormuzan, nothing loth, made profession of the faith upon the spot; and thenceforth, taking up his residence at Medina, received a pension of high grade.

"What is the cause," inquired Omar of the deputation, "that these Persians persistently break faith and rebel against us? Maybe, ye treat them harshly." "Not so," they answered; "but thou hast forbidden us to enlarge our boundary; and the King is in their midst to stir them up. Two Kings can in no wise exist together, until the one expel the other. It is not our harshness, but their King, that hath incited them to rise against us after having made submission. And so it will go on until thou shalt remove the barrier and leave us to go forward and expel their King. Not till then will their hopes and machinations cease."

These views were also enforced by Hormuzan. The truth began to dawn on Omar that necessity was laid upon him to withdraw the ban against advance. In self-defence, nothing was left but to crush the Chosroes and take entire possession of his realm.

A.H. 16-
20.

Deputa-
tion urge
removal
of ban
against
advance.

Omar
begins to
see this.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONQUEST OF PERSIA

21-22 A.H. 642-643 A.D.

Persian
campaign
forced on
Omar.

IT was not long before any lingering doubts of Omar were put an end to. He was compelled at last by the warlike attitude of the Persian court to bid his armies take the field with the avowed object of dealing the Empire a final blow.

Yezdegird
gathers a
great
army,
20 A. H.
641 A. D.

Though forced to fly, Yezdegird may have buoyed himself up with the hope that the Arabs, content with the fertile plain of Mesopotamia, would leave his possessions undisturbed beyond the mountain range. But the capture of Sus the ancient capital of Media, and the advance on Ispahan put an end to any such imagination. Arabian hordes still pressed upon the border; and their irruption into farther Persia was inevitable. The King, having resolved once more to stem the hostile tide, ordered the Governors of provinces to gather their forces together for a vigorous attack. Many of these enjoyed a virtually independent rule; but now their interests were knit together by a common danger. From the shores of the Caspian to the Indian Ocean, from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, they rallied in vast numbers around the Royal standard on the plain below the snow-capped peak of Demavend.

Force
under
Noman
opposes
them.

Tidings of the rising storm as they reached Sad were passed on directly to the Caliph. Each courier brought a fresh alarm. A host of 150,000 was assembled under a general named Firuzan; now encamped at Hamadan, now marching on Holwan, they would soon be close to

Kufa, at their very doors. The crisis, no doubt, was serious. Any reverse on the mountain border would loosen hold upon the plains below; and Chaldæa, even Kufa and Bussorah might be wrested from them. As on previous occasions of imminent danger, Omar declared his resolve to march in person. Encamped midway between these two Cities, his presence would restore confidence; and while able from thence to direct the movements in front, his reserve would be a defence to them in the rear. But the old arguments again prevailed, and Omar was persuaded to remain behind. Noman was summoned from the campaign in Khuzistan to take the chief command. Leaving strong garrisons behind, troops were pushed forward in two columns from Bussorah and Kufa. The army at Sus, besides furnishing a contingent for the main advance, renewed its attack upon Persepolis, and so prevented the forces in that quarter from joining the Royal standard.

A.H. 21-
22.

Arrived at Holwan, Noman sent forward spies, who reported the enemy pitched in great force on the plain bounded by the lofty peaks of Elwand, but the road thus far clear. So they marched forward, and were soon face to face with the Persians on the memorable field of Nehavend. The Moslems were 30,000 strong, one fifth only of the enemy; weak in numbers, but strong in faith, and nerved by the presence of veterans and heroes of former fields. After two days' skirmishing, the Persians retired behind their line of fortification, from whence they were able at pleasure to issue and molest their adversaries. The Moslems at last, wearied by delay, resolved by artifice to draw them out. At Toleiha's instance they fell back, and, on the Persians following, wheeled round and cut them off from their return. A fierce engagement followed, and in it Noman was slain. But the Arabs achieved at last their wonted success. Of the enemy 30,000 were left on the field; the rest fled to an adjoining hill, and there 80,000 more were slain. Of the great army but shreds effected their escape. The fate of Firuzan gave rise to a pious proverb. He fled towards Hamadan, but finding

Battle of
Nehavend,
21 A.H.
642 A.D.

A. H. 21-
22.

Decisive
effect of
Moslem
victory.

the mountain pass choked by a caravan of honey, and losing his way, was overtaken thus and slain. Hence the saying—"Part of the Lord's host is the honey-bee." Hamadan fell into the hands of the victorious army; and the royal treasure and jewels, deposited for safety in the great Fire temple there, were delivered up. The chiefs and people of all western Persia submitted and became tributary. The booty was immense; and amongst it two caskets of rare gems, which Omar at first placed in the treasury at Medina. Next morning, the courier was recalled, Omar having seen a vision of angels who warned him of punishment hereafter if he kept the jewels. "Take them hence," he said; "sell them, and let the price be divided amongst the army." They fetched 4,000,000 dirhems.

Rei and
other con-
quests,
22 A. H.
643 A. D.

Omar had now embarked on an enterprise from which there was no returning. The proud Yezdegird refused to yield, and the Caliph no longer scrupled pursuing him to the bitter end. The warlike races south of the Caspian again gathered under Isfandiar, brother of the ill-fated Rustem, for the defence of Rei. The Moslems advanced to meet them; and another great victory placed the City at their mercy. Isfandiar retired to Azerbaijan; again defeated, he was taken prisoner; then, despairing of success, he changed sides, and made common cause with the invading army. From Rei, Yezdegird fled to Ispahan; finding no shelter there, he hurried to Kerman, and thence retired to Balkh. At last he took refuge in Merve, whence he sought aid from the Turks, and even from the Emperor of China. The former espoused his cause; and for several years the contest was waged with varying success in the vicinity of Merve. But in the end the Turkish hordes retired, and with them Yezdegird, across the Oxus. The conflict was subsequently renewed, but Yezdegird never recovered his authority; bereft of his treasures and deserted by his followers, who in vain besought him to tender submission, he survived till the reign of Othman, when, as we shall see, he met with an ignoble death.

On the fall of Rei, the Arabs turned their arms against

the various Persian provinces. Some of these, though subordinate in name, had been, in point of fact, their own masters; and now, even when the heart had ceased to beat, maintained a dangerous vitality. Six columns, drawn from Kufa and Bussorah, and continually replenished by new Arabian levies thirsting for rapine and renown, invaded as many different regions, each falling under the government of the leader who reduced it. Thus, one after another, Fars, Kerman, Mokran, Sejestan, Khorasan, and Azerbijan, were conquered. But the people would ever and anon rise again in rebellion; and it was long before the invaders could subside into a settled life, or feel secure away from the protection of garrisoned entrenchments. The privileges enjoyed by professors of the faith were so great that the adherents of Zoroastrian worship were not long able to resist the attraction; by degrees the Persian race came over, in name at least, to the dominant creed, and in the end all opposition ceased. The notices of Zoroastrian families, and of Fire temples destroyed in after reigns, show indeed that in many quarters the conversion was slow and partial.¹ But after the fall of the Court, the political and social inducements to bow before Islam were, for the most part, irresistible. The polished Persian formed a new element in Moslem society. Yet, however noble and refined, he held for long a place apart and altogether inferior to that enjoyed by the rude but dominant class of Arabian blood. Individuals or families belonging to the subject peoples could only gain a recognised position by attaching themselves to some Arab chief or clan, as "clients," or adherents; and, though thus dependent, might claim some of the privileges of the ruling faith. But neither here nor elsewhere did they intermarry with the Arabs on equal terms, nor were they, in point of fact, looked upon otherwise

A.H. 21-22.

Persian empire reduced.

Persians long held a subordinate race.

¹ The Zoroastrians were still numerous, especially in the outlying provinces, even under the Abbassides. The social and political inducements to profess Islam,—a profession at first but superficial,—are well brought out in *The Apology of Al Kindy*. See especially the speech of Al Mamun, pp. 29 and 84.

A. II. 21-
22. than as of inferior caste. Thus, though in theory, on becoming Mussulmans, conquered nations might enter the "equal brotherhood" of Islam, they formed not the less an altogether lower estate. The race and language, ancestral dignity, and political privileges, of the Arab line, continued for many generations to be paramount

CHAPTER XXV

THE LATER YEARS OF OMAR'S REIGN. DOMESTIC EVENTS

17-23 A.H. 638-644 A.D.

WHILE Moslem arms were thus rapidly reducing the East under the Omar sway, the wave of conquest which had swept over Syria, and broken threateningly on the southern border of Asia Minor, now for the time relaxed into a calm. After the death of Heraclius there was no longer spirit left in the Empire to continue the struggle by either land or sea. Desultory attempts there were at intervals upon the coast, but followed by no lasting success. Muavia was busy meanwhile consolidating the administration of Syria, and, with sagacious foresight, strengthening his hold against the chances of the future. Elsewhere peace prevailed. Amru maintained firm rule in Egypt; and, waging chronic warfare against the Native tribes and Roman settlements on the coast, gradually extended westward the boundaries of Islam. Arabia, still pouring forth its restless spirits to fight abroad, was tranquil at home.

17-23 A.H.
638-44 A.D.
Quiet in
Syria,
Arabia,
and Egypt.

Besides the journeys into Syria already mentioned, Omar quitted his residence at Medina only for the annual Pilgrimage. The Governors of the various provinces used to visit Mecca for the same purpose; and the Caliph was wont to improve the opportunity for conferring with them as they returned by way of Medina, on matters of provincial interest. Several years before his death, he spent three weeks at Mecca, and enlarged the space around the Kaaba. Dwellings that approached too closely to the

Omar visits
Mecca ;
enlarges
court of
Kaaba.

A. H. 17-
23.
— Holy house were pulled down, and the first step taken to form a grand Square and piazza such as became the place of worship for all mankind. Some owners refused to sell their patrimony; but the houses were demolished nevertheless, and the price in compensation deposited in the treasury. The boundary pillars of the *Haram*, or sacred precincts around the City, were renewed; and convenient halting-places constructed at the pilgrim stations, for custody of which and care of the adjoining springs, the local tribes were held responsible.

Disaster in
Red Sea,
19 A. H.
640 A. D.

In the seventh year of Omar's reign volcanic fires burst from a hill in the neighbourhood of Medina. The Caliph gave command to distribute alms amongst the poor, a pious work in which the people joined; "and so the volcano stopped." In the same year a naval expedition was sent across the Red Sea, to check attacks upon the Moslems on the Abyssinian coast. The vessels were wrecked, and the expedition suffered great privation. The disaster led Omar to vow that he would never again permit troops to embark upon an element so treacherous. It was not till some years after his death that the Musulmans gathered courage to brave the risks of a naval encounter.

Moghira
arraigned
on charge
of adultery,
17 A. H.
638 A. D.

In the Governors appointed to control the turbulent cities of Kufa and Bussorah, Omar was not altogether fortunate. Otba, governor of Bussorah, died, as we have seen, shortly after rescuing the unfortunate expedition to Persepolis. The choice of a successor in Moghira was ill-advised. Of rude and repulsive aspect, he had committed murder in his youth at Tayif, and Islam had not softened his nature or improved his morals. A Harem of fourscore wives and concubines failed to satisfy his vagrant passion. At Bussorah his movements were watched by enemies, who through an intervening window were witness to an intrigue with a Bedouin lady visiting his house. When he came forth to lead the public prayer, they shouted him down as an adulterer; and Omar summoned him to answer the accusation. By any reasonable law of evidence, the crime had been established beyond a doubt;

but, under the strange conditions promulgated by Mahomet on the misadventure of his favourite wife, there was a flaw in the testimony of Ziad, the fourth witness.¹ The Caliph, with an ill-concealed groan at the miscarriage of justice, ordered the witnesses to be scourged according to the ordinance, and the accused set free. "Strike hard," cried the barefaced Moghira, addressing the unwilling minister of the law;—"strike hard, and comfort my heart thereby!" "Hold thy peace," said Omar; "it wanted but little to convict thee; and then thou shouldst have been stoned to death as an adulterer." The culprit was silenced, but not abashed. He continued to reside in Medina, a crafty courtier at the Caliph's gate.

As successor, Omar appointed Abu Musa to the government of Bussorah, a man of very different stamp. Small of stature, smooth in face, and of little presence, he had yet distinguished himself at Honein, and had been employed as an envoy by the Prophet. He wanted strength and firmness for the stormy times that were coming, but was wise and sufficiently able to hold the restless Bedouins of Bussorah in check. Belonging to a Bedouin tribe himself, it was perhaps an advantage, in the jealousies now growing up, to be outside the clique of Mecca and Medina citizens. But feeling still the need of such support, he said to Omar as he was leaving: "Thou must strengthen my hands with a company of the Companions of the Prophet, for verily they are as salt in the midst of the people"; and his request was granted, for he took nine-and-twenty men of mark along with him. But even Abu Musa was near losing his command, and that in a way which curiously illustrates Omar's government. After a successful campaign against the Kurds, he sent, as usual, a deputation to Medina with report of the victory, and the royal Fifth. Dhabba, a discontented citizen, being

A.H. 17-
28.

Abu Musa
governor of
Bussorah.

¹ The autoptic witness of four persons is necessary for conviction, the penalty being death; but if the evidence fail of full proof, the witnesses instead are scourged (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 293). Conviction therefore is, under ordinary circumstances, practically impossible. Moghira felt beholden to Ziad for his evidence in this matter, as we shall in the sequel see.

A. H. 17-23. refused a place upon it, set out alone to Medina, and there laid charges against Abu Musa, who was summoned by Omar to clear himself. After some days of confinement, he was brought before the Caliph, face to face with his accuser. The first charge was that a band of youths taken in the expedition were used by him as attendants. "True," said Abu Musa; "they did me good service as guides; therefore I paid their ransom, and now, being free, they serve me." "He speaketh the truth," answered Dhabba, "but what I said was also true." The second was that he held two landed properties. "I do," explained Abu Musa; "one for the subsistence of my family, the other for the sustenance of the people." Dhabba answered as before. The third was that the governor had in his household a girl that fared too sumptuously. Abu Musa was silent. Again, he was charged with making over the seals of office to Ziad; which was admitted by Abu Musa, "because he found the youth to be wise and fit for office." The last charge was that he had given the largess of a thousand dirhems to a poet; and this Abu Musa admitted,—to preserve, as he said, his authority from scurrilous attack. The Caliph was satisfied, and permitted Abu Musa to resume his government, but desired him to send Ziad and the girl to Medina. On their arrival, Omar was so pleased with Ziad, already foreshadowing his administrative talent, that he sent him back with approval of his employment in the affairs of state; but the girl was detained, perhaps because of her undue influence, in confinement at Medina. With Dhabba the Caliph was very angry. Out of malice he had sought to ruin Abu Musa by one-sided allegations. "Truth perverted is no better," said Omar, "than a lie; and a lie leadeth to hell fire."

Accused of
malver-
sation,
23 A. H.
643 A. D.

Sad,
governor
of Kufa
deposed,
21 A. H.
642 A. D.

Kufa remained several years under its founder Sad, the conqueror of Chaldæa. At length, in the Ninth year of Omar's reign, a faction sprang up against him. The Bedouin jealousy of the Coreish had already begun to work; and Sad was accused of unfairness in distributing the booty. There was imputed also lack of martial spirit and backwardness in the field, a revival of the slanderous

charge at Cadesiya. He was summoned, with his accusers, to Medina; but the main offence proved against him was one of little concern to them. In his public ministrations he had cut short the customary prayers; and Omar, deeming the misdemeanour to be unpardonable, deposed him. To fill a vacancy requiring unusual skill, experience, and power, Omar unwisely appointed Ammâr, who, as a persecuted slave and confessor in the first days of Islam, was second to none in the faith; but a man of no ability, and now advanced in years.¹ The citizens of Kufa were not long in finding out his incapacity; and, at their desire, Omar transferred Abu Musa from Bussorah to rule over them. But it was no easy work for him to curb the factious populace. They took offence at his slave for undue influence in buying fodder before it crossed the bridge; and for so slight a cause, after he had been Governor but for a year, the Caliph sent him back again to Bussorah. Omar was on the point of making another nomination, when the artful Moghira wormed the secret from him; and, dwelling on the burden of a hundred thousand turbulent Citizens, suggested that the candidate in view was not fit to bear it. "But," said Omar, "the men of Kufa have pressed me to send them neither a headstrong tyrant, nor a weak and impotent believer." "As for a weak believer," answered Moghira, "his faith is for himself, his weakness thine; as for a strong tyrant, his tyranny injureth himself, his strength is for thee." Omar, caught in the snare, was weak enough to confer on Moghira, his former scandal notwithstanding, the government of Kufa. With all his defects, Moghira was, without doubt, the strong man needed for that stiff-necked city; and he held his position during the two remaining years of Omar's reign.

About the same time, Omar appointed another early convert of singular religious merit, Abdallah ibn Masud, who had in early days like Ammâr been a slave at Mecca, to a post at Kufa, for which, however, he was better fitted, —the charge of the Treasury. He had been the body-

A.H. 17-23.

Moghira appointed in his room.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 66.

A. H. 17-23. servant of the Prophet, who was used to call him "light in body, but weighty in faith."¹ He was learned in the Coran, and had a "reading" of his own, to which as the best text, he held persistently against all recensions.

Bussorah, additional endowment.

There was still considerable jealousy between Bussorah and its richer rival. The armies of both had contributed towards the conquest of Khuzistan, and had shared accordingly. But Bussorah, with its teeming thousands, was comparatively poor; and Omar, to equalise the benefits of all who had served in the earlier campaigns, assigned to them increased allowances, to be met from the surplus revenues of the territories administered at Kufa.

Provincial officers, civil, military, and religious.

In the more important Governments, the judicial office was discharged by a functionary who held his commission as Cazeer immediately from the Caliph. The control of other departments remained with the Governor, who, in virtue of his office, led the daily Prayers and, especially on Friday, added an address which had often an important political bearing. Military and fiscal functions, vested at the first, like other powers, in the Governor's hands, came eventually to be discharged by officers specially appointed to the duty. Teachers of religion were commissioned by the State. From the rapidity with which whole peoples were brought within the scope of Islam, risk arose of error in respect both of creed and ritual, to the vast multitude of "New-moslems," as they were called. To obviate the danger, Omar appointed masters in every country, whose business it should be to instruct the people—men and women separately—in the Coran and its requirements. Early also in his reign, he imposed it, as a legal obligation, that the people, both small and great, should all attend the public services, especially on Friday; and notably that in the month of Fast, the whole body of Moslems should be constant in the assembling of themselves together in the Mosques.

Era of the Hegira, 17 A. H.

To Omar is popularly ascribed, not only the establishment of the Dewan or Exchequer, and Offices of systematic account, but also the regulation of the Arabian

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 58, 294.

year. He introduced for this purpose the Mahometan era, commencing with the new moon of the first month (Moharram) of the year in which the Prophet fled from Mecca. Hence the Mahometan year was named the *Hegira*, or "Era of the Flight."¹

A.H. 17-
23.

Of the state of Mahometan society at this period we have not the material for judging closely. Constant employment in the field, no doubt, tended to check the depraving influences which, in times of ease and luxury, relaxed the sanctions and tainted the purity of Bedouin life. But there is ample indication that the relations between the sexes were already deteriorating. The baneful influence of polygamy, divorce, and servile concubinage, was quickened by the multitude of captive women distributed or sold among the soldiers and the community at large. The wife of noble blood held, under the old and chivalrous code of the Bedouins, a position of honour and supremacy in the household, from which she could be ousted by no base-born rival, however fair or fruitful. She was now to be, in the estimation of her husband, but one amongst many. A slave-girl bearing children, became at once, as *Omm Walad*,² free; and in point of legitimacy her offspring ranked with the children of the free and noble wife. Beauty and blandishment thus too often outshone birth and breeding, and the favourite of the hour displaced her noble mistress.

Deterioration of social and domestic life.

With the coarse sensualist, revelling like Moghira in a Harem stocked with Greek and Persian bond-maids, this might have been expected. But it was not less the case in many a house of greater refinement and repute. Some lady, ravished, it may have been, from a noble home, and

Story of
Leila.

¹ The calendar was already strictly lunar, as announced by the Prophet at the Farewell pilgrimage. But the *era*, and consequent numbering of the years, was introduced only now. The lunar year is eleven days shorter than the solar, and so loses three years in every century of ours. There is this convenience in the lunar reckoning, that, if the date be given, you can tell the age of the moon; but also this serious want, that the month is no indication of the season of the year.

² *i.e.* "Mother of his child."

A.H. 17-
23.
—

endowed with the charms and graces of a courtly life, would captivate her master, and for the moment rule supreme. The story of Leila affords a sample. That beautiful Ghassanide princess was bought at Duma by Khalid from the common prize. The fame of her charms reached Medina, and kindled a romantic flame in the breast of Abd al Rahman, son of Abu Bekr. The disconsolate lover ceased not singing his Mistress's praises, and his own unhappiness, in verses still preserved. At last he became her master, and she was despatched from the camp to his home. At once he took her to wife. His love was so great that, forsaking all other, he kept only to her, so long as her beauty lasted. She was the queen of his household. After a time she fell sick and began to waste away. The beauty went, and with it the master's love, and her turn came to be forsaken. His comrades said to him: "Why keep her forsaken and neglected thus? Suffer her to go back to her people and her home." So he suffered her. Leila's fate was happy compared with that of most. Tired of his toy, the owner would sell her, if still young and beautiful, to be the plaything of another; or if disease or years had fretted her beauty, leave her to eke out the forlorn, weary, hopeless, lot of a household slave.

Use of
wine.

Relaxation of manners is significantly marked by frequent notices of drunkenness. There are not wanting instances even of Governors deposed because of it. Omar was rigorous in imposing the legal penalty. He did not shrink from commanding stripes to be inflicted, even on his own son and his boon companions, for the use of wine. At Damascus, the scandal grew to such a height that Abu Obeida had to summon a band of Citizens, with the hero Dhirar at their head, for the offence. Hesitating to enforce the law, he begged of Omar that the penitent offenders might be forgiven. An angry answer came: "Gather an assembly," he wrote in the stern language of his early days, "and bring them forth. Then ask, *Is wine lawful or forbidden?* If they shall say *forbidden*, lay eighty stripes on each; if *lawful*, behead them

"every one." They confessed that it was forbidden, and submitted to the ignominious punishment. A.H. 17-28.

Weakness for wine may have been a relic of the days when the poet sang, "Bury me under the roots of the juicy vine." But there were domestic influences altogether new at work in the vast accession of captive women, Greek, Persian, and Egyptian, to the Moslem harems. The Jews and Christians might retain their ancestral faith, whether as concubines, or married to their masters. With their ancestral faith they, no doubt, retained much also of the habits of their fatherland; and the same may be said both of them and of the Heathen and Parsee slave-girls, even when adopting outwardly the Moslem faith. The countless progeny of these alliances, though ostensibly bred in the creed and practice of Islam, must have inherited much of the mother's life and nationality who nursed and brought them up. The crowded Harem, with its sanction of servile concubinage, was also an evil school for the rising generation. Wealth, luxury, and idleness were under such circumstances provocative of licence and indulgence, which too often degenerated into intemperance and debauchery.

For, apart from war and faction, Moslem life was idle and inactive. There was little else to relieve its sanctionious voluptuousness. The hours not spent in the Harem were divided between listless converse in the City clubs, and prayer at Mosque five times a day. Ladies no longer appeared in public excepting as they flitted along shrouded beneath "the veil." The light and grace, the charm and delicacy, hitherto imparted by their presence to Arab society were gone; the softness, brightness, and warmth of nature, so beautifully portrayed in ancient Arab song, were chilled and overcast. Games of chance, and suchlike amusements, were forbidden; even speculation was checked by the ban on interest for money lent. And so, Mussulman life, cut off, beyond the threshold of the Harem, from the ameliorating influences of the gentler sex, began to assume outside the dreary, morose, and cheerless aspect ever since retained. But nature is not to

Influence
of concu-
binage on
the family.

Prevailing
laxity of
manners.

A.H. 17-
23.
— be for ever thus pent up; the rebound too often comes; and in casting off its shackles, humanity not seldom bursts likewise through the barriers of the Faith. The gay youth of Islam, cloyed with the dull delights of the sequestered Harem, were tempted thus when abroad to evade the restrictions of their creed, and seek in the cup, in music, games, and dissipation, the excitement which the young and light-hearted will demand. In the greater Cities, intemperance and libertinism were rife. The canker spread, oftentimes the worse because concealed. The more serious classes were scandalised not only by amusements, luxuries, and voluptuous living, inconsistent with their creed, but even with immoralities which cannot here be named. Development of this evil came later on, but tares were already sown even under the strict regime of Omar.¹

Simplicity
of Omar's
domestic
life.

For the present such excesses prevailed only in foreign parts. At home, the Caliphs, fortified by the hallowed associations of Medina, preserved the simplicity of ancient Arab life. Severe simplicity, indeed, was not incompatible (as in the case of Mahomet himself) with the indulgences of the Harem. But even in this respect, the first three Caliphs, judged by the standard of Islam, were temperate and modest. Omar, they say, had no passion for the sex. Before the Hegira, he contracted marriage with four wives, but two of these, preferring to remain at Mecca, separated from him. At Medina, he married five more, one of whom, however, he divorced. The last marriage was in the eighth year of his reign, when near sixty years of age. Three years previously he had married a granddaughter of the Prophet, under circumstances casting a curious light on his domestic ways. He conceived a liking for Omm Kolthum, the maiden daughter of Abu Bekr, and sister of Ayesha, through whom a betrothal was arranged. But Ayesha found the light-hearted damsel with no desire to wed the aged Caliph. In this

¹ For a description of the shameless demoralisation that prevailed in Damascus and Baghdad, I must refer to the learned and elaborate work of H. von Krenmer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter dem Chalifen*.

dilemma she had recourse to the astute Amru, who readily undertook to break the marriage off. He broached the subject to Omar, who thereupon imagined that Amru wished the maiden for himself. "Nay," said Amru, "that I do not; but she hath been bred softly in the family of her father Abu Bekr, and I fear she may ill brook thine austere manners, and the gravity of thy house." "But," replied Omar, "I have already engaged to marry her; how can I break it off?" "Leave that to me," said Amru; "thou hast indeed a duty to provide for Abu Bekr's family, but the heart of this maiden is not with thee. Let her alone, and I will show thee a better than she, another Omm Kolthum, even the daughter of Aly and of Fatima." So Omar married this other maiden, and she bore him a son and a daughter.

A.H. 17-
23.

Many of those whose names we have been familiar with were now dropping off the scene;—Fatima, the daughter, and Safia, the aunt, of Mahomet, Zeinab one of his wives, and Mary his Coptic bond-maid; Abu Obeida, Khalid, and the Muedzzin Bilâl. Many others who also bore a conspicuous part in the great rôle of the Prophet's life, had now passed away, and a new race was springing up in their place.

Death
of many
familiar
person-
ages.

Abu Sofian survived till 32 A.H., and died 88 years of age. One eye he lost at the siege of Tayif, and the other at the battle on the Yermuk, so that he had long been blind. He divorced Hind, the mother of Muavia—she who "chewed the liver" of Hamza at the battle of Ohod!¹ The reason for the divorce does not appear.

Abu Sofian
and Hind.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 254.

CHAPTER XXVI

DEATH OF OMAR

23 A.H. 644 A.D.

Omar's
last pil-
grimage,
23 A.H.
Oct.
644 A.D.

IT was now the eleventh year of Omar's Caliphate, and though some sixty years of age, he was full of vigour, and vigilant in the discharge of the vast responsibilities devolving on him. In the last month of the year he journeyed, as was his wont, to Mecca; and taking the widows of Mahomet in his suit, performed with them the full rites of annual Pilgrimage. He had returned but a few days to Medina, when his reign came to a tragic and untimely end.

Abu Lulu,
a slave,
promises
to make
him a
windmill.

A Persian slave, Abu Lulu, had been brought by Moghira from Irac. Made prisoner in his youth by the Greeks, he had early embraced Christianity; and now, taken by the Moslems, his fate was to endure a second captivity as Moghira's slave. When the crowd of prisoners was marched into Medina from the battle of Nehavend, said to have been Abu Lulu's birthplace, the sight opened springs of tenderness long pent up; and, stroking the heads of the little ones, he exclaimed: "*Verily, Omar hath consumed my bowels!*" He followed the trade of carpenter; and his master shared the profits. Meeting Omar in the market-place, he cried out, "Commander of the Faithful! right me of n.y wrong, for verily Moghira hath assessed me heavily." "At how much?" asked the Caliph. "At two dirhems a day." "And what is thy trade?" "A carpenter and worker in iron," he said. "It is not much," replied Omar, "for a clever artificer like thee. I am told that thou couldest design for

"me a mill driven by the wind." "It is true." "Come, then," continued the Caliph, "and make me such a mill that shall be driven by the wind." "If spared," said the captive in surly voice, "I will make a mill for thee, the fame whereof shall reach from east even to far west"; and he went on his way. Omar remarked, as he passed, the sullen demeanour of Abu Lulu:—"That slaye," he said, "spoke threateningly to me just now." A.H. 23.

Next day, when the people assembled in the Mosque for morning prayer, Abu Lulu mingled with the front rank of the worshippers. Omar entered, and, as customary, took his stand in front of the congregation, with his back towards them. No sooner had he begun the prayer with the words *Allah Akbar*, than Abu Lulu rushed upon him, and with a sharp blade inflicted six wounds in different parts of his body. Then he ran wildly about, killing some and wounding others, and at last stabbed himself to death. Omar, who had fallen to the ground, was borne into his house adjoining the court, but was sufficiently composed to desire that Abd al Rahman should proceed with the service. When it was ended, he summoned him to his bedside, and signified his intention of nominating him to the Caliphate. "Is it obligatory upon me?" inquired Abd al Rahman. "Nay, by the Lord!" said Omar, "thou art free." "That being so," he replied, "I never will accept the burden." "Then stanch my wound," said the dying Caliph (for life was ebbing through a gash below the navel), "and stay me while I commit my trust unto a company that were faithful unto their Prophet, and with whom their Prophet was well pleased." So he named, together with Abd al Rahman, other four,—Aly, Othman, Zobeir, and Sad,—as the chiefest among the Companions, to be Electors of his successor, and called them to his bedside. When they appeared, he proceeded:—"Wait for your brother Talha" (absent at the moment from Medina) "three days; if he arrive, take him for the sixth; if not, ye are to decide the matter without him." Then, addressing each in turn, he warned them of the responsibility attaching to the duty now Omar mortally wounded by him.
Appoints Electors to choose successor.

A.H. 23. — imposed upon them, and the danger to the one elected of partiality towards his own clan and family. "O Aly, if the choice fall upon thee, see that thou exalt not the house of Hashim above their fellows. And thou, Othman, if thou art elected, or Sad, beware that thou set not thy kinsmen over the necks of men. Arise, go forth, deliberate, and then decide. Meanwhile Soheib shall lead the prayers." When they had departed, he called Abu Talha, a warrior of note, to him, saying:—"Go, stand before the door, and suffer no man to enter in upon them." After a pause he spoke solemnly to those around him:—"Tell it to him who shall succeed, as my last bequest, that he be kind to the Men of the City which gave to us and to the Faith a home; that he make much of their virtues, and pass lightly by their faults. Bid him treat well the Arab tribes; verily they are the backbone of Islam; the tithe that he taketh from them, let him give it back unto the same for nourishment of their poor. And the Jews and Christians, let him faithfully fulfil the covenant of the Prophet with them. O Lord, I have finished my course. And now to him that cometh after me I leave the kingdom firmly established and at peace." Then he lay down quietly and rested for a time.

Desires to
be interred
by the
Prophet.

After a while he bade his son go forth, and see who it was that wounded him. Told that it was Abu Lulu, he exclaimed:—"Praise be to the Lord that it was not one who had ever bowed down before Him, even once, in prayer! Now Abdallah, my son, go in unto Ayesha and ask her leave that I be buried in her chamber by the side of the Prophet, and by the side of Abu Bekr. If she refuse, then bury me by the other Moslems, in the graveyard of Backie.¹ And list thee, Abdallah, if the Electors disagree" (for he was to have a casting voice) "be thou with the majority; or, if the votes be equal, choose the side on which is Abd al Rahman. Now let the people come in." Crowds had assembled at the door; and, permission given, they approached to make

¹ For this burying ground outside the city, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 193.

obeisance. As they passed in and out, Omar asked whether any leading man had joined with Lulu in conspiracy against him. "The Lord forbid!" was the loud response, in horror at the very thought. A.H. 28.

Among the rest, Aly came to inquire; and as he sat by the Caliph's bedside, the son of Abbas too came up. Omar, who dreaded the factious spirit of the latter, said: "O Ibn Abbas, art thou with me in this matter?" He signified assent, whereupon Omar added earnestly: "See " that thou deceive me not, thou and thy fellows. Now, " Abdallah, my son, raise my head from the pillow, then " lay it gently down upon the ground: peradventure " the Lord may in mercy take me thus, this night, for I " fear the horrors of the rising sun." A physician gave him to drink of date-water; but it oozed through the wound unchanged; and so also with a draught of milk. Which when the physician saw, he said: "I perceive that the wound is mortal: make now thy testament, O Commander of the Faithful." "That," said Omar, "have I done already." As he lay, his head resting on the bosom of his son, he recited this couplet:—

"It would have gone hard with my soul, had I not been a Moslem;
And fasted and prayed as the Lord hath commanded."

And so, in a low voice, he kept repeating the name of the Lord and the Moslem creed, until his spirit passed away. It was a few days before the close of the 23rd year of the Hegira. He had reigned for the space of ten years and a half. Achievements of his Caliphate.

So died Omar, next to the Prophet the greatest in the kingdom of Islam; for it was all within these ten years that, by his wisdom, patience, and vigour, the dominion was achieved of Syria, Egypt, and Persia. Abu Bekr beat down the Apostate tribes; but at his death the armies of Islam had but just crossed the Syrian frontier. Omar began his reign master only of Arabia. He died the Caliph of an Empire embracing some of the fairest provinces under Byzantine rule, and with Persia to boot. Yet throughout this marvellous fortune he never lost the Vigorous, wise, and simple.

A.H. 28. balance of a wise and sober judgment, nor exalted himself above the frugal habit of an Arab chief. "Where is the Caliph?" the visitor would ask, as he looked around the court of the Medina mosque; and all the while the monarch might be sitting in homely guise before him.

Character. Omar's life requires but few lines to sketch. Simplicity and duty were his guiding principles, impartiality and devotion the leading features of his administration. Responsibility so weighed upon him that he was heard to exclaim, "O that my mother had not borne me; would that I had been this stalk of grass instead!" In early life of a fiery and impatient temper, he was known, even in the later days of the Prophet, as the stern advocate of vengeance. Ever ready to unsheathe the sword, it was he that at Bedr advised the prisoners to be all put to death. But age, as well as office, had now mellowed this asperity. His sense of justice was strong. And excepting the treatment of Khalid, whom he pursued with an ungenerous resentment, no act of tyranny or injustice is recorded against him; and even in this matter, his enmity took its rise in Khalid's unscrupulous treatment of a fallen foe. The choice of his captains and governors was free from favouritism, and (Moghira and Ammar excepted) singularly fortunate. The various tribes and bodies in the empire, representing interests the most diverse, reposed in his integrity implicit confidence, and his strong arm maintained the discipline of law and empire. A certain weakness is discernible in his change of governors at the factious seats of Bussorah and Kufa. Yet even there, the conflicting jealousies of Bedouin and Coreish were kept by him in check, and never dared disturb Islam till he had passed away. The more distinguished of the Companions he kept by him at Medina, partly, no doubt, to strengthen his counsels, and partly (as he would say) from unwillingness to lower their dignity by placing them in office subordinate to himself. Whip in hand, he would perambulate the streets and markets of Medina, ready to punish offenders on the spot; and so the proverb,— "Omar's whip is more terrible than another's sword."

But with all this he was tender-hearted, and numberless acts of kindness are recorded of him, such as relieving the wants of the widow and the fatherless.¹ A.H. 23.

Omar was the first who assumed the title Ameer ul Momenin, or "Commander of the Faithful." "*Caliph* (Successor) of the Prophet of the Lord, was too long and "cumbersome a name," he said, "while the other was "easier, and fitter for common use." First
"Com-
mander
of the
Faithful."

According to his desire, Omar was buried side by side with the Prophet and Abu Bekr, in the chamber of Ayesha. Soheib, as presiding over the public Prayers, performed the funeral service, and the five Electors, with the Caliph's son, lowered the body into its last resting-place. Burial.

The Moslem annalist may well sigh as, bidding farewell to the strong and single-minded Caliph, he enters on the weak, selfish, and stormy reign of his successor. Stormy
prospect.

¹ For example, journeying in Arabia during the famine, he came upon a poor woman and her hungry weeping children seated round a fire, whereon was an empty pot. Omar hastened on to the next village, procured bread and meat, filled the pot, cooked an ample meal, and left the little ones laughing and at play.

CHAPTER XXVII

ELECTION OF OTHMAN

DZUL HIJJ 23 A.H.—MOHARRAM 24 A.H.
NOVEMBER 644 A.D.

The
Electors.
xii. 23 A. H.
Nov.
644 A. D.

WHAT arrangements Omar might have made for a successor, had his end come less suddenly upon him, it is perhaps unnecessary to inquire. But some more definite choice he would, in all probability, have formed. We know that the perils of disunion hung heavily on his mind. The unbridled arrogance of the Arabian tribes at Kufa and Bussorah, flushed with the glory and spoils of war, was already felt to be a growing danger; while family rivalries amongst the Coreish themselves had begun to weaken their hold upon the people. So much is plain, that (Abd al Rahman excepted) Omar saw no one amongst them endowed with sufficient power and influence to hold the reins of government; none, at least, so prominent as to take the acknowledged lead. Again, the mode of nomination or election proper to Islam was yet uncertain. Abu Bekr on his deathbed appointed Omar his successor; but the higher precedent of Mahomet himself, who when laid aside simply named Abu Bekr to lead the prayers, was of doubtful meaning. Had Abu Obeida survived, Omar was known to say that he would have chosen him; but he was gone, and Abd al Rahman would none of the post. Weak and faint from the assassin's dagger, the emergency came upon the dying Caliph unprepared. So, relieving himself of the responsibility, he fell upon the expedient of nominating the chiefest

of the Companions, on one or other of whom he knew the choice must fall, to be Electors. A.II. 23.

Omar hoped, no doubt, that the successor thus chosen would have the unequivocal support of those who elected him. But he had not calculated on the frailty of human nature; and selfish ends proved more powerful than loyalty. Abd al Rahman was the only real patriot amongst them. Neither Talha, nor Zobeir, nor Sad, had any special reason to aspire to the Caliphate. Zobeir, indeed, was closely related to the Prophet. Sad, also, was the nephew of Mahomet's mother; but his recall from Kufa had tarnished his fame as conqueror of Medain. Aly, a few years younger, had the strongest claim of kinship, whatever that might be; for he was at once the son of the Prophet's uncle, the widowed husband of the Prophet's daughter Fatima, and the father of his only surviving grandsons. He had hitherto, from inactive temperament, remained passive at the Caliph's court; but, of quick and high intelligence, he had ever held a distinguished place in the counsels of Omar. In the absence of any leading competitor, his claim could now no longer be left out of sight, nor, without want of spirit, fail to be asserted by himself. Othman was his only real rival. Years carried weight with Othman, for he was now close on seventy. Attractive in person and carriage, he early gained the hand of Rockeya, the Prophet's daughter. Shortly after her death, he married her sister Omm Kolthum; and when she, too, passed away, Mahomet used to say he loved Othman so dearly that, if another daughter had yet remained, he would have given her to him. But his character withal had vital defects. Of a close and selfish disposition, his will was soft and yielding. And of all the competitors, Othman probably had the least capacity for dominating the unruly elements now fermenting throughout the Moslem empire.

The Electors, when appointed by Omar, forthwith retired, and fell into loud and hot discussion. Omar, overhearing it, desired that they should wait till his decease. So after the burial, Micdad, a veteran citizen

Their position and character.

The conclave.

A.H. 23. appointed by the deceased Caliph to the duty, assembled the Electors in the treasury chamber adjoining Ayesha's house, while Abu Talha with a guard kept watch at the door. Omar had ordered that the choice should not be delayed beyond the third day, so that his successor might be declared by the fourth at latest; and signified the utmost urgency by saying that if the minority then resisted, they should be beheaded on the spot. The Electors, when thus again assembled, pressed hotly each the claim of his own party, and two days passed in unprofitable wrangling. Abd al Rahman spent the night in visiting the leading Citizens, and the chief officers from the Provinces (who, having come for the yearly Pilgrimage, had not yet departed), and in sounding their views. On the third day, Abu Talha warned the Electors that he would allow no further delay, and that decision must be come to by the morning. To bring the matter to an issue, Abd al Rahman offered to forego his own claim, if only the rest would abide by his choice. They all agreed but Aly, who at first was silent, but at last said: "First give me thy word that thou wilt regard neither kith nor kin, but right alone and the people's weal." "And I," rejoined Abd al Rahman, "ask thee first to give me thy troth that thou wilt abide by my choice, and against all dissentients support it." Aly assented, and thus the matter rested in the hands of Abd al Rahman.

Abd al
Rahman
umpire.

That night Abd al Rahman, closeted with each of the Electors in turn, did not close his eyes. The contest was narrowed between the houses of Hashim and Omeyya, in the persons of Aly and Othman; and their influence with the electoral body was fairly equal. Zobeir was in favour of Aly; how Sad voted is not certain. Talha had not yet returned. With Aly and Othman, separately, Abd al Rahman was long in secret conference. Each pressed his own claim; but each admitted the claim of the other to be the next in weight. The morning broke upon them thus engaged; and now the nomination must be made.

The courts of the Mosque overflowed with expectant

worshippers assembled for the morning service. Abd al Rahman addressed them thus:—"The people think that the governors, chiefs, and captains from abroad should, without further waiting, return to their respective posts. Wherefore advise me now in this matter." Ammâr, late governor of Kufa, said: "If it be thy desire that there be no division in the land, then salute Aly Caliph!" and Micdad affirmed the same. "Nay," cried Abu Sarh, "if it be thy desire that there be no division, then salute Othman!" and Abu Rabia affirmed the same. Ammâr turned in contempt on Abu Sarh; who, repaying scorn with scorn, said: "And pray, Ammâr, how long hast thou been counsellor to the Moslems? Let the Beni Hashim and Omeyya speak for themselves." But Ammâr would not be silent; whereupon one cried angrily, "Thou passest beyond thy bounds, O son of Someyya; who art thou, thus to counsel the Coreish?"¹ Sad, seeing the strife wax warm, said to Abd al Rahman: "Finish thy work forthwith, or flames of discord will burst forth." "Silence, ye people!" cried Abd al Rahman. "Be quiet, or ye will bring evil on yourselves. The determination of this matter rests with me." So saying, he called Aly to the front;—"Dost thou bind thyself by the covenant of the Lord, to do all according to the Book of the Lord, the example of the Prophet, and the precedent of his Successors?" "I hope," responded Aly, "that I should do so; I will act according to the best of my knowledge and ability." Then he put the same question to Othman, who answered unconditionally,—"Yea, I will." Whereupon, either dissatisfied with Aly's hesitating answer, or having already decided in his mind against him, Abd al Rahman raised his face toward heaven, and taking Othman by the hand, prayed thus aloud:—"O Lord, do Thou hearken now and bear me witness. Verily the burden that is around my neck, the same do I place round the neck of Othman." So saying, he

A.H. 24.
Othman
elected.

1st Mo-
harram
24 A. H.
7 Nov.
644 A. D.

¹ To understand the taunts here bandied, it must be remembered that Abu Sarh was the foster-brother of Othman, and bore a bad repute, as we shall see further on; and that Ammâr was son of a bond-maid called Someyya.

A.H. 24. saluted him as Caliph, and the people followed his example.

His
inaugural
address.

It was the first day of the New year, the 24th of the Hegira. After two or three days spent in receiving the homage of the people, Othman ascended the pulpit, and made a brief and modest speech. "The first attempt," he said, "was always difficult, for he was unused to speak in public. It would be his duty in the future to address them, and the Lord would teach him how."

Aly's party
discon-
tented.

Though Aly, like the rest, took the oath of allegiance, yet his partisans were much displeased, and he himself upbraided Abd al Rahman bitterly with the desire to keep the supreme power out of the Prophet's house and brotherhood. "Beware," said Abd al Rahman, with prophetic voice,— "take heed lest, speaking thus, thou makest not a way against thyself, whereof thou shalt repent hereafter." And so Aly passed out with the words of Joseph on his lips; "Surely patience becometh me. The Lord is my helper against that which ye devise."¹ Shortly after, Talha returned to Medina. Othman acquainted him with what had happened, and as his vote would have ruled the majority, declared that if he dissented, he was prepared even then to resign the Caliphate. But on learning that all the people had agreed, Talha also swore allegiance.

The choice
disastrous
for Islam.

The choice thus made by Abd al Rahman laid the seeds of sad disaster. It led to dissensions which for years bathed the Moslem world in blood, threatened the existence of the faith, and to this day divide believers in hopeless and embittered schism. But Abd al Rahman could hardly have anticipated the wanton, weak, and wavering policy of Othman, which slowly but surely brought these results about. There is no reason to think that, in discharging his functions as Umpire, he acted otherwise than loyally and, as he thought, for the best.²

¹ *Sura* xii. 219.

² He discharged the invidious task as a loyal and unselfish patriot. Night and day engaged in canvassing the sentiments of the leading chiefs, he did his best to compose the antagonistic claims of the Electors. The immediate cause of his nominating Othman is not easy to find. Abbasside traditions assume it

An embarrassing incident followed the accession of Othman. Some one told Obeidallah, son of the deceased Caliph, that Abu Lulu had been seen shortly before in private converse with Hormuzan the Persian prince, and with a Christian slave belonging to Sad; and that when surprised, the three separated, dropping a poniard such as that with which the assassin had wounded Omar. Rashly assuming a conspiracy, the infuriated Obeidallah rushed with drawn sword to avenge his father's death, and slew both the prince and the slave. Sad, incensed at the loss of his slave, seized Obeidallah, still reeking with his victims' blood, and carried him, as the murderer of a believer (for Hormuzan had professed the Moslem faith), before the Caliph. A council was called. There was not a tittle of evidence, or presumption even, of the supposed conspiracy. Aly conceived that, according to the law, Obeidallah must be put to death, as having slain a believer without due cause. Others were shocked at the proposal:—"But yesterday," they said, "the Commander of the Faithful lost his life, and to-day thou wilt put his son to death!" Moved by the appeal, Othman assumed the responsibility of naming a money compensation in lieu of blood, and this he paid himself. Some feeling was excited, and people said that the Caliph was already departing from the strict letter of the law. The poet, Ibn Lebid, satirised both the murderer, and the Caliph who had let him off, in stinging verse; but he was silenced. So the matter dropped, and there is no reason to think that the judgment was generally disapproved.

One of Othman's first acts was to increase the stipends of the chief men all round, by the addition to each of one hundred dirhems. The act, no doubt, was popular, but it gave promise of extravagance in the new administration.

to have been the conscientious scruples of Aly in hesitating to swear that he would follow strictly the precedents of Abu Bekr and of Omar. The Coran and the precedent of Mahomet he would implicitly obey, but the precedent of the first Caliphs only so far as he agreed with them. In the tenor of the traditions relating how Abd al Rahman first questioned Aly and then Othman, and in their replies, I hardly find sufficient ground for this assumption; and it looks very much of a piece with the Abbasside fabrications of later days.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CALIPHATE OF OTHMAN. GENERAL REVIEW

24-35 A.H. 645-656 A.D.

Causes of
Othman's
unpopu-
larity.

THE reign of Othman lasted twelve years. It is usual to say that the first six were popular, and the last six the reverse; in other words, that during his later years the tide turned, and, discontent ripening into sedition, the storm burst with gathered fury upon the aged Caliph. This is true to some extent; but in reality the causes of unpopularity were busily at work from the very first. They were twofold, as has been already noticed; first, antagonism between the Arab nation at large and the Coreish; and second, jealousy among the Coreish themselves,—namely, between the house of Hashim and that of Omeyya, to which latter Othman and Muavia belonged.

1. Antago-
nism
between
Arab tribes
and
Coreish.

The Arab soldiery, flushed with the glory and fruits of victory, were spread all over the Empire. In Syria, they were held in check by the powerful hand of Muavia, strengthened by the large body of influential Citizens from Mecca and Medina settled there. But in other lands, conscious of their power, the Arab tribes were rapidly getting the bit between their teeth. Their arrogant and factious spirit had its focus in Kufa and in Bussorah; in both these cities, indeed, it had already under Omar shown itself; for even he had not been able effectually to curb their insolence. The Arabs were impatient of control, partly because the success of Islam was due to their arms; partly because in the brotherhood of the faith, all Believers, specially those of Arab blood, stood on equal ground. The power of the Caliph, indeed, as

successor to the Prophet, was absolute, uncontrolled by any constitutional authority whatever. But even he, yielding to popular sentiment, not only took counsel on critical occasions with the leading men around him, but, as a rule, held himself bound by the same, and enjoined the like on his lieutenants. And so it was that in the concessions which he made to the clamour of the citizens of Bussorah and Kufa, Omar had already set a baneful lesson to his successor, and given to those constituencies a foretaste of power which they were not slow to take advantage of. Thus the turbulent spirit grew from day to day,—a spirit of opposition to authority, and impatience of Coreishite rule.

A.H. 24-
85.

The second cause, less threatening to Islam at large, was more insidious, and fraught with greater danger to the Caliphate, and to the person of Othman himself. Had the Coreish rallied loyally around the throne, they might have nipped the Arab faction in the bud. But the weakness of Othman, and the partiality with which he favoured his own relations, stirred the jealousy of the house of Hashim, which began now to vaunt the claims of Aly and the Prophet's family, and to depreciate the Omeyyad branch to which the Caliph belonged. That branch, unfortunately for the Omeyyads, had been the tardiest to recognise the mission of the Prophet; and those on whom Othman now lavished his favour were amongst the earliest and most inveterate opponents of Islam. Every expression uttered by Mahomet during that period of bitter enmity, was now raked up and used to blacken their names, and cast discredit on a Government which promoted them to power and honour. Thus the Coreish were divided; rivalry paralysed their influence, and Othman lost the support which would otherwise have enabled him to crush the machinations of the Arab malcontents. Still worse, Aly and his party lent themselves to the disloyal policy of the Bedouin faction which was fast sapping the foundations of the Caliphate, and which, as Aly should have foreseen, would in the end, if he succeeded to the throne, recoil against himself.

2. Jealousy
between
houses of
Hashim
and
Omeyya.

A.H. 24-
35.

Factionous
spirit
diverted by
military
service.

Campaigns
in the East.
31 A.H.
652 A.D.

It was not, however, till later on that these influences, though early at work, assumed dangerous prominence. This was in great measure due to the military operations which, busily pursued in all directions throughout the twelve years of Othman's caliphate, served to divert attention from domestic trouble. Expeditions, as we have seen, had been from time to time directed towards the East, and the various provinces brought more or less under tributary subjection. Shortly after the death of Omar, a general rising took place in Persia, and so to restore Moslem supremacy, a series of enterprises were, by command of Othman, set on foot. Ibn Aamir, governor of Bussorah, having first reduced the adjoining province of Fars, inaugurated a great campaign in the north and east. The land was overrun, and the strongholds, after they had been either stormed or had surrendered at discretion, were ordinarily left in the hands of native Princes on condition of a heavy tribute. Nishapur, taken by the treachery of one of the Mirzabans, was assessed at a million, and Merve at a million and a quarter pieces; and so on with the other States. Serukhs surrendered on quarter being given for a hundred lives; but in furnishing the list of names, the Mirzaban forgot his own, and so was beheaded with the rest of the fighting men. A great battle was fought at Khowarizm on the Oxus, and the country as far as Balkh and Takharistan forced to acknowledge the Caliph's suzerainty. Having achieved these splendid victories, in which were taken 40,000 captives, Ibn Aamir set out for Mecca, on a pilgrimage of thanksgiving. The Lieutenants whom he left to prosecute the campaign, restored authority at the point of the sword in the revolted parts of Kerman and Sejestan, and brought under obedience the chiefs as far as Herat, Kabul, and Ghazni.¹ The control must, however, as yet

¹ Idolatry long prevailed throughout these parts. In Sejestan, the general seized the shrine of an idol made of gold, and the eyes of rubies. The arms he cut off, and took out the rubies. "Here," said he, as he gave them back to the Prince, "these are thine; this I did only to let thee know that this thing can neither hurt thee nor can it do thee good." It may have

have been but slight and desultory; for long years after, we find these outlying provinces continually rising against Moslem rule, and again for the time asserting independence. Kerman, however, and the nearer parts were held under a more substantial sway; forts were erected, water-courses dug, and the land divided among the conquerors; and so settled rule gradually extended eastward. It was not till the eighth year of Othman's reign that Yezdegird died. There are various accounts of his wanderings in the East after the battle of Nehavend, destitute and helpless; but they all agree in the fact that about this time, taking shelter in a miller's hut, he was there assassinated, and that he was buried with reverence by the Metropolitan of Merve.¹ The knowledge that the line of Nushirvan was now at an end, tended no doubt to the pacification of the East.

A.H. 24-35.

31 A.H.
652 A.D.

Although upon the whole the progress of the Moslems was steadily forward, there were still reverses, and these not seldom of a serious kind. An arduous campaign was carried on during this reign against the hordes of Turks and Khizrs, to the west of the Caspian Sea. In the year 32 A.H. these gained so signal an advantage in the mountainous passes of Azerbaijan, that in the discomfiture which followed, the Arab leaders and a great body of the veterans were slain. To retrieve the disaster, Othman ordered levies from Syria to reinforce the Kufan army. Bad blood bred between the two; the Syrians refused to serve under a General commanding troops from Kufa; and altercation ensued which nearly led to bloodshed. This, adds the historian, was the first symptom of the breach between the Kufans and the men of Syria, which subsequently broke out into prolonged hostility. About the same time, a whole army was lost in deep snow upon the heights of

Turks and
Khizrs,
32 A.H.
653 A.D.

been a Buddhist idol; but of Buddhism as a religion we hear little or nothing in this direction.

¹ We have this in two different traditions. The Bishop summoned the Christians (who would seem to have been at this time a substantial body), and recounting the benefits they had received from the Persian dynasty, made them build a church or shrine over the remains which were buried there.

A. H. 24-
35.
—
Kerman, only two men escaping to tell the tale. There were also some alarming losses in Turkestan. But Arabia continued to cast forth its swarms of fighting tribes in such vast numbers, and the wild fanaticism of the faith still rolled on so rapidly, that such disasters soon disappeared in the swelling tide of conquest.

Syria
entirely
under
Muavia.

Fighting
with
Greeks,
26 A. H.
647 A. D.

Syria had by this time come entirely under Muavia. On the death of his brother Yezid, Omar gave him the government of Damascus; and as the other governors passed away, their districts fell successively into his hands; till at last, early in the reign of Othman, to whom as of the Omeyyad line Muavia was closely related, the entire Province came to be administered by him. Excepting raids of little import, Syria had for some time enjoyed rest, when suddenly in the second year of Othman's caliphate, Muavia was startled by the approach of an army from Asia Minor, which he had not the means to oppose. Help was ordered from the eastern provinces, and 8000 volunteers soon joined the Syrian army. Thus reinforced, the Arabs repulsed the Byzantine attack. Following up the success, they overran Asia Minor, and passing through Armenia, reached Tabaristan, thus forming a junction with their comrades on the eastern shore of the Caspian. Then turning north, they marched as far as Tiflis, and reached even to the Black Sea. Thereafter hostilities with the Greeks were renewed every summer, and eventually, aided by naval expeditions from the ports of Africa, the Syrian generals pushed forward their conquests in the Levant and Asia Minor, strengthened their border, and enlarged their coasts. A few years before the death of Othman, Muavia, accompanied by his Bedouin wife, headed one of these expeditions along the coast to the very precincts of Constantinople; and returning by Amuria, destroyed many fortresses on the way.

Africa,
25 A. H.
646 A. D.

In Africa, I have already noticed the desperate attack made early in this reign on Alexandria from seaward; the Byzantine forces on that occasion actually regained possession of the City, but were shortly after driven out by Amru; and against the Moslem power in Egypt no

further attack was for the present made. Farther to the west, however, the Byzantine arms remained long in force; and along the shores washed by the Mediterranean strong Arab columns were still actively engaged against them. Among the chiefs who had joined the Egyptian army was Abdallah Abu Sarh, already noticed as the foster-brother of Othman. He bore no enviable reputation in Islam. Employed by Mahomet to record his revelations, he had proved unfaithful to the trust; and on the capture of Mecca, was by the Prophet proscribed from the general amnesty, and only at the intercession of Othman escaped death. An able administrator, he was appointed by Omar to the government of Upper Egypt, when he advanced on Nubia. But some years after, he fell out with Amru, in whom was vested the supreme control. Each appealed to Othman, who declared Amru to be in fault, and deposed him from the revenue and civil control. Amru objected. "To be over the army," he said, "and not over the revenue, was like holding the cow's horns while another milked her." He repaired angrily to Othman, who, after some words of bitter altercation, transferred the whole administration into the hands of Abu Sarh. The act was unfortunate for the Caliph. It threw Amru into the ranks of the disaffected; while the bad repute of Abu Sarh, "the renegade," as they called him, gave point to the charges of partiality and nepotism now rife against Othman.¹

A.H. 24-
35.Amru
superseded
by Abu
Sarh,
26 A.H.
647 A.D.

Abu Sarh, left thus in sole command, carried his arms vigorously along the coast beyond Tripoli and Barca, and even threatened Carthage. Gregory, as its governor, reinforced by the Emperor, advanced against him with an army, we are told, of 120,000 men. Othman, warned of the danger, sent a large contingent to Abu Sarh's help, with which marched a numerous company of "Companions." The field was long and hotly contested; and

Conquests
in Africa,
26 A.H.
647 A.D.

¹ Abu Sarh narrowly escaped execution at the capture of Mecca (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 397). Party spirit now freely magnified his offence, and he was abused as the person alluded to in *Sura vi. 94*: "Who is more wicked than he who saith, *I will produce a revelation like unto that which the Lord hath sent down.*" See Sale *in loco*.

A.H. 24-
35.
Abu Sarh, to stimulate his troops, promised the hand of Gregory's daughter, with a large dower, to the warrior who should slay her father. The enemy was at last discomfited with great slaughter, and a citizen of Medina gained the lady for his prize. He carried her off on his camel to Medina; and the martial verses which he sang by the way are still preserved.¹ In this campaign, Othman incurred much odium by granting Abu Sarh a fifth part of the royal Fifth of booty as personal prize. The rest was sent as usual to Medina; and here again Othman is blamed for allowing Merwan his cousin to become the purchaser of it at an altogether inadequate price.

Naval
operations
forbidden
by Omar,

It is, however, as the first commander of a Moslem fleet that Abu Sarh is chiefly famous, in which capacity he added largely to the conquests of Islam; while, on the other hand, his undue elevation aroused keen jealousy contributing anew to the obloquy cast on his Master's name. Muavia had long keenly missed the support of a fleet, and in fact had sought permission from Omar to embark his soldiery in ships. "The isles of the Levant," he wrote, "are close to the Syrian shore; you might almost hear the barking of the dogs and cackling of the hens; give me leave to attack them." But Omar dreaded the sea, and wrote to consult Amru, who answered thus:—"The sea is a boundless expanse, whereon great ships look tiny specks; nought but the heavens above and waters beneath; when calm, the sailor's heart is broken; when tempestuous, his senses reel. Trust it little, fear it much. Man at sea is an insect on a splinter, now engulfed, now scared to death." On receipt of this alarming account, Omar forbade Muavia to have anything to do with ships;—"The Syrian sea, they tell me, is longer and broader than the dry land, and is instant with the Lord, night and day, seeking to swallow it up. How should I trust my people on its accursed bosom? Remember Ala.²

¹ The campaign furnishes plentiful material for the romances of the pseudo-Wackidy and later writers. According to some, the maiden leaped from the camel, and being killed escaped thus her unhappy fate.

² *Supra*, p. 177.

“Nay, my friend, the safety of my people is dearer to me than all the treasures of Greece.” A.H. 24-35.

Nothing, therefore, was attempted by sea in the reign of Omar. But on his death, Muavia reiterated the petition, and Othman at last relaxed the ban, on condition that maritime service should be voluntary. The first fleet equipped against Cyprus, in the 28th year of the Hegira, was commanded by Abu Cays as admiral; it was joined by Abu Sarh with a complement of ships manned by Egyptians, and Arab warriors from Alexandria. Cyprus was taken easily, and a great multitude of captives carried off. The Cypriots agreed to pay the same revenue as they had done to the Emperor; and the Caliph, unable as yet to guarantee their protection, remitted the poll-tax.¹ Of Abu Cays we are told that he headed fifty expeditions by land and by sea, but was killed at last, while engaged in exploring a Grecian seaport. But undertaken by Othman.
Cyprus occupied, 28 A.H. 649 A.D.

Three years after the fall of Cyprus, driven now from the harbours of Africa, and seriously threatened in the Levant, the Byzantines gathered a fleet of some 500 vessels, and defied the Arabs. Abu Sarh was appointed to answer the challenge. He manned every available ship in the ports of Egypt and Africa; and his squadron, though inferior in weight and equipment to the Enemy's, was crowded with valiant warriors from the army. The Byzantine fleet came in sight near Alexandria. The wind lulled, and both sides lay for a while at anchor. The night was passed by the Moslems in recitation of the Coran and prayer, while the Greeks kept up the clangour of their bells. In the morning, a fierce engagement took place. The Arab ships grappled with their adversaries, and a hand-to-hand encounter with sword and dagger ensued. The slaughter was great on both sides; but the Greeks, Naval victory off Alexandria, 31 A.H. 652 A.D.

¹ [There is still in Cyprus a shrine called *Khaldat Sultan Takye*, dedicated to Omm Haram, wife of an officer in this expedition. Accompanying her husband on the island, she fell from her mule and died, and so this shrine was dedicated to her. *Asiatic Society's Journal*, January 1896, art. vi. p. 81. 3rd Ed.]

A.H. 24-
35.

Obloquy
cast on
Othman.

unable to withstand the wild onset of the Saracens, broke and dispersed. The Byzantine commander sailed away to Syracuse, where the people, infuriated at the defeat, despatched him in his bath.¹

This splendid victory notwithstanding, discontent against Othman now for the first time found free and dangerous expression among the leading Companions in the fleet. They murmured thus against the Caliph;—
“ Othman hath changed the ordinances of his predecessors,
“ he hath made Admiral a man whom the Prophet would
“ have put to death; and suchlike men also hath he put
“ in chief command at Kufa, Bussorah, and elsewhere.”
The clamour reaching the ears of Abu Sarh, he declared that none of the malcontents should fight in his line of battle. Excluded thus, they were the more incensed. Spite of the threats of Abu Sarh, the inflammatory language spread, and men began to speak openly and unadvisedly against Othman.

Outlook
darkens.

The clouds were louring, and the horizon of the Caliph darkened all around.

¹ According to Theophanes, it was Constans II, who so perished, but at a later date. See Gibbon, chap. xlviii.

CHAPTER XXIX

DOMESTIC EVENTS DURING THE LATTER DAYS OF OTHMAN. HIS GROWING UNPOPULARITY

30-34 A.H. 651-655 A.D.

KUFA and Bussorah at this period exercised an influence on the destinies of Islam hardly less potent than that of Medina itself. The turbulent and factious atmosphere of these cities became rapidly charged with a spirit of disloyalty and rebellion, aggravated by the weak and unwise change of their Governors. Discontent at Kufa and Bussorah.

Moghira did not long enjoy the command at Kufa. He was removed by Othman, who, to fill the vacancy, in obedience (some say) to the dying wish of Omar, reinstated Sad in his former office. The issue again was unsuccessful. To provide for his luxurious living, Sad took an advance from Ibn Masud, chancellor of the treasury, who, by and by, became importunate for repayment. A heated altercation ensued, and Sad swore angrily at Ibn Masud. The factious city ranged itself, part with the great warrior, and part with the quondam slave and attendant on the Prophet. The quarrel reached the ears of Othman, who, much displeased, recalled Sad before he had been a year in office. As successor, the Caliph appointed Welid ibn Ocba, a brave warrior, but suspected of intemperance, and withal a uterine brother of his own. The choice was all the more unfortunate, because Welid was son of that Ocba who, when taken prisoner at the battle of Bedr and about to be put to death, exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, "Who will care for my little children?" and was answered by the Prophet, "Hell- Sad reinstated at Kufa, 34 A.H. 645 A.D. Super- seded by Welid ibn Ocba,

A.H. 30-34. fire!"¹ The words were not forgotten, and faction was careful now to turn them to account. Nevertheless, Welid was popular; and as he commanded successive campaigns in the East with gallantry and vigour, he managed for a time to divert the restless spirits from discontent at home. But in the end, the unruly populace was too strong for him. A murder took place, and sentence of death was executed at the City gate against the culprits. Their relatives resented the act of justice, and watched for ground of accusation against the Governor, whose habits gave them ready opportunity. Charges of intemperance were repeatedly dismissed by Othman, for want of legal proof. At last his enemies succeeded in detaching from his hand the signet ring of office while he slept from the effects of a debauch, and carried it off in triumph to Medina. But still worse, it was established that Welid had conducted the morning Prayers in such a state that, having come to the proper end of the service, he went on, without stopping, to commence another. The scandal was great; and the majesty of Islam must be vindicated. Welid was recalled to Medina, scourged according to law, and deposed.

Who is de-
posed for
inebriety.

At Bussorah, too, things were going from bad to worse. Abu Musa had now been many years Governor, when the restless citizens became impatient of his rule. He had been preaching to the pampered soldiery the virtue of enduring hardness, and going forth on foot to war. When the next expedition was ready, they watched to see whether he would himself set the example. As his ample baggage issued forth, winding from the castle on a long string of mules, they set upon him, crying, "Give us of these beasts to ride upon, and walk thou on foot, a pattern of the hardness thou preachest unto us." Then they repaired to Medina, and complained that he had drained the land of its wealth, pampered the Coreish, and tyrannised over the Arab tribes. Instead of checking their petulance with promptitude, Othman gave it new life by deposing Abu Musa, and appointing a certain obscure

Abu Musa
deposed at
Bussorah,
29 A. H.
650 A. D.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 223.

citizen whom they desired, to be their Governor. Found A.H. 30-
unequal to the post, this man was deposed, and a youthful 34.
cousin of the Caliph, Ibn Aamir, promoted in his room.
When tidings of his nomination reached Bussorah, Abu
Musa said: "Now ye shall have a tax-gatherer to your
" hearts' content, rich in cousins, aunts, and uncles, who
" will flood you with his harpies!" And so it turned out;
for he soon filled the local offices and the commands in
Persia with creatures of his own. In other respects, how-
ever, he proved an able ruler; his signal victories in the
East have been already noticed, and in the struggle now
close at hand he took a leading part.

The government of Kufa, vacated by the deposition of Said,
Welid, was conferred by Othman, together with that of ^{Governor}
Mesopotamia, upon another young and untried kinsman, ^{of Kufa,}
Said ibn al Aas. His father was killed fighting against ^{30 A. H.}
the Prophet at Bedr; and the boy, thus left an orphan, ^{651 A. D.}
had been brought up by Omar, who eventually sent him
to the wars in Syria. Receiving a good account of his
breeding and prowess, Omar summoned him to his court,
and gave him two Arab maidens to wife.¹ This youth,
now promoted to the most critical post in the empire, was
not only without experience in the art of governing, but,
vainly inflated with the pretensions of the Coreish, made
no account of the powerful Bedouin faction. Accustomed
in Syria to the strong discipline of Muavia, he wrote to
Othman, on reaching Kufa, that licence reigned in the
city, that noble birth passed for nothing, and that the
Bedouins were altogether out of hand. His first address
as Governor was a blustering harangue, in which he glibly
talked of crushing the sedition and arrogance of the men
of Kufa with a rod of iron. Countenanced in his over-
bearing course by the Caliph, he fomented discontent by
invidious advancement of the Coreishite nobility, and by
treating with contumely the great body of the Citizens. ^{Discontent}
^{gains}
^{ground at}
^{Kufa.}
"One Coreishite succeedeth another as our governor,"

¹ He was nephew to the Khalid who opened so ingloriously the Syrian campaign. Not satisfied with this pair of wives, he had a numerous harem, and left twenty sons and as many daughters.

A. H. 30-
34.
— they said;—"the last no better than the first. It is but out of the frying-pan into the fire." The under-current of faction daily gained strength and volume. But the vigorous campaigns of Said in northern Persia, for he was an active soldier, served for a time to occupy men's minds, and to stay the open exhibition of a rebellious spirit.

Recension
of Coran,
30 A. H.
651 A. D.

Meanwhile other causes were at work—some apparently insignificant in themselves, but turned adroitly to account by the enemies of Othman. First was the recension of the Coran. The Moslem armies spread over such vast areas and, as well as the converted Peoples, were so widely separated one from another, that differences were arising in the recitation of the sacred text, as it had been settled in the previous reign. Bussorah followed the reading of Abu Musa; Kufa was guided by the authority of Ibn Masud; and the text of Hims differed from that in use even at Damascus. Hodzeifa, during his long campaign in Persia and Azerbijan, having witnessed the variations in different provinces, returned to Kufa gravely impressed with the urgent need of revision. Ibn Masud was highly incensed with the slight thus put upon the authority of his text. But Hodzeifa, supported by the Governor, urged Othman to restore the unity of the divine word, "before that believers begin to differ in their scripture, even as the Jews and Christians."¹ The Caliph, advised by the leading Companions at Medina, called for copies of the manuscripts in use throughout the Empire. He then appointed a syndicate of experts from amongst the Coreish, to collate these with the sacred originals still in the keeping of Haphsa. Under their supervision the variations were reconciled, and an authoritative exemplar written out, of which duplicates were deposited at Mecca, Medina, Kufa and Damascus. Copies were multiplied over the empire; former manuscripts called in and committed to the flames; and the standard text brought into

¹ [Referring apparently (not to the originals, but) to the translations of the Bible in the various languages of the countries into which Christianity spread. The Coran was held too sacred to be translated, and was only (as still) read in its original Arabic, whatever the language of the people. 3rd Ed.]

exclusive use. The action of Othman was received at the moment, as it deserved, with general consent, excepting at Kufa. There Ibn Masud, who prided himself on his faultless recitation of the oracle, pure as it fell from the Prophet's lips, was much displeased; and the charge of sacrilege in having burned copies of the divine Word, was readily seized on by the factious Citizens. By and by, the cry was spread abroad; and, taken up with avidity by the enemies of Othman, we find it ages afterwards still eagerly urged by the partisans of the Abbasside dynasty as an unpardonable offence committed by the ungodly Caliph. The accusation thus trumped up was really without foundation. Indeed, it was scouted by Aly himself. When, several years after, as Caliph, he found the citizens of Kufa still blaming his ill-starred predecessor for the act;—"Silence!" he cried; "Othman acted with the advice of the leading men amongst us; and had I been ruler at the time, I should myself have done the same."¹

A.H. 80-84.

A great body of the nobility from Mecca and Medina about this time transferred their residence to Kufa and Bussorah. These had no right to share in the endowments of Irac, the special privileges of which, in virtue of conquest, were reserved for the original settlers. They were allowed, however, now to do so on condition that they surrendered their properties in the Hejaz. The concession afforded fresh ground for discontent at the extravagant pretensions of the Coreish.

Many Coreish migrate to Irac.

The story of Abu Dzarr is singularly illustrative of the times, and his treatment formed one of the grounds of complaint against the Caliph. He was an early convert to the faith; and is said even to have anticipated Mahomet in some of the observances of Islam. An ascetic in habit, he inveighed against the riches and indulgences of the day as altogether alien from the faith, and as evils which,

Abu Dzarr Ghifary.

¹ On this recension, see Excursus on the "Sources for the Biography of Mahomet," in the *Life of Mahomet*. The manner in which the Abbasside faction perverted the facts and turned the charge to malignant purpose against the Omeyyad house, is well illustrated in the *Apology of Al Kindy*, pp. 25 *et seq.* The charge against Hajjaj is equally groundless.—*Ibid.* p. xi.

A. H. 30-34. —
 Abu Dzarr Ghifary.

rushing in like a flood, were now demoralising the people. Gorgeous palaces, crowds of slaves, horses and camels, flocks and herds, costly garments, sumptuous fare, and splendid equipage, were the fashion, not only in Syria and Iraq, but even now within the Holy cities.¹ The protest of Abu Dzarr was the natural recoil of a strict and fervid believer from the graceless and licentious luxury of the day: but it was seized by the discontented classes as a weapon against the Government. Visiting Syria, the ascetic, whose spirit was stirred at the pomps and vanities around him, preached repentance. "This gold and silver "of yours," he cried, "shall one day be heated red-hot in "the fire of hell; and therewith shall ye be seared in your "foreheads, sides, and backs, ye ungodly spendthrifts!"² "Wherefore, spend now the same in alms, leaving your- "selves enough but for your daily bread; else woe be "unto you in that day!" Crowds flocked round him at Damascus, some trembling under his rebuke; others rejoicing at the contempt poured on the rich and noble; while the people at large were dazzled by the vision of sharing in the treasures of the classes thus denounced. Uneasy at the disturbing effect of these diatribes, Muavia resolved to test the spirit of the preacher. He sent him a purse of 1000 pieces, and in the morning, affecting to have made a mistake, demanded its return; but during the night Abu Dzarr had distributed the whole in charity. On this, Muavia, convinced of his sincerity, and apprehensive of the spread of his socialistic doctrines, despatched

¹ Masudy dwells on this as one of the causes of demoralisation and disloyalty now setting in so rapidly, and he gives some remarkable instances. *Zobeir* had 1000 slaves, male and female, and 1000 horses. At all the great cities he had palaces, and the one at Basorah was still to be seen in the fourth century A. H. His landed estate in Iraq was rated at 1000 golden pieces a day. *Abd al Rahman* had 1000 camels, 10,000 sheep, and left property valued at four hundred thousand dinars. *Zeid* left gold and silver in great ingots, and had land valued at 10,000 dinars. The Coreishite nobles built themselves grand palaces in Mecca and Medina and their environs. Othman himself had a splendid palace at Medina, with marble pillars, walls of costly stucco, grand gates and gardens; he also amassed vast treasures.

² *Sura ix. 36*; originally applied to Christian priests and monks. — *Life of Mahomet*, p. 440.

the preacher to Medina, telling Othman that he was an honest but misguided enthusiast. Before the Caliph, Abu Dzarr persisted in fearlessly denouncing the great and wealthy, and urged that they should be forced to disgorge their riches. Othman condescended to reason with him. "When once men have fulfilled their obligations," he asked, "what power remaineth with me to compel any further sacrifice?" and he turned to Kab, a learned Jewish convert, to confirm what he had said. "Out upon thee, son of a Jew! What have I to do with thee?" cried Abu Dzarr, smiting Kab violently on the stomach. Argument being thus of no further use, Othman banished the preacher to Rabadza in the desert, where two years after he died in penury. Finding the end approach, the hermit desired his daughter to slay a kid, and have it ready for a party of travellers who, he said, would shortly pass that way to Mecca; then, making her turn his face toward the Kaaba, he quietly breathed his last. Soon after, the expected party came up, and amongst them Ibn Masud from Kufa, who, weeping over the departed saint, bewailed his fate, and buried him on the spot, which became one of holy memory. The death of Ibn Masud himself, a few days after, added to the pathos of the incident. The plaintive tale was soon in everyone's mouth; and the banishment of the famous preacher of righteousness was made much of by the enemies of the Caliph. The necessity for it was forgotten, but the obloquy remained.¹

A.H. 30-
34.Obloquy
on his
banish-
ment,
30 A.H.
651 A.D.

¹ Attempts are made by Abbasside tradition to show that Abu Dzarr was driven into opposition by the tyranny of Muavia's rule, and by divers ungodly practices permitted by Othman at Medina. But Ibn al Athir justly doubts this, and distinctly says that his preaching tended to excite the poor against the rich. Abu Dzarr's doctrines were based on the equality of believers; and the danger lay in their popularity with the Socialists who decried the pretensions of the Coreish. Before Muavia, he reasoned thus: "*Riches, ye say, belong unto the Lord; and thereby ye frustrate the people's right therein; for the Lord hath given them to His people.*" "Out upon thee!" replied Muavia; "what is this but a quibble of words? Are we not all of us the Lord's people, and the riches belong unto us all?" Tradition dwells on the want and wretchedness of Abu Dzarr's life at Rabadza, to add point to Othman's unkind treatment. His own tribe are said to have resented his ill-treatment by joining the rebellion.

A. H. 30-
34.

Amuse-
ments at
Medina
put down.

When himself minded to assume the office of censor and rebuke the ungodliness of the day, the unfortunate Caliph fared no better. The laxity of Syria had reached even to the sacred precincts of the Hejaz; and Othman, on attempting to check the games and other practices held to be inconsistent with the profession of Islam, incurred resentment, especially from the gay youth whose amusements he thwarted. Gambling and wagering, indeed, were put down with the approval of the stricter classes of society; but there were not wanting many who, displeased with the Caliph's interference, joined in the cry of his detractors.

Court of
the Kaaba,
enlarged,
26 A. H.
647 A. D.

The enlargement of the grand square of the Kaaba, commenced by Omar, was carried on by Othman while he visited Mecca on pilgrimage. And here, too, the ill-fated Caliph met with opposition. The owners of the demolished houses refused to accept the compensation offered, and raised a great outcry. The Caliph put them into prison, for, said he, "My predecessor did the same, and ye made no outcry against him." But what the firm arm of Omar could do, and none stir hand or foot against him, was a different thing for the weak and unpopular Othman to attempt. He was more successful with the Mosque at Medina, originally built by Mahomet, and hallowed by the mortal remains of the Prophet and his two successors. This was now enlarged and beautified. The supports, at first the trunks of date-trees, were removed, and the roof made to rest on pillars of hewn stone. The walls, too, were built up with masonry, richly carved and inlaid with rare and precious stones. It was a pious work, and none objected.

And
Mosque of
Medina,
32 A. H.
653 A. D.

Changes in
pilgrim
cere-
monial,
32 A. H.
653 A. D.

Yet another cause of murmuring arose from certain changes made by Othman in the ceremonial of the annual Pilgrimage, which, though in themselves trivial and unmeaning, excited strong disapprobation at the Caliph's court. He pitched tents for shelter during the few days spent for sacrifice at Mina, a thing never done before; and, to the prayers heretofore recited there and on Mount Arafat, he added new ones, with two more series of pros-

trations. The ritual, as established by the Prophet himself, had been scrupulously followed by his two successors, and a superstitious reverence attached even to its minutest detail. When expostulated with on the unhallowed innovation, Othman gave no reasonable answer, but simply said it was his will to do so. Disregard of the sacred example of the Founder of the faith offended many, and raised a cry among the Companions unfavourable to Othman.

A.H. 30-
34.

Again, beyond the immediate circle of his kinsfolk, Othman made no personal friends. Narrow, selfish, indiscreet and obstinate,—more and more so, indeed, with advancing years,—he alienated those who would otherwise have stood loyally by him, and made many enemies who pursued him with relentless hatred. Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, for example, and Abu Hodzeifa, were among those embittered against him at the naval victory of Alexandria. And yet no very special cause can be assigned for their enmity. The first is said to have been actuated by “passion and ambition.” The other, nearly related to Othman, and as an orphan kindly brought up by him, was now offended at being passed over for office and command. Both joined the rebellion which shortly broke out in Egypt, and were amongst the most dangerous of the Caliph’s enemies. Nor was it otherwise with the people at large. A factious spirit set in against the unfortunate monarch. The leaven fermented all around; and every man who had a grievance, real or supposed, hastened to swell the hostile cry.

Increasing
unpopu-
larity.

To crown the Caliph’s ill-fortune, in the 7th year, he lost the signet-ring of silver which, engraven for the Prophet, had been worn and used officially both by him and his successors. It was a favourite and meritorious occupation of Othman to deepen the old wells, and to sink new ones, in the neighbourhood of Medina. He was thus engaged when directing the labourers with his pointed finger, the ring slipped and fell into a well. Every effort was made to recover the priceless relic. The well was emptied, the mud cleared out, and a great reward offered;

Loss of the
Prophet’s
signet-
ring,
29 A. H.
650 A. D.

A. H. 30-
34. but no trace of the ring appeared. Othman grieved over the loss. The omen weighed heavily on his mind ; and it was some time before he consented to supply the lost signet by another of like fashion.

Othman
 marries
 Naila,
 28 A. H.
 649 A. D.

Besides the two daughters of the Prophet, both of whom died before their father, Othman had other wives. Three still survived when, in the 5th year of his Caliphate, being then above seventy years of age, he took Naila to wife. Of her previous history we know little more than that once a Christian, she had embraced Islam. She bore him a daughter ; and through all his trials clung faithfully by her ancient lord, to the bitter end. The days were coming when he needed such a helper by his side.

CHAPTER XXX

DANGEROUS FACTION AT KUFA. GROWING DISSATISFACTION

33-34 A.H. 654-655 A.D.

TOWARDS the close of Othman's reign, the hidden ferment, which (Syria perhaps excepted) had long been everywhere at work, began to make its appearance on the surface. The Arab tribes at large were displeased at the pretensions of the Coreish. The Coreish themselves were divided and ill at ease, the greater part being jealous of the Omeyyad house and the Caliph's favourites. And temptation to revolt was fostered by the weakness and vacillation of Othman himself.

Ibn Aamir had been now three years governor of Bussorah, when Ibn Saba (or, as he is commonly called, Ibn Sauda), a Jew from the south of Arabia, appeared there, and professed the desire to embrace Islam. It soon appeared that he was steeped in disaffection towards the existing government,—a firebrand of sedition; as such he was expelled successively from Bussorah, Kufa, and Syria, but not before he had given a dangerous impulse to the already discontented classes there. At last, he found a safe retreat in Egypt, where he became the setter forth of strange and startling doctrines. Mahomet was to come again, even as the Messiah was. Meanwhile Aly was his legate.¹ Othman was a usurper, and his Governors a set of godless tyrants. Impiety and wrong were rampant

Seditious
elements
at work.

Ibn Sauda
preaches
sedition in
Egypt,
32 A.H.
653 A.D.

¹ What led Ibn Sauda to entertain transcendental ideas of Aly does not appear; and indeed the notices of an "Alyite sect" at this period, sound somewhat anticipatory and unreal.

A.H. 33-
34.
everywhere; truth and justice could be restored no other-
wise than by the overthrow of this wicked dynasty.
Such was the preaching which daily gained ground in
Egypt; by busy correspondence it was spread all over
the Empire, and startled the minds of men already fore-
boding evil from the sensible heavings of a slumbering
volcano.

Emeute
at Kufa,
33 A. H.
654 A. D.

The outbreak of turbulence was for the moment re-
pressed at Bussorah by Ibn Aamir; but at Kufa, Said
had neither power nor tact to quell the factious elements
around. At his first public service he had offended even
his own party by ostentatiously washing the pulpit steps
before ascending a spot pretended to have been made
unclean by his drunken predecessor. He was foolish
enough not only to foster the arrogant assumptions of the
Coreish, but to contemn the claims of the Arab soldiery,
to whose swords they owed the conquest of the land.
He called the beautiful vale of Chaldæa *the Garden of the
Coreish*—"as if forsooth," cried the offended Arabs, "with-
out *our* strong arm and lances, they ever could have
won it." Disaffection, stimulated by the demagogue
Ashtar and a knot of factious citizens, culminated at last
in an outbreak. As the Governor and a company of the
people, according to custom, sat in free and equal converse,
the topic turned on the bravery of Talha, who had shielded
the Prophet in the day of battle. "Ah!" exclaimed Said,
"*he* is a warrior, if ye choose, a real gem amongst your
Bedouin counterfeits. A few more like him, and we
should dwell at ease." The assembly was still nettled
at this speech, when a youth incautiously gave expression
to the wish, how pleasant it would be if the Governor
possessed a certain property which lay invitingly by the
river bank near Kufa. "What!" shouted the company,
"out of *our* good lands!" And with a torrent of abuse,
they leaped upon the lad and his father, and went near to
killing both.

Ring-
leaders
exiled to
Syria.

To awe the malcontents, emboldened by this outrage,
ten of the ringleaders, with Ashtar (of whom more here-
after) at their head, were sent in exile to Syria, where it

was hoped that the powerful rule of Muavia and loyal example of the Syrians might inspire them with better feelings. Muavia quartered the exiles in a church; and morning and evening, as he passed by, rated them on their folly in setting up the crude claims of the Bedouins against the indefeasible rights of the Coreish. Subdued by several weeks of such treatment, they were sent on to Hims, where the Governor subjected them for a month to like indignities. Whenever he rode forth, he showered invectives on them as traitors working to undermine the empire. Their spirit at last was broken, and they were released; but, ashamed to return to Kufa, they remained in Syria, excepting Ashtar, who made his way secretly to Medina.

Months passed, and things did not mend at Kufa. Most of the leading men, whose influence could have kept the populace in check, were away on military command in Persia; and the malcontents, in treasonable correspondence with the Egyptian faction, gained head daily. In an unlucky moment, Saïd planned a visit to Medina, there to lay his troubles before the Caliph. No sooner had he gone than the conspirators came to the front, and recalled the exiles from Syria. Ashtar, too, was soon upon the scene. Taking his stand at the door of the Mosque, he stirred up the people against Saïd. "He had himself just left that despot," he said, "at Medina, plotting their ruin, counselling the Caliph to cut down their stipends, even the women's; and calling the broad fields which they had conquered *The Garden of the Coreish.*" The deputy of Saïd, with the better class of the inhabitants, sought in vain to still the rising storm. He enjoined patience. "Patience!" cried the warrior Caca, in scorn; "ye might as well roll back the great river when in flood, as quell the people's uproar till they have the thing they want." Yezid, brother of one of the exiles, then raised a standard, and called upon the enemies of the tyrant, who was then on his way back, to bar his entry into Kufa. So they marched out as far as Cadesia, and sent forward to tell Saïd that "they did not need him any more." Little anticipating such reception, Saïd

A. H. 33-
34.

Saïd
expelled
from Kufa,
34 A. H.,
655 A. D.,

A.H. 32-
34.

remonstrated with them. "It had sufficed," he said, "to have sent a delegate with your complaint to the Caliph; but now ye come forth a thousand strong against a single man!" They were deaf to his expostulations. His servant, endeavouring to push on, was slain by Ashtar; and Said himself fled back to Medina, where he found Othman terrified by tidings of the outbreak, and prepared to yield whatever the insurgents might demand. At their desire he appointed Abu Musa, late Governor of Bussorah, in place of Said. To welcome him the officers in command of garrisons came from all quarters into Kufa; and Abu Musa received them in the crowded Mosque. He first exacted from the inhabitants a pledge of loyalty to the Caliph, and then installed himself by leading the prayers of the great assembly.

And Abu
Musa ap-
pointed.

Othman's
fatal
mistake.

If, instead of thus giving way, Othman had inflicted on the ringleaders of Kufa condign punishment, he might haply have weathered the storm. It is true that thus he would in all likelihood have precipitated rebellion, not only in that turbulent City, but in Bussorah and Egypt also. Yet, sooner or later, that was unavoidable; and in the struggle he would now have had a strong support. For here the contention was between the Coreish with all the nobility of Islam on the one hand, and the Arab tribes and city rabble on the other; and in this question the great leaders would to a man have rallied round the throne. By his pitiable weakness in yielding to the insurgents, Othman not only courted contempt, but lost the opportunity of placing the great controversy about to convulse the Moslem world upon its proper issue. It fell, instead, to the level of a quarrel obscured by personal interests, and embittered by charges of tyranny and nepotism against himself. The crisis was now inevitable. Men saw that Othman lacked the wisdom and strength to meet it, and each looked to his own concern. Seditious letters circulated freely everywhere; and the claims even began to be canvassed of candidates to succeed Othman, who, it was foreseen, could not long hold the reins of empire in his feeble grasp.

Thus, even at Medina, sedition spread, and from thence messages reached the provinces far and near that the sword would soon be needed at home, rather than in foreign parts. So general was the contagion that besides his immediate kindred, but two or three men are named, as still faithful to the throne. Moved by the leading Citizens, Aly repaired to Othman and said :—“The people bid me expostulate with thee. Yet what can I say to thee, who art the son-in-law of the Prophet, as thou wast his bosom friend? The way lieth plain before thee ; but thine eyes are blinded that thou canst not see. Blood once shed, will not cease to flow until the Judgment day. Right blotted out, treason will rage like foaming waves of the sea.” Othman complained, and not without reason, of the unfriendly attitude of Aly himself. “For my own part,” he said, “I have done my best ; and as for the men ye blame me for, did not Omar himself appoint Moghira to Kufa ; and if Ibn Aamir be my kinsman, is he the worse for that ?” “No,” replied Aly ; “but Omar kept his lieutenants in order, and when they did wrong he punished them ; whereas thou treatest them softly, because they are thy kinsmen.” “And Muavia, too,” continued the Caliph ;—“it was Omar who appointed him to Syria.” “Yes,” answered Aly ; “yet I swear that even Omar’s slaves did not stand so much in awe of him, as did Muavia. And now he doth whatever he pleaseth, saying, *It is Othman*. And thou, knowing it all, leavest him alone !” So saying, Aly turned and went his way.

As Aly’s message professed to come from the people, Othman went straightway to the pulpit and addressed the assemblage met for prayer. He reproached them for intemperate speech and subserviency to evil leaders, whose object it was to blacken his name, exaggerate his faults, and hide his virtues. “Ye blame me,” he said, “for things ye bore cheerfully from Omar. He trampled on you, beat you with his whip, and abused you. And ye took it patiently from him, both in what ye liked and what ye disliked. I have been gentle with you ; bended my back

A.H. 33-
84.Aly expos-
tulates
with
Othman,Who
appeals to
the people.

A.H. 33-
 34. "unto you; withheld my tongue from reviling, and my hand
 "from smiting. And now ye rise up against me!" Then,
 after dwelling on the prosperity of his reign at home and
 abroad, and the many benefits accruing therefrom, he
 ended—"Wherefore, refrain, I entreat of you, from abuse
 "of me and of my governors, lest ye kindle the flames of
 "sedition and revolt throughout the empire." The appeal
 was marred by his cousin Merwan, who at its close ex-
 claimed, "If ye will oppose the Caliph, we shall soon bring
 "it to the issue of the sword." "Be silent!" cried Othman;
 "leave me with my fellows alone. Did I not tell thee not
 "to speak?" Othman then descended from the pulpit.
 The harangue had no effect. The discontent spread, and
 the gatherings against the Caliph multiplied.¹

Close of
 Othman's
 11th year.

Thus ended the 11th year of Othman's reign. Near
 its close was held a memorable council, of which account
 will be given in the chapter following. The Caliph per-
 formed the Pilgrimage as usual. He had done so every
 year; this was to be his last.

¹ Merwan is always represented by Abbasside tradition as the evil genius
 of Othman. But the *role* he played in this character is no doubt exaggerated.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE OUTLOOK DARKENS

34-35 A.H. 655 A.D.

THE unhappy Caliph was now hurried on, by the rapid course of events, helplessly to his end. Abd al Rahman, who, no doubt, felt himself responsible from the share he took in the nomination of Othman, was about this time removed by death. But even he had been dissatisfied; and one of the first open denunciations of Othman's unscrupulous disregard of law,—small it might be, but significant,—is attributed to him. A high-bred camel, part of the tithes of a Bedouin tribe, was presented by the Caliph, as a rarity, to one of his kinsfolk. Abd al Rahman, scandalised at the misappropriation of what belonged to charity, laid hands upon the animal, slaughtered it, and divided the flesh among the poor. The personal reverence attaching heretofore to the "Successor of the Prophet of the Lord," gave place to slight and disregard. In the streets, Othman was greeted with cries that he should depose Ibn Aamir and the godless Abu Sarh, and put away Merwan, his chief adviser and confidant. He had the countenance of none excepting his immediate kinsmen, and reliance upon them only aggravated the hostile clamour.

The conspirators had hitherto burrowed underground. Now their machinations coming to light, rumours of impending treason began to float abroad. The better affected classes throughout the Empire felt uneasy; alarm crept over all hearts. Letters were continually received at Medina, asking what these ominous sounds meant, and what catastrophe was now at hand. The chief men of

Othman treated with contumely.

Othman sends delegates to test feeling in provinces.

A.H. 34— Medina kept coming to the Caliph's court for tidings ; but, notwithstanding sullen mutterings of approaching storm, the surface yet was still. At last, by their advice, Othman despatched a trusty follower to each of the great centres, Damascus, Kufa, Bussorah, and Fostat, to watch and report whether suspicious symptoms anywhere appeared. Three returned saying that they discovered nothing unusual in the aspect of affairs. The fourth, Ammâr, was looked for in vain ; for he had been gained over by the Egyptian faction. Thereupon Othman despatched a royal edict to all the provinces as follows:—At the coming Pilgrimage the Governors from abroad would, according to custom, present themselves at court ; whoever had cause against them, should then come forward and substantiate their grievance, when the wrong would be redressed ; else it behoved them to withdraw the baseless calumnies that now were troubling men's minds. Proclamation was made accordingly. The plaintive appeal was understood ; and people in many places when they heard it wept, and invoked mercy on their Caliph.

Conference
of gover-
nors at
Medina,
34 A. H.
655 A. D.

The Governors repaired to Medina at the time appointed, but no malcontent came forward to make complaint. Questioned by Othman, his lieutenants knew not of any grievance, real and substantial. To the outward eye, everything was calm ; and even the royal messengers had returned without finding anything amiss. But all knew of the dangerous sore in the body politic, and of its spreading rapidly. The wretched Caliph invoked their pity and their counsel. But they could offer nothing of which he might lay hold. One advised that the conspirators should be arrested and the ringleaders put to death ; another that the stipends of all disloyal men should be forfeited ; a third that the unquiet spirits amongst the people should be diverted by some fresh campaign ; others that the Governors should amend their ways. Othman was bewildered ; one thing only he declared ;—to measures of severity he never would assent ; the single remedy he could approve was despatch of fresh armies to fight in foreign parts.

Nothing was settled to avert the crisis, and the Govern- A.H. 34-35.
 nors departed as they came. When Muavia made ready Othman declines help from Muavia,
 to leave, he entreated Othman to retire with him to Syria, where a loyal people would rally round him. But he answered: "Even to save my life I will not quit the land "wherein the Prophet sojourned, nor the City wherein his "sacred body resteth." "Then let me send an army to "stand by thee." "Nay, that I will not," responded Othman firmly; "I never will put force on those who dwell "around the Prophet's home, or quarter bands of armed "men upon them." "In that case," replied Muavia, "I "see nought but destruction awaiting thee." "Then the "Lord be my defence," exclaimed the aged Caliph, "and "that sufficeth for me."¹ "Fare thee well!" said Muavia, as he departed to see his face no more.

Leaving the City by the road for Syria, Muavia passed Who retires warning Aly and Zobeir.
 a group of the Coreish, amongst whom were Aly and Zobeir. He stayed for a moment to drop a warning word into their ears. They were drifting back, he said, into the anarchy of "the days of Ignorance" before Islam. The Lord was a strong Avenger of the weak and injured ones. "To you"—and these were his last words—"to you I "commit this helpless aged man. Help him, and it will "be the better for you. Fare ye well." So saying he passed on his way. The company remained some time in silence. At last Aly spoke: "It will be best done as he "hath said." "By the Lord!" added Zobeir, "there never "lay a burden heavier on thy breast, nor yet on ours, than "this burden of Othman's just now."

¹ Quoting from *Sura xxxix.* 39.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PLOT RIPENS. CONSPIRATORS ATTACK MEDINA. DEATH OF OTHMAN

35 A.H. 656 A.D.

Plot to
surprise
Medina.
End of
34 A.H.,
Summer,
655 A.D.

THE plot now rapidly came to a head. A plan of action had been already formed. While the lieutenants of the Caliph were absent from their posts on the occasion just described, the conspirators were to issue from Kufa, Bussorah, and Fostat, and converge upon Medina in combined and menacing force. There, in answer to the Caliph's challenge, they would present an endless roll of complaints, and cry loudly for redress, reform, and change of Governors. Denied by Othman, they would demand his abdication, and, in last resort, enforce it by the sword. But as to a successor they were not agreed. Kufa was for Zobeir; Bussorah for Talha; Egypt's favourite was Aly.

Conspira-
tors set
out for
Medina,
ix. 35 A.H.,
April
656 A.D.

The scheme miscarried. But some months later, in the middle of the following year, it was revived and secret preparations made for giving it effect. Under pretext of visiting Mecca for the lesser Pilgrimage,¹ the concerted movement at last took place, two or three months before the annual Pilgrimage. Abu Sarh, Governor of Egypt, at once despatched a message to apprise Othman. In reply he was ordered to pursue the rebels; he did so, but too late; they had already marched beyond his reach. On turning back, he found Egypt in the hands of a traitor, and fleeing for his life, took refuge, across the border, in Palestine. Among the insurgent leaders of Egypt was Mohammed son of Abu Bekr.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. lxxxviii. It may be performed any time of the year.

Startled by intelligence that the insurgents were in full march on Medina, Othman ascended the pulpit and admitted the real object of attack. "It is against myself," he said; "by and by they will look back with a longing eye on my reign, and wish that each day had been a year, because of the bloodshed, anarchy, and ungodliness, that will flood the land." The rebels soon appeared, and pitched three separate camps, from Kufa, from Bus-sorah, and from Egypt, in the neighbourhood of the City. The people put on their armour, a thing unheard of since the days of the Apostasy, and prepared for resistance. The insurgents, foiled thus far, sent deputies to the widows of Mahomet, and chief men of the City. "We come," they said, "to visit the Prophet's home and resting-place, and to ask that certain of the Governors be deposed. Give us leave to enter." But leave was not granted. Then they despatched each a deputation to their respective candidates. Aly stormed at the messengers, and called them rebels accursed of the Prophet; and the others met with no better reception at the hands of Talha and Zobeir. Unable to gain the Citizens, without whose consent their object was out of reach, the rebel leaders declared themselves satisfied with the Caliph's promise of reform, and so retired. They made as if each company were taking the road home, but with the concerted plan of returning shortly, when they might find the City less prepared. The Citizens, relieved of the immediate danger, cast aside their armour, and for some days things went on as before, Othman leading the prayers. Suddenly, the three bands reappeared. A party headed by Aly went forth to ask the reason. The strangers pointed to a document attested by the Caliph's seal; this, they said, had been found by the Egyptian company upon Othman's servant, whom they caught hastening on the road to Fostat; and it contained orders for the insurgents to be imprisoned, tortured, or put to death. Aly, suspecting collusion, asked how the discovery had become so promptly known to the other companies marching in different directions, as to bring them all back at once together? "Speak of it as ye will,"

A.H. 35.

Insurgents
encamp
near
Medina;
first retire;

But return
with
document
bearing
Caliph's
seal.

A.H. 35. they said, "here is the writing, and here the Caliph's seal." — Aly repaired to Othman, who denied knowledge of the document; but with the view of clearing up the matter, consented to receive the rebel leaders. Introduced by

Angry
altercation
with
Caliph.

Aly, they made no obeisance, but with defiant attitude recounted their pretended grievances. They had retired with the promise of redress, they said; but, instead of redress, here was the Caliph's own servant whom they had caught hastening to Egypt with the treacherous document now produced. Othman swore solemnly that he knew nothing of it. "Then say who it was that wrote and sealed this order." "I know not," said the aged Caliph. "But it was passed off as thine; thy servant carried it; see, here is thy seal, and yet forsooth thou wast not privy to it!" Again Othman affirmed that it was even so.¹ "Whether thou speakest truth," they cried in accents loud and rude, "or art a liar, either way, thou art unworthy of the Caliphate. We dare not leave the sceptre in the hands of one who, either knave or fool, is too weak to govern those about him. Resign, for the Lord hath deposed thee!" Othman made answer:—"The garment wherewith the Lord hath girded me I will in no wise put off; but any evil ye complain of, that I am ready to put away from me." It was all too late, they cried; he had often made, and as often broken, the promise to amend; they could no longer trust him; now they would fight until he abdicated, or else was slain. "Death," said Othman, gathering himself up, with the firmness and dignity that

¹ The facts regarding this document are obscure. It certainly was sealed with the Caliph's signet; but who affixed it, and how obtained, cannot be told. Nobody alleges Othman's complicity. Most traditions attribute the act to Merwan, the Caliph's unpopular cousin, who, throughout the narrative, receives constant abuse as the author of Othman's troubles; but these are all tinged with Abbasside hatred. Aly's accusation against the insurgents is unanswerable. There must have been a preconcerted scheme between the three camps; and there is strong presumption of something unfair as regards the document itself. It is, of course, possible that Merwan may have taken upon himself the issue and despatch of the rescript; and, indeed, there were not wanting grounds for his venturing on such a course. The insurgents may also have got scent of the document, before they started ostensibly with the purpose of returning home. But these are mere surmises.

marked his last days,—“ death I prefer ; as for fighting, I
 “ have said it already, my people shall not fight ; had that
 “ been my desire, I had summoned legions to my side.” A.H. 35.
 The altercation becoming loud and violent, Aly arose and
 departed to his home. The conspirators also retired to
 their fellows ; but they had now secured what they
 desired, a footing in the City. They joined in the ranks
 of worshippers at the daily prayers in the Mosque, cast
 dust in the face of Othman as he stood up to speak, and
 thrust aside his loyal helpers. The fatal crisis was hurrying
 on.

Upon the Friday following, when the prayers were
 over, Othman ascended the pulpit. He first appealed to
 the better sense of the Citizens, who, although overawed by
 the rebels, condemned their lawless attitude. Then turning
 to the conspirators, he continued,—“ Ye are aware that
 “ the men of Medina hold you accursed at the mouth of
 “ the Prophet, for that ye have risen up against his Caliph
 “ and Vicegerent. Wherefore wipe out now your evil
 “ deeds by repentance, and by good deeds make atone-
 “ ment for the past.” One and another of the Citizens
 arose earnestly confirming the Caliph’s words and pleading
 his cause ; but they were silenced and violently set down.
 A tumult arose. The men of Medina were driven from
 the Mosque by showers of stones. One of these struck
 Othman, who fell from the pulpit, and was carried to his
 house adjoining, in a swoon. He soon recovered, and for
 some days was still able to preside at the daily prayers.
 At last the insolence and violence of the insurgents forced
 him to keep to his house, and a virtual blockade ensued.
 But a bodyguard of armed retainers, supported by loyal
 Citizens, succeeded for a time in keeping the entrance
 safe.

From the first day of the tumult, Aly, Zobeir, and
 Talha (the three named by the rebels as candidates for
 the Caliphate) each sent a son to join the loyal and gallant
 band planted at the Palace door. But they did little
 more ; and, in fact, throughout the painful episode, kept
 themselves altogether in the background. After the uproar

Tumult at
 time of
 prayer ;
 Othman
 struck
 down.

Attitude
 of Aly,
 Zobeir,
 and Talha.

A.H. 35. and Othman's swoon, they came along with others to inquire how he fared. No sooner did they enter, than Merwan and other kinsmen attending the Caliph, cried out against Aly as the prime author of the disaster, which would recoil, they said (and said truly), upon his own head. Thereupon Aly arose in wrath, and, with the rest, retired home. It was, in truth, a cruel and dastardly desertion, and in the end bore bitter fruit for one and all. Alarm at the defiance of constituted authority, and loyalty to the Throne, equally demanded a bold and uncompromising front. The truth was outspoken by one of the Companions at the time. "Ye Coreish," he said, "there hath been till now a strong and fenced door betwixt you and the Arab tribes; wherefore is it that ye now break down the door?"

Othman
besieged.
Parley
with Aly,
Zobeir,
and Talha.

So soon as the conspirators had shown their true colours, Othman despatched urgent calls to Syria and Bussorah for help. Muavia, who had long foreseen the dire necessity, was ready with a strong force, which, as well as a similar column from Bussorah, hurried to their Master's rescue. But the march was long, and the difficulty was for Othman to hold out till they should appear. The insurgents had possession of the Mosque and of the approaches to the Palace; and, in the height of insolence, their leader now took the Caliph's place at prayer. There were no troops at Medina, and Othman was dependent on the little force which barely sufficed to guard the Palace entrance. It was composed besides train-band slaves, of some eighteen near kinsmen, and other Citizens, with the sons of Aly, Zobeir, and Talha. Apprehending, from the growing ferocity of the attack, that the end might not be far off, Othman sent to tell Aly, Zobeir, and Talha that he wished once more to see them. They came and stood without the Palace, but within reach of hearing. The Caliph, from the flat roof of his house, bade them all sit down; and so for the moment friends and foes sat down together. "Fellow Citizens!" cried Othman with loud voice, "I have prayed to the Lord for you, that when I am taken, he may set the Caliphate aright." Then he

spoke of his previous life, and how the Lord had made choice of him to be Successor of His Prophet, and Commander of the Faithful. "And now," said he, "ye have risen up to slay the Lord's elect. Have a care, ye men!" (and here he addressed the besiegers);—"the taking of life is lawful but for three things, apostasy, murder, and adultery. Taking my life without such cause, ye but suspend the sword over your own necks. Sedition and bloodshed shall not depart for ever from your midst." Thus far they gave him audience, and then cried out that there was yet a fourth just cause of death, the quenching of truth by wrong-doing, and of right by violence; and for his ungodliness and tyranny he must abdicate or be slain. For a moment Othman was silent. Then calmly rising, he bade the Citizens go back; and himself, with but faint hope of relief, turned to re-enter his dreary home.

The blockade had lasted several weeks, when a mounted messenger arrived with tidings that succour was on its way. This, coming to the insurgents' knowledge, caused them to redouble their efforts. Closing every approach, they allowed neither outlet nor ingress to a single soul. Water hardly obtainable even by stealth at night, the little garrison suffered the extremities of thirst. On the appeal of Othman, Aly expostulated with the besiegers;—"they were treating the Caliph," he told them, "more cruelly than they would prisoners on the field of battle. Even infidels did not deny water to a thirsty enemy." They were deaf to his entreaty. Omm Habiba, touched with pity, sought with Aly's aid to carry water on her mule through the rebel ranks; but neither sex nor rank, nor having been the Prophet's wife, availed to prevent her being roughly handled. They cut her bridle with their swords, so that she was near falling to the ground, and drove her rudely back. The better part of the inhabitants were shocked at the violence and inhumanity of the Rebels; but none had the courage to oppose them. Sick at heart, most kept to their houses; while others, alarmed, and seeking to avoid the cruel spectacle, quitted Medina. It

A. H. 35.

Blockade pressed. Suffering from thirst.

A.H. 35. is hard to believe that, even in the defenceless state of the city, Aly, Zobeir, and Talha, the great heroes of Islam, could not, if they wished, have raised effective opposition to the lawless work of the heartless Regicides. We must hold them culpable, if not of collusion with the insurgents, at least of cold-blooded indifference to their Caliph's fate.¹

Annual pilgrimage,
xii. 35
A. H.,
June
656 A. D.

The solemnities of yearly Pilgrimage were now at hand, and Othman, still mindful of his obligation as head of Islam to provide for their due observance, once more ascended the Palace roof. From thence he called for the son of Abbas, one of the faithful party guarding the entrance, and bade him assume the leadership of the band of pilgrims who should now proceed to Mecca;—a duty which, much against his will, as taking him from the defence, he undertook. Ayesha joined the party. She is accused of having formerly stirred up the people against Othman. Now, at anyrate, the impulsive lady shook herself free from the insurgents, and also, in order to detach her brother Mohammed from their company, besought him to accompany her to Mecca. But he refused.

The Palace
stormed,
18 Dzul
Hijj,
June 17.

The approach of succour at last quickening the rebels to extremities, they resolved on a final and murderous attack. Violent onset was made from all quarters, and

¹ The talk among the courtiers of Mamūn, as reflected in the *Apology of Al Kindy*, was that Aly, even at a much earlier period, contemplated the putting of Othman to death (*Apology*, p. 73). There seems no proof or even the slightest presumption of this; but anyhow, one cannot but feel indignant at the attitude of Aly, who would do so much, and no more; who sent his son to join the Caliph's guard at the Palace gate, and was scandalised at water being denied him to drink; and yet would not so much as raise a finger to save his life.

We have also traditions in which Othman is represented as reproaching Talha for encouraging the rebels in a more strict enforcement of the blockade; but, whatever his demerits in deserting the Caliph, this seems incredible. The ordinary account is that Talha and Zobeir, on hearing of the rebel excesses, kept to their houses; others, again, say that they both quitted Medina.

Omna Habiba, as daughter of Abu Sofian, naturally sympathised with Othman. A citizen of Kufa, who had accompanied the insurgents, was so indignant at their treatment of one of "the Mothers of the Faithful," that he went off to his home, and there gave vent to his feelings in verses expressive of his horror at the scenes enacting at Medina.

the forlorn band of defenders, unable longer to hold their ground, retired within the Palace gate, which they closed and barred, covering their retreat with a discharge of archery, by which one of the rebels was killed. Infuriated at their comrade's death, the insurgents rushed at the gate, battered it with stones, but finding it all too strong, sat down to burn it. Meanwhile others, swarming in crowds from the roof of an adjoining building, gained easier access, and, rushing along the corridor, attacked the guard still congregated within the Palace gate. One of these was slain, Merwan was left half dead, and the rest were overpowered. Othman had retired alone into an inner chamber of the women's apartments; and there awaiting his fate, read from the Coran spread open on his knees. Three ruffians sent to fulfil the bloody work, rushed in upon him thus engaged. Awed by his calm demeanour and plaintive appeal, each returned as he went. "It would be murder," they said, "to lay hands upon him thus." Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, in his hate and rage had no such scruples. Running in, he seized him by the beard, and cried, "The Lord abase thee, thou old dotard!" "Let my beard go," said Othman, calmly; "I am no dotard, but the Caliph, whom they call Othman." Then, in answer to a further torrent of abuse, the aged man went on,— "Son of my brother! Thy Father would not have served me so. The Lord help me! To him I flee for refuge from thee." The appeal touched even the unworthy son of Abu Bekr, and he too retired. The insurgent leaders, now impatient, crowded in, smote the Caliph with their swords, and trampled on the Coran which he had been reading. He yet had strength enough to gather up the leaves and press them to his bosom, while the blood flowed forth upon the sacred text.¹ Thus

¹ The blood, we are told, flowed down to the words: "If they rebel, surely they are schismatics; thy Lord will swiftly avenge you" (*Sura* ii. v. 138). The appropriateness of the text, however, may of itself have suggested the story.

When the insurgents first rushed in, he was reading the passage in *Sura* iii. 174, which refers to Medina being attacked at the battle of Ohod. The disaffected Citizens are there represented as taunting Mahomet and his followers

A.H. 36. attacked, the faithful Naila cast herself upon her wounded
 And Oth- lord, and as she shielded him with her arm, a sword-cut
 man slain. severed several of her fingers, which fell upon the ground.
 The band of slaves attempted his defence. One of them
 slew the leader, but was immediately himself cut down.
 Further effort was in vain. The insurgents plunged their
 weapons into the Caliph's body, and he fell lifeless to the
 ground. The infuriated mob now had their way. A scene
 of riot followed. They stabbed the corpse, leaped savagely
 on it, and were proceeding to cut off the head, when the
 women screamed, beating their breasts and faces, and the
 savage crew desisted. The Palace was gutted; and even
 Naila, all wounded and bloody, was stripped of her veil.
 Just then the cry was raised, "To the Treasury!" and
 suddenly all departed.

His burial. As soon as they had left, the Palace gate was barred,
 and thus for three days and nights the three dead bodies
 lay in silence solemnly within. Then some chief men of
 the Coreish obtained leave of Aly to bury the Caliph's
 body. In the dusk of evening, the funeral procession
 wended its way to the burying-ground outside the city.
 Death had not softened the Rebels' hearts, and they pelted
 the bier with stones. Not in the graveyard, but in a field
 adjoining, the body, with hurried service, was committed
 to the dust. In after years the field was added by Merwan
 to the main burying-ground,—a spot consecrated by the
 remains of the early heroes of the Prophet's wars. And
 there the Omeyyads long buried their dead around the
 grave of their murdered kinsman.

Character. Thus, at the age of eighty-two, died Othman, after a
 reign of twelve years. The misfortunes amidst which he
 sank bring out so sharply the failings of his character that
 further delineation is hardly needed. Narrow, irresolute,
 and weak, he had yet a kindly nature which might have

in these words: "*Verily, the men (of Mecca) have gathered forces against
 you; wherefore, be afraid of the same. But it only increased their faith,
 and they said:—The Lord sufficeth for us; He is the best Protector.*" This
 was a favourite text of Othman's, and he may perhaps have turned to it for
 comfort now that vain was the help of man.

made him, in less troublous times, a favourite of the people. Such, indeed, for a season he was at the beginning of his Caliphate. But afterwards he fell on evil days. The struggle between the Coreish and the rest of the Arabs was hurrying on the nation to an internecine war. The only possible safety was for the class still dominant to have opposed a strong and united front. By his vacillation, selfishness, and nepotism, Othman broke up into embittered factions the aristocracy of Islam, and threw the last chance away. A.H. 35.

The columns hastening from the north for Othman's relief, hearing on their way the tragic end, returned to their respective homes. Columns
return to
the north.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ELECTION OF ALY

35-36 A.H. 656 A.D.

Revulsion
of feeling.

ON the Caliph's death, his kinsfolk, and such as had helped in his defence, retired from the scene. The City was horror-struck. They had hardly anticipated the tragic end. Many who had favoured or even joined the Rebels, started back now the deed was done. The relatives of the murdered Caliph fled to Mecca, with vows of vengeance. A citizen of Medina, wrapping carefully the severed fingers of Naila in the blood-stained shirt of Othman, meet symbols of revenge, carried them off to Damascus, and laid them at Muavia's feet.

Aly elected
Caliph,
24 xii. 35
June 23,
656.

For several days anarchy reigned in Medina. The Regicides had mastery of the city. The Egyptians were foremost amongst these in the first days of terror; and prayer was conducted in the Mosque by their leader. Of the inhabitants few ventured out. At last, on the fifth day, the Rebels insisted that, before they quitted Medina, the Citizens should elect a Caliph, and restore the empire to its normal state. Shrinking, no doubt, from the task which Othman's successor would have to face, Aly held back, and offered to swear allegiance to either Talha or Zobeir. But in the end, pressed by the threats of the Regicides and entreaties of his friends, he yielded; and so, six days after the fatal tragedy, Aly took the oath to rule "according to the Book of the Lord," and was saluted Caliph. Zobeir and Talha were themselves the first to acknowledge him. They asserted afterwards that they swore unwillingly, through fear of the conspirators.

The mass of the people followed. There were exceptions ; but Aly was lenient, and would not press the adherents of the late Caliph to swear allegiance. The insurgents, having themselves done homage, departed to tell the tale at Kufa, Bussorah, and Fostat. A.H. 35-
36.

No bed of roses was strewn for Aly. Whether at home or abroad, work rough and anxious was before him. To the standing contention between the Bedouins and Coreish was now added the cry of vengeance on the Regicides. Red-handed treason had loosened the bonds of society, and constituted authority was set at nought. Bands of Bedouins, scenting plunder from afar, hung about the City. Encouraged by the servile population now broken loose, they refused to depart.¹ Aly was pressed to vindicate the majesty of law, and punish the men who had stained their hands with the blood of Othman. Even Talha and Zobeir, awakening too late to the portentous nature of the crime enacted, with little check from them, and before their very eyes, urged this. "My brothers," replied Aly, "I am not indifferent to what ye say, but helpless. The wild Bedouins and rampant slaves will have their way. What is this but an outburst of paganism long suppressed ;—a return, for the moment, to the days of Ignorance, a work of Satan? Just now they are beyond our power. Wait ; and the Lord will guide us." This waiting, hesitating mood, was the bane of Aly's life. He was over fifty years of age, and, though vigorous in his earlier years, had become

¹ A servile population, captives of war, had been pouring for years into Medina as into other centres. They were employed as domestics, warders, bodyguards, or followed trades, paying profits to their masters. On the outbreak they broke away into defiant attitude. This would occur the more readily at Medina, as they formed the guards of the Treasury and Mansions of the great men ; and, being the only trained force there, they felt their power. We find them similarly taking part in the outbreaks at Bussorah and elsewhere. Like the Janissaries or Memluks of later days, they were a petulant brood. Immediately on homage being done to Aly, they lampooned him in minatory verses, to which Aly (not to be outdone in the poetry even of slaves) replied in extempore couplets. Proclamation was made that slaves not returning to their masters would be treated as outlaws ; but it had no effect.

A. H. 35-36. — corpulent and inactive now. He loved ease; and while sometimes obstinate and self-willed, his ordinary maxim was that things left to themselves would surely mend.

Coreish
alarmed.

The Coreish were anxious and alarmed. The revolt, ostensibly against Othman's ungodly rule, was taking now far wider range. The Bedouins were impatient of Coreishite control; and that which had happened to the Omeyyad family, now forced to fly Medina, might any moment happen to themselves. Yet Aly, though he denounced the work of the Regicides as high treason, took no steps to punish it, but temporised. Prompt and vigorous pursuit would no doubt have been joined in, heart and soul, by all the leaders and better classes of Islam. He chose rather to let the vessel drift, as it shortly did, into the vortex of rebellion.

Aly would
depose
Muavia in
Syria.

The confirmation, or supersession, of the provincial Governors was another pressing matter; and here Aly, turning a deaf ear to his friends, proved wilful and precipitate. When Ibn Abbas returned from the pilgrimage at Mecca, he found Moghira wisely urging Aly to retain the Governors generally in their posts, at least till the Empire at large had recognised his succession to the Throne. But Aly refused. The son of Abbas now pressed the same view: "At anyrate," he said, "retain " Muavia; it was Omar, not Othman, who placed him " there; and all Syria followeth after him." The advice, coming from so near a kinsman, deserved consideration. But Aly, with family hatred against the Omeyyad line, answered sharply, "Nay; I will not confirm him even for " a single day." "If thou depose him," reasoned his friend, "the Syrians will question thine election: and, " still worse, accusing thee of the blood of Othman, rise " up as one man against thee. Confirm him in the " government of Syria, and they care not who is Caliph. " When thou art firmly seated, depose him if thou wilt. " It will be easy then." "Never," answered Aly; "he " shall have nought but the sword from me." "Thou " art brave," Ibn Abbas replied, "but innocent of the " craft of war; and hath not the Prophet himself said,

"What is war but a game of deception?" "That is true," responded Aly, "but I will have none of Muavia." A.H. 35-36.
 "Then," said Ibn Abbas, "thou hadst better depart to thy property at Yembo, and close the gates of thy stronghold there behind thee; for everywhere the Bedouins are hounding along; and if thou makest others thine enemies, these will surely find thee out, and lay the blood of Othman at thy door." "Come," said Aly, trying another line, "thou shalt go forth thyself to Syria." "See, now, I have appointed thee." "That," replied Ibn Abbas, "can never be. Muavia would surely behead me or cast me into prison because of Othman's death, and my being kin to thee. Harken, and make terms with him ere it be too late." But Aly turned a deaf ear.

Acting on this wayward impulse, Aly sent men of his own to replace existing governors throughout the Empire. In most places these met with but a sorry reception. At Bussorah, indeed, Ibn Aamir, unwilling to provoke hostilities, retired to Mecca, and his successor, Othman ibn Honeif, entered unopposed; but the faction which clung to the memory of the late Caliph was as strong there as that which favoured Aly, while a third party waited the out-turn of events at Medina. In Egypt it was much the same. Cays, appointed to the command, was a wise and able ruler; but he only succeeded in crossing the frontier by feigning attachment to the cause of Othman; while a strong and aggressive faction throughout the country, swore that they would not submit until the Regicides were brought to justice. In Yemen, the new Governor obtained possession, but only after his predecessor had carried off to Mecca all the treasure. The two officers nominated to Kufa and Syria met with so rough a reception, that they were glad to escape with their lives back to Medina.

Dispirited by these events, Aly took counsel with Talha and Zobeir. The sedition he had apprehended was already kindled, and would spread like wild-fire, catching whatever might come in its way. "Then," replied they, "let us depart, that we may do thee service in the field." "Wait," answered Aly; "the cautery

And ap-
point new
governors
through-
out the
Empire,
i. 36 A. H.,
July 656.

Sends
letters to
Muavia
and Abu
Musa.

A.H. 35-
86.
— must be the last resort." So he resolved in the first instance to address letters to Muavia, and also to Abu Musa at Kufa, demanding their allegiance. Abu Musa replied in loyal terms, but withal, bade the Caliph beware of the disaffection which in Kufa was rife around him. With Syria, communication was utterly cut off; weeks elapsed, and there was no reply. In truth, a strange scene meanwhile was being enacted there.

Emblems
of ven-
geance
hung up at
Damascus.

Muavia had no sooner received the emblems of Othman's murder,—the gory shirt and Naila's mangled fingers,—than he hung them on the pulpit of the Damascus mosque. There suspended, they remained a spectacle maddening the Syrians to bloody revenge. Still, he took no immediate action. Biding his time, he waited to see what the new Caliph might do. Had Aly been wise, he would have used the angry Syrians to take vengeance on the Regicides, and in so doing crush as well the rising rebellion of the Arab tribes. In this work they would have been his strongest help; for Syria never suffered from the Bedouin turbulence which kept Irac and Egypt in continual turmoil. It had been the early and favourite field of the Coreish, who, settling there more largely than elsewhere, found their influence, in consequence, all the better recognised. Moreover, they inhabited the Syrian cities in common with the Christian population, which had surrendered for the most part on favourable terms. Society was thus throughout all classes orderly and loyal; whereas Bussorah and Kufa were filled with restless headstrong Arab tribes which held the conquered lands to be their own especial patrimony. Law prevailed in Syria; in Irac and Egypt, petulance and pride of arms. Syria was, moreover, attached to the Omeyyad stock, and so remained faithful to the end.

Muavia
sends
defiant
answer,
ii. 36 A. H.
August
656 A. D.

The Syrians had not long to wait the outcome of Aly's plans. His abortive attempt to supersede Muavia, and refusal to arraign the Regicides, gave colour to the charge of collusion with them; and having the bloody shirt ever before their eyes, the Syrians soon raised the cry against the Caliph. The majesty of outraged law

must now be vindicated ; and if the Assassins were not pursued to justice, who but Aly was to blame? Damascus was in this excited temper when Aly's letter reached Muavia. At the first no answer was vouchsafed. The Envoy kept in waiting witnessed day by day the gathering storm. At last Muavia sent a despatch,—stranger than ever had been seen before. The cover was superscribed with this address ; *From Muavia to Aly*, and bore the seal of State. There was no other word, all was blank within. The despatch was carried by Cabisa, a Bedouin chief, and with him the Caliph's envoy was given permission to depart. Arriving at Medina three months after Othman's death, Cabisa presented the letter to Aly, who broke the seal impatiently. "What meaneth this?" he cried, starting at the blank despatch ;—"let the enigma "be explained." Cabisa first inquired whether his life was safe. "Safe," answered Aly ; "the person of an Ambassador is sacred. Speak on." "Know then," proceeded Muavia's envoy, "that but now I left behind me, "weeping under the blood-stained shirt of Othman, sixty "thousand warriors, bent on revenging the Caliph's death, "—and revenging it on thee!" "What!" exclaimed Aly, aghast, "*On me!* Seest thou not that I am powerless "to pursue the murderers? O Lord! I take Thee to "witness that I am guiltless of Othman's blood. Begone! "See, thy life is safe." As the Envoy withdrew, the petulant slaves and rabble shouted after him, "Slay the "dog ; slay the envoy of Syrian dogs!" He turned, and, apostrophising the Coreish, cried at the pitch of his voice, "Children of Modhar! Children of Cays! The horse and "the bow! Four thousand picked warriors close at hand. "See to your camels and your steeds!"

Medina was roused and startled by the Envoy's cry. The time was come when Aly could no longer put his decision off. Hasan, his elder son, ever poor in spirit, counselled waiting ; but Aly saw too plainly the hour for action to be now or never. He gave vent to his troubled soul in martial lines, which soon in everyone's mouth, told the people his resolve to make the sword the arbiter

A.H. 35-
 36.
 ———
 betwixt Muavia and himself. An expedition against Syria was proclaimed; captains were appointed to command the various companies of the expected levies, and banners were presented to them by Aly; but he was careful to name no one who had taken part in the attack on Othman. Orders were also sent to Kufa, Bussorah, and Egypt, to raise troops for the war. This done, Aly mounted the pulpit and harangued the Citizens. If they failed to fight now, he told them, the power would pass away from them, never more to be regained. "Fight, then, against the cursed schismatics, who would destroy the unity of Islam and rend in twain the body of the Faithful. Haply the Lord will set that right which the Nations are setting wrong." But the people did not respond to the appeal, and the ranks were slow of filling.

Talha and
 Zobeir
 depart to
 Mecca.

Talha and Zobeir, when they saw affairs thus drifting, again asked leave to quit Medina; and so they now set out for Mecca, on pretext of performing the lesser Pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XXXIV

REBELLION AT BUSSORAH

36 A.H. 656 A.D.

BUT, before crossing arms with Muavia, heavy work was in store for Aly. Ayesha retires to Mecca,

Returning from Mecca, Ayesha was met on her way to Medina by the tidings of Othman's death and Aly's accession to the Caliphate. "Carry me back," cried the incensed and impetuous lady; "carry me back to Mecca. They have murdered the Caliph. I will avenge his blood."

In the early period of Othman's troubles, Ayesha, like others, had contributed her share towards fomenting public discontent. But she was no party to the cruel attack of the Conspirators; and had, in fact, sought to detach her brother from them by inviting him to accompany her to Mecca. Vain and factious, she had never forgiven the unhandsome conduct of Aly on the occasion when her virtue had been doubted by the Prophet;¹ and now she would gladly have seen Zobeir succeed instead. In place, therefore, of continuing her journey home, she turned and went straightway back again to Mecca. There the disaffected gathered round her, while from her veiled retreat she plotted the revenge of Othman's blood, and with shrill voice harangued her audience on the enormous crime that had desecrated the Prophet's home and resting-place. And there stirs up sedition.

Thus when Zobeir and Talha reached Mecca, they found sedition already well advanced. The numerous adherents of the Omeyyad house, who had fled thither on

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 291 *et seq.*

A.H. 36. the Caliph's death, or still were resident at Mecca, and the factious and servile mass at large, listened eagerly to their tale. "They had left the men of Medina," said Zobeir and Talha with Ayesha march on Bussorah, iv. 36 A. H. Oct. 656 A. D. Talha and Zobeir, "plunged in perplexity. Right had "been confounded so with wrong that people knew "not which way to turn. It was for Mecca now to lead, "and punish traitors who had slain their Caliph." The standard of rebellion thus raised, many flocked around it. Bussorah was to be the first object of attack, a city favouring the claims of Talha; while Ibn Aamir, the late Governor and friend of Othman, had still an influential following there. The treasure he had brought away, as well as that carried off by Ala from Yemen, was now expended in equipping the force, and providing it with carriage. Ayesha, spurning the restraints of sex, prepared to join the campaign and stir up the men of Bussorah, as she had stirred up those of Mecca. Haphsa was with difficulty restrained by her brother Abdallah, son of Omar (who had just fled from Medina, and held aloof from either side), from following her Sister-widow. At length, some four months after Othman's death, the rebel army set out 3000 strong, of whom 1000 were men of Mecca and Medina. Ayesha travelled in her litter on a camel, destined to give its name to the first engagement in the civil war. The other widows of Mahomet residing at Mecca accompanied her a little way, and then returned. As they parted, the company gave vent to their feelings, and wept bitterly at the luring outlook;—"there was no "such weeping, before or after, as then; so that day was "called *The Day of Tears*."

Ambition mingled with cry for revenge.

Questions began to arise whether Talha or Zobeir would in event of victory be the Caliph; but Ayesha, staying the strife, as premature, desired that Abdallah son of Zobeir should lead the prayers; and it was given out that the choice of the future Caliph would be left, as heretofore, to the men of Medina. Said, ex-governor of Kufa, distrusting the motives of the leaders, turned aside at the last moment, and with his company went back to Mecca. As the remaining cavalcade swept by him, shouting that

they were on their way to destroy the murderers of Othman, Said cried out, "Whither away? the objects of your vengeance (meaning Talha and Zobeir) are on their camels' humps before your eyes. Slay them both, and return then to your homes!" It is not improbable that with both of these, and their followers also, ambition was mistaken for desire of just revenge. In the whirl of passion, party-cry too often takes the place of reason; and we need not doubt that both leaders and followers had wrought themselves into the belief that punishment of the high treason enacted at Medina was their real object. A.H. 36.

Notwithstanding all this parade of justice, the conscience of Ayesha was ill at ease. As they journeyed through the desert, her camel-driver beguiled the tedium of the night by calling out the names of the hills and valleys through which they passed. Approaching a Bedouin settlement, the dogs began to howl;—*The Valley of Hawâb!* cried the guide, noting their progress. Ayesha started and screamed. Something dreadful which Mahomet had spoken about the barking of the dogs of Hawâb, flashed across her memory. "Carry me back," she cried; and, making her camel kneel, she hastily alighted from her litter. "Alas and alas!" she continued, "for I heard the Prophet say, reproaching us, as he sat surrounded by his Wives one day: '*O that I knew which amongst you it is at whom the dogs of Hawâb will bark!*' It is me! it is me! the wretched woman of Hawâb. I will not take another step on this ill-omened expedition." They sought to persuade her that the guide had mistaken the name; but she refused to stir, and the army halted for a whole day. In despair, they bethought them of a stratagem. The following night, they raised the cry that Aly was upon them. The greater terror prevailing, Ayesha hastened to her camel, and resumed the march. Ayesha's
quailm of
conscience.

The alarm, feigned for the purpose, was not altogether groundless. When rumours of the defection first reached Medina, Aly refused to move against the malcontents so long as no overt act of rebellion threatened the unity of Aly fails to
intercept
the rebels.

A.H. 36. Islam. But shortly after, news arrived of the design on Bussorah. At the first, Aly was disposed to congratulate himself that the conspirators had not made Kufa, with its greater Bedouin population, their object. The son of Abbas, however, pointed out that Bussorah was really the more dangerous, because fewer of the leading Chiefs were there, able to curb the people and repress rebellion. Aly admitted this ; and, now thoroughly alarmed, gave orders that the column destined for Syria should march instead to Nejd, hoping thereby to intercept the rebels on their way to Bussorah. But the people still hung back. At last a column of 900 men was got together, at the head of which Aly himself marched hastily in pursuit of the insurgents ; but on striking the Mecca road he found that they had already passed. Not being equipped for further advance, he halted there. Messengers were sent to Kufa, Egypt, and elsewhere, demanding reinforcements ; and for these the Caliph waited before he ventured forward.

Ayesha,
Talha, and
Zobeir
attack
Bussorah.

To return to Ayesha. The insurgent army, having resumed its march, reached Bussorah, and encamped close by. Messages were exchanged, and Ibn Honeif, the Governor, aware that the cry of vengeance on the Regicides really covered designs against his master Aly, called an assembly, to try the temper of the people. Finding from the uproar that the strangers had a strong party in the City, he put on his armour, and, followed by the larger portion of the Citizens, went forth to meet the enemy, who, on their side, were joined from the town by all the malcontents. A parley ensued. Talha, the favourite at Bussorah, Zobeir, and even Ayesha with shrill voice, all three declaimed against the murderers of Othman, and demanded justice. The other side were equally loud in their protestations against Ayesha and her attack upon their City. It was a shame, they said, and a slight on the memory of the Prophet, for her to forego the sanctity of the Veil, and the proprieties of "Mother of the Faithful." Aly had been duly elected, and saluted Caliph ; and now Talha and Zobeir were treacherously violating the allegiance which they had been the first to swear. These, again, both pro-

tested that the oath had been forced upon them. On this point the controversy turned ; and from words they fell to blows. Night interposed ; but fighting was resumed the following day, and with so serious a loss to the loyalists that a truce was called, and agreement come to, on the understanding that the facts should be ascertained from Medina. If force had really been put upon Zobeir and Talha to take the oath, then Ibn Honeif would retire and leave the City in their hands. An Envoy accredited by either side was accordingly deputed to Medina. He arrived there while Aly was absent in his camp, and forthwith proclaimed his mission before the assembled City. The people at first were silent. At last, one declared that both Talha and Zobeir had done homage under compulsion, whereupon a great tumult arose ; and the Envoy, having seen and heard enough to prove diversity of view, at once took leave.

A.H. 36.
Reference
to Medina
on ques-
tion of
compul-
sion.

When tidings of these things reached Aly, who was with his army in Nejd, he addressed a letter to Ibn Honeif, his governor. "There was no compulsion," he wrote, "on either Talha or Zobeir ; neither of these my "adversaries was constrained otherwise than by the will "of the majority. By the Lord ! if their object be to "make me abdicate, they are without excuse ; if it be "any other thing, I am ready to consider it." So when the Envoy returned from Medina, and when upon his report the insurgents called on Ibn Honeif to evacuate the City according to agreement he produced the Caliph's letter, and refused. But the rebels had already obtained a footing within the City. Arming themselves, they repaired to the Mosque for evening service, and, the night being dark and stormy, were not perceived until they had overpowered the bodyguard, entered the adjoining Palace, and made Ibn Honeif a prisoner. On the following day, a severe conflict raged throughout the City, which ended in the discomfiture of Aly's party, and so the government passed into the hands of Talha and Zobeir. True to their ostensible object, these now made proclamation that every citizen who had engaged in the

Bussorah
seized by
Talha and
Zobeir,
24 iv.
36 A. H.
19 Oct.
656 A.D.

A.H. 36. attack on Othman should be brought forth and executed. The order was carried rigorously out, and great numbers were put to death. The life of Ibn Honeif was spared. Set at liberty, his head and beard were shaven, and his eyelashes and moustaches clipped; and in this sorry plight the ousted Governor made the best of his way back to Aly.

Ayesha
seeks rein-
force-
ments.

The insurgents communicated tidings of their success to Syria. Ayesha also wrote letters to Kufa, Medina, and Yemen, dissuading the people from their allegiance to Aly, and stirring them up to avenge the death of Othman.

Meanwhile the citizens of Bussorah swore allegiance to Talha and Zobeir conjointly. To avoid appearance of rivalry, prayers were conducted alternately by a son of each. Little active sympathy was evoked by the Usurpers. Talha proclaimed an expedition against Aly. But no one responded to the call, and his spirits fell. Thus some weeks passed uneasily, till the City was aroused by the announcement that Aly with an army was in full march upon it.

CHAPTER XXXV

BATTLE OF THE CAMEL

36 A.H. 656 A.D.

FINDING that the insurgent troops, with Ayesha, Zobeir, Aly, with help from Kufa, advances on Bussorah, vi. 36 A.H. Dec. 656 A.D. and Talha, had already passed, Aly, as we have seen, halted for a while on the road to Bussorah, with the view of strengthening his army; for, although joined on his march by certain loyal tribes, he still felt too weak for immediate action. To Kufa he addressed a special summons, inhabited as it was by many veterans on whose loyalty he might reasonably depend; and he added force to the call by promising that Kufa should be his seat of government. "See," he wrote, "have not I chosen your city before all other cities for my own? Unto you do I look for succour, if haply peace and unity should again prevail as it behoveth among brethren in the faith." But the summons was at the first unheeded. The overgrown City was made up of many factions; and from some of these the message of Ayesha, demanding revenge for Othman's blood, had already found response. Abu Musa, its governor, was unequal to the emergency. Loyal to the memory of the murdered Caliph, he yet sought to allay the ferment by a neutral course, and urged the Citizens to join neither party, but remain at home. A second deputation meeting with no better success, Aly bethought him of sending his elder son Hasan, in company with Ammâr, the former governor of Kufa, to urge his cause. The appeal of Hasan, grandson of the Prophet, had at last the desired effect. The chord of loyalty in the fickle city's heart was touched; a tumult arose, and

A.H. 36. Abu Musa, unable to maintain his weak neutrality, was deposed. The Arab tribes rallied, and for the moment heartily, around the loyalists. Soon 10,000 men, partly by land, partly by river, set out to join the Caliph, who, advancing slowly, awaited their arrival. Thus reinforced, Aly was able at last to take the field effectively, and march on the rebellious city.

Aly's
negotia-
tions with
Talha and
Zobeir.

Bussorah itself was not wholly hostile, and numbers of the citizens came out, to join the camp of Aly. The insurgent army, which still nearly equalled that of the Caliph, now marched forth with Talha and Zobeir at their head and Ayesha herself seated in a well-fenced litter. But Aly's thoughts were for peace if possible. He was a man of compromise; and here he was ready, in the interests of Islam, magnanimously to forget the insult offered him. Apart, indeed, from personal jealousies, there was no disagreement sufficient to bar the hope of reconciliation. The cry of Talha and Zobeir was for vengeance against the murderers of Othman; and against these, Aly as yet did not deny that justice should be dealt. But he was obliged to temporise. He had in his army great numbers of the very men who had risen against Othman; and he felt that to inflict punishment on them, as his adversaries required, would for the present be impossible. Holding these views, he halted, still some little way from Bussorah, and sent forward Cacao (who with other leaders of renown had joined him from Kufa) to expostulate with Talha and Zobeir. "Ye have slain 600 men of Bussorah," said Cacao to them, "for the blood of Othman; and lo! to avenge *their* blood, 6000 more have started up. Where is this internecine war to stop? It is peace and repose that Islam needeth now. Give that, and again the majesty of law shall be set up, and the guilty brought to justice." As he spoke, the truth flashed on the minds of Zobeir and Talha, and even of Ayesha; and they returned word that if these really were the sentiments of Aly, they were ready to submit. After several days spent in such negotiations, Aly, glad at the prospect of a bloodless compromise, advanced.

But, as we have seen, Aly's army, recruited at random from the Bedouin settlements, comprised a great number of notorious regicides. Afraid of bringing these into contact with the heated army of his opponents, still breathing out fire and slaughter against them, Aly gave command that none who had shared in the attack on Othman should for the present accompany him in his advance. These in their turn, with Ashtar at their head, became alarmed. Talha's troops, sworn to their destruction, were double their number; if peace were patched up, no hope remained. Reasoning thus, they held a secret conclave, and came to the conclusion that their only safety lay in precipitating hostilities, and thus forcing Aly's hand to crush their enemies. Accordingly they remained behind, but with the resolve that at the right moment they would advance and throw themselves upon the enemy.

A. H. 86.

Tactics
of the
regicides.

The army of Bussorah, numbering some 20,000 men, remained encamped on the outskirts of the city. Aly's force, advancing unopposed, halted within sight; and negotiations for peace went on, evidently substantial and sincere. Aly himself approached on horseback, and Talha with Zobeir rode forth to confer with him. "Wherefore have ye risen against me," said Aly; "did ye not swear homage to me?" "Yea," replied Talha, "but with the sword over our necks; and now our demand is that justice be executed against the murderers of Othman." Aly replied that he no less than they held the regicides to be guilty; he even cursed them in no measured terms, but added that for their punishment they must bide their time. Zobeir on his side was softened by certain words of the Prophet towards him which Aly recalled to his mind, and bound himself by an oath that he would not fight. Then they all retired. Both armies, understanding that negotiations were in progress, went to rest that night in security such as they had not felt for many weeks.

Negotia-
tions for a
compro-
mise.

But anon the spell was rudely broken. Towards morning, a sudden shock changed the scene. The Regicides, during the night, carried their design into execution. Led by them, squadrons of Bedouin lances bore down, while

Regicides
precipitate
hostilities.

A.H. 36. yet dark, upon the Bussorah tents. In a moment all was confusion. Each camp believed that it had been attacked by the other ; and the dawn found both armies drawn up, as the conspirators desired, in mortal combat against each other. In vain Aly endeavoured to hold back his men. The sense of treachery embittered the conflict. It was a strange engagement,—the first in which Moslems had crossed swords with Moslems. It resembled a battle of the old Arab times, only that for tribal rivalry were now substituted other passions. Clans were broken up, and it became in some measure a contest between the two rival Cities ; “ The Beni Rabia of Kufa fought against the Beni Rabia of Bussorah, the Beni Modhar of the one against “ the Beni Modhar of the other ” ; and so on, with the various tribes, and even with families, one part arrayed against the other. The Kufa ranks were urged on by the Regicides, who felt that, unless Aly conquered, they were all doomed men. The fierceness and obstinacy of the battle can be only thus accounted for. One of the combatants tells us that “ when the opposing sides came “ together breast to breast, with a furious shock, the noise “ was like that of washermen at the riverside.”¹ The attitude of the leaders was in marked contrast with the bitter struggle of the ranks. Zobeir, half-hearted since his interview with Aly, left the battlefield according to his promise, and was killed in an adjoining valley. Talha, disabled by an arrow in the leg, was carried into Bussorah, where he died. Bereft of their leaders, the insurgent troops gave way. They were falling back upon the city, when they passed by the camel of Ayesha. Attacked fiercely all around, she from within her litter kept crying out with fruitless energy,—“ Slay the murderers of Othman.” The word ran through the retiring ranks, that “ the Mother of the Faithful was in peril,” and they gallantly stayed their flight to rescue her. Long and cruelly the conflict raged around the fated camel. One after another, brave warriors rushed to seize her standard ; one after another they were cut down. Of the Coreish seventy perished by the bridle.

Zobeir and
Talha
killed.

¹ The metaphor will be appreciated by the Eastern traveller.

At last, Aly, perceiving that her camel was the rallying-point of the enemy, sent one of his captains to hamstring, and thus disable it. With a loud cry the animal fell to the ground. The struggle ceased and the insurgents retired into the city. The litter bristling with arrows like a hedgehog, was taken down, and, by desire of Aly, placed in a retired spot, where Ayesha's brother Mohammed pitched a tent for her. As he drew aside the curtain, she screamed at the unknown intrusion;—"Are thine own people, then," he said, "become strange unto thee?" "It is my brother!" she exclaimed, and suffered herself to be led into the tent. The brave but wayward lady had escaped without a wound.

A.H. 36.

The carnage in the ill-starred *Battle of the Camel* (for so it came to be called) was very great. The field was covered with 10,000 bodies in equal proportion on either side; and this, notwithstanding that the victory was not followed up. For Aly had given orders that no fugitive should be pursued, nor any wounded soldier slain, nor plunder seized, nor the privacy of any house invaded. A great trench was dug, and into it the dead were lowered, friends and foes alike. Aly, encamped for three days without the City, himself performed the funeral service. It was a new experience to bury the dead slain in battle not against the infidel, but believer fighting against believer. Instead of cursing the memory of his enemies (too soon the fashion in these civil wars), Aly spoke hopefully of the future state of such as had entered the field, on whatever side, with an honest heart. When they brought him the sword of Zobeir, he cursed the man who took his life; and, calling to mind the feats displayed by the brave man that wielded it in the early battles of Islam, exclaimed:—"Many a time hath this sword driven care and sorrow from the Prophet's brow." The Moslems might well mourn the memory both of Talha and Zobeir, remembering how on the field of Ohod the former had saved the life of Mahomet at the peril of his own; and how often the latter had carried confusion into the ranks of the idolaters of Mecca. Their fall, and that of many of the

Losses in
the battle
of the
Camel.

A.H. 36. — Companions, was a loss to the Empire itself, because seriously weakening the Coreish in the struggle yet to be fought out betwixt them and the Arab tribes. In fact, this victory of Aly was virtually the victory of the Regicides, supported by the factious citizens of Kufa. Thenceforward Aly was wholly dependent upon them. If, instead, he had effected a compromise with Talha and Zobeir, his position would have been incomparably stronger.

Aly's magnanimity towards the enemy.

The bearing of Aly was generous towards his fallen foe. Having entered the City, he divided the contents of the treasury amongst the troops which had fought on his side, promising them a still larger reward "when the Lord should have delivered Syria into his hands." But otherwise he treated friends and foes alike, and buried in oblivion animosities of the past. Merwan and the adherents of the house of Omeyya fled to their homes, or found refuge else in Syria. All that remained in the City swore fealty to Aly. The only class dissatisfied was that of the slaves and rabble, who murmured at having no share in the treasure, nor any chance of plunder. These, gathering into marauding bands, occasioned much disquietude to the Caliph, and hastened his departure from the City, with the view of checking the mischief they were bent on.

Ayesha retires to Medina.

Ayesha was treated by Aly with the reverence due to one who bore the title of "the Prophet's Spouse in this life and also in the life to come." She was now five-and-forty years of age, but had lost little of the fire and vivacity of youth. After the battle, the Caliph visited her tent, and expressed his satisfaction at finding her unhurt; adding mildly, but half reproachfully:—"The Lord pardon thee for what hath passed, and have mercy upon thee." "And upon thee also!" was the pert and ready answer. The best house in Bussorah was given up to her; and there she was waited on by her own adherents. Not long after, she left with a retinue of forty handmaids, attended by her brother. Aly himself accompanied her a short distance on foot; and a large party went as far as the first stage to bid her farewell. Proceeding to Mecca, she

performed the lesser Pilgrimage; and then retiring to Medina, no more attempted to interfere with the affairs of State. Her nephew Abdallah son of Zobeir,¹ retired with her. He became famous in the subsequent history of the Caliphate; but that was not till Ayesha had passed away. She spent the remainder of her days at Medina. There crowds of pilgrims visiting the Prophet's grave (her own apartment) gazed wonderingly at the once beautiful and favourite wife of Mahomet; while she, garrulous in old age, became the fertile source of tradition and the narrator of incidents in the Prophet's life beginning with her earliest childhood. She died in the 58th year of the Hegira, aged sixty-six, having passed forty-seven years in widowhood.²

Aly did not stay long in Bussorah. Having appointed his cousin, Abdallah son of Abbas, governor of the City, with Ziad, the able administrator, to aid him in charge of the treasury, he set out for Kufa.

¹ His mother Asma, Ayesha's sister, is famous because on the occasion of Mahomet's flight from the cave she tore her girdle to tie up his wallet, and was hence called "She of the two shreds" (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 136).

² Tradition abounds in anecdotes about Ayesha. Aly's army taunted her as "the *unnatural* Mother of the Faithful." The soldiers on her side, in reply, extemporised a couplet, extolling her as "the noblest and best of Mothers." When they told this to her, she was much affected, and exclaimed, "Would that I had died twenty years before this!" Aly, also, when he heard it, said, "Would that I too had died twenty years ago!"

Ayesha, always ready in repartee, was not very particular in her language. Asim approaching her litter on the field, she cursed him for the liberty he had taken. "It was but a little something red and white," he said impudently, "that I caught a glimpse of." "The Lord uncover thy nakedness," she cried angrily; "cut off thy hands, and make thy wife a widow!" All which (they say) came to pass. A saucy passage is related between her and the aged Ammâr, who said, as she was leaving, "Praise be to the Lord that we shall hear no more that vile tongue of thine."

When starting for Mecca, with Aly and a company around her, she said, "Let us not entertain hard thoughts one against the other; for verily, "as regardeth Aly and myself, there happened not anything between us" (alluding to her misadventure in the Prophet's lifetime, *Life of Mahomet*, p. 289) "but that which is wont to happen between a wife and her husband's family; and verily Aly was one of the best of them that entertained suspicions against me." Aly replied: "She speaketh the truth; there was nought, beyond what she saith, between her and me." And then he went on to quote Mahomet's own words regarding Ayesha, that "she was not only his wife in this world, but would be equally his wife in the world to come."

CHAPTER XXXVI

ALY TRANSFERS HIS SEAT OF GOVERNMENT TO KUFÄ. AFFAIRS IN EGYPT

36 A.H. 656-657 A.D.

Medina
abandoned
as capital
of Islam.

AS Aly rode forth from Medina in pursuit of the insurgent army, a citizen seized his bridle; "Stay!" he cried earnestly;—"if thou goest forth from hence, the government will depart from this City never more to return." He was pushed aside, as one having lost his wits; but his words were long remembered, and the prophecy was true. Medina was to be the seat of Empire no more.

Aly's entry
into Kufa,
vii. 36 A.H.
Jan.
657 A.D.

In the 36th year of the Hegira, seven months after the death of Othman, Aly entered Kufa. The first four of these had been spent at Medina; the other three in the campaign of "the Camel"; and a short stay at Bussorah. No Caliph had as yet visited Kufa. It was now to be the seat of Aly's government. The inhabitants were flattered by the honour thus put upon them. The City had certain advantages; for in it were many leading men, able, and some of them willing, to support the Caliph. Moreover, Aly might calculate on the jealousy of Irac towards Syria in the approaching struggle with Muavia. But these advantages were all more than counterbalanced by the factious humour of the populace. It was the focus of Bedouin democracy; and the spirit of the Bedouins was yet untamed. What had they gained, the men of Kufa asked, by the insurrection against Othman? The cry of vengeance on the Regicides was for the moment silenced; but things, they said, were drifting back into the old Coreishite groove. The charge was, in fact, the same

as the sons of the Desert were making all round. "Aly A.H. 36.
 "hath set up his cousins, the sons of Abbas, everywhere,— Factionous spirit there.
 "in Medina, Mecca, Yemen, and now again at Bussorah,
 "while he himself will rule at Kufa. Of what avail that
 "we made away with Othman, and have shed our own
 "blood, fighting against Zobeir and Talha?" So spoke
 the arch-conspirator Ashtar among his friends at Bus-
 sorah; and Aly, fearful of such teaching, took him in his
 train to Kufa, where, among the excitable populace, there
 was even greater danger. Another uneasy symptom was
 that the servile dregs and baser sort of Bussorah, breaking
 loose from all control, went forth in a body and took pos-
 session of Sejestan on the Persian frontier. They killed
 the leader sent by Aly to suppress the rising, and were not
 put down till Ibn Abbas himself attacked them with a
 force from Bussorah.

It was in the West, however, that the sky loomed most. Struggle in prospect with Syria.
 It was but a shorn and truncated Caliphate which Aly
 enjoyed, so long as his authority was scorned in Syria. A
 mortal combat with Muavia loomed in that direction.
 But, before resuming the Syrian thread, we must first turn
 to Egypt.

That heavy charge had been committed to Cays, son Cays, governor of Egypt, ii. 36 A.H. Aug. 650 A.D.
 of Sad ibn Obâda, the citizen nearly elected Caliph at the
 Prophet's death. Of approved ability and judgment, and
 a loyal follower of Aly, he declined to take soldiers with
 him to Egypt, saying that the Caliph had more need of
 them than he, and preferring instead the support of seven
 "Companions," who accompanied him. On his approach,
 the rebel Governor fled to Syria, where he lost his life.
 Cays was well received by the Egyptians, who swore
 allegiance to him on behalf of Aly. But a strong faction
 sheltered in a neighbouring district, loudly demanded
 satisfaction for the death of Othman. Cays wisely left
 these alone for the present, waiving even the demand
 for tithe. In other respects he held Egypt with firm
 grasp.

In prospect of an early attack by Aly, Muavia became
 uneasy at the Egyptian border being commanded by so

A.H. 36. able a ruler as Cays, whom he made every effort to detach from Aly. Upbraiding him with having joined a party still imbued with the blood of Othman, he called upon Cays to repent, and promised that, if he joined in avenging the crime, he should be confirmed in the government of Egypt, and his kinsmen promoted to such office as he might desire. Cays, unwilling to precipitate hostilities, fenced his answer with well-balanced words. Of Aly's complicity in the foul deed there was as yet, he said, no evidence; he would wait. Meanwhile he had no intention of making attack on Syria. Again pressed by Muavia, Cays frankly declared that he was, and would remain, a staunch supporter of the Caliph. Thereupon Muavia sought craftily to stir up jealousy between Aly and his Lieutenant. He gave out that Cays was temporising, and spoke of his leniency towards the Egyptian malcontents as proving that he was one at heart with them. The report, assiduously spread, reached, as intended, the court of Aly, where it was taken up by those who either doubted the fidelity of Cays or envied his prosperity. To test his obedience, Aly ordered an advance against the malcontents; and the remonstrance of Cays against the step as premature, was taken as proof of his complicity. He was deposed, and the regicide Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, appointed in his room. Cays retired in anger to Medina, where, as on neutral ground, adherents of either side were unmolested; but finding no peace there from the taunts of Merwan and others, he at last resolved to cast himself on Aly's clemency; and Aly, on the calumnies being cleared away, took him back at once into his confidence, and thenceforward kept him as his chief adviser. Muavia upbraided Merwan with having driven Cays from Medina; —“If thou hadst aided Aly,” he said, “with a hundred thousand men, it had been a lesser evil than is the gain to him of such a counsellor.”

Cays sup-
planted by
Muavia's
intrigue.

Moham-
med son of
Abu Bekr,
appointed
to Egypt.

Muavia
joined by
Amru.

On his own side, however, Muavia had a powerful and astute adviser in Amru, the conqueror of Egypt. During the attack on Othman, Amru had retired from Medina with his two sons to Palestine. The tidings of the tragedy,

aggravated by his own unkindly treatment of the Caliph, affected him keenly. "It is I," he said, "who, by deserting the aged man in time of trouble, am responsible for his death." From his retirement he watched the struggle at Bussorah; and when Aly proved victorious, repaired at once to Damascus, and presented himself before Muavia. In consequence of his unfriendly attitude towards Othman, Muavia at first received him coldly. In the end, however, the past was condoned and friendship restored. Thenceforward Amru was the trusted counsellor of Muavia. A.H. 36.

This coalition, and the false step of Aly in recalling Cays from Egypt, materially strengthened Muavia's hands. The success of Aly at Bussorah had also this advantage for Muavia, that it removed Talha and Zobeir, his only other competitors, from the field. The position of Aly, again, as one of concession to the Arab faction, was fraught with peril. While refusing ostensibly to identify himself with the murderers of Othman, it was virtually their cause that he had fought; and therefore equally the cause of the Arab tribes against the Coreish and aristocracy of Islam. And Aly might have foreseen that the socialistic element in this unnatural compromise must, sooner or later, inevitably come into collision with the interests of the Caliphate. Aly's position at Kufa weak;

The authority of Muavia rested on a firmer basis; his attitude was bolder, his position more consistent. He had from the first resisted the levelling demands of the faction hostile to Othman. He was, therefore, now justified in pursuing these to justice, while, at the same time, in so doing he asserted the supremacy of the Coreish. The influence of the "Companions" had always been paramount in Syria; while the Arab element there was itself largely recruited from the aristocratic tribes of the south;—the result being that the Bedouins were by Muavia held thoroughly in check. The cry for vengeance, inflamed by the gory emblems still hanging from the pulpit, was taken up by high and low; while the temporising attitude of Aly was in every man's mouth proof of complicity with the Strength of Muavia's at Damascus.

A.H. 36. Regicides. And though many may have dreaded Aly's vengeance in the event of his success, the general feeling throughout Syria was a burning desire to avenge the murder of his ill-fated predecessor.

Aly and
Muavia in
personal
antagon-
ism.

Still, whatever the motives at work elsewhere, the contest, as between Aly and Muavia, was now virtually for the crown; and many looked to "the Grey mule of Syria" as having the better chance. A possible solution lay, no doubt, in the erection of Syria into an independent kingdom side by side with that of Irac and Persia. But the disintegration of the Caliphate was an idea which had as yet hardly entered into the minds of the Faithful. The unity of Islam, established by the precedent of the Quarter of a century, was still, and long continued to be, the ruling sentiment of the Nation.

CHAPTER XXXVII

BATTLE OF SIFFIN

36-37 A.H. 657 A.D.

AFTER Aly had established himself at Kufa, there followed a short interval of rest. The Lieutenants and Commanders, from far and near, flocked to the new capital to do homage to the Caliph. Towards one of these, a Bedouin chief, Muavia was known to entertain friendly sentiments. Him, therefore, Aly deputed to Damascus with a letter, wherein, after making mention of his election to the Caliphate, and the discomfiture of the enemy at Bussorah, he called on Muavia to follow the example of the Empire, and take the oath of allegiance. As on a former occasion, the Envoy was kept long in waiting. At last he was dismissed with an oral promise that submission would be tendered if punishment were meted out to the Regicides, but on no other condition. With this reply the Envoy further reported that Othman's blood-stained garment still hung upon the pulpit of the Mosque, and that a multitude of Syrian warriors had sworn "that they would use no water" to wash themselves withal, neither sleep upon their beds, "till they had slain the murderers of the aged Caliph, and "all those that sheltered them."

Muavia's
defiant
reply to
Aly, viii.
36 A.H.
Jan.
657 A.D.

Seeing Muavia thus hopelessly alienated, Aly, resolved no longer to delay, proclaimed an expedition against Syria. At first the people were slack in answering the call. But after a time he succeeded in gathering together an imposing force of 50,000 men. His plan was to march through Upper Mesopotamia, and so invade Syria from the north. A detachment was sent as an advance-guard along the

A. H. 86-87. western bank of the Euphrates, but meeting with opposition there, was forced to cross back again into Mesopotamia. Aly himself, with the main body, marched up the Tigris ; then turning short of Mosul to the west, crossed the desert of Mesopotamia, and, outstripping his advanced column, reached the Euphrates in its upper course at Ricca. An unfriendly population lined the banks ; and it was not without sanguinary threats that Ashtar forced them to construct a bridge. The army crossed near Ricca ; and then marching some little distance along the right bank, in the direction of Aleppo, met the Syrian outposts.¹

Aly
invades
Northern
Syria,
xi. 36 A. H.
April
657 A. D.

Muavia
meets Aly
on the
field of
Siffin.

On learning Aly's approach, Muavia lost no time in marshalling his forces, which greatly outnumbered the enemy, and, having no desert or river to cross, were soon to the front. Amru was in command, with his two sons as lieutenants. Aly, desirous of averting bloodshed, had given orders that, as soon as his troops came upon the enemy, they should halt, and, confining themselves to the defensive, avoid precipitating hostilities before opportunity was given for friendly overture. The vanguards spent the first few days in skirmishing. Ashtar challenged the Syrian officer to single combat ; but he was told that, having imbrued his hands in the blood of the late Caliph, he could not claim the privileges of honourable warfare. When the main armies came in sight of each other, Aly found Muavia so encamped as to cut him off from the river, and reduce his army to straits for water. He therefore brought on an engagement, in which Muavia was forced to change his ground, and occupy the memorable field of Siffin.² Some days of inaction followed ; after which Aly

¹ When the people refused to throw a bridge of boats over the river at Ricca, a detachment moved farther up, intending to cross by the standing bridge at Membaj ; but meanwhile Ashtar threatening the inhabitants with the sword, forced them to construct a bridge at Ricca. Ricca (Nicephorium) is at the junction of the Belik with the Euphrates, near where the river having approached Aleppo trends thereafter eastward. The outposts met at Sur al Rum, now in ruins, a little to the west of Ricca. It lies near Thapaeus of the ancients, on the line of Cyrus' march.

² Siffin lay to the west of Ricca, half-way to Balis (one of Chesney's steamer stations), and about 100 miles from the coast ; south-east of Aleppo, and north-east of Hims.

sent three chiefs to demand that, for the good of the commonwealth, Muavia should tender his allegiance. A scene ensued of fruitless recrimination. Muavia demanded that the murderers of Othman should be brought to justice; while the demand was stigmatised as a mere cat's-paw covering ambitious designs upon the Caliphate. This was resented as a base calumny by Muavia. "Begone, ye lying scoundrels!" he cried; "the sword shall decide between us." So saying, he drove them from his presence. Finding all attempt at compromise vain, Aly marshalled his army into eight separate columns, each under a Bedouin chieftain of note. As many separate columns were similarly formed on the Syrian side. Every day one of these columns, taking the field in turn, was drawn up against a column of the other army. Desultory fighting in this singular way was kept up throughout the month, there being sometimes as many as two engagements in a day. But the contest was hardly yet begun in earnest. On either side they feared to bring on a common battle, "lest the Moslems should be destroyed, root and branch, in the internecine struggle."

A.H. 36-
37.

Desultory
fighting,
xii. 36 A.H.
May
657 A.D.

The new year opened on combatants, wearied by such indecisive strife and inclined to thoughts of peace, and so a truce was called, to last throughout the month. The interval was spent in deputations, but they proved as fruitless as those which had gone before. Aly, under the influence of the heated Bedouins around him, was hardly now disposed even to blame the attack on Othman. When pressed on this point by the Syrian delegates, he avoided a direct reply. "I will not say," was the evasive answer, "that he was wrongly attacked, nor will I say that the attack was justified." "Then," answered the Syrians, "we shall fight against thee, and against every one else who refuseth to say that Othman was not wrongfully put to death;" and with these words took their final leave. On his side, Muavia declared to the messengers of Aly that nothing short of the punishment of the Regicides would induce him to quit the field. "What?" exclaimed some one; "wouldest thou put Ammâr to death?" "And

Truce
during first
month of
37 A.H.
June
657 A.D.

Fruitless
negotia-
tions.

A. H. 36-37. "why not?" answered Muavia; "wherefore should the son of the bondwoman not suffer for having slain the freedman of Othman?"¹ "Impossible," they cried; "where will ye stop? It were easier to bale out the floods of the Euphrates."

Renewal of hostilities, ii. 37 A. H. July 657.

So passed the month; and Aly, seeing things still unchanged, commenced hostilities afresh. He caused proclamation to be made along Muavia's front, summoning the Syrians to allegiance. But it only made them rally more closely round Muavia; and a company, girding themselves with their turbans in token of the vow, swore that they would defend him to the death. The warfare thus resumed, daily becoming severer and more embittered, Aly at last made up his mind to bring on a general and decisive battle. Thus, ten days after the renewal of hostilities, both armies drawn out in entire array, fought till the shades of evening fell, neither having got the better. The following morning, the combat was renewed with greater vigour. Aly posted himself in the centre with the flower of his troops from Medina; the wings were formed, one of warriors from Bussorah, the other of those from Kufa. Muavia had a pavilion pitched upon the field; and there, surrounded by five lines of his sworn bodyguard, watched the day. Amru, with a great weight of horse, bore down upon the Kufa wing, which gave way; and Aly was exposed to imminent peril, both from thick showers of arrows and from close encounter. Reproaching the men of Kufa for their cowardice, the Caliph fought bravely, his unwieldy figure notwithstanding, sword in hand, and manfully withstood the charge. Ashtar, at the head of three hundred *Readers*,² or *Ghazies*, led forward the other wing, which fell with fury on Muavia's "turbaned"

Battle of Siffin, 11, 12, ii. 37 A. H. 29, 30 July.

¹ Othman's freedman was one of his followers slain at Medina in the final onslaught of the conspirators. The life of Ammar, son of the bondwoman Sommeiya, was forfeit for this lesser crime, much more for the assassination of the Caliph. Such was Muavia's argument.

² *Readers* or *Reciters* of the Coran, those, namely, who, having it by heart (*Elâfis*), were able to repeat it from beginning to end. They were the most fanatical part of the Moslem forces, answering as they did closely to the *Ghazies* of our day.

bodyguard. Four of its five ranks were cut to pieces, and Muavia bethinking himself of flight had already called for his horse, when a martial couplet flashed on his mind, and he held his ground. Amru stood by him;—"Courage to-day," he cried, "to-morrow victory. The fifth rank repelled the danger; and both sides again fought on equal terms. Feats of desperate bravery were displayed by both armies, and heavy was the carnage. On Aly's side fell Hashim, the hero of Cadesiya. Of even greater moment was the death of Ammâr, now over ninety years, and one of the leading Regicides. As he saw Hashim fall, he exclaimed, "Paradise! how close thou art beneath the arrow's barb and falchion's flash! O Hashim! even now I see heaven opened, and black-eyed maidens bridally attired, clasping thee in their embrace!" So, singing, and refreshing himself with his favourite draught of milk and water, the aged warrior, fired with the ardour of youth, rushed into the enemy's ranks, and met the envied fate. Mahomet had once been heard to say to him:—"By a godless and rebellious race, O Ammâr, thou shalt one day be slain"; in other words, that Ammâr would be killed fighting on the side of right. Thus his death, as it were, condemned the ranks against whom he fought, and spread dismay in Muavia's host. But Amru answered readily: "And who is it that hath killed Ammâr, but Aly and the 'rebellious race' that have brought him hither?" The clever repartee ran through the Syrian host, and did much to efface the evil omen.

The fighting this day was in real earnest; darkness failed to separate the combatants; and, like Cadesiya, that night was called a second *Night of Clangour*. The morning broke on the two armies still in conflict. With emptied quivers they fought hand to hand. Ashtar, the Regicide, resolved on victory at whatever cost, continued to push the attack with unflinching bravery and persistence. Muavia, disheartened, began to speak of a judicial combat with a champion on either side. "Then go forth thyself, and challenge Aly," said Amru. "Not so," answered Muavia, "I will not do that, for Aly ever

A.H. 38-
37.

Battle still
rages on
third day,
13 Safar,
31 July.

A.H. 36-
37.

“slayeth his man, and then *thou* shouldest succeed me.” Amru, indeed, well knew that this was not Muavia’s line, who himself, like his antagonist, was now of an unwieldy mien. It was no time for continuing grim pleasantry like this; and so Amru bethought him of a stratagem. “Raise the leaves of the Coran,” he cried; “if any refuse to abide thereby, it will sow discord amongst them; if they accept the hallowed symbol it will be a reprieve from cruel slaughter.” Muavia caught at the words. And so forthwith they fixed the sacred leaves on the points of their lances, and raising them aloft, called out along the line of battle: “The law of the Lord! the law of the Lord! Let that decide betwixt us!” No sooner heard, than the men of Kufa leapt forward, re-echoing the cry: “The law of the Lord, that shall decide between us!” As all were shouting thus with one accord, Aly stepped forth and expostulated with them: “It is the device,” he cried, “of evil men; afraid of defeat, they seek their end by guile, and cloak rebellion under love of the Word.” It was all in vain. To every argument they answered (and the Ghazies loudest of all):—“We are called to the Book, and we cannot decline it.” At last, in open mutiny, they threatened the unfortunate Caliph that, unless he agreed, they would desert him, drive him over to the enemy, or serve him as they had served Othman. Seeing opposition futile, Aly said: “Stay wild and treasonable words. Obey and fight. But if ye will rebel, do as ye list.” “We will not fight,” they cried; “recall Ashtar from the field.” Ashtar, thus summoned, at the first refused. “We are gaining a great victory,” he said, “I will not come”; and he turned to fight again. But the tumult increased, and Aly sent a second time to say:—“Of what avail is victory when treason rageth? Wouldst thou have the Caliph murdered, or delivered over to the enemy?” Ashtar unwillingly returned, and a fierce altercation ensued between him and the angry soldiery. “Ye were fighting,” he said, “but yesterday for the Lord, and the choicest among you lost their lives. What is it but that ye now acknowledge your-

Hostilities
suspended
for arbitra-
tion by
Coran.

“selves in the wrong, and the martyrs therefore gone to hell?” “Nay,” they answered;—“yesterday we fought for the Lord; and to-day, for the same Lord we stay the fight.” On this, Ashtar upbraided them as “traitors, cowards, hypocrites, and villains.” In return, they reviled him, and struck his charger with their whips. Aly interposed. The tumult was stayed. And Ashath chief of the Beni Kinda, was sent to ask Muavia “what his meaning in raising the Coran aloft might be.” “It is this,” he sent answer back, “that we should return, both you and we, to the will of the Lord, as set forth in the Book. Each side shall name an Umpire, and their verdict shall be binding.” Aly’s army shouted assent. The unfortunate Caliph was forced to the still deeper humiliation of appointing as his arbiter one who had deserted him. The soldiery cried out for Abu Musa,—the temporising governor of Kufa who had been deposed for want of active loyalty. “This man,” answered Aly, “did but lately leave us and flee; and not till after several months I pardoned him. Neither hath he now been fighting with us. Here is a worthy representative, the son of Abbas the Prophet’s uncle; choose him as your Umpire.” “As well name thyself,” they answered rudely. “Then take Ashtar.” “What!” said the Bedouin chiefs in the same rough imperious strain, “the man that hath set the world on fire! None for us but Abu Musa.” It was a bitter choice for Aly, but he had no alternative. The Syrian arbiter was Amru, for whose deep and crafty ways the other was no match. He presented himself in the Caliph’s camp, and the agreement was put in writing. As dictated from Aly’s side, it ran thus: “*In the name of the Lord Most Merciful!* This is what hath been agreed upon between the Commander of the Faithful, and——” “Stay!” cried Amru (like the Coreish to the Prophet at Hodeibia¹); “Aly is *your* commander, but he is not ours.”

A.H. 36-
37.

Deed of
arbitra-
tion.

13 ii.

37 A.H.

31 July

657 A.D.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 346.

A.H. 36-
 37.
 them "to follow the judgment of the Coran; and, where "the Coran was silent, the acknowledged precedents of "Islam." To the Umpires, the guarantee of both Aly and Muavia was given of safety for themselves and for their families; and the promise of the people that their judgment should be followed. On their part, the Umpires swore to judge righteously, and thus, so far as in them lay, to reconcile the Faithful. The decision was to be delivered after six months, or later if the Umpires saw cause for delay, and at some neutral spot midway between Kufa and Damascus. Meanwhile hostilities should be suspended. The writing having been duly executed and signed, was numerously witnessed by leading chiefs on either side. Ashtar alone refused:—"Never should I acknowledge this to be mine own right "hand," he said, "if it did but touch a deed like this."

Aly and
 Muavia
 retire.

And so the armies buried their dead, and quitted the memorable but indecisive battlefield. Aly retired to Kufa; and Muavia, his point for the present gained, to Damascus. As Aly entered Kufa, he heard wailing on every side. A chief man, whom he bade to pacify the mourners, answered: "O Caliph, it is not as if but two or "three had been slain; of this clan alone hard by, an "hundred and four score lie buried at Siffin. There is "not a house but the women are weeping in it for their "dead."

Discord at
 Kufa.

The slaughter, indeed, had been great on both sides. And what gave point to Aly's loss was that the truce was but a hollow thing, with no hope in it of lasting peace or satisfaction. The Arab faction, to whose insolent demands he had yielded, was more estranged than ever. When the men of Kufa murmured at the compromise, Aly could but reply that the mutinous soldiery had extorted the agreement from him; and that having pledged his faith, he could not now withdraw. He had thrown in his lot with traitors and regicides, and was now reaping the bitter fruit. Muavia alone had gained.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE KHAREJITES, OR THEOCRATIC FACTION, REBEL AGAINST ALY

37 A.H. 657 A.D.

THE quick sagacity of Amru had never been turned to better account than when he proposed that the Coran should be the arbiter between the contending parties. To be judged by the Book of the Lord had been the cry of the democrats from the beginning. The sacred text gave countenance neither to the extravagant pretensions of the Coreish, nor to their rule of favouritism and tyranny. Its precepts were based on the Brotherhood of the faithful; and the Prophet himself had enjoined the absolute equality of all. No sooner, therefore, was the Coran proclaimed than, as Amru anticipated, the Arab chiefs, caught in the snare, took up the cry, and pledged themselves thereto.

Reflection soon tarnished the prospect. They had forgotten how narrow was the issue which the Umpires had to decide. The Bedouins and democrats were fighting not for one Caliph or the other, but against the pretensions of the Coreish at large. It was this that nerved them to the sanguinary conflict. "If the Syrians conquer," cried one of their chiefs, "ye are undone. Again ye will be ground down by tyrants like unto the minions of Othman. They will seize upon the conquests of Islam as if, forsooth, they were theirs by inheritance, instead of won by our swords. We shall lose our grasp both of this world and the next." Such were the alleged evils for which they had slain Othman, and from which they had

A.H. 37. — been fighting for deliverance. By the appointment of an Umpire, what had they gained? It was a *Theocracy* they had been dreaming of, and now they were drifting back into the abuses of the past. The Umpires would decide simply as between Muavia and Aly; and, whatever the verdict, despotism would be riveted more firmly than ever upon them. What they really wanted had been lost sight of: nor was there any longer a prospect of its being won.

Draw off
into hostile
camp near
Kufa;

Angrily arguing thus, a body of 12,000 men fell out from Aly's army on their homeward march, but kept side by side with the rest, at some little distance off. Loud and violent in their speech, they beat about their neighbours in rude Bedouin fashion with their whips, and accused one another of having abandoned the cause of Islam into the hands of godless arbitrators; while others repented at their having betrayed the Caliph on the field of battle, and thus separated themselves from the great body of the Faithful. In this frame of mind they avoided Kufa, but encamped in its vicinity at the village of Harora. They chose for themselves a temporary leader. Their resolve, however, was that, when they had gained ascendancy, they would no longer have any Prince or Caliph at all, nor any oath of allegiance but to *the Lord alone*, and vest the administration of affairs in a Council of State. Such theocratic dreams were not confined to these schismatics, but had widely leavened the factious and fanatic city Kufa itself.

But per-
suaded by
Aly,

Aly, aware of the danger, sent his cousin, Ibn Abbas, to reason with the seceding body, but to no effect. He then proceeded in person to their camp, and gained over their leader by the promise of the government of Ispahan. He urged that, so far from being responsible for "the godless compromise," as they called the truce, he had been driven to it against his better judgment by their own wayward and persistent obstinacy; that the Umpires were bound by its terms to deliver their decision in accordance with the sacred text, which the Theocrats equally with himself held to be the final guide; and if

the Umpires' deliverance should after all be in disregard A.H. 37.
of right, he would without hesitation reject the same, and
again go forth to fight with them against their enemies.

For the present they were pacified by these assurances ;
and so, breaking up their camp, they returned to their
homes, there to await the decision of the Umpires.

Retire to
their
homes.

CHAPTER XXXIX

DECISION OF THE UMPIRES

37 A.H. 658 A.D.

Interreg-
num.

THE interval passed uneasily. Muavia ruled in Syria; Aly, over the rest of the Moslem world. Neither, for the moment, interfered with the other. The Empire was for the moment in suspense.

Umpires
meet,
viii. 37 A. H.
Feb.
658 A. D.

Within the time appointed, Amru appeared at Duma, half way across the desert and, shortly after, Abu Musa; each followed, as agreed upon, by a retinue of 400 horse. Thither also flocked multitudes from Irac and Syria, from Mecca also and from Medina. With intense interest they watched the strange proceeding, which was to decide the future of Islam. The leading chiefs, too, of the Coreish were there; some with the distant hope that the choice might haply fall on one of them.

Their
confere-
nce.

The Umpires met in a pavilion pitched for the occasion; and there a private conference was held between the two alone. The account preserved is brief and uncertain. Abu Musa, pressed by his astute colleague, admitted that the assassination of Othman was a wicked and unjustifiable act. "Then why," rejoined Amru, "wilt thou not take Muavia, the avenger of the Caliph's blood, for his successor?" "If it were a mere question of blood-feud or kinsmanship," said Abu Musa, "then Othman's sons would have the nearer claim. But succession to the throne must be determined by the chief Companions' vote." Amru then proposed his own son. "A just and good man," replied Abu Musa, "but one whom thou hast already made to take sides in

“ the civil war ; and above all things we must beware of
 “ kindling mutiny again amongst the Arab tribes.” A. H. 37.
 A similar objection shut out Abdallah son of Zobeir ; and
 Omar’s son was put aside as not having qualities fitted
 for command. “ Then,” asked Amru, when all possible
 candidates had been named and negatived, “ what may
 “ be the judgment thou wouldst give ? ” “ My judgment,”
 answered Abu Musa, “ would be to depose both Aly and
 “ Muavia, and then leave the people free to choose as
 “ Caliph whom they will.” “ Thy judgment is also mine,”
 said Amru promptly ; “ let us go forth.”

The people, in breathless expectation, crowded round
 the pavilion as the Umpires issued from it. “ Let them
 know,” said Amru to his fellow, “ that we are agreed.”
 Abu Musa advanced, and with voice loud and clear, said :
 “ We are agreed upon a decision such as, we trust, will
 “ reconcile the people, and reunite the empire.” “ He
 “ speaketh true,” said Amru : “ step forth, O Abu Musa,
 “ and pronounce thy judgment.” Then spoke Abu Musa :
 “ Ye people ! we have considered the matter well. We
 “ see no other course for peace and concord, but to depose
 “ Aly and Muavia, both one and other. After that, ye
 “ shall yourselves choose a fit man in their room. This is
 “ my judgment.” He stepped aside, and Amru advanc-
 ing said : “ Ye have heard the sentence of Abu Musa.
 “ He hath deposed his fellow ; and I too depose him. But
 “ as for my chief, Muavia, him do I confirm. He is the
 “ heir of Othman, the avenger of his blood, and the best
 “ entitled as Caliph to succeed.”

The assembly was thunderstruck. Even the Syrians
 had never dreamed of Muavia achieving such a triumph ;
 nor had it entered the minds of those on Aly’s side, that
 their Umpire could be overreached thus shamefully.
 “ What could I do ? ” cried Abu Musa, assailed on every
 hand ; “ he agreed with me, then swerved aside.” “ No
 “ fault of thine,” said the son of Abbas : “ the fault of
 “ those who put thee in the place.” Overwhelmed with
 reproaches, Abu Musa escaped to Mecca, where he
 thenceforward lived in obscurity. In the heat of indigna-

A.H. 37.

 Muavia
 saluted
 Caliph by
 Syrians.

 tion, the commander of the Kufa bodyguard seized Amru, and was roughly handling him, when the people interposed to set him free. Amru returned forthwith to Damascus, where by acclamation Muavia was saluted Caliph.

How the startling intelligence affected Aly, may be judged by the fact that to the prescribed daily service he now added a petition cursing by name, Muavia, Amru, and their chief adherents. Muavia was nothing loth to follow his example. And so the world was edified by the spectacle of the two rival Commanders of the Faithful uttering commination one against the other, in the public prayers.¹

¹ The imprecation used by Aly was as follows: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, "let Muavia be accursed, and Amru," and so on with the chief leaders by name. "Let them be accursed all!" Muavia's imprecations, in the same way, included Aly, his sons Hasan and Hosein, and Ashtar.

CHAPTER XL

THE KHAREJITES, OR THEOCRATIC SEPARATISTS, DEFEATED AT NEHRWAN

37 A.H. 658 A.D.

ALY was not content with heaping on his rival malediction. He resolved on immediate renewal of hostilities. There was, however, other work before him in first dealing with an enemy nearer home.

Ever since they had broken up their camp at Harora, the Kharejites, instead of settling down in sentiments of loyalty and peace, had been gaining in aggressive force and turbulence. There should be no oath of fealty, was the theocratic cry, but to the Lord alone, the Mighty and the Glorious. To swear allegiance to either Aly or Muavia was in derogation of that Great name. "Both sides," they said, "are coursing along, neck and neck, in the race of apostasy: the Syrians run after Muavia right or wrong, and ye swear for Aly through black and white. It is nought but blasphemy." So they drew up their creed in one short sentence: *No rule but that of the Lord alone*; and this they insolently flung in Aly's teeth.¹ In vain the Caliph argued, as before, that Arbitration had been forced upon him by themselves. "True," they readily replied; "but we have repented of that lapse; and thou must repent of it too, or else we shall fight against thee; and if so be we are slain, we shall gladly meet our

¹ *La hukm illa lillahi*. The creed of the Separatists was that Believers being absolutely equal, there should be no Caliph, nor oath of allegiance sworn to any man, the government being in the hands of a Council elected by the people.

A. H. 37. " Lord." Aly yet hoped to win them over. He bore with their seditious talk; and made his intention known of treating them forbearingly. " They should have free access to the Mosques for prayer. If they joined his army, they would share the booty like the rest. So long as they refrained from any overt act, he would use no force of arms against them."

Kharejites march on Nehrwan, x. 37 A. H. March 658 A. D.

Instead of pacifying the fanatics, this moderation but emboldened them. At last, when the Umpires' judgment was delivered, they denounced it as amply justifying their secession, and resolved at once to raise the divine standard. They looked for heavenly interposition; but even if they perished, it was a righteous cause, which must triumph in the end; and they themselves, protesting against a wicked world, would surely be inheritors of the World to come. Accordingly, about a month after the Arbitration, they began, in concert with the brethren who sympathised with them at Bussorah, to leave their homes by stealth. The conspirators from Bussorah, 500 strong, were pursued by the Governor, but effecting their escape, joined the party which in greater force had issued forth from Kufa. Secular power, and the pomp of this life, were abhorrent from the covenanting creed; and it was only after many had declined the dangerous pre-eminence, and then simply as a temporary expedient, that a Leader was prevailed on to accept the chief command. The design was to seize Medain, and there, under a Council of Representatives, establish theocratic rule as a model to the ungodly cities all around. But the Governor had timely warning, and repulsed the attempt. They passed on, and in small bodies crossing the Tigris farther up, assembled at Nehrwan 4000 strong.

Aly orders levy for Syrian campaign.

Aly did not at first recognise the serious bearing of the movement. The number was comparatively small; and he hoped that, immediately they saw their former comrades in arms marching against the graceless Syrians, they would not hesitate again to join his standard. So Aly mounted the pulpit and harangued the men of Kufa. He denounced the Umpires as having cast the Book of the Lord, equally

with the Prophet's precedent, behind their backs. Both were apostates, rejected of the Lord, of the Prophet also, and of all good men;—"Wherefore," said he, "we must fight our battle over again at the point where, on the eve of victory, we were forced to leave it off. Prepare to march for Syria, and be ready in your camp without the city by the second day of the coming week." Then he indited a despatch to the fanatics at Nehrwan. It was couched in similar terms, and ended thus: "Now, therefore, return forthwith and join the army. I am marching against the common enemy, yours and ours. We have come back to the time when at Siffin ye fought by my side; now follow me again." In reply they sent an insulting message:—"If Aly would acknowledge his apostasy and repent of it, then they would see whether anything could be arranged between them; otherwise they cast him off as an ungodly heretic." The stiff-necked Theocrats were thereupon, for the present, left to their own devices, and the business of raising levies for Syria proceeded with. But little enthusiasm was anywhere displayed. Of 60,000 fighting men on the stipendiary roll at Bussorah, 3000 were with difficulty got together. At Kufa, after vain appeal, a conscription was ordered through the heads of clans; and thus at length an army of 65,000 was brought into the field.

With this imposing force, Aly had already commenced his march on Syria, when tidings reached him that the fanatic host was committing outrage throughout the country in the very outskirts of the camp.¹ A messenger sent to make inquiry, met the common fate. Tidings becoming more and more alarming, the army demanded to be led against them; "for how," said they, "can we leave such outlaws at large behind us, with homes exposed to their unlicensed cruelty?" Aly, himself convinced of this, changed his course, crossed the Tigris,

¹ The outrages were to the last degree barbarous and cold-blooded. Travellers, men and women, refusing to confess the theocratic tenets were put to death; a woman great with child ripped up with the sword, and so forth.

A.H. 37. and marched against the fanatics. When now near Nehrwan, he sent a messenger to demand surrender of all such as had been guilty of outrage and murder. "Give up these to justice," he said, "and ye shall be left alone, until the Lord grant us victory in Syria, and then haply He shall have turned your hearts again toward us." They replied that "they were all equally responsible for what had passed, and that the blood of the ungodly heretics they had slain was shed lawfully." A parley ensued, in which the Caliph expostulated with the misguided fanatics, and offered quarter to all who should come over to his army, or retire peaceably to their homes. Some obeyed the call and came over; 500 went off to a neighbouring Persian town, and many more dispersed to their homes; but 1800 remained upon the field, martyrs to the theocratic creed. With the wild battle-cry, *To Paradise!* they rushed upon the lances of the Caliph's force, and to a man were slain. Aly's loss was trifling.

Who are dispersed and slain.

The Kha-rejites a chronic thorn in the empire.

It had been better for the peace of Islam if not one of the 4000 had escaped. The snake was scotched, not killed. The fanatic spirit was strangely catching; and the theocratic cause continued to be canvassed vigorously and unceasingly, though in secret, both at Bussorah and Kufa. However hopeless their object, the fanatics were nerved, if not by expectation of divine aid, at the least by sure hope of the Martyr's crown. In the following year, bands of insurgent fanatics once and again appeared unexpectedly in the field, denouncing Aly, and proclaiming that the Kingdom of the Lord was at hand. One after another they were cut to pieces, or put to flight with ease. Still such continual risings could not but endamage the name and power of Aly, who now reaped the fruit of his weak compromise with the enemies of Othman, and neglect to bring them to justice. Fanatics in their extravagant doctrine, these men were too sincere to combine with any purely political sect, and hence they seldom came near to leaving any permanent mark of their creed behind them. But both in the present and in succeeding reigns, we find them every now and then gathering up

their strength dangerously to assail the empire, and as often beaten back. Ever and anon, for ages, these *Kharejites* “went forth” (as the name implies)¹ on their desperate errand, a thorn in the side of the Caliphate, and a terror to the well-disposed. A.H. 87.

¹ *Kharejite*, “one who goes forth,” that is to say, against the Government, demanding, as a Covenanter, its reform.

CHAPTER XLI

REVOLT OF EGYPT

38 A.H. 658 A.D.

Aly gives
up Syrian
campaign.
End of
37 A. H.
April
658 A. D.

HAVING dispersed the fanatics at Nehrwan, and recrossed the Tigris, Aly turned his face again towards Syria. But the troops urged that, before so long a campaign, their armour needed refitting. "Let us return for a little to "our homes," they said, "to furbish up our swords and "lances, and replenish our empty quivers." Aly consenting, they marched back and encamped in the vicinity of Kufa. The soldiers dropped off in small parties thither; and in a short time the camp was left almost empty. Aly, finding that none returned, became impatient, and himself entering Kufa, again harangued the people on the obligation to go forth with him and make war on Syria. But exhortation and reproach fell equally on listless ears. There was no response. Aly lost heart. The Syrian expedition fell through; and no attempt was made to resume it.

Position of
Aly and
Muavia.

Thus closed the 37th year of the Hegira. The situation was unchanged. Muavia, with now a colourable title to the Caliphate, remained in undisturbed possession of Syria, strong in the loyalty and affections of his subjects; while Aly, mortified by an indifferent and alienated people, was now to experience a severer trial in the loss of Egypt.

Egypt in
revolt.

We have seen that a powerful faction in that dependency sided with those demanding satisfaction for the blood of Othman; and that Cays having been recalled for not suppressing the dissentients, Mohammed son of

Abu Bekr had been appointed in his room. Casting aside the wise policy of his predecessor, Mohammed demanded of the recusants at once to submit, or to be gone from Egypt. They refused, but, masking their hostile designs, watched the issue of the struggle at Siffin. When on its conclusion Muavia was still left master of Syria, they gained heart and began to assume the offensive. Though repeatedly defeated, the slumbering elements of revolt were everywhere aroused, and Muavia, seeing his opportunity, commissioned Amru to regain the province of which he had been first conqueror. A.H. 38.

Aly saw, now all too late, the mistake which he had made. He would have reappointed Cays; but Cays declined again to take the post. The only other fitted for the emergency was Ashtar, the regicide, who was sent off in haste to Egypt. But on the way he met with an untimely death, having been poisoned (at the instigation, it is said, of Muavia) by a chief on the Egyptian border with whom he rested. There was joy at the death of the arch-regicide throughout Syria, where he was greatly feared. Aly was equally cast down by the untoward event. His only resource was now to bid Mohammed hold on, and do what he could to retrieve his position. But the faction which favoured Muavia gained ground daily; and when Amru, at the head of a few thousand men, crossed the border, he was joined by an overwhelming body of insurgents. Mohammed, after a vain attempt to fight, was slain, and his body ignominiously burned in an ass's skin.¹ Thus Egypt was lost to Aly; and Amru, as lieutenant of the rival Caliph, again became its Governor. Amru conquers Egypt for Muavia, ii. 38 A.H. July 658 A.D.

The loss of Egypt was the harder for Aly to bear, as immediately due to his own mistake in removing Cays; and even now it might have been retrieved if the men of Kufa had not been heartless in his cause. Over and again Aly's mortification at loss of Egypt.

¹ Amru had offered Mohammed quarter. But he was caught in his flight by a Chief so incensed against the Regicides that he slew him in cold blood, and having put his body in an ass's skin, cast it into the flames. Ayesha was inconsolable at her brother's fate, and, though her politics were all against Aly, she now cursed Muavia and Amru in her daily prayers, and thenceforward ate no roasted meat or pleasant food until her death.

- A.H. 38. he implored them to hasten to the defence of Mohammed.
— With difficulty two thousand men were got together, but after so long delay that they had hardly marched before news of the defeat made it necessary to return. Aly thereupon ascended the pulpit, and upbraided the people for their spiritless and disloyal attitude. For fifty days he had been urging them to go forth, to avenge their fallen brethren, and help those still struggling in the field. Like a restive, wayward camel, casting its burden, they had held back. "And now," he said, in grief and bitterness of spirit, "the son of Abu Bekr is fallen a martyr, and " Egypt hath departed from us."

CHAPTER XLII

REMAINDER OF ALY'S REIGN

38-40 A.H. 658-660 A.D.

NO gleam of fortune lighted up the remaining days of Aly's reign. What with fanatics at home, and the rival Caliphate abroad, his life was one continual struggle. And, moreover, the daily exhibition of indifference and disloyalty in Kufa, the city of his choice, was a mortification hard to bear.

The loss of Egypt, and cruel death of Mohammed, preyed upon his mind. He withdrew into strictest privacy. His cousin, Ibn Abbas, governor of Bussorah, fearful lest he should resign, or do something rash and unadvised, set out to visit and comfort him. Muavia seized the opportunity to stir up in his absence the disaffected elements at Bussorah. Among the various clans, he was sure of finding many there who, equally with himself, sought to avenge the blood of Othman; few were zealously attached to the cause of Aly; the remainder were mostly of the theocratic faction, now quite as hostile to Aly as to Muavia. The Syrian emissary, carrying for this end a letter to the citizens of Bussorah, was so well received, that Ziad, who held the City's temporary charge, was forced to retire with the treasure and pulpit of State into the stronghold of a loyal clan, from whence he wrote for help to Kufa. Aly at once despatched a Chief having influence with the local tribes, who were by his persuasion induced to rally round Ziad. After severe fighting in the City, the rebels were at last defeated, and driven for refuge to a neighbouring Castle. There surrounded, the Castle was set on fire, and the

Remainder
of Aly's
reign.

Rising at
Bussorah
suppressed,
38 A.H.
658 A.D.

A.H. 38-
40. Syrian envoy, with seventy followers, perished in the flames. The victory was decisive for the time; but the insurrection had brought to light the alarming spread of disaffection, and showed how precarious was Aly's grasp upon the Bedouin races of factious Bussorah.

Kharejite risings.

The spirit of disturbance and unrest was not confined to Egypt and to Bussorah. In a single year, we read of some half-dozen occasions on which considerable bands of *Kharejites* were impelled by their theocratic creed to raise the standard of rebellion. One after another they met the common fate of slaughter and dispersion. But though crushed, the frequent repetition of such desperate enterprises, fruit of a wild and reckless fanaticism, had a disturbing effect. The most serious of these risings was that led by Khirrit; and it is the more remarkable, because this chief had fought bravely with his tribe by Aly's side in the battles both of the Camel and at Siffin. He was driven, like many others, by strong conviction to rebel. Boldly approaching the throne, this Chief told Aly that since he had referred a divine issue to human arbitration, he could obey him now no more, nor even stand up behind him in the Mosque at prayer; but henceforth was sworn to be his enemy. Aly, with his usual patience, said that he would argue out the matter with him, and arranged a meeting for the purpose. But the night before, Khirrit stole away from the City with his following;—"Gone," said Aly, "to the devil; lost, like the doomed Thamudites!" They were pursued, but effected their escape to Ahwaz. There they raised the Persians, Kurds, and Christian mountaineers, by the specious and inflammatory cry that payment of taxes to an ungodly Caliph was but to support his cause, and as such intolerable. With a band of rebel Arabs, they kindled revolt throughout Fars, and put the Governor to flight. A force from Bussorah drove them to the shores of the Indian Ocean. But luring the people by delusive promises, they still gained head; and it was not till after a bloody battle, in which Khirrit lost his life, that the supremacy of the Caliphate was re-established in southern Persia. The Mussulman prisoners in this

Rebellion of Khirrit in S. Persia, 38 A.H. 658 A.D.

campaign were set at liberty on swearing fresh allegiance ; but 500 Christians were marched away to be sold into captivity. The women and children, as they were torn from their protectors, wailed with loud and bitter cry. The hearts of many were softened. Mascala, one of the captains, touched by the scene, took upon himself the cost of ransoming the Christian captives, and set them free. Aly, hearing of it, demanded from him immediate payment at a thousand pieces for each captive ; and Mascala, unable to pay down so great a sum, fled and joined Muavia.

A. H. 38-40.
Kharrit defeated and slain.

The defeat of the Kharejites did not at once restore peace to Persia ; for Fars and Kerman threw off their allegiance, and expelled their Governors. To quell the spreading insurrection, Aly employed Ziad from Bussorah, a man, as we have seen, of conspicuous administrative ability. He carried with him a great Court and retinue ; but it was mainly by setting one rebellious Prince against another, and by well-appointed promises and favours, that he succeeded in restoring peace ; and by his success earned the government of Fars. He fixed his Court at Istakhr (Persepolis), and his administration there became so famous as even to recall to Persian memories the happy age of Noushirwan.

Ziad governor of Fars, 39 A. H. 659 A. D.

Though successful thus in Persia, Aly was subject to trouble and molestation nearer home. Muavia, relieved now from apprehension on the side of Egypt, began to annoy his rival by frequent raids on Arabia and the cities beyond the Syrian desert. The object was various—now to ravage a Province or surprise a citadel, now to exact the tithe from Bedouin tribes, or secure allegiance to himself. Such inroads, though not always successful, inspired a sense of insecurity ; and worse, betrayed the lukewarmness of the people in the cause of Aly. These would stir neither hand nor foot to repel the Syrians invading villages close even at their door. To show his displeasure at their listlessness and disobedience, Aly went forth himself into the field almost unattended. On this, the men of Kufa, partly from shame, partly lured by promise

Syrian expeditions against Irac, 38-39 A. H. 659 A. D.

A.H. 38-40. of increased stipends, marched to the defence of their frontier. In the year 39 A.H. there were nearly a dozen inroads of the kind. Though eventually repelled, it was not always without loss in prisoners, plunder, and prestige. On one occasion Aly's commander, with a flying column, pursued the raiders back into the heart of Syria as far as Baalbek; and thence, turning northward, escaped by Ricca again into Iraq. On the other hand, Muavia, to show his contempt for the power of Aly, made an incursion right across Mesopotamia, and for some days remained encamped on the banks of the Tigris. After leisurely inspecting Mosul, which he had never seen before, he made his way back to Damascus unmolested.

Muavia
visits
Mosul.

Raid of
Bosor on
Arabia,
40 A.H.
660 A.D.

The 40th year of the Hēgira opened with a new grief for Aly. When the time of pilgrimage came round, Muavia sent Bosor, a brave but cruel captain of his host, with 3000 men, into Arabia, to secure for him the allegiance of the Holy places. As he drew nigh to Medina, the governor fled, and Bosor entered unopposed. Proceeding to the Mosque, he mounted the sacred steps of the Prophet's pulpit, and recalling Othman to mind, addressed the people thus: "O citizens of Medina! The Aged man! "Where is the greyhaired aged Man whom, but as yesterday, and on this very spot, I swore allegiance to? Verily, "but for my promise to Muavia, who bade me stay the "sword, I had not left here a single soul alive!" Then he threatened the leading Citizens with death if they refused to acknowledge Muavia as their Caliph; and so, fearing for their lives, all took the oath of allegiance to the Omeyyad ruler. Passing on to Mecca, the same scene was enacted by the imperious Envoy there, and with the same result.¹ Then marching south to Yemen, he committed great atrocities there upon the adherents of Aly. The Governor, a son of Abbas, escaped to his cousin Aly at Kufa. But two of his little children, falling into the tyrant's hands, were put to death in cold blood,

Infant
children
of Aly's
cousin
slain.

¹ On Bosor's approach, Abu Musa (the Umpire) fled from Mecca for his life. The unfortunate man had been living there ever since the Arbitration, equally obnoxious to both sides.

with their Bedouin attendant, who in vain protested against the cruel act. An army of 4000 men was despatched in haste from Kufa, but too late to stop these outrages; and Bosor made good his escape to Syria. The wretched Peninsula fared no better at the hands of the relieving army. Many of the inhabitants of Najran were put to death because they had belonged to Othman's party. The men of Mecca were forced to recall the oath they had just taken, and again do homage to Aly. Similarly, the citizens of Medina swore allegiance to Hasan, son of Aly, at the point of the sword; but no sooner were the troops gone, than the Leader of the opposite faction resumed his functions. Thus bitterly was the Peninsula rent in two. The cruel death of his Cousin's infant children preyed on Aly more, perhaps, than all his other troubles; and he cursed Bosor in the daily service with a new and bitter imprecation. The disconsolate mother poured forth her sorrow in plaintive verse, some touching couplets of which are still preserved.¹

Yet another grief was in store for Aly. He had promoted his cousins, the sons of Abbas, to great dignity, giving the command of Yemen to one, of Mecca to another, of Medina to a third; while Abdallah, the eldest, held the government of Bussorah, the second city in the empire. Complaints having reached the Court of irregularities at Bussorah, Aly called upon his cousin to render an account. Scorning the demand, Abdallah threw up the office, and, carrying his treasures with him, retired to Mecca. Aly was much mortified at this unfriendly act; and still more by the desertion of his brother Ackil to Muavia.

These troubles, crowding rapidly one upon another, at last broke Aly's spirit. He had no longer heart to carry

¹ For example:

" Ah! who hath seen my two little ones--

Darlings hidden, like pearls within their shell?"

As grandchildren of Abbas, their fate naturally occupies a conspicuous place in Abbasside tradition. Aly cursed Bosor, praying that he might lose his senses, and in answer to the prayer he became, we are told, a hopeless, drivelling idiot.

A.H. 38-40.

Abdallah, son of Abbas, retires to Mecca.

Aly concludes treaty with Muavia, 40 A.H. 660 A.D.

A.H. 38-
40. on hostilities with Syria. If he might but secure the Eastern provinces in peaceful subjection to himself, it was all he could hope for now. Accordingly, after a lengthened correspondence, an armistice was concluded between Aly and Muavia, by which they agreed to lay aside their arms, respect the territory of each other, and maintain, in time to come, a friendly attitude.

The
 double
 Caliphate.

It is possible that the double Caliphate thus recognised, in two separate and independent Empires, by the respective rulers of the East and West, might have been prolonged indefinitely, or even been handed down in perpetuity, had not the tragical event occurred to be narrated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XLIII

ASSASSINATION OF ALY

40 A.H. 661 A.D.

THE theocratic Separatists were sorely troubled at the prospects of Islam. It was not that raids and robbery, dissension and strife, had been the order of the day; for to them bloodshed was more tolerable than apostasy. To the Kharejite, the cessation of war brought no peace of mind. A settled government was the ruin of his hopes. Aly having come to terms with Muavia, there was no longer room to expect that the ungodly kingdoms of the earth would be overthrown, and the reign of righteousness restored. Thus the theocratic party brooded over the blood that had been shed in vain at Nehrwan and on other battlefields, and for the present abandoned hope. Many took refuge from the godless tyranny in the sacred precincts of the Hejaz, where they might lament freely over the miserable fate of Islam. As three of these thus mourned together, a gleam of hope shot across their path;—"Let us each kill one of the tyrants; Islam will yet be free, and the reign of the Lord appear." And so, as in the case of Othman, but under another guise and urged by bolder hopes, the three conspired against the State. The fatal resolve once taken, details were speedily arranged. Aly and Muavia both must fall; and Amru also, not only as the impious Arbitrator, but also as the likeliest successor to the throne left vacant by the other two. Each was to dispose of his fellow, as he presided at the morning service, on the same Friday when, being the Fast, the Grand mosques of Kufa, Damascus, and

Conspiracy
to assassinate
Aly,
Muavia,
and Amru,
40 A.H.
661 A.D.

A.H. 40. Fostat would be thronged with worshippers. They dipped their swords in powerful poison, and separated, swearing that they would either fulfil the task or perish in the attempt. Amru escaped. He was sick that day, and the captain of his guard, presiding at prayers, died in his stead. Muavia was not so fortunate. The blow fell upon him, and was near to being fatal. His physician declared his life could be saved only by the cautery, or by a potent draught that would deprive him of the hope of further progeny. He shrank from the cautery, and chose the draught. The remedy was effectual, and he survived.

Amru
escapes.

Muavia
wounded;
recovers.

Aly
wounded
in the
Mosque at
Kufa.

At Kufa things turned out differently. The conspirator Ibn Muljam was able on the spot to gain two desperate accomplices from the Beni Taym. That tribe, deeply imbued with the fanaticism of the day, had suffered severely in the massacre of Nehrwan, and nursed resentment ever since against the Caliph. Ibn Muljam loved a maid of the Beni Taym, who having on that fatal day lost father, brother, and other relatives, was roused thereby to a savage ardour. "Bring me," said the damsel to her lover, "the head of Aly as my dower; if thou escapest alive, thou shalt have me as thy guerdon here; if thou perish, thou shalt enjoy better than me above." So she introduced him to two accomplices, who, burning with the same spirit of revenge as Ibn Muljam, were to lie in wait on either side of the door leading into the crowded Mosque. At the time appointed, the Caliph entered the assembly calling aloud as usual, *To prayers, ye people! To prayers!*

- Immediately he was assailed on either hand. The sword of one conspirator fell upon the lintel; but Ibn Muljam wounded the Caliph severely on the head and side. He was seized. Of his accomplices one was cut to pieces, the other in the tumult fled. Aly was carried into the Palace with strength enough to question the assassin who was brought before him. Ibn Muljam declared boldly that the deed had been forty days in contemplation, during all which time it had been his prayer that "the Wickedest of mankind might meet his fate." "Then," replied Aly, "that must have been thyself." So saying, he turned to

his son; Hasan, and bade him keep the assassin in close custody: "If I die, his life is forfeit; but see thou mutilate him not, for that is forbidden by the Prophet." During the day Omm Kolthum went into the assassin's cell and cursed him, adding, what no doubt she would have fain believed, "My father shall yet live." "Then, Lady," replied the fanatic, "whence these tears? Listen. That sword I bought for a thousand pieces, and a thousand more it cost to poison it. None may escape its wound."

It soon became evident that the wound indeed was mortal. They asked the Caliph whether, if he died, it was his will that his son should succeed to the throne. Still true to the elective principle, Aly answered: "I do not command it, neither do I forbid. See ye to it." Then he called Hasan and Hosein to his bedside, and counselled them to be steadfast in piety and resignation, and kind to their younger brother, the son of his Hanifite wife. After that he wrote his testament, and continuing to repeat the name of the Lord, so breathed his last. When they had performed the funeral obsequies, Hasan arraigned the assassin before him. Nothing daunted, Ibn Muljam said: "I made a covenant with the Lord before the Holy house at Mecca, that I would slay both Aly and Muavia. Now, if thou wilt, I shall go forth and kill the other, or perish in the attempt. If I succeed, I will return and swear allegiance unto thee." "Nay," said Hasan, "not before thou hast tasted of the fire." He was put to death, and the body, tied up in a sack, was committed to the flames.

Aly died sixty years of age. His troubled and contested reign had lasted but four years and nine months. In his youth, he was one of the most distinguished heroes in the early wars of Islam. But after the Prophet's death he took no part in any of the military expeditions. In his later years he became heavy and obese, and his bald and portly figure was a subject of ridicule to his enemies. For a time he was content with a single wife, the Prophet's daughter Fatima, by whom he had three sons¹ and two daughters, the progenitors of the Syed race,—the nobility

¹ One of these died in infancy; the other two were Hasan and Hosein.

A.H. 40.

Death of
Aly, 17 ix.
40 A.H.
25 Jan.
661 A.D.

Ibn Mul-
jam put to
death.

Aly's
wives and
children.

A.H. 40. of Islam. After she died, he took many women into his Harem, both free and servile, by whom he had, in all, eleven sons and fifteen daughters. Aly was a tender-hearted father. In his later years, a little girl was born to him, with whose prattle he would beguile his troubles; he had her always on his knee, and doted on her with a special love.¹

Aly's
forbear-
ance and
magnani-
mity.

In the character of Aly there are many things to commend. Mild and beneficent, he treated Bussorah, when prostrate at his feet, with a generous forbearance. Towards theocratic fanatics, who wearied his patience by incessant intrigue and insensate rebellion, he showed no vindictiveness. Excepting Muavia, the man of all others whom he ought not to have estranged, he carried the policy of conciliating his enemies to a dangerous extreme. In compromise, indeed, and in procrastination; lay the failure of his Caliphate. With greater vigour, spirit, and determination, he might have averted the schism which for a time threatened the existence of Islam, and which has since never ceased to weaken it.

Wise but
inactive.

Aly was wise in counsel, and many an adage and sapient proverb has been attributed to him. But, like Solomon, his wisdom was for other than himself. His career must be characterised a failure. On the election of Abu Bekr, influenced by Fatima, who claimed and was denied a share in her father's property, he retired for a time into private life. Thereafter we find him taking part in the counsels of Abu Bekr and his successors, and even performing the functions of Chief judge. But he never asserted the leading position, which, as cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, might have been expected of him; nor is there aught to show that this was due to other cause than an easy and inactive temperament. One indelible blot rests on the escutcheon of Aly, his flagrant breach of duty towards his Sovereign ruler. He had sworn alle-

Desertion
of Othman
a blot
upon his
name.

¹ The mother of this little girl belonged to the Beni Kilab. The child lisped, and pronouncing *l* like *sh*, was unable to say *Kilab*; when asked to what tribe she belonged, she would imitate the bark of a dog (*kilab* or *kalb* meaning "a dog"), to the great delight of Aly and his courtiers.

giance to Othman, and by him he was bound to have stood in the last extremity. Instead, he held ignobly aloof, while the Caliph fell a victim to red-handed treason. Nor can the plea avail that he was himself under pressure. Had there been a loyal will to help, there would have been a ready way. In point of fact, his attitude gave colour to the charge even of collusion.¹ And herein Aly must be held accountable not only for a grave dereliction of duty, but for a fatal error which shook the stability of the Caliphate itself, as he was himself not long in finding to his cost.

Tradition, strange to say, is silent, and opinion uncertain, as to where the body of Aly lies. Some believe that he was buried in the Great mosque at Kufa, others in the Palace. Certainly, his tomb was never, in early times, the object of any care or veneration. The same indifference attached to his memory throughout the realm of Islam, as had attached to his person during life, and it was not till a generation had passed away that any sentiment of special reverence or regard for the husband of the Prophet's daughter, and father of his only surviving progeny, began to show itself.

There is no trace whatever at this period, of the extravagant claims of later days. On the contrary, even at Kufa, the capital that should have been proud of its Caliph, there prevailed at this time towards him and his family an utter want of enthusiasm and loyalty, amounting at times to disaffection. The fiction of the divine *Imamship* was a reaction in favour of Aly's descendants, arising out of the coming tragedy at Kerbala and cruel fate of the Prophet's progeny, which, fostered by Alyite and Abbasside faction, soon became a powerful lever, skilfully and unscrupulously used, to overthrow the Omeyyad dynasty.

¹ See above, p. 244, and note.

CHAPTER XLIV

HASAN SUCCEEDS ALY. ABDICATES IN FAVOUR OF MUAVIA

40-41 A.H. 661 A.D.

Hasan
succeeds
his father,
40 A.H.
661 A.D.

WHEN they had committed Aly, we know not where, to his last home, Kufa did homage, as it were by common consent, to Hasan, his eldest son. But Hasan was a poor-spirited creature, more intent on varying the charms of his ever-changing Harem than on the business of public life, and altogether unworthy his descent as grandson of the Prophet.¹

But is at-
tacked by
Muavia,
and
mobbed by
his own
troops.

It was now Muavia's opportunity for asserting his title to the whole Moslem empire. Already, in accordance with Amru's verdict at the Arbitration, he was recognised as Caliph throughout Syria and Egypt. Resenting the succession of Hasan, Muavia at once gathered a powerful army and marched against Kufa. No sooner was this intelligence received, than the Citizens, indignant at the prospect of falling under the rule of Syria, rallied beneath the new Caliph's standard, and an army, 40,000 strong, was ready to repel the attack. But Hasan had no stomach for the war. Sending forward his vanguard of

¹ His vagrant passion gained him the nickname of *The Divorcer*, for only by continual divorce could he harmonise his craving for new nuptials with the requirements of the law, which limits freeborn wives to four. He is said to have exercised the power of divorce, as a matter of simple caprice, seventy (others say ninety) times. The leading men complained to Aly that his son was continually marrying their daughters, and as often divorcing them. Aly said the remedy lay in their own hands; they should refuse to give him their daughters to wife. These divorced wives were irrespective of slave-girls, for whom there is no limit.

12,000 men, under the brave and faithful Cays, to meet the enemy, he followed himself irresolutely; and, with the bulk of his army, rested at Medain amidst the luxurious gardens of the old Persian court. While thus ignobly holding back, the report gained currency at Medain that Cays had been defeated and slain. An *émeute* ensued. The troops rose mutinously upon the Caliph. They rushed into his sumptuous pavilion, and plundered the royal tents even to the carpets. A project was set on foot to seize his person, and, by delivering him up to Muavia, thus make favourable terms. The faint-hearted Caliph, alarmed at the outbreak, took refuge in the Palace of the Chosroes, a more congenial residence than the martial camp; and, trusting no longer to his fickle and disloyal people, sent letters of submission to Muavia. He agreed to abdicate and retire to Medina, on condition that he should retain the contents of the treasury, five million pieces, in addition to the revenues of a Persian district; and that the imprecation against his father should drop from the public prayers. Muavia granted the first request; as for the second, he consented that no prayer reviling Aly should be recited within hearing of the Son. The truce was ratified accordingly.

A.H. 40-41.

Hasan
abdicates
in favour
of Muavia,
24 iii. 40.
10 Aug.
661,

And so, after a brief and inglorious reign of five or six months, Hasan, with his household and belongings, quitted Kufa for Arabia. The People wept at his departure. But Hasan left them without regret. They were a race, he said, in whom no trust could be reposed, and who had set purpose neither for evil nor for good.

And retires
to Medina.

Cays, whose ability and prowess were worthy of a better cause, remained for some while longer in the field. At length, having obtained terms for all who had been fighting on the side of Aly, and there being no longer any master now to fight for, he laid down his arms and did homage to Muavia.

Cays
submits.

Thus, at last, Muavia was able to make triumphal entry into Kufa. Having there received the homage of the Eastern provinces, he returned to Syria sole and undisputed Caliph of Islam. Damascus thenceforth was the capital of the Empire.

Damascus
capital of
Islam.

CHAPTER XLV

MUAVIA

40-60 A.H. 661-680 A.D.

FROM the death of Othman 35 A.H., Muavia was independent ruler of the West ; and from Hasan's abdication till his own death, that is, for nearly twenty years, he was undisputed Caliph of all Islam. During this long reign there was prosperity and peace as a rule at home, disturbed only by intermittent outbursts of Kharejite zealots, and by factions still ardent for the house of Aly. Both were easily suppressed, though not without bloodshed, by the strong arm of the Caliph and his able lieutenants. Abroad his rule was equally successful, and extended the boundaries of Islam in all directions.

Muavia's
reign,
40-60 A.H.
661-680
A.D.

Amru held the government of Egypt during the rest of his long life, which, indeed, had been one of the most eventful in this history. No man influenced more than he the fortunes of the Caliphate. Brave in the field, astute in counsel, coarse and unscrupulous in word and deed, it was mainly to Amru that Muavia owed his ascendancy over Aly, and the eventual establishment of the Omeyyad dynasty. Conqueror of Egypt, and for four years its governor under Omar, he continued in the same post a like period under Othman, who by his recall made him in an evil hour his enemy. Finally reappointed by Muavia on the defeat of Mohammed, he was still at his death the governor of Egypt. He died 73 years of age, penitent, we are told, for his many misdeeds.

Amru.
His death,
43 A.H.

The career of Moghira, though less brilliant, was not less singular. A native of Tayif, he had been deputed by

A.H. 40-
60.

Moghira
governor
of Kufa.

the Prophet, in company with Abu Sofian, to hew down the tutelary idol of that city.¹ He was ill-favoured, having lost an eye on the field of Wacûsa. Clever and designing, he survived his disgraceful fall at Bussorah, which nearly cost him life as well as honour, and rose again to influence. Finally, appointed by Muavia to that most difficult post, the government of the no longer regal Kufa, he held under strict control the turbulent and restless city, still the frequent scene of theocratic outburst, and of those dangerous conspiracies in favour of the house of Aly which began soon to disturb the Omeyyad dynasty.

Ziad
reconciled
to Muavia,
42 A.H.
662 A.D.

But perhaps the greatest service which Moghira rendered to Muavia, was that he succeeded in reconciling Ziad to his sovereign. The history of Ziad is one of the most remarkable of the time. He was the reputed son of Abu Sofian, who fell in with his mother, then a vagrant bondwoman, before his conversion at Tayif. By the faithful discharge of important trusts, Ziad overcame the disadvantage of servile birth, rose to important office, and eventually was appointed by Aly to the government of Bussorah and Istakhr. Powerful, wise, and eloquent, he was by far the ablest statesman of the day. Devoted to the cause of Aly, he was bitterly opposed to the pretensions of Muavia, even after the abdication of Hasan. Called by Muavia to render an account of his stewardship in Persia, he refused to do so or to appear at Court even when threatened, if he continued to absent himself, with the life of his sons in Bussorah. A thorn in his side, he caused continual alarm to Muavia. At last, in the year A.H. 42, Moghira, who had not forgotten the occasion on which he owed his life to the partial evidence of Ziad,² repaired to Istakhr, and persuaded him to tender his submission. Under safe-conduct he appeared before the Caliph at Damascus, and as a royal gift, together with his arrear of revenue, presented a million pieces. He was dismissed with honour, and provided with a residence in Kufa.

A year or two afterwards a curious episode in his life

¹ In A.H. 9, *Life of Makomet*, p. 437.

² Above, p. 188.

disturbed the equanimity of the Moslem world. As Ziad grew daily in royal favour, Muavia was seized with the desire to remove the stain upon his descent, and thus prove him not the supposititious, but the real and legitimate, son of Abu Sofian his own father. A commission appointed for the purpose held this established; upon which Muavia publicly acknowledged Ziad to be his brother. The announcement raised a scandal throughout Islam, first as contravening the law of legitimacy, and still more as making Omm Habiba—also the child of Abu Sofian and one of the “Mothers of the faithful,”—to be the sister of what (the above decision notwithstanding) was held to be an adulterous issue. Not only so, but Muavia's own kinsfolk, the house of Omeyya, were displeased at the affront thus put upon the purity of their blood. The feeling, however, soon passed away, as it was seen that a pillar of strength had been gained for the Omeyyad dynasty.¹ Shortly after, Ziad was made governor of Bussorah in addition to his Persian command. His strong hand fell heavily on the restless population of that turbulent city, now patrolled incessantly by an armed police of a thousand men. None might venture abroad at night on pain of death; and so ruthless was the order, that an unlucky Arab, wandering unawares into the precincts, was executed for the involuntary offence. The supremacy of law, an experience new to Bussorah, repressed rebellion, and effectually enforced order, where strife and faction had heretofore prevailed.

On Moghira's death, he was elevated to the governor-

¹ When Ziad proposed to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, his brother (who, offended at his tergiversation in the case for adultery against Moghira (*supra*, p. 188), had never spoken to him since) sent a message to dissuade him: “Thou wilt meet Omm Habiba,” he said, “if thou goest on pilgrimage. Now, if she receive thee as her brother, that will be regarded as a slight upon the Prophet; if otherwise, it will be a slight upon thyself.” So Ziad gave up the design. Again, Ziad, wishing to secure an acknowledgment of legal birth from Ayesha, addressed her a letter in which he subscribed himself, *Ziad son of Abu Sofian*; to which she replied, without committing herself, “To my dear son Ziad.” Abbasside writers name him without any patronymic, “Ziad, son of his father.” He is also called after his mother, “Ziad ibn Sommeyya.”

A.H. 40-60.

Ziad acknowledged as brother by Muavia, 45 A.H. 665 A.D.

Appointed governor of Bussorah,

A.H. 40-
60.

Attack on
Constanti-
nople.

wintered in Armenia, and the campaign was prosecuted both by sea and land. In A.H. 50 a formidable expedition was directed against Constantinople. The army suffered severely from want of provisions, and sickness; and Muavia sent his pleasure-loving son Yezid, much against his will, to join the army with large reinforcements. The force landed near Constantinople, the safety of which is ascribed by some to the use of Greek fire, discovered about the time. There was much fighting, and the Moslem loss was heavy. But misfortune notwithstanding, efforts against the City were not abandoned. We read of almost yearly expeditions, and in A.H. 53, an island near Constantinople was seized and held by a Moslem garrison for seven years; but the position was abandoned by Yezid on his father's death.

Death of
Abu Ayub
and other
Com-
panions;
also of
Ayesha and
widows of
Mahomet.

In the Grecian campaign a famous Companion, Abu Ayub, was killed under the walls of Constantinople, where his tomb was tended and visited by pilgrims for ages. He was the same who entertained the Prophet in his house for the first half-year after his arrival at Medina.¹ Early memories are also recalled by the death of Arcam, whose abode,—thence called "the house of Islam,"—was the resort of Mahomet and his followers when he first began his teaching at Mecca.² About the same time also we read of the death of Ayesha, nearly 70 years of age, and of four other of the "Mothers of the faithful," also thus advanced in years.³

A son of
Khalid
poisoned.

A blot rests on the name of Muavia for compassing the death of Abdul Rahman, son of the great Khalid. The splendour of his father's memory, and his own success in the campaign against the Greeks, invested him with such distinction throughout Syria, as to arouse the fears and jealousy of Muavia, who employed (it is said) a Christian agent to poison him. It is rare to find an imputation of the kind against Muavia, who though backward in checking the cruelty of his lieutenants, was himself on the whole mild and just in his administration.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 164.

² *Ibid.* pp. 59, 87.

³ Safa, Joweiria, Omm Salma, and Omm Ha'atba.

In the 50th year of the Hegira, Muavia entertained the project of removing the pulpit and staff of the Prophet from Medina to Damascus, now the capital of Islam. But the impious project was, by divine interposition, checked. For, "on its being touched, the pulpit trembled fearfully, and the sun was darkened, so that the very stars shone forth, and the men were terrified at the prodigies." The fond tradition is significant of the superstitious regard in which everything connected with the Prophet's person was now held. Muavia was dissuaded from his design by the consideration urged upon him, that where the Prophet had placed his pulpit and his staff, there they should remain. And so they were left as relics in the Great mosque hard by the last home of Mahomet.

A.H. 40-
60.

Project of
carrying
Mahomet's
pulpit to
Damascus.

CHAPTER XLVI

YEZID APPOINTED HEIR-APPARENT. HEREDITARY NOMINATION BECOMES A PRECEDENT

56 A.H. 676 A.D.

Precedents
for nomi-
nation or
election of
Caliph.

THE election of a Caliph on each succession had been followed by serious peril to the peace of Islam. The choice was supposed to be a privilege vested in the inhabitants of Medina, "Citizens," as well as "Refugees"; but the practice had been various, and the rule had been oftener broken than observed. The Prophet himself nominated no one. Abu Bekr we may say was chosen by acclamation.¹ He again, on his deathbed, named Omar as successor; and Omar, establishing yet another precedent, placed the choice in the hands of Electors. It is true that on both these last occasions the succession was ratified by the homage of Medina; but that was little more than formal recognition of appointment already made. At the fourth succession, the election of Aly, though carried out under compulsion of the Regicides, resembled somewhat the popular election of the first Caliph. Then followed the rebellion of Talha and Zobeir, based on the allegation that homage had been extorted from them. After that ensued the struggle between Muavia and Aly, which ended in the so-called Arbitration of Duma, and the double Caliphate. On the death of Aly, who declined to nominate a successor, his son Hasan was elected, not, as heretofore, by the people of Medina, but by the Citizens of Kufa. And, finally, we have the

¹ Mahomet, as we have seen, appointed him on his deathbed to lead the prayers; but he made no express nomination.

first example of abdication, when Hasan resigned his rights into the hands of Muavia, and left him sole Caliph of Islam. A.H. 56.

Whatever rights Medina may originally have possessed, circumstances had now materially altered the means of exercising them. Abandoned as the seat of government, Medina had practically lost the privilege of choosing a successor to the Throne, or even of confirming the nomination made by others. Succession, as in the case of Hasan, followed necessarily, and at once, upon the death of the reigning Caliph, and Medina had now no choice but to acquiesce in what had already taken place elsewhere. The elective function was thus, from the course of events, transferred to the inhabitants of the seat of Government, wheresoever that might be. Initiative no longer possible at Medina.

Again, the troubles which followed the election of Aly might recur at any moment. Zobeir and Talha raised the standard of revolt on the plea of compulsion, while between Aly and Muavia there followed a long and doubtful contest. These internecine struggles had imperilled the fortunes of Islam. Not only had the ranks of the Faithful been seriously thinned, but, from without, enemies might have taken dangerous advantage of the strife; as indeed would have been the case in the contest between Aly and Muavia, had the latter not made a truce with the Byzantine Court while civil war impended. But if a similar opportunity again offered, the foes of Islam might not be so forbearing, and a fatal wound might be inflicted on an Empire torn by intestine conflict. Danger at each succession.

Influenced by such considerations, and also no doubt by the desire of maintaining the Caliphate in his own line, Muavia entertained the project of declaring his son, Yezid, to be his Heir-apparent. By securing thus an oath of fealty throughout the Moslem world, he would anticipate and prevent the peril of a contested election. Ziad was favourable to the scheme, but enjoined deliberation, and a cautious canvass throughout the provinces. He also counselled Yezid, who was devoted to the chase and careless of public affairs, to amend his ways in preparation Muavia's design to nominate his son.

A.H. 56. for the Throne, and show before the people a character more fitted for the high dignity in prospect. Moghira likewise was favourable to the project. But it was not till both these counsellors had passed away that Muavia found himself in a position to proceed with the design.

Yezid
declared
Heir-
apparent,
56 A.H.
676 A.D.

So soon as Muavia felt secure of adequate support, and especially that Medina would not resent the invasion of her elective privilege,¹ deputations from all the Provinces and Chief cities presented themselves at Damascus. These, received in state, affected to press the nomination; and accordingly, without further ceremony, the oath of allegiance was taken by all present to Yezid as the next successor. Syria and Irac having without demur tendered homage, Muavia set out for Mecca with a retinue of 1000 horse, ostensibly to perform the lesser Pilgrimage, but in reality to obtain the assent of the two Holy cities to the

Mecca and
Medina
forced to
swear
allegiance.

succession of Yezid. The leading dissentients at Medina were Hosein son of Aly, Abd al Rahman son of Abu Bekr, and the two Abdallahs sons of Omar and Zobeir. Muavia on entering the City received them roughly, and so, to avoid further mortification, these left at once for Mecca. The remainder of the Citizens consented to the nomination of Yezid, and took the oath accordingly. Continuing his journey to Mecca, the Caliph carried himself blandly towards its people for the first few days, which were occupied with the rites of the lesser Pilgrimage. But as his time of departure drew nigh, he stood up to address them on his errand, and though his speech was gilded with assurances that the rights and privileges of the City would be respected, there was at the first no response. Then

¹ When Merwan, governor of the city, placed the matter before the men of Medina, he was at first violently opposed. Amongst others, Abd al Rahman, son of Abu Bekr, said, "This thing is naught but fraud and deception. In place of election, the right to which vesteth in this City, ye will now make the succession like unto that of the Greeks and Romans—where one Heraclius succeedeth another Heraclius." On this, Muavia quoted from the Coran: "Say not unto your parents, *Fie on you!* neither reproach them" (*Sura*, xvii. 24); signifying, it may be, that the very practice of nomination, now opposed, had been introduced by Abu Bekr himself in appointing Omar. Abdallah, son of Omar, is said to have been gained over by the gift of ten thousand golden pieces.

arose Abdallah son of Zobeir, and declared that the recognition of an Heir-apparent would run counter to all the precedents of Islam. On this the Caliph urged the risks to which Islam was ever and anon exposed from a contested succession. Others then spoke thus:—"We consent," they said, "to any one of these three things. *First*, do as the Prophet did, and leave the election to the citizens of Medina. Or, *secondly*, do as Abu Bekr did, and nominate a successor from amongst the Coreish.¹ Or, *thirdly*, like Omar, appoint Electors who shall, from amongst themselves, choose a candidate to succeed thee. Only, like them, thou must exclude thine own sons and thy father's sons." "As for the first course," replied Muavia, "there is none now left like unto Abu Bekr, that the people might choose him. And for the rest, verily I fear the contention and bloodshed that would follow if the succession be not fixed beforehand." Then finding his arguments of no effect, he called out the bodyguard, and at the point of the sword caused the City to take the oath.

The example of Syria, Irac, and the Holy cities was followed throughout the Empire without reserve. And ever after, the precedent more or less prevailed. The fiction of an elective right vested in the whole body of the Faithful, though still observed more or less in form, ceased now to have reality, and the oath of allegiance was without hesitation enforced by the sword against recusants. The reigning Caliph thus proclaimed as his successor the fittest of his sons, the one born of the noblest mother, or otherwise most favoured, or (in default of issue) the best qualified amongst his kinsmen. To him, as Heir-apparent, an anticipatory oath of fealty was taken, first at the seat of Government and then throughout the Empire, and the succession followed as a rule the choice. Sometimes a double nomination was made, anticipating at once thus

A.H. 56.

Muavia's action becomes the received precedent of Islam.

¹ That the Caliph must be of the Coreishite stock was axiomatic, excepting with the Kharejites, who denounced all privilege. The stricter Kharejites held that there should be no Caliph, but only a Council of State. If there were a Caliph, they were indifferent as to what stock he came from.

A.H. 56. two successions: but such attempt to forestall the distant future too often provoked, instead of preventing, civil war. The practice thus begun by the Omeyyads was followed equally by the Abbassides; and proved a precedent even for later times.

Yezid and
his mother.

Muavia had other sons, but Yezid's mother, Meisur was of noble birth, and as such her son took precedence. The story of this lady has special attraction for the early Arab writers. Amid the courtly luxuries of Damascus she pined for the freedom of the Desert, and gave vent to her longing in verse, of which the following may be taken as a specimen:—

“The tent fanned by desert breeze is dearer to me than these lofty towers,
I should ride more joyously on the young camel than on the richly
caparisoned steed.
The wild blast over the sandy plain is sweeter far to me than flourish
of royal trumpets.
A crust in the shade of the Bedouin tent hath better relish than these
courtly viands.
The noble Arab of my tribe is more comely in my sight than the obese
and bearded men around me.
O that I were once again in my desert home! I would not exchange it
for all these gorgeous halls.”

The lady's verses, coming to Muavia's ears, displeased him. Like Aly, he had become from luxurious living obese and portly, and felt the taunt of his wife, as if aimed at himself. So he dismissed Yezid with his Mother to the tents of her tribe the Beni Kelb, where in boyhood he acquired his Bedouin taste for the chase and a roving life.

¹ By Mahometan law, the son of the bondwoman is equally legitimate with the son of the free. But the Arab sentiment of noble birth prevailed; and it still prevails, as we daily see in such petty principalities as Afghanistan.