



1892

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.

SECOND EDITION

Revised; with Maps



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

56 PATERNOSTER ROW, 65 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD
AND 164 PICCADILLY

1892

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PREFACE

THIS work was intended as an abridgment of the *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 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 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

¹ Smith & Elder, 1883.

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



impressed with the vast research, the unfailing accuracy, and the dispassionate judgment of the author.

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, or 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 them-



selves, 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.

At first sight, 'the Caliphate,' as here treated, might appear somewhat beyond the scope of the *Religious Tract Society*. It really is by no means so. For if the contrast with Christianity is not immediately expressed it must constantly be inferred, and cannot but suggest itself at every turn to the thoughtful reader; while some aspects of it have been specially noticed in the Review at the close of the volume.

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

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	ط = tz	ك = k

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

W. M.

EDINBURGH, *September*, 1891.



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THE CALIPHATE :
ITS RISE, DECLINE, AND FALL.

CHAPTER I.

DEATH OF MAHOMET, ELECTION OF ABU BEKR.

II 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 era, that is of the Flight from Mecca. Mahomet had reached the age of three-score years and three, and up to the time of his last illness, which lasted but thirteen days, had been hale and vigorous. His death fell as 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 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 Mahomet when laid aside) was conducting the service in his place. When prayers were ended, Abu Bekr, seeing his master to all appearance better, obtained leave to visit his

Abu Bekr
absent.



A.H. 11. wife who lived in the upper suburb of the city. Then 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 mid-day. Rumour spreading, the Mosque was soon crowded with a host of bewildered followers. Amongst them Omar 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 he had long dwelt upon 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 citizens 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 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 Obada, leader of the Beni Khazraj, who, sick of a fever, lay covered up at the further 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. Hobab, on 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 Hobab returned the words. The altercation gaining heat and bitterness, Abu Bekr saw it must be stopped at any risk; and stepping forward said, '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 these both at once, 'Thou hast already, at the Prophet's bidding,

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. — led the prayers, and 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 Hobab cried to a man of the Beni Khazraj about to take the pledge, 'Wilt thou cut thine own kinsman's throat?' 'Not so,' he answered; '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 nominee, spake among themselves: 'If this man be chosen, the rule will be for ever with the Beni Khazraj. Let us 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 Refugees. He was one of themselves. Moreover the Prophet, when laid aside, by appointing Abu Bekr to take his place at the daily prayers, had in a manner indicated him as his Vicegerent. And so homage was done on all sides to Abu Bekr. He was saluted as the 'CALIPH,' or 'Successor of the Prophet.'

Abu Bekr
elected
Caliph.

Burial of
the
Prophet.

The night was occupied 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 you. If I do well, support me; if ill, then set me right. 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



A.H. 11.

Aly delays
doing
homage.

Fatima
mother of
Hasan and
Hosein.

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



A.H. 11. 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 ruler of a nation, like the chieftain of a tribe, is the head and representative of his people, and the nomination 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 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 death, and made no preparation for what should 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 his wish that he should succeed¹. 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 remind the reader not fresh from study of the Prophet's life, of the state of parties at the present juncture. The *Men of Medina* are the old inhabitants of the city who had received Mahomet on his escape from Mecca, and supported his cause²; they now embraced practically the whole native population, as the party that opposed him had gradually succumbed before his growing power. They were divided into two tribes, the *Aus* and *Khazraj*, jealous of each other. Beside these were the *Refugees*, or those who had followed Mahomet in

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 499.

² Hence called *Ansar*, or Helpers.



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 friendship or acquaintance 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. A.H. 11

Abu Bekr, three-score years of age, was somewhat short Abu Bekr. 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, now for many years white, dyed red. His countenance still in old age was 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 the other both Omar. 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, and beard dyed like his friend's; his stride was 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 the soft nature of Abu Bekr, served 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.

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



CHAPTER II.

EXPEDITION TO SYRIAN BORDER.

II A.H. 632 A.D.

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

Osama appointed by
Mahomet to command the
force.

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.

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 now, distinctly to mark the object, his son Osama, 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, 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, Osama 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.

Abu Bekr deaf to reclamations
against its despatch.

The day following his inauguration, Abu Bekr took up the banner, and restoring it to Osama, 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 the command, the fighting men of Medina and its neighbourhood flocked to the camp, even Omar amongst the number. While yet preparing to



depart, the horizon darkened suddenly. Report of the 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 Osama 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 Khattab!' 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. A.H. 11.

When all was ready for the march, Abu Bekr repaired to the camp, and accompanied the force a little way on foot. 'Be mounted,' said Osama 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 wipe out a multitude of sins.' After a while he stopped, and said to Osama: 'If it be thy will, give Omar leave that he may return with me to the city, for strength and counsel.' So he gave him leave. He accompanies Osama a little way on foot.

The army then halted, to receive Abu Bekr's parting words. 'See,' said he, addressing Osama, 'that thou avoid 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 And gives his last instructions.



A.H. 11. — meat which the 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!

Osama re-
tains vic-
torious.

So Abu Bekr returned with Omar to Medina. Osama 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 Codhaa, and the semi-Christian tribes which, under the Roman banner, had discomfited and slain his father. That disaster was now avenged in fire and blood. The land was ravaged far and near, and after an absence of two months, the army returned laden with spoil.

Meanwhile stirring events had been transpiring at Medina.



CHAPTER III.

MEDINA THREATENED.

II A. H. 632 A. D.

IN after-days Abu Bekr was used to look back with just pride upon the despatch, universal reclamation notwithstanding, of Osama's force. Public opinion was not long in justifying the act by results of essential benefit. 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.

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 sent off beyond recall his only force, and left Medina open and apparently defenceless.

Towards the close of Mahomet's life, three rivals laying claim to the prophetic office had raised the standard of rebellion. In the south, insurrection was hardly quelled by the death of the 'Veiled Prophet' of Yemen, when, on tidings of the decease of Mahomet, it burst forth with redoubled violence. At the centre of the peninsula, again,

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

His
courageous
attitude.

Insurrec-
tion
throughout
Arabia.



A.H. 11. Moseilama detached the powerful tribes around Yemama from their allegiance. To the north-east, nearer home, Toleiha, the third pretender, was now openly and dangerously hostile. From every quarter, in rapid succession, came news of spreading disaffection. Collectors of the tithe (an impost hateful to the Bedouin), Legates and Residents of Mahomet throughout the provinces,—all, in fact, who represented the authority of Islam, fled or were expelled. The faithful were massacred, some 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. Ansuru, hurrying back from Oman (whither he had been sent as ambassador 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 frequently 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.

Danger of
Medina.

As report after report came in of fresh defection, Abu Bekr could but instruct his scattered officers to hold together wherever able the loyal few, bravely trusting to tide over the crisis till Osama'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 in the near desert eastward were the first to assume a threatening attitude. The Beni Abs and Damyanian massed there in such numbers that



the land was straitened by them,' and they parted into two bodies, one at Rabadza, the other at 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 the 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 with you for the same.' 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 chief men still remaining with him,—Aly, Talha, and Zobeir. For the rest of the people 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 ^{not} attacked. Wherefore be vigilant and ready.'

And so it came to pass. They tarried but three days, ^{Attack repelled.} 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 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, anticipating renewed attack, called out every man capable of bearing arms, and spent the night in marshalling his force. Next



A.H. 11.

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.

Good effect
of the
victory.

The affair was small, but the effect was great. As failure would have been a disastrous, perhaps fatal, to Islam, so was victory the turning-point in its favour. The power of the Prophet's successor to protect his city, even without 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, to be sure, were few compared with the apostate hordes; but it was an augury of brighter days. The first to present 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.'

Saving of
Islam due
to Abu
Bekr.

Tradition delights to ascribe with pious gratitude the preservation of Islam to the aged Caliph's faith and fortitude. 'On the death of Mahomet,' so runs our record, 'it wanted but a little, and the Faithful had perished utterly. But the Lord strengthened the heart of Abu Bekr, and established 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 OSAMA. EXPEDITIONS SENT AGAINST
THE APOSTATE TRIBES THROUGHOUT ARABIA.

II A. H. 632 A. D.

OSAMA 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.

Osama's
return.
vi. II A.H.
Sept. 632
A.D.

Abu Bekr lost no time now in following up the advantage he had 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. Deeply moved at their fate, Abu Bekr took an oath that 'he would by the like deaths destroy as many of them as they had slain, or even more.'

Expedition
against
Beni Abs
and
Dzobian.

Leaving Osama in command of the city, and the army also 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

Abu Bekr
chastises
rebel tribes
at Rabadza.



A.H. 11. joined his army at Bozakha. Thereupon 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 eventually tendered their submission, and then found ample compensation in conquered lands beyond Arabia. Satisfied with this success, the Caliph returned to Medina.

Islam must
be reim-
posed on
all Arabia.

The army by this time was refitted. The tithes had begun to come in from the 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 had vanished, and the Arabs had relapsed into apostasy. And 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 death-bed. 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 word.

Eleven ex-
peditions
despatched
to different
parts of
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 chiefs. 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; Amru against the Beni Codhaa. And so 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.

Proclama-
tion to
apostates
to repent.
viii. 11 A.H.
Oct. 632
A.D.

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.



CSL

A.D. 632.] PROCLAMATION TO APOSTATE TRIBES. 17

Such as refused would be attacked, their fighting 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 Adzan, 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. A.H. 11.

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. Abu Bekr never again went forth to fight.

It is not quite so clear why he failed to appoint the more distinguished Companions to any chief command. The same was afterwards the policy of Omar, who would say that he refrained partly because the liability to render an account to him would have implied subjection inconsistent with their dignity, but chiefly also to strengthen his own hands by having them about him as advisers. 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 Ay and Zobeir, so prominent in the battles of Mahomet, should now altogether disappear from operations in the field. No chief Companion appointed to a command.



CHAPTER V.

RECOVERY OF ARABIA. CAMPAIGN OF KHALID.

11 A.H. 632-3 A.D.

The
struggle
of a year
for Arabia's
recovery.

IT was indeed time for decisive action. But a few weeks before, the entire Peninsula was submissive to the claims of Mahomet both as Prophet and as King. Now all was on a sudden changed; and the Arabs abjuring Islam, were fast relapsing into apostasy and tribal 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 alone which had been breathed by Mahomet into his faithful followers, that 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.

Details
meagre
and hazy.

A brief outline of the twelve-months' campaign will suffice; for tradition, up to the Prophet's death clear and copious, suddenly at this point, becomes curt, obscure, and disconnected. The scene of confusion prevailing throughout the land is presented to us in meagre, dim, and hazy outline. While Islam struggled for very life, its followers thought 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 operations 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.*

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 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 battle-fields 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 regard had he for loss of life, that he could 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. Fighting on the side of the Coreish, the defeat of the Prophet at Ohod was due mainly to his prowess. After his conversion, Khalid's was the only column which at the capture of Mecca disobeyed by shedding blood; and shortly after, the cruel massacre of an unoffending tribe brought down upon him stern reproof from Mahomet. On the field of Muta he gave signal promise of the 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.



A. H. 11.

Khalid
marches
against
Toleiha.

His column, by far the strongest of the eleven, was composed of the flower of the Refugees, as well as of the native Citizens. To divert the enemy's attention, Abu Bekr gave out its destination as for Kheibar; and, to strike the greater terror, that he 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.

Toleiha.

Bedouin
jealousy of
Mecca and
Medina.

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 doggrel verses and childish sayings are all that the contemptuous voice of tradition has transmitted of their teaching. That four pretenders (for Sajah the prophetess was also such) should have arisen in different parts of Arabia, and just then 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 at once suggested the claims of others, and contributed to their success. Jealousy of Mecca and Medina, moreover, and impatience of the trammels of Islam, were powerful incentives for Bedouins to cast in their lot with these pretenders. Thus the Beni Ghatafan, who aforetime were in league with the Beni Asad, had recently fallen out with them and lost some pasture-land. Oyeina, chief of the Ghatafan, now counselled a return to their old relations with the Beni Asad. 'Let us go back,' he said, 'to our ancient alliance which we had with them before Islam, 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, but Toleiha is alive.' So saying, Oyeina, with 700 of his warriors, joined the false prophet at Bozakha.



On first hearing of the heresy, Mahomet had sent an envoy to rally the faithful amongst the Beni Asad and crush the pretender. But the cause, gaining ground, was now supported by the neighbouring Beni Tai, as well as by the insurgents who flocked to Toleiha after their defeat at Rabadza; and so the envoy had to fly. The great family of Tai, however, was not wholly disloyal, for (as above mentioned) the legal dues had been already presented to Abū Bekr on behalf of some of them. Adi, their loyal chief, was therefore now sent forward by Khalid to his people, in the hope of detaching them from Toleiha's cause. He found them in no friendly humour. 'The Father of the foal!' they cried (for such was the sobriquet 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 that 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 they not only tendered submission, but joined him with 1000 horse, 'the flower of the land of Tai, and the bravest of them.'

A.H. 11.
Beni Tai
reclaimed.

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 Okkasha, who had been slain, and left by Toleiha to be trampled on 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, in his prophetic garb of hair, was on the field. Oyeina was fighting 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,' said Toleiha, a little after, 'a message now hath come.' 'And

Battle of
Bozakha.

¹ *Abu Bekr* means 'Father of the young camel'; so they called him by the nick-name *Ab ul Fasil*, 'Father of the foal.'



A. II. 11.

what is it?' enquired 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 forget! Ho, every man to his tent!' So they turned to go; and thereupon the army fled.

Toleiha's
sequel.

Toleiha escaped with his wife to Syria. The sequel is 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 Okkasha,' he said, '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 wars in Irac, where, in the great struggle with Persia, he became a hero of renown.

Repentant
tribes re-
ceived back
into Islam.

After the battle of Bozakha, the Beni Asad, fearing lest their families should fall into the conqueror's hand, 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 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. A. H. 11.

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

A few of the leading rebels were sent prisoners to Abu Bekr. One of them, Oyeina, the notable marauding chieftain, had often been the terror of Medina. When the city was besieged by the Coreish, he offered his assistance on certain humiliating terms, which the Prophet was near accepting; 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; I never was a believer until now.' The Caliph listened patiently to the appeal of the captives. He forgave them, and commanded their release¹. Oyeina pardoned.

¹ For Omm Siml's mother, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 361; and for Oyeina, *ibid.* p. 323, &c.



A. H. 11.

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

Khalid's
advance,
11 A. H.
(Nov. 2),
632 A. D.

Having subdued the tribes inhabiting the hills and desert north of Medina, Khalid bent his steps eastward, against the Beni Temim who occupied the plateau towards the Persian Gulf.

Beni
Temim.

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 the chiefs, 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 Malik ibn Noweira) in hostilities with the rest of the tribe, and eventually brought Khalid on the scene.

Sajah, the
prophetess,
invades
Central
Arabia.

It was no less than the advent of the prophetess Sajah, at the head of a great host from Mesopotamia. Descended from the Yerboa, her family had migrated north, and joined the 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 Yerboa, her own clan, and promised them the kingdom, should victory crown her arms. They joined her standard, with Malik 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 Malik, she was worsted. Then, having made terms and exchanged



prisoners, she bethought her of attacking the rival prophet, A. H. 11.
Moseilama, and so passed onwards to Yema'na.

As Khalid, flushed with victory, now approached, most Malik ibn
of the branches of the Temim hastened to tender their Noweira;
submission. At this critical juncture, the withdrawal of
Sajah left Malik ibn Noweira with the Yerboa tribe in a
position of some perplexity, and he was undecided how to
act. Conflicting views respecting Malik's loyalty divided the
Moslem camp. For some reason Khalid was bent on attack-
ing 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 Malik with such as choose to
follow me. I compel no man.' So he went forward and
left the malcontents behind. These, however, thought
better of it, and rejoined the army. Khalid marched straight
upon the headquarters of Malik, but found not a soul upon
the spot. It was utterly deserted.

In fact, Malik had resolved on submission, though his Brought a
proud spirit rebelled against presenting himself before prisoner to
Khalid.
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 neighbour-
hood 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, Malik was seized
with his wife and a party of his people. When challenged,
they had 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, Malik 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!'



A. H. 11.

Malik ibn
Noweira
put to
death.His widow
taken to
wife by
Khalid.Khalid
exonerated
by Abu
Bekr.

The captors differed in their evidence. Some averred that the prisoners had offered resistance. Others, with Abu Catada, 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 not 'to wrap,' but 'to *slay*;' and Dhīrar, commandant of the guard, taking it in that sense, put the prisoners, and with them Malik, 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 Malik 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 Catada roundly asserted the responsibility of Khalid. 'This is thy work!' he said; and, though chided for it, he persisted in the charge. He declared that never again would he serve under Khalid's banner. In company with Motammim, Malik'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 the same? That be far from me.' Nevertheless he summoned Khalid to answer the charge.

Khalid obeyed the call. On reaching Medina, he went straightway to the Great mosque, and entered it in his



rough costume, clothes rusty with his girded armour, and turban coiled rudely about the head with arrows stuck in it. As he passed along the courtyard towards the Caliph's chamber, Omar could not restrain himself, but seizing the arrows from his turban, broke them over his shoulders, and abused him as hypocrite, murderer, and adulterer. Khalid, not knowing but that Abu Bekr might 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 his victim's widow, and run counter to Arab sentiment in incontinently celebrating his nuptials on the very field of battle. As Khalid thus relieved again passed by, 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.

Omar, still unconvinced of Khalid's innocence, was of opinion that he should be withdrawn from his command. He persevered in pressing this view upon Abu Bekr, who would reply, 'Omar, hold thy peace! Refrain thy tongue from Khalid. He gave an order, and the order was misunderstood.' But Omar heeded not. He neither forgave nor forgot, as in the sequel we shall see.

A. H. 11.
But held
guilty by
Omar.

The scandal was the greater, because Malik 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.

Scandal of
the case.

The materials are too meagre for a conclusive judgment on the guilt or innocence of Khalid. But the 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 any rate the indictment of shameless indulgence and reckless disregard of the proprieties of life.



A. H. 11.

III. *Battle of Yemama.*

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

Khalid's
campaign
against
Moseilama.
End of
11 A. H.
Beginning
of 633 A. D.

BUT sterner work was in reserve for Khalid. In the centre of Arabia, some marches 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.

Moseilama.

The beginning of Moseilama's story belongs to the life of Mahomet¹. 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. Upon 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 thereafter sent Rajjal, a convert from the same tribe, to counteract the heresy and reclaim his brethren; but Rajjal, 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 poor travesty of Islam. Though strongly supported by his people both as their prophet and their ruler, he now felt that the meshes of Abu Bekr began to close around him. The Caliph's generals were steadily reducing the rebels along the coast of the Persian Gulf, and Khalid, whom he dreaded most, was not far behind. At this juncture came tidings that the Prophetess Sajah, 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 were so much

His marriage with
Sajah,
the prophetess.

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 490.



at one that the Prophet of Yemama took the Prophetess of Mesopotamia to wife, and celebrated their nuptials on the spot,—the dower being one half the revenues of Yemama. After remaining thus a few days, Sajah departed for her home in the north, and, like a meteor, disappeared 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 changed the scene; and Moseilama, marching out with a heavy force to meet him, pitched his camp at Acraba.

Ikrima and Shorahbil, the commanders originally despatched by Abu Bekr to quell the rising at Yemama, had both already suffered 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, he went forward to Oman, there to retrieve his tarnished reputation. Shorahbil, meanwhile, was directed to halt and await the approach of Khalid.

Ikrima and Shorahbil's reverse.

It was after this reverse that Khalid, on being summoned to Medina about the affair of Malik, 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.

Khalid sets out for Yemama.

While yet a march from Acraba, Khalid surprised a mounted body of the Beni Hanifa, under command of their chief Mojaa. They were returning from a raid against a neighbouring tribe, unaware of his approach. But they belonged to the enemy, and as such were put to the sword, excepting Mojaa, 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.

Mojaa taken prisoner.

Next day, the armies met upon the sandy plain of Acraba. The enemy rushed on with desperate bravery.

Battle of Yemama.



A. H. 11. 'Fight for your loved ones!' they cried, 'it is the day of jealousy and vengeance; if ye be worsted, your maidens 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,' Mojaa 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 roused. To stimulate rivalry between the Bedouins and city Arabs, 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, who led the men of Mecca, singled out Rajjal, and, reproaching his apostasy, despatched him forthwith. A furious south wind, charged with desert sand, blinded the Moslems and caused a momentary check. Upbraiding them for their slackness, Zeid cried out: 'Onward 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 flag-staff 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 exclaiming, '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 Citizens of Medina behind. Their commander, when they gave way, reproached them thus: 'Woe be to you



because of this backsliding. Verily, I am clear of ye, A.H. 11. even as I am clear of these, pointing to the apostate enemy, amongst whom he flung himself 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 in 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 Citizens of Medina 300, nearly 700 in all; while the slaughter amongst the Bedouins, though somewhat less, raised the gross number over 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.



A. H. 11.

Moseilama
among the
slain.

Moseilama was slain by Wahshi, the 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 Mojaa, 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 Mojaa, 'this was a nobler and a better man.' It was the brave Mohakkem, who fell covering the retreat, slain by the hand of the Caliph's son. Entering the 'Garden of Death,' among the heaps of mangled dead they stumbled on a body of insignificant mien. 'This is your man,' Mojaa said, as he turned it on its side; 'truly ye have done for him!' 'Yea,' replied Khalid, 'or rather it is he which hath done for you, that which he hath done.'

Truce with
the Beni
Hanifa.

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, Mojaa bethought him of a stratagem. He represented the forts and fastnesses as held in force throughout the country, in proof of which he had their battlements lined with the aged, the women, and even the children, in disguise. Persuaded thus that the inhabitants would fight to the last, and seeing his army wearied and anxious to visit their homes, Khalid concluded a truce, more favourable than he would but for Mojaa's artifice have given. When it came to light, Khalid was angry; but in the end excused him on the ground of patriotism, and 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!' said he; 'how is it that this impostor led you all astray?' 'Oh Caliph!' they answered, 'thou hast heard



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.

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 should be lost therefrom.’ At the death of his brother Zeid, who had shared with him 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 the 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.

Many
Com-
panions
slain.

Khalid again signalised his victory by wedding a captive maid upon the field. ‘Give me thy daughter to wife,’ he said to Mojaa, the prisoner who had so faithfully defended his bride in the hour of peril. ‘Wait,’ replied Mojaa; ‘be not so hasty. Thou wilt have thyself in the Caliph’s eyes, and me likewise.’ ‘Man, give me thy daughter!’ he repeated imperiously; so Mojaa 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 was Abu Bekr’s own; but the ‘Sword of the Lord’ could not be spared.

Khalid
takes
Mojaa’s
daughter
to wife.

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



CSL

CHAPTER VI.

APOSTASY AND REBELLION CRUSHED IN OTHER
PARTS OF THE PENINSULA.

11 A.H. 632-3 A.D.

Campaign
in East and
South of
Arabia,
11 A.H.
632-3 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 was not less stubborn; and the success, though in many quarters slow and at times even doubtful, was in the end complete.

Bahrein
taken by
Ala.

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 recognizing the suzerainty of the Prophet, received Ala as Resident at his Court. 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



A. H. II.

Miraculous
lake; and
drying up
of the sea.

Mothanna.

Oman.



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.

Mahra.

Hodzeifa was left behind as governor of Oman. Ikrima, 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 2,000 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 Mohammar in the campaign against Hadhramaut and Yemen. Before we must first take note of how things stood after the death of Mahomet nearer home in the west and south of the peninsula.

The
Hejaz and
Tihama.

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, all the way to Yemen, nothing was seen save turmoil and alarm. Troops of bandits, remnants of the false prom-



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 that the roads became again for a time unpassable, but now only from the offensive mass of carcases strewn upon them.

Peace in Yemen was not so easily restored. The 'Veiled Prophet,' Aswad, had been recently assassinated by conspirators in the interest of Mahomet¹. 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 his lieutenant. The Arab blood of Cays rebelled against serving under a foreigner, and he plotted to expel the whole body of Persian 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 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 means 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.

Yemen
after
Aswad's
death.

But more effectual help was now approaching. On one side was Mohajir. Appointed by the Prophet as his lieutenant in Hadhramaut, he had been detained sick at Medina, perhaps also by inability earlier to obtain a following. Last of the commanders to take the field, it was probably ten or twelve months after the Prophet's death that he marched south, and joined on the way by loyal tribes near the disturbed

Cays and
Amr
defeated.
Yemen
restored.
End of
11 A.H.
Spring,
633 A.D.

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 492.



A. H. 11. 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 Hadhranaut aside, and passed rapidly on towards Aden. Alarmed at the gathering storm, Cays and Amr ibn Madekerib 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 both; and his clemency was not abused, for we find the two gallant but 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 Hadhranaut.

Hadhranaut.
Ashath ibn
Cays

The government of the great southern province of Hadhranaut was held with difficulty, during the protracted absence of Mohajir, by 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 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 rescued the captives. He is the same Ashath who, when he tendered homage to Ibn Omeyyeh, betrothed to himself the sister of Abu Bekr¹. Now compromised, he went into active re-

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 476.



bellion, and roused the whole country against Ziad, who, A. H. 11. surrounded by the enemy, despatched an urgent summons for Mohajir to hasten to his deliverance.

By this time Mohajir and Ikrima, marching respectively subdued by Mohajir and Ikrima. 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 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 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 Ashath spared by Abu Bekr. pusillanimous wretch who had neither the power to lead, nor yet the courage to defend, his people; and threatened



A. H. 11. 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 with his sister. Ashath remained for a while in idleness at Medina, and the Caliph would say that one of the three 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.

Peace
universally
restored.

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.

Lady
who had
been be-
trothed to
Mahomet.

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 damsel¹.

Two song-
stresses
mutilated.

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 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.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 404. She was brought to the Prophet for her beauty, who, finding some defect, sent her home.



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 freebooter, 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.

Review.
Reign of
Islam re-
established
in Arabia.

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 Osama in the north, it was followed up by Khalid's brilliant achievements in the east and centre of Arabia. While in the 'Garden of Death' the flower of the faithful were deciding the fate of Islam then trembling in the balance, operations, as we have seen, 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 the last embers of apostasy.

The Arabs
sullen, till
roused by
war-cry
from with-
out.

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 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 Aus were impatient of the 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. Had nothing external supervened, he had soon shaken off the yoke of Islam, and Arabia would have returned again 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 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.

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 people¹. From first to last the summons was to Arabs and to none other. It is true that, some years before his death, Mahomet called on certain kings and princes to confess the catholic faith of Abraham; 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 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 the one Faith throughout Arabia.' The seed of a universal creed had indeed been sown; but that it ever germinated

Islam intended for Arabia;

17

¹ Coran xlii. v. 6; et passim.



A. H. 11. was due to circumstance rather than design. Even Omar, after his splendid conquests, continually 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 people, beyond which they should not pass.

but spread
at the call
to conquer.

Nevertheless, universal empire was altogether in accord with the 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 key-note 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 this that now turned the sullen temper of the Arab tribes into eager loyalty: for the brigand spirit of the Bedouin was brought thus into unison with the new-born spirit of Islam. The call to battle reverberated through the land, and was answered eagerly. The response began with the tribes in the north, the first reclaimed from apostasy. Later, in the second year of the Caliphate, the exodus spread to the south, and grew in magnitude year by year. At first the Caliph forbade that help should be taken from any that had backslidden. The privilege was reserved for such only as had remained steadfast in the faith. But, step by step, as new spheres opened out, and the cry ran from shore to shore for fresh levies to fill the 'Martyr' gaps, the ban was put aside, and all were bidden. Warrior after warrior, column after column, whole tribes in endless 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 'to every man a damsel or two;' and at the sight of the royal Fifth set forth in order 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.

Teeming
hosts go
forth.

Discredit
still attach-
ing to
apostasy.

It must not, however, be overlooked that though apostasy was thus condoned, and in the blaze of victory almost lost sight of, a certain discredit still clung to the 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 was welcome, in the ranks,—allowed even to head small parties of fifty or a hundred; but to the last, the post of honour was denied.

The Arabs, thus emerging from their desert-home, became the aristocracy of Islam. Conquered nations, even of higher civilisation, if they embraced the faith, fell into a lower caste. Arabians were the dominant class, and they alone, wheresoever they might go. It was only as 'clients,' or dependants, that 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. When, therefore, he succeeded 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 wives or children now set out in search, if haply they might find and claim them. Strange tales are told of these disconsolate journeys. But some of the women captive at Medina preferred remaining with their masters.

A. H. 11.
Arabs the nobility of the Moslem world.

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, throughout the East, by Turks and Persians. Such as had settled in the cities mingled with the people; the rest returned to their desert wilds, and with them departed the glory of



A. H. 11. the Caliphate. This, however, was not the case in the West; and so in Spain and Africa the prestige of Arab blood survived.

Medina. The domestic history of Medina is at this early period barren of incident. As supreme 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.

Pilgrimage. The presidency at the annual Pilgrimage is carefully recorded yearly by the annalists of Islam. The Caliph was too much engrossed with the commotion throughout Arabia to proceed himself to Mecca on this occasion, and the governor of the Holy City presided in his stead.

So ended the first year of the Caliphate.



CHAPTER VIII.

CAMPAIGN IN CHALDÆA.

12 A.H. 633 A.D.

CHALDÆA and Southern Syria belong properly to Arabia. The tribes inhabiting this region, partly heathen, but chiefly in name at least Christian, formed an integral part of the Arab race, and as such fell within the immediate scope of the new dispensation. When these came into collision with the Moslem columns on the frontier, they were eventually 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.

It is important, especially in the early part of this history, to bear in mind that the only sources available to the student are Arabian. As for the West, Byzantine annals utterly disappear in the impending cataclysm; and it is many long years before any help whatever is available from that quarter. On the other side, the Persian empire was 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. Thus, both for East and West, we are entirely dependent on Arab tradition, and this, at the first, singularly brief and fragmentary; while the authorities being altogether one-sided, we are left, as best we can, to draw a narrative just and impartial to all concerned.

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

History dependent on purely Arabian sources.