

A.H. 86-
96.

Carrying all before him, he found Nezak strongly posted in Khulm, at the entrance of a pass guarded by a fort. Bribing a deserter, he was shown a route to turn the pass, and so fell upon the rear of the enemy, who effected escape across the valley of Ferghana. Here Nezak was again taken in a defile guarded on one hand by Coteiba and on the other by his brother. Thus hemmed in for months, he suffered the extremity of want. But the season again forcing a return to winter quarters, Coteiba, unwilling to leave Nezak still abroad, beguiled him into his camp with promise of self-conduct. Reporting the capture to Hajjaj, he asked for leave to put him to death. After a long delay permission came; and so, with 700 of his followers¹, Nezak was slain and his head sent to Hajjaj. The Prince of Tokharistan was now released, and with his retinue sent to Damascus, where he was kept till Welid's decease. The perfidy of Coteiba towards Nezak was so gross, that the Moslem public, though not unused to guile in war, was scandalized, and upbraided him for it. Another painful, but less inexcusable, incident occurred about the same time. On Nezak's defeat, the king of Juzajân, a member of the coalition, sought terms of peace, which being granted, Coteiba invited him to his camp, sending one Habib as a hostage, and taking hostages in return. The king died while in Coteiba's camp; and his subjects, suspecting foul play, put Habib to death; whereupon Coteiba retaliated by slaying the native hostages to a man. Having pushed his conquests still further into Soghdiana², Coteiba returned by Bokhara to Merve. Next year he proceeded to Sejestan against Ratbil, but was set free by the conclusion of peace with that potentate.

92 A.H.

In 93 A.H. Coteiba again crossed the Oxus, and marched

¹ Some traditions say 12,000; but these reports must be taken *cum grano*. The popular voice ran strongly against Coteiba's treachery, and would be inclined to exaggerate.

² The King of Shoman had expelled the Moslem Resident, thinking his fortress impregnable. It was stormed by catapults, which must have been very effective, as the missives entered the king's chamber. Kish and Nusaf were overrun; Faryâb offering opposition, was ravaged and set on fire, so that it was called 'the burned land.' The males were all put to death, and the women taken captive.



on Khowarizm, the Shah having offered him 10,000 cattle if he would deliver him from a rebellious brother. The rebels were routed, and 4000 prisoners put to death. The rebellious brother and his followers were made over to the Shah, who slew them and conferred their property on Coteiba. He was now recalled by the news that Samarcand had thrown off the Moslem yoke. Making a rapid descent upon it, Coteiba thus in a speech addressed his troops:—‘The wretched Soghdians are verily fallen into our hands; they have broken their treaty with us, as ye have heard; and truly the Lord will deliver Khowarizm and Soghd into our hands, even as He delivered the Beni Coreitza and Nadhir into the hands of the Prophet.’¹ The city held out long, and engines had to be brought up to batter the walls. Fearing an assault, the king sued for terms. Coteiba agreed to retire on a heavy tribute and quota of horsemen; but first he must enter, build a mosque, and inaugurate religious service there; after that he would evacuate the place. He entered. The fire-temples were destroyed and the images burned, but the city was not given up². Coteiba’s repeated perfidy was much spoken against; and some Syrian is said to have prophesied, but too truly, that the Caliphate would yet pay the penalty, and Damascus be ravaged by these wild Turcomans. Meantime the conqueror’s hand fell heavily on Samarcand. Moslem families brought from Khorasan in great numbers were settled there; the natives were all disarmed, and none dared walk abroad at night on pain of death.

A.H. 86-96.
Campaign against Samarcand, 93 A.H.

During the next two or three years, aided by large contingents of horse from the tribes he had subdued (the favourite policy in the East of using subject peoples to rivet their own chain³), Coteiba pushed his conquests forward, taking Khojend, Shush, and other cities of Ferghana, till

Coteiba’s last campaign on the borders of China, 94-96 A.H.

¹ Two Jewish tribes destroyed at Medina, *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 292, 329.

² One of the idols was held so sacred that anyone who touched it would immediately die. Coteiba seized a torch, and with a loud Takbir set it on fire; the golden nails in it weighed 50,000 mithcals. A granddaughter of Yezdegird, taken captive here, was sent to Damascus, and taken into the royal harem. Welid had a daughter by her.

³ In 95 A.H. 20,000 native levies are said to have followed Coteiba from Bokhara, Kish, Nusaf, and Khewarizm.



A.H. 86-96. he reached Kashgar and the confines of China. A curious tale is told of an interview with 'the King of China,'—probably a border Mandarin,—who, to release Coteiba from an oath that he would take possession of the land, sent him a load of Chinese soil to trample on, a bag of Chinese coin by way of tribute, and four royal youths on whom to imprint his seal. Coteiba had now reached the limit of his conquests. While on this campaign he received tidings of the Caliph's death : suddenly the scene is changed, and his future all overcast.

Campaign
of Ibn
Casim on
the Indus,
89-96 A.H.
714-717
A.D.

Like Coteiba in Central Asia, Mohammed ibn Casim, cousin of Hajjaj and governor of Mekran, was the first great conqueror on the Indian border. With a well-appointed army of 6000 men, he advanced on Sind and laid siege to its capital, Deibul. A catapult named *the Bride*, worked by 500 men, laid waste the city, and a stone shot from it overthrew the pinnacle of the famous temple of Budd, from which flaunted its great red flag. The omen struck terror into the enemy ; the king fled, and Ibn Casim, leaving a garrison in the city, pursued him across the Indus, where, surrounded by his elephants, he was slain in a severe engagement. His wife and maidens, rather than suffer dishonour, set fire to their palace, and were consumed with all their treasure. Then the conqueror took Brahminabad by storm¹, and having made terms with Rôr, crossed the Biyas and invested Multan, which after a prolonged siege, the water having failed, surrendered at discretion. The fighting men were put to the sword, and their families, with the crowd of attendants on the shrine of Budd, made captive. Multan was then a centre of pilgrimage, people coming from all quarters to worship the idol. It was 'the Gateway of India and the House of gold.' The spoil was incredible, and double the whole cost of the expedition, which was estimated by Hajjaj at 60,000,000 pieces. While Ibn Casim rested here, enjoying the fruits of his splendid conquests, tidings of Welid's decease arrested his farther progress eastward. He was recalled to Irac, where, with certain

Multan
taken.

¹ Two parasangs from the later Mansûra 'the Victorious.' Spoken of as in the hilly country of Belochistan.



other adherents of Hajjaj, he was put to the torture and died. A.H. 86-96.

With our historian we may here anticipate a little the Moslem rule in India. Habib, one of Mohallab's family (on which now shone the sun of courtly favour) governor of Sind, fixed his court at Rôr, and allowed the princes displaced by Ibn Casim to return, as protected, to their several states. The devout Omar II summoned them to embrace Islam, on which they received Arabian names. In the days of Hisham, Joneid pushed the Moslem bounds still further east. But the prestige of Islam again waned for a time. Most of the princes relapsed into heathenism, and to hold them in check, the fortified camp Mahfuza (the *Protected*) was founded, from which expeditions, both naval and military, were sent forth. Things, however, says Ibn al Athir, 'remained in India on a weak and feeble footing until the blessed accession of the Abbassides.'

Progress of
Moslem
arms in
India.
100-135
A.H.
718-742
A.D.

It should be noted here that in India there was an altogether new departure in the treatment of the subject races. Idolatry was tolerated. Temples were left standing, and their worship not disallowed. By divine letter, Jews and Christians might continue to profess their faith under Moslem rule; and even Parsees were, by a strained interpretation, brought within the exemption¹, as followers of the 'Book' of Zoroaster. But idolaters were to be pursued to the bitter end, and utterly rooted out. Such, the plain teaching of the Coran, had been the habitual policy hitherto;—the policy still, as we have seen, pursued in Central Asia. But in India a new leaf was turned. As Weil remarks,—'It no longer was a Holy war,—with the view, that is to say, of the conversion of the heathen. That object was now dropped. Side by side with Allah, idols might be worshipped, if only tribute were duly paid.' And so, even under Mahometan rule, India remained largely a pagan land.

Heathen-
ism and
idolatry
tolerated
in India.

Throughout this reign Moslem armies, commanded generally by leaders of the royal blood, made yearly inroads into Armenia and Asia Minor, which the Greeks, from re-

Progress in
Armenia
and Asia
Minor.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, p. 469.



A.H. 86-
96.

verses nearer home, were little able to withstand. In the year 89 a campaign against the Turks on the Caspian was undertaken with notable success. But all other conquests of this reign fade before that of Spain. It is a conquest which, though demanding a separate chapter for itself, we must be content to treat in briefest outline.

Campaign
of Musa
in Western
Africa,
89 A.H.
708 A.D.

Musa was, in 59 A. H., appointed governor of the Mediterranean coast to the west of Egypt, by Abd al Aziz, brother of the Caliph and governor of Egypt, of which 'Africa'¹ was a dependency. His predecessor had already retrieved the disasters that successively befel the Moslem army at Cairowan : and Musa having consolidated his power in the older districts, now, with the aid of his two sons, pushed the Moslem conquests to the farthest west. In successive engagements at Sus and Tlemsen, he completely overthrew the Berbers, took incredible multitudes prisoners², and at last brought the native population, even to the bounds of Morocco, under his authority. Opposition ended, 'Readers of the Coran' were appointed to instruct the people in the faith³. Naval expeditions were also set on foot, and successful descents made on Majorca and Sardinia⁴. Having established his freedman Taric at Tangier, as lieutenant over the newly conquered districts in the west, Musa returned to his head-quarters at Cairowan.

Musa's
designs on
Spain,
90 A.H.
709 A.D.

The kingdom of Spain was at this period ruled by Roderic, a usurper, to whom Count Julian, ruler of the coast lying over against Tangier, was bitterly opposed⁵.

¹ 'Africa' was the name for the Moslem conquests stretching westward from Egypt to the Atlantic.

² The Fifth of the captives, the share of the State, amounted to 60,000 ;—the entire number being thus 300,000—the greatest, our historian adds, ever known. But the traditions regarding Musa are liable to a touch of romance.

³ A few years further on we are told that by 100 A.H. 'the whole of the Berbers were converted to Islam.'

⁴ A long account is given of the capture of its harbour, 92 A.H.; of the recovery of treasure cast into the sea, and secreted in the roof of the great church; and of the riches of the spoil. Other descents are mentioned 135 and 323 A.H., and finally in 400, when, however, the Moslem fleet of 120 ships was discomfited; after which no attempts were made on the island.

⁵ The daughters of the Spanish nobles, we are told, used to be sent to Court to be educated; and Roderic had taken advantage of this to dishonour Julian's daughter, which was the cause of this bitterness.



Ceuta, on the African side, was part of Julian's domain. It occurred to him that with the help of the invaders from the East, he might now drive the usurper from the throne. He therefore entered into friendly relations with Musa, and at an interview explained the ease with which the narrow strait might be crossed; and Musa, nothing loth, was lured by the inviting prospect of a campaign in Spain. The Caliph, fearing the sea, at the first hesitated; but when it was explained how close was the opposite shore, he gave consent. Next year, by way of trial, Musa sent a few hundred men in four ships under command of Tarif, who made an easy descent on the near coast at a place that still bears his name, and returned with a spoil so rich that the army longed to repeat the attack upon a larger scale. Musa, thus emboldened, placed a force of 7000 men, chiefly Berbers and freedmen, with some Arabs, at the disposal of Taric, who, crossing the straits, took possession of the fortress called after him, Gibraltar¹. From thence he ravaged the adjacent country of Algezira², when Roderic, receiving tidings of the descent, hastened to repel the invader. Taric, apprized of this through Julian and his followers, appealed for additional troops to Musa, who sent him 5000 Arabs. Thus reinforced, Taric was able now, with 12,000 men, to hold his ground against the great army of Roderic. They met on the banks of the Guadalete, to the north of Medina Sidonia. For a week the issue was uncertain. But there was treachery in the Spanish camp. The numerous party opposed to Roderic, buoyed with the hope that the Arabs, satiated with spoil, would soon recross the sea, and leave the throne to its proper claimant, fought feebly, and at last gave way. The Spanish force was routed, and Roderic in his flight drowned. But the spoil had not the effect expected. Instead of retiring, the Arabs, flushed with victory, stormed Ecija; and, daily swelled by fresh contingents scenting from afar a rich reward, spread themselves over the land. Malaga and Granada were captured and the province overrun. The people everywhere fled to the hills and fortresses, vainly fancied impregnable; and all the

A.H. 86-
96.
90 A.H.

Descent
of Tarif,
x. 91 A.H.
July,
710 A.D.

and of
Taric,
vii. 92 A.H.
April,
711 A.D.

His
victories.
End of
ix. 92 A.H.

¹ Jebel-Taric, the hill of Taric.

² Arabic for *peninsula*.



A.H. 86-
96.

Toledo
taken.

Table of
Solomon,
93 A.H.

Descent
of Musa,
ix. 93 A.H.
June,
712 A.D.

Merida,
94 A.H.

quicker, at the fearful report spread by the conquerors that they fed on human flesh. Leaving Cordova besieged by one of his generals, Taric, guided still by Julian, hastened to Toledo, the capital, which to his astonishment he found deserted by all but Jews. These, delivered from Christian thralldom, now threw in their lot with the invaders (how different from the days of Mahomet!), and were placed in charge of cities which the conquerors found themselves too few to occupy. The inhabitants had all fled in terror, some as far even as Galicia. But it was by no means the policy of the Arabs to make the land a desert. And so the people were gradually tempted back by promise of security, toleration for their religion if only preached unostentatiously, and the establishment of Christian courts. In a city beyond the hills, carried there perhaps for safety, a relic beyond all value fell into Taric's hands, the famous *Table of Solomon*, set with pearls and rubies and all manner of precious stones, and having 360 feet. With this priceless jewel, Taric returned to Toledo, having within the short space of two years reduced the greater part of Spain, and put every enemy to flight that dared to meet him in the field.

The splendid exploits of his lieutenant made Musa envious. To rival his success, he set out himself with a large force and many warriors of note, and landed in Spain, 93 A.H. Guided in a course which Julian promised him would eclipse the glory of Taric, he struck out a new line of victory, stormed Sidonia, Carmona, and the ancient capital Seville. Merida was laid siege to, and the walls battered by engines. It resisted many months, and the garrison fought with desperate bravery. A spot, our historian tells us, was still in his day called the 'Martyrs' bastion,' where a column of Moslems was cut to pieces by a party issuing from a hole beneath the wall. At last it fell, and Musa, on the way to Toledo, met Taric at Talavera. He received him angrily, struck him on the head with his whip, and demanded an account of the booty. Friendly relations restored, the famous table was given up to Musa¹.

¹ One of the feet was wanting, supplied by a golden substitute. More of this in note below.



The generals then separated, Taric for Saragossa, and A.H. 86-96. Musa for Salamanca and Astorga. Saragossa held out long, and it was not till Musa had rejoined his lieutenant Saragossa. there that by their united efforts it was stormed. Musa then continued his victorious progress to the extreme north-east of Spain, and occupying Tarragona and Barcelona, reached as far even as to Gerona, on the border of France. There, tradition says, he was confronted by an image with the words engraved '*Sons of Ismail, hitherto and no further—Return!*' and so he turned back¹. Taric, taking a more southerly course, overran the entire coast, reducing Tortosan on the Ebro, Valencia, and other leading cities on his way.

The tidings of Musa's ill-treatment of Taric had meanwhile reached the Caliph, who, displeased therewith, and not unlikely jealous of his independent attitude, sent a messenger to recall the viceroy to Damascus. The summons met him on a new campaign to the West. Bidding the messenger fall into his train, Musa continued his progress of victory and devastation, till entering Galicia, he came in sight of the blue waves of the northern sea². A second messenger followed him to Lugo, with a sterner and immediate mandate. He was turned out of the camp by the imperious conqueror; who now, however, felt that the summons could no longer be disobeyed. Carrying Taric therefore with him, he turned his face southward: and so marching through the scenes of their unparalleled achievement, the two conquerors made their way back to the straits of Gibraltar. Before quitting Spain, Musa placed his son Abd al Aziz at the head of the government. Two other sons were also put in command, the one at

Musa recalled,
95 A.H.
713 A.D.

¹ The tradition is curiously proleptic, and shows how fable often enters our annals. The words given are: '*Sons of Ismael! here is your limit. Go back! And if ye ask why, I tell you, that otherwise ye shall return to discord among yourselves, so that ye shall slay and behead one another.*'

² 'Carrying the messenger with him he passed on to new parts, slaying and taking captive, pulling down churches and breaking up their bells, till he reached the high lands overlooking the green ocean. When the second messenger came in the city of Lugo, he seized the reins of his mule and marched him out of the camp,' &c.



A.H. 88-96. — Cairowan, the other over Western Africa. Perhaps no family at the moment ever enjoyed a wider fame or power more uncontrolled.

Musa's
fall,
96 A.H.
714 A.D.

The marvellous achievements of Musa—with but few parallels in history,—were sufficient to have disturbed the equilibrium of any mind. But this will hardly excuse the indiscretion which led the recalled conqueror to make his return through Africa a royal and triumphal progress, and thus justify the suspicions which had no doubt already marked him out at Court as a subject of danger. He carried with him countless store of rare and precious things, laden on endless lines of wagons and camels. A multitude of virgins of noble birth with their attendant maidens, and a vast crowd of Gothic captives in their strange attire, following in his train, attracted the gaze of the astonished people as he passed along¹. At Cairo he stayed some time, and distributed rich marks of favour among his friends, specially the family of his patron Abd al Aziz, the late governor of Egypt, to whom he owed his rise. The progress was thus so slow that he did not reach Damascus till after the death of Welid. The new Caliph, Soleiman, received him coldly, deposed him from all his commands, cast him into prison, and laid such heavy demands upon him, that he was reduced to poverty, and when released, forced to beg from his friends the means of living. To add to his misfortune, his son Abd al Aziz, whom he had left to succeed him in Spain, was assassinated, as is supposed, by secret orders from Damascus; and the heartless Soleiman sent his head to the father with an insulting message:—‘a grievous error on the Caliph’s part,’ justly adds the Arabian annalist. Taric also must have retired into private life, for we hear no more of him. The fall of both resembles that of Khalid,—an ungrateful end for the three great conquerors of their age².

Musa’s son
murdered,
97 A.H.
715 A.D.

¹ ‘Thirty thousand virgins with their attendant maidens’: but the whole story of Musa is cast in an extravagant style.

² Another, but more romantic, and less likely, narrative is as follows:—

Musa reached Damascus while Welid was yet alive (which, if we look only to the dates, is not improbable). He vaunted himself at court, in depreciation of Taric, as the conqueror of Spain; and among the spoils belonging to him—



The era of Welid was glorious both at home and abroad. There is no other reign, not excepting even that of Omar, in which Islam so spread abroad and was consolidated. We may safely accept the judgment of the impartial Weil, who tells us that, 'although Mussulman historians, because of his supporting Hajjaj, call Welid a tyrant, he is in our eyes the greatest, and in every respect the most powerful and illustrious, ruler amongst all the Commanders of the Faithful.' From the borders of China and the banks of the Indus to the Atlantic, his word was law. In his reign culture and the arts began to flourish. He enlarged and beautified the Mosques of Medina and Jerusalem, and founded one at Damascus, which still exists. He established schools and hospitals, and made provision for the aged, blind, and lame. He frequently visited the markets; and so encouraged manufacture and design, that people began to take an interest in their advancement. Roads, with wells at convenient stations, were made throughout the kingdom, and the comfort of travellers, notably of pilgrims to the Holy places, specially cared for. More perhaps than any other Caliph, he knew how to hold the balance between the Arabian tribal rivalries, and ruled at large with a powerful hand. If Hajjaj be an exception, Welid,

A.H. 86-96.
Grandeur
of Welid's
reign.

self and as such presented to the Caliph, was 'Solomon's table.' Taric upon this claimed that the prize was his, which Musa denied. 'Ask him then,' said Taric, 'what has become of the lost foot' (see former note). Musa could not tell; whereupon Taric (who had kept it by him for just such an occasion) produced the wanting piece. And so Welid was satisfied that Musa had really treated Taric badly.

A curious account is also given of the death of Abd al Aziz, Musa's son. Himself an excellent man, he fell under the influence of Roderic's widow, who persuaded him to adopt the courtly habits of the country. His followers being slow to make courtly obeisance (as resembling prostration at prayer), she had a low threshold made, through which all had to stoop as they approached the throne. She also made him wear Roderic's jewelled crown. His followers on this conspired to slay him as a renegade 97 A.H. Others hold that Soleiman, probably fearing that Abd al Aziz might assume regal and independent power, sent orders for his death at the time his father came to grief at court, and that his enemies fell upon him as he was praying in his chamber with the Coran before him. 'When the head was sent to his father with the Caliph's cruel question, "Dost thou recognize it?" he exclaimed,—"Welcome to thy martyrdom, my son; for truly they did slay thee in thy piety and uprightness." And it was counted as one of Soleiman's chief misdeeds.'



A.H. 86-96. — at the least, held him in better check than did his predecessor. Looking at it from first to last, we shall not find in the annals of the whole Caliphate a more glorious reign than that of Welid.

Welid mild
and con-
descending.

As a proof of his mildness and consideration, it is told of him that when in 91 A.H., on pilgrimage, he visited Medina and made large presents to the people, the court of the Mosque was cleared of worshippers, that he might in company with Omar inspect at leisure the improvements he had made. One old man alone would neither rise up nor salute the Caliph. Omar tried hard to divert the attention of his cousin from the uncourtly worshipper; but Welid saw, and at once recognized him. 'How art thou, Said?' said the Caliph. Without the slightest movement or salutation, the aged man replied:—'Very well, I am thankful to say, and how doth the Commander of the Faithful?'—'The last of his race!' said Welid, in admiration of the fast vanishing homeliness and simplicity which others might have rebuked as uncourtly rudeness.

Death of
Welid,
vi. 96 A.H.
Feb.,
715 A.D.

It has been already noticed that Welid wished to displace his brother Soleiman from being Heir Apparent in favour of his own son. He died before the change could be accomplished: but the effect was, not the less, to create an intense feeling of resentment in the mind of Soleiman, especially towards Coteiba and the adherents of Hajjaj, both of whom had encouraged Welid in his design.

Welid was forty-five at his death, and he had reigned nearly ten years.



CHAPTER LII.

SOLEIMAN.

96-99 A.H. 715-17 A.D.

SOLEIMAN succeeded at once to the throne. It went as a saying at Damascus that Welid's turn was for art; Soleiman, 96 A.H. 715 A.D. Sôleiman's for the harem and good living; Omar's (the next to follow) for devotion. The fashion of the Court changed accordingly. With the first, the talk was of culture; with the second, of slave-girls, marriage, and divorce; with the third, of austerity, and recitation of the Coran over night. The prowess of the empire waned under Soleiman. He was called, indeed, the Key of blessing,—but only because he nominated Omar for his successor.

He weakened the administration of Spain by conniving at,—if indeed he did not actually order,—the murder of Abd al Aziz, the able follower of his father Musa; the Christians, profiting by the neglect that followed, rose upon their conquerors in Asturias, and the mountainous region in the north. Declension in Spain and the East. Ibn Casim, the successful invader of India, recalled as a follower of the hated Hajjaj, came to an evil end. And under one of the sons of Mohallab (now the favoured house) that succeeded, the progress of Islam in the far East slackened, and its prestige declined.

With Coteiba, the death of Welid caused the utmost consternation. Appointed by Hajjaj, he well knew the bitterness of Soleiman towards all his adherents, and the danger in which they stood from the enmity of Yezid, the favourite of the day. Rebellion and end of Coteiba. In an evil hour, he set up for



A.H. 86-96. — at the least, held him in better check than did his predecessor. Looking at it from first to last, we shall not find in the annals of the whole Caliphate a more glorious reign than that of Welid.

Welid mild and con-
descending. As a proof of his mildness and consideration, it is told of him that when in 91 A.H., on pilgrimage, he visited Medina and made large presents to the people, the court of the Mosque was cleared of worshippers, that he might in company with Omar inspect at leisure the improvements he had made. One old man alone would neither rise up nor salute the Caliph. Omar tried hard to divert the attention of his cousin from the uncourtly worshipper; but Welid saw, and at once recognized him. 'How art thou, Said?' said the Caliph. Without the slightest movement or salutation, the aged man replied:—'Very well, I am thankful to say, and how doth the Commander of the Faithful?'—'The last of his race!' said Welid, in admiration of the fast vanishing homeliness and simplicity which others might have rebuked as uncourtly rudeness.

Death of
Welid,
vi. 96 A.H.
Feb.,
715 A.D. It has been already noticed that Welid wished to displace his brother Soleiman from being Heir Apparent in favour of his own son. He died before the change could be accomplished: but the effect was, not the less, to create an intense feeling of resentment in the mind of Soleiman, especially towards Coteiba and the adherents of Hajjaj, both of whom had encouraged Welid in his design.

Welid was forty-five at his death, and he had reigned nearly ten years.



CHAPTER LII.

SOLEIMAN.

96-99 A.H. 715-17 A.D.

SOLEIMAN succeeded at once to the throne. It went as a saying at Damascus that Welid's turn was for art; Söleiman's for the harem and good living; Omar's (the next to follow) for devotion. The fashion of the Court changed accordingly. With the first, the talk was of culture; with the second, of slave-girls, marriage, and divorce; with the third, of austerity, and recitation of the Coran over night. The prowess of the empire waned under Soleiman. He was called, indeed, the Key of blessing,—but only because he nominated Omar for his successor.

He weakened the administration of Spain by conniving at,—if indeed he did not actually order,—the murder of Abd al Aziz, the able follower of his father Musa; the Christians, profiting by the neglect that followed, rose upon their conquerors in Asturias, and the mountainous region in the north. Ibn Casim, the successful invader of India, recalled as a follower of the hated Hajjaj, came to an evil end. And under one of the sons of Mohallab (now the favoured house) that succeeded, the progress of Islam in the far East slackened, and its prestige declined.

With Coteiba, the death of Welid caused the utmost consternation. Appointed by Hajjaj, he well knew the bitterness of Soleiman towards all his adherents, and the danger in which they stood from the enmity of Yezid, the favourite of the day. In an evil hour, he set up for



A.H. 96-
99.
—

himself, and called on the army to join him against the government. But miscounting his influence, he fatally overshot the mark. The troops did not respond. The Yemen faction was hostile, and rallied under an opposing banner. Fighting thus with but a scanty following, he was slain, and his head, with those of eleven of his brethren, sent a welcome offering to the Caliph. And so the conqueror of Bokhara, Samarcand and Kashgar came to an untimely and dishonoured end. It was said of him by a Turk, *Coteiba at the world's end was more terrible to us, than Yezid at our very door.* He had been one of the greatest heroes of Islam, were not his name stained by treachery and bloodshed, and his career cut short by a heedless rebellion.

Yezid
succeeds
in Irac,
96 A.H.

and Kho-
rasan,
97 A.H.

Yezid, the Caliph's minion, was at first appointed to Irac, but unwilling to incur unpopularity in collecting the severe assessments of Hajjaj, which barely sufficed for the now lavish expenditure at Damascus, he obtained the nomination of a financial officer to undertake the ungrateful task. Finding, however, the exchequer thus closed against his own extravagance, he prevailed on the Caliph, by the vain boast that his conquests would cast Coteiba's into the shade, to give him Khorasan. Arriving at Merve nearly a year after the outbreak of Coteiba, he felt bound to make good his boast; and casting aside his luxuries, took the lead of the army, now 100,000 strong; of whom some 60,000 were Arabs. His efforts were directed to the tract lying on the south-eastern recess of the Caspian Sea. There Jorjan and Tabaristan had, as we have seen, been overrun by Said ibn al Aas so long ago as the reign of Othman. But though tributary in name, the native rulers, conscious of their strength, were ever withholding payment of their dues, and no one dared to set foot within that inaccessible and rebellious region. This region formed a barrier to communication between Irac and Merve, and a southern circuit had therefore to be made by troops and travellers for Central Asia. It was therefore an important object to reduce the intervening space. Starting from Merve, Yezid first attacked Jorjan; and



its defenders were driven back into their defiles, where after suffering much hardship they came to terms. Here Yezid gave first proof that he might vie with Coteiba in cruelty as well as conquest; for although all who had made terms were spared, the country was ravaged, innumerable captives taken, and multitudes slain in cold blood¹. Leaving 4000 men in Jorjan, he marched south-west to Tabaristan, where the prince, notwithstanding help from Gilan and Deilem, was discomfited and driven into the hills. Thither the Moslems following were drawn within dangerous defiles, whence severely punished, they were pursued again into the plain. This reverse encouraged the men of Jorjan, breaking their treaty, to fall upon the garrison, and slay them to a man. Alarmed at his rear being thus cut off from Merve, Yezid made peace with Tabaristan; and, turning back to Jorjan, swore a great oath (similar to that of Khalid) that he would not stay his sword till he had eaten bread of corn ground by the blood of his enemies. The city, strongly planted on an eminence, held out for seven months, and then fell into the hands of the inhuman conqueror, who butchering thousands of his victims in an adjoining valley, turned the stream upon a mill that overlooked the ghastly scene, and so fulfilled his oath. He also lined the approaches to the city on the right hand and on the left, for miles, with impaled bodies². Yezid returning to Merve, reported his success to the Caliph, and with a vain-glorious boast magnified the booty into an enormous sum, such as would have yielded four million pieces for the Fifth³.

A.H. 96-99.
Yezid's campaign in Jorjan and Tabaristan, 98 A.H. 716 A.D.

His cruelty in Jorjan.

To counterbalance the victories in Central Asia, Soleiman had the mortification of finding the vast preparations made to storm Constantinople useless. Shortly before his death, Welid had fitted out a fleet to attack the Byzantine capital by sea, while columns from Armenia and Asia Minor co-

Unsuccessful attack on Constantinople, 96-98 A.H. 714-716 A.D.

¹ Tradition places the number at 14,000, which seems hardly credible.

² Tradition varies as to the numbers from 12,000 to 40,000; but here again the statement seems incredible.

³ Another tradition says six millions. His secretary warned him of the danger of making so extravagant an estimate, a danger which, as we shall see, came true.



A.H. 96-

99.

operated by land. Everything appeared to favour the project. Rebellion at home had paralysed the Greek power, while the disloyalty of Leo the Isaurian, who joined hands with Maslama son of Abd al Melik, the Moslem leader, afforded the best prospect of success. Unexpectedly, Leo himself was raised to the throne, and threw the unnatural alliance over. The Moslem troops on both sides of the Bosphorus were defeated, and suffered such hardship from hunger, frost, and pestilence, that after lying before Constantinople for a year, the fleet was forced to retire, and the invasion came to a disastrous and inglorious end.

98 A.H.

Death of
Soleiman,
ii. 99 A.H.
Sept.,
717 A.D.

Soleiman died early in 99 A.H., at Dabic, in the north, whither he had gone to watch the Byzantine struggle. A son, nominated his successor, died before him. On his death-bed the Caliph wished to appoint another son, a minor; but was persuaded instead, to name Omar, son of his father's brother Abd al Aziz so long the governor of Egypt, and after him his brother Yezid to succeed. For the nomination of Omar, the memory of Soleiman is blessed, though he himself receives but little other praise. The following incident illustrates his heartless cruelty, and how the manners of his court did but follow suit. On pilgrimage to Mecca, he halted at Medina, where a convoy of 400 Greek captives were brought into his camp. Doomed to death, they were ranged before the royal assembly for the courtiers and poets in the Caliph's train, by way of sport, to try their hands upon. One after another, these brought their swords down upon the neck of a wretched captive, and at each ringing stroke, the head of a victim rolled off. The turn came to Farazdac, the poet, who was handed a sword the worse for wear. Once and again the blow failed of its effect, whereat the Caliph and those around him jeered. Upbraided thus for his awkwardness, Farazdac cast the sword away, and extemporized some couplets which turned the laugh aside¹.

¹ The poetry is indubitable evidence of the cruel tale being founded on fact. The point of it lies in this, that a somewhat corresponding failure had once been experienced by a chief of the Beni Abs. These were the maternal



Soleiman was not only cruel but dissolute and jealous ; A.H. 96-
and as such was used to guard his harem by a watch of ^{99.} _____
eunuchs. Handsome in mien and feature, it is related of Soleiman
him that at Dabiq, arrayed in a green robe and turban, ^{cruel and} _____
he looked at himself in the mirror, and said, 'Am I not ^{dissolute.} _____
the kingly youth?' A slave-girl stood admiring by ;
'What thinkest thou?' he said to her. 'I was thinking,'
she sang in plaintive verse, 'that thou art the best of joys,
if thou wouldest but remain ; yet for mankind there is no
continuing here. No blemish can I see in thee that is
in other men, excepting only that thou, like them, must
pass away.' And he died within the week,—having reigned
two years and a half.

relatives of the Caliph, and it was they who, joining their master, exposed
Farazdac to the ridicule of the company ; and so he adroitly turned the
laugh against them in his stinging verses, which ridiculed the failure of their
own chief.

The first captive brought up, a Patrician, was assigned as a mark of honour
to a great-grandson of Aly, to behead. The poet Jarir was also honoured with
a captive of rank. It is almost incredible that such heartless despite should
have been shown towards human life. But so we read, and that without any
comment or expression of surprise. How low the morale of the court under
Soleiman !



CHAPTER LIII.

OMAR II.

99-101 A.H. 717-20 A.D.

Omar II,
ii. 99 A.H.
Sept.,
717 A.D.

IF Soleiman differed from Welid, Omar differed incomparably more, not only from both, but also from all other Caliphs both before and after him. An unaffected piety, tinged albeit with bigotry, led to uprightness, moderation, and simplicity of life, and to a rule that was eminently just and peaceful. On assuming the Caliphate, the royal grooms brought before him the prancing steeds of the court stables to choose from; but he preferred his own modest equipage. He bade his wife surrender to the treasury the costly jewels given by her father Abd al Melik, else he could no longer live with her; and she obeyed. On Omar's death, her brother succeeding to the throne, offered to restore them, but she, mindful of her husband's wish, declined. Calling his other wives and slave-girls to him, he told them, that as now he had to bear the weight of empire, they must no longer expect from him the same attention and benevolence as before; but it was open to them to leave: they wept, and all declared that they would not be parted from him. In his first oration he invited only those to join his company who would help in doing that which was just and right. Poets, orators, and such like, soon found that his court was no place for them, while it was thronged by the pious, and by



devout divines. His scruples led him sometimes into acts of questionable expediency. The domes at Fadak, reserved by the Prophet for public charity¹, but some time back wrongfully appropriated by Merwan for the expenses of the court, were now restored to their original use; and this, with other resumptive measures of the kind, created ill-feeling in the royal house. His conversion to Islam prejudiced him against the employment of Jews and Christians: and in a rescript addressed to his lieutenants he bade them exalt the true faith, above all others, and appoint none but Moslems to offices of trust,—quoting verses of the Coran in support of his command². He was also hard and unpitiful in exacting from those of other creeds the severest burdens it was lawful to impose. But whatever the bigotry or even fanaticism of his rule, and however much he may have sought to proselytize by favouring his own religion, his justice in administering the law according to the dictates of Islam, was surpassed by none. When he was appealed to by the Christians of Damascus to give them back the Church of St. John, turned by Welid into the city Mosque,—though unable to concede their request, he restored to them other churches, which under the capitulation should have been theirs, in compensation.

A.H. 99-101.

Pious and bigoted, but just.

Hitherto in the public prayers every day throughout the empire, a petition cursing Ali had been in use. The imprecation was now withdrawn, out of a sense of duty no doubt led to this action, just as he thought, by a passage in the Coran, which enjoins justice and kindness towards relatives³. When a Jewish boy at Medina, the practice was denounced to him by a holy man, whose teaching he adopted, and never departed from. Omar had urged his father to discontinue it when governor of Egypt, who replied that the cessation, however otherwise right and proper, would damage the Umayyady reign, and favour transfer of the Caliphate to the house of Ali. The imprecation was resumed after Omar's death. But

Discontinues imprecation on Ali.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 516-548.² *Ibid.* iii. 118; v. 58.³ Coran xvi. 90.



A.H. 99-
101.

Kharejite
rising in
Irac,
100 A.H.

its temporary absence did no doubt stimulate the movement then taking shape against the Omeyyad dynasty.

In the second year of his reign there was a theocratic rising in Irac that did not differ from others of its kind, excepting that from the leniency of Omar it gained a dangerous head, drawing in the end 10,000 men to put it down. His conduct was certainly here characterised by weakness. Though up in arms against him, he forbade them to be attacked until they had first shed blood. He sent for their leaders, to argue their grievances and traitorous tenets out with them. He heard their scruples patiently and answered them, but without effect. What troubled him most was their plea that, though he might himself be orthodox and saintly, yet the godless Yezid would succeed him. Omar could only answer that with succession to the throne he could not interfere, as it had been so provided by the same authority from which his own title was derived. The theocratic faction was stimulated by Omar's concessions to their prejudices; and equally so were the Omeyyad family troubled at his attitude, as dangerous to their dynasty¹.

Efforts at
conversion
in Africa
and Spain.

There is not much to record of adventure, military or administrative, in the reign of Omar. His first concern was to bring safely back what remained of the armament so bootlessly launched by his predecessors against Constantinople. Large supplies of food and carriage were, for this end, sent to Mezzoun, and the withdrawal was successfully carried out. Elsewhere the efforts of Omar were mainly marked by endeavours to convert the people to Islam. Among the Moslems these were most successful. But in Spain the task was not so easy; and therefore, to reduce the influence of the Christians, their lands were divided amongst the conquerors. A royal mosque was also founded in this reign at Saragossa. To promote conversion in the East Omar addressed a rescript to the kings of Sind, inviting them to embrace Islam, with the

¹ It is even asserted that he tried to poison his drink, and that of this he died. But this is not consistent with other traditions, and looks like a fabrication of the Abbasside enemies of the Omeyyad line.



promise of thereby enjoying all the privileges and immunities of the Arab race. This they did, and obtained Arabian names, but again, in the reign of Hisham, apostatized.

A.H. 99-101.

The most marked event, however, in the reign of Omar, was the arraignment of Yezid, son of Mohallab. Even Soleiman is said to have become dissatisfied with his favourite; and Omar, regarding him now as a tyrant, summoned him to give an account of his stewardship in Khorasan. Yezid no sooner set foot in Irac than he was put in chains, and so conducted to Damascus. Omar held him to the letter of his reported victories and prize in Central Asia. In vain Yezid protested that the report was made to magnify the achievement in the people's eyes, and that he had never thought of being called to account for the exact amount which he had named. Omar would none of the excuse; Yezid must produce a reckoning of the whole, and make good what was due. Finally, he was banished in coarse prison dress to an island in the Red Sea. But warned of his dangerous aims even in that isolated place, the Caliph removed him to Aleppo, where he was kept in strict confinement. His son, whom he had left to take his place at Merve, came to intercede for him, but in vain; and dying shortly after, Omar performed the funeral service over him, saying that he was a better man than his father. Yezid had fancied Omar to be but a sanctimonious hypocrite; he now found him terribly in earnest; but he had reason to fear his successor even more. On hearing that Omar had sickened, he bribed the guard, and effected his escape to Bussorah, where he raised a dangerous rebellion, as we shall in the sequel see.

Fall of Yezid, 99 A.H.

The policy pursued in Khorasan and Central Asia after the recall of Yezid is another evidence that the Caliph was more intent on the spread of the faith than on temporal aggrandisement. There were loud cries of harshness and exaction from the professed converts of Khorasan. Omar sent for a deputation of these to represent their grievances, and finding their complaint well-founded, deposed Jarrah the Viceroy, and insisted that all who said the creed and

Religious policy in Khorasan.

A.H. 99--
101.

joined in the religious services should be exempt from burdens, and placed on the same footing as themselves. To consolidate his rule, he stayed the sword against outlying countries, and called in the garrisons and columns that had been settled in those heathen parts. In all the provinces retained, the people finding now the comfort and advantages of conversion, began to flock in multitudes to the faith. At first they were tested by their willingness to be circumcised; but Omar hearing of it, forbade a test nowhere enjoined in the Coran; 'for Mahomet,' said he, 'was sent to call men to the faith, not to circumcise them.' The burdens on unbelievers were imposed, as elsewhere, to the utmost, but justice towards them must be observed. No churches, synagogues, or fire-temples were to be destroyed: but the erection of new ones was forbidden. The policy of Omar was thus to fill Khorasan and the adjoining districts with a population of contented believers; to consolidate the faith and cast the sword aside. And in this policy, so far as his short and transient reign allowed, he was successful.

Death of a
pious son.

A son of seventeen died before him. Some touching passages are related of his conversation with this youth, who was like-minded with his father in high religious aspiration. He urged his father to enforce reform and bring back society to the primitive practice of what was right. Omar replied that he had done what he could by gentle means, but if Moslem rule were to be regenerated as his son desired, it must be accomplished by force; and 'there is no good,' said he, 'in that reform which can be enforced only by the sword.'

Attractive
character.

Though devoid of stirring events, there is much that is attractive and instructive in the reign of Omar. It is a relief, amidst bloodshed, intrigue, and treachery, to find a Caliph devoted to what he believed the highest good both for himself and for his people. The saint might be morbid, over-scrupulous, and bigoted; but there are few, if any, throughout this history, whose life leaves a more pleasing impression on the reader's mind than that of Omar.



It was the middle of 101 A.H., after a reign of nearly ^{A.H. 99-}
two years and a half, that Omar sickened. In a few weeks ^{101.}
he died, and was buried at Dair Saman, near Hims. He ^{Death of}
was succeeded by his cousin Yezid, son of Abd al Melik, ^{Omar II,}
according to his brother Soleiman's last will. ^{Reyab.}

101 A.H.
Jan.,
720 A.D.



CHAPTER LIV.

YEZID II.

101-105 A. H. 720-24 A. D.

Yezid II,
101 A.H.
720 A.D.

Rebellion
of Yezid,
son of
Mohallab.

THE Kharejite outbreak in Irac had hardly been quelled when a more serious rising threatened Yezid II,—the rebellion of his namesake Yezid, son of Mohallab. The accession of the new Ruler revived the tribal jealousies. His wife was niece to Hajjaj; and so throwing over the Yemen faction, Yezid II took up the cause of the family and adherents of Hajjaj, all of whom, as we have seen, had been sorely pursued by Soleiman. The favourite of Soleiman, Yezid had, unfortunately as it now turned out for himself, carried out the orders of his patron with great severity, and had confiscated to a vast amount the wealth which the present Caliph's wife inherited from her father. Yezid had turned a deaf ear to her cry; and so her husband, the present Caliph, had threatened that if he ever came to power, he would cut him into a thousand pieces. This was the reason why Yezid, when he heard of Omar's last sickness, and knew that his enemy must succeed, escaped from prison, and fled to Bussorah. There he rallied numerous friends around him, for with all his failings Yezid was free and openhanded, and having attacked the palace, slew the governor, seized the treasury, and by profuse largess raised a threatening force. The Caliph, now alarmed, sent to offer a free pardon; but Yezid had too deeply compromised himself,



and must fight to the bitter end. The rebellion gained so great a head, that Yezid was able to send governors to Fars, Kerman, and other centres in the East. At Bussorah all the adherents of Hajjaj that fell into his hands were slain, but the chief men of the city, even such as favoured Yezid, fearing to compromise themselves with the Court, made their escape to Kufa. Yezid himself settled down inactive at Bussorah, till tidings of an army 80,000 strong advancing from Syria under command of Maslama, the Caliph's brother, forced him to take the field. His brothers urged him to leave Irac and occupy Khorasan, or the strongholds in the nearer mountains, where the discontented would flock to him, and thus weary out the Syrian force; but he declined to be 'like the bird that flies from hill top to hill top,' and so moving forward he occupied Wasit. Maslama advanced on Kufa where there was a strong party in favour of Yezid; and having deposed the governor, with difficulty suppressed a rising. Then crossing the Euphrates, he took ground on the left bank of the river. Yezid, leaving one of his brothers with a strong reserve at Wasit, marched against his enemy. A week passed in skirmishing and single combats. Then Yezid attacked the Caliph's army by night, but they were on the alert and the onset failed. Next day there was a great battle. Yezid harangued his army, denouncing the Omeyyads as a godless race, against whom it were a more sacred duty to war than against the Turks, and thus bring back the pure observances of their holy faith,—words that must have sounded strange from the lips of the unprincipled worldling. On the other side, to nerve his men by making retreat impossible, Maslama set fire to the bridge behind them. The rebel army, unable to sustain the Syrian onset, fell back; and Yezid, hearing that his favourite brother was killed, rushed upon the enemy's ranks, crying that life after that was no longer worth living, and was slain. On this, his brothers, unable to hold their position at Wasit, retired, after beheading all the prisoners in their hands; and, with wives and children, took ship by the gulf to a fortress in Kerman,

A.H. 101-105.

His defeat and death.



A.H. 101-105. hoping that its governor, who owed his post to Yezid, would give his family and kindred shelter. But they were mistaken; the brothers were put to death, and the women and children sold into slavery¹. Equally cruel with the fate of the prisoners at Wasit was that of those at Kufa, where 300 were by the Caliph's orders slain. In companies of twenty and thirty, they were brought out, some of them naked, and decapitated in cold blood. Thus the Caliph slaked his wrath against the faction hostile to Hajjaj. And so perished the house of Mohallab, none of whose descendants were meet representatives of that great man. The butcheries and contempt of human life we now so often read of, are a painful feature of the day. The cruel scene, however, is but a fit ending to the career of the man who drove the corn-mill of Jorjan with his victims' blood.

Rising in
Khorasan,
102-104
A.H.

The services of Maslama in this dangerous rebellion, and in the campaign against the Greeks, were rewarded by the government of Irac and Khorasan. As his lieutenant at Merve, Maslama appointed his son-in-law Said, a weak man, called in derision *Khozeina*, from affecting in his dress the attire of a Persian lady. The choice was far from fortunate. There was a general rising of the hordes in Khojend and Ferghana, which became dangerous owing to inactivity on the Moslem side. The tributary Soghdians, threatened by these, sought protection from Merve; but help being slow of coming, they meanwhile made overtures to the Turks, and between the two suffered grievously. When Moslem forces did arrive, the Soghdians returned at first to their allegiance. Information, however, reached the Moslem general of the murder of an Arab,—for numbers of Arabians and Persians had begun to settle in the land,—and he sent for the culprit, and slew him in his tent. The Soghdians retaliated by putting to death the Mussulman prisoners in their hands, 150 in number; whereon the general fell upon the Soghdian residents,

¹ A cruel and apparently unlawful act in the case of women professing the faith of Islam.



who having been meanwhile disarmed, had only staves A.H. 101-105.
 wherewith to defend themselves. The whole, 3000 in
 number, fell by the sword¹. Fighting went on more or
 less throughout the reign in these outlying provinces, but
 with no very marked results.

Maslama being unequal to the difficult task of collecting Irac, Asia Minor, and Armenia, 102-104 A.H.
 the revenue in Irac, the government was given to Omar
 Ibn Hobeira, an ambitious scion of the Fezara tribe, in
 reward for his military service. He had distinguished
 himself in the campaign against the Kharejites, and more
 recently on the northern border of Mesopotamia. In Asia
 Minor, the Moslem possessions were quiet. But towards
 the North-east several heavy, and not always fortunate,
 operations were carried on against the Khizr, Kiphjak,
 and other hordes inhabiting the mountain region between
 the Black and Caspian seas. The first army sent thither 104 A.H.
 suffered a bad defeat, losing their camp, and being driven
 out of the country. A second force retrieved the disaster,
 and occupied Balanja and other important cities; but
 incautiously pressing their advance too far, were overtaken
 by winter, and were surrounded and cut off by Turcoman
 hordes. The Caliph promised fresh support, but dying
 shortly after, left the task to his successor.

In Africa things went from bad to worse. The Caliph Africa.
 appointed one who had been a favourite secretary of Hajjaj
 as governor; and he, practising the harsh tactics he had
 learned of his master, against the converted Berbers, roused
 an insurrection which ended in his death, and relaxed the
 bonds of discipline and attachment to the Court.

Spain, as a dependency of Africa, was in an even less Spain.
 satisfactory relation to the Caliphate. Its authority being

¹ Another tradition says 7000, which, even with any conventional margin, seems incredible. The Soghdian merchants were allowed to retire before the massacre. A romantic story is told of the fort of Bahli, occupied by a clan of the Soghdians who remained loyal. One of the Turcoman generals wished to marry a lady in the fort; on her refusal they besieged the place. A Moslem column came on the scene just as they were on the point of surrendering from thirst. The Turks were attacked and routed. They fled out of sight, and the Mussulmans meanwhile bore away every man, woman, and child to a place of safety. The Turks returning, found the fortress empty, not a soul to be seen, and declared that it was the genii who had done the miracle.



A.H. 101-105. ———
Inroad into France. 100 A.H. 718 A.D.
Pyrenees crossed again, 103 A.H.
mediate and intermittent, the governing hand, strong elsewhere, was for this great conquest changeful and often weak, while the leaders, though valiant in the field, were in the civil branch intent chiefly on their own aggrandisement. In the year 100 A.H., the Moslem troops, attracted by the weakness of France, which was at the moment torn by internal discord, and by the hatred of the native race to their new masters from the north, made an inroad into the southern provinces. Ravaging the land as far as Nismes, they returned to Spain laden with booty. Tempted by this success, two or three years after they again crossed the Pyrenees, stormed Narbonne and garrisoned its fortress as their permanent head-quarters. Advancing, they laid siege to Toulouse, but were forced to raise it on the approach of the enemy, by whom they were put disastrously to flight. The scattered fragments rallied under the banner of the famous Abd al Rahman¹, and found a safe retreat in Narbonne. But the reverse, bruited far and wide, emboldened the Northern Spaniards, who had already in Asturias thrown off the yoke, to fresh efforts against the Moslems, on whom about this time they inflicted a serious defeat. The mountainous region was a source of strength to them; and there the seeds of a new power were being sown, which in the fulness of time brought Moslem rule to an end in Spain².

Alyite and Abbasside canvass.

In a reign so weak and so unpopular, it is no wonder that intrigue on the part of the Alyites, and now also on that of the descendants of Abbas (of whose designs mention is now for the first time made), gained ground throughout the East. A deputation from Irac canvassing the cause, in the harmless garb of merchants, was arrested in Khorasan and taken before 'Khozeina.' But he, listening to their feigned story, and accepting the guarantee of their friends, allowed them to go. And so the cause insidiously grew.

Last of the Companions.

Year by year, tradition has up to this time been chronicling the death of aged men who having been in the society

¹ Or, as he is called by European writers, Abderame.

² The Moslems lost Narbonne, and were finally driven out of France in 759 A.D. See M. Reinaud's *Invasions des Sarrasins*, Paris, 1836.



of Mahomet, are dignified as his *Companions*. Such notices, A.H. 101-105.
 by the lapse of time, now come to a natural close. In 89 A.H. the last two of these who lived in Syria died, one aged 100, the other, a 'Companion who had seen the two Kiblas'.¹ Others survived in Irac for a year or two later. But the last of all who had seen and known the Prophet, died at Mecca in the year 101². 'Companions' enjoyed a high distinction in Moslem society. They would have done so under any circumstances, as having seen and conversed with Mahomet himself. But a fresh value as time went on began to attach to their words. The Coran, at first the sole guide in all concerns, social, legal, and spiritual, was gradually found inadequate for the novel wants of an ever-expanding Moslem world. The word and wont (*Sunnat*) of the Prophet was thus called in to supplement it. Collectors of tradition, accordingly, sprang up everywhere, who sought out 'Companions' from the ends of the earth, and spent their lives in taking down their remembrance of incidents connected with the life of Mahomet. Nothing, however trivial, came amiss; for every word and every act might form a precedent hereafter in social or legal obligation. The profession thus came to be one of high repute, and hundreds of thousands of traditions have been handed down of every shade of credibility, upon which to a great extent the law and custom of Islam has been built, and which incidentally also have given us a clear and authentic view of the Prophet's life itself.

Collectors
of tradi-
tion.

Early in his reign Yezid was persuaded to nominate as successor his brother Hisham, and after him his own son Welid, then but eleven years of age. Homage was done to both accordingly throughout the empire. A few years'

Hisham
nominated
successor.

¹ That is, remembered when Mahomet prayed with his face towards Jerusalem as his Kibla, before he changed towards Mecca. See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 198.

² His name is Amir Abul Tufeil. Others are mentioned as dying in this year who were born in Mahomet's lifetime; but they had not seen him. One of these died in 98 A.H. over 100 years old. He had gone as a boy to Medina to make confession of his faith to Mahomet, but arrived just after his death, and so never saw him alive; another is mentioned as surviving till 109 A.H., who must have been over 100.



A.H. 101-
105.

Yezid's
passion
for a slave
girl.

later he repented that he had not given the succession immediately to his son; but did not venture on a change.

Yezid had even a greater passion for the harem than any of his predecessors, but it was more fixed and constant. We are told of a slave-girl Habîba and a songstress Sallâma. His attachment to the former was so great that he did not many days survive her death. He had retired with her for a season to a garden retreat in Palestine, and there, casting playfully a grape-stone into her mouth, it choked her, and she died upon the spot. For three days he clung weeping to her relics. At last he was persuaded to let her be buried. The funeral service was performed by his brother Maslama, who feared that if the Caliph were seen by the people, they would be scandalized at the extravagance of his grief. He never recovered composure or self-control, and died within a week. The cry of Sallâma, who was tending his last moments, was the first intimation of the fact to his family and attendants¹.

Death of
Yezid II
vii. 105 A.H.
Jan.,
724 A.D.

Yezid II died at the age of forty, having reigned a little over four years;—an inglorious reign, which failed to stay, if it did not actually hasten, the decadence of the Omeyyad house. He was succeeded by his brother Hisham, another son of Abd al Melik.

¹ The romantic tale of Habîba throws a strange light on the royal harem, and the conditions of its domestic life. Some years before his accession, when on pilgrimage to Mecca, Yezid purchased her for 4000 pieces of gold; but his brother Soleiman, then Caliph, was displeased at the purchase; and so he returned her to the merchant, who then sold her to an Egyptian. When Yezid succeeded to the throne, his wife, a grand-daughter of Othman, said one day to him,—‘Is there yet any one thing in the world, my love, left thee to desire?’ ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘and it is Habîba.’ So she sent to Egypt and bought the object of his heart’s desire. Then having adorned her as a bride, she seated her on a couch in an inner chamber behind a curtain, and called her husband; and as they talked, again she asked “Is there aught yet in the world left for thee to long after?” “Yea, and thou knowest it all thyself.” So she drew the curtain aside, and saying, “Yes, I know it; there sits Habîba waiting for thee,” she arose and left them together. And Yezid loved his wife all the more for it.



CHAPTER LV.

CALIPHATE OF HISHAM.—CONTINUED DECADENCE
OF OMEYYAD DYNASTY.

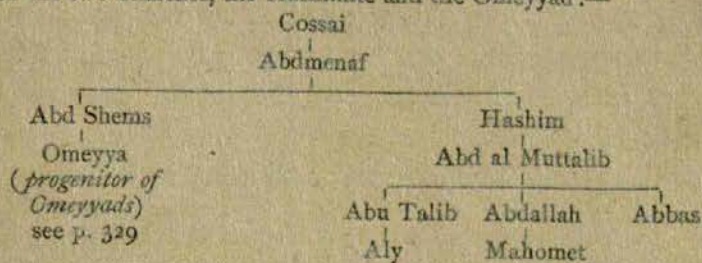
105-125 A. H. 724-43 A. D.

HISHAM now entered peaceably on a long reign. Exemplary as a true believer, he banished, like Omar II, from his Court all things inconsistent with the profession of Islam, and his mild and generally upright administration might have restored prosperity to the empire, had not the evil genius of his predecessors still cast its blight upon the throne. There was much besides to cause depression. His lieutenants were not always happily chosen, and they so played upon his two defects of character, avarice and suspicion, as sometimes to betray him into unguarded and cruel action, as well as cause him to miss the friendship and popularity which a well-timed liberality would have secured. Military enterprise was nowhere successful in his reign, and indeed repeatedly suffered severe disaster. From the first, Hisham threw himself into the arms of the Yemen party, and thus alienated from his rule the opposing faction.

Hisham,
105 A.H.
724 A.D.

From early times, anterior even to the birth of Mahomet, there existed a rivalry between the two chief stocks of the Coreish, the descendants namely of Hashim and of Omeyya¹.

¹ See *Life of Mahomet*, pp. xxii. and 570. This table will explain the relation between the two branches, the Hashimite and the Omeyyad:—



(Ancestors of Hashimites, see next table).



A.H. 105-125.—The Prophet, sprung from the former, suffered bitter opposition, both in field and forum, from the Omeyyads, till the conquest of Mecca converted the whole body of the Coreish, and welded friend and foe equally within the bonds of Islam. In the first enthusiasm of the faith, all distinctions of the kind vanished. But they gradually came to life again, and burst out fiercer than ever on the murder of Othman, and in the struggle between Muavia and Aly; while the Kharejites, who were continually rising in rebellion, recognized neither the one house nor the other, but demanded a purely theocratic rule. Things calmed down in the lengthened reign of Muavia. But the tragic end of Hosein and his family at Kerbala, caused a strong reaction towards the house of Aly; and so there arose the party called Shie-ites (or Sectaries), advocating the divine right of succession in that line, and in it alone;—a doctrine which began to be busily but secretly circulated by a widely scattered and disloyal body¹.

Claim of Mohammed descendant of Abbas. But now another and more dangerous aspirant came upon the scene. This was Mohammed, great-grandson of Abbas, the Prophet's uncle. No pretensions had been heretofore advanced by this branch of the Hashimite stock. The idea of their right to the sovereignty was of recent growth, and it was not till the present reign that it took definite shape in supersession of the house of Aly. The Abbasside advocates, to conciliate the Shie-ite interest, spread the report that the son of Hosein (the 'Hanefite' pretender) had on his death-bed bequeathed his right to Mohammed. Whether this be so or no, the plea of both parties was based in common on the immeasurable superiority of the branch from which the Prophet sprang, over the Omeyyad. These latter were moreover incessantly maligned by Alyites and Hashimites alike, as sprung from the enemies of Mahomet, as persecutors of his descendants,—a wicked and dissolute race of tyrants, neglectful of the sanctions of Islam, given to wine and hounds, music and singing, and revelry, in short to every

¹ Shia (Sheea) means 'sect'; and so the sect or branch holding these views are called 'Shie-ites.'

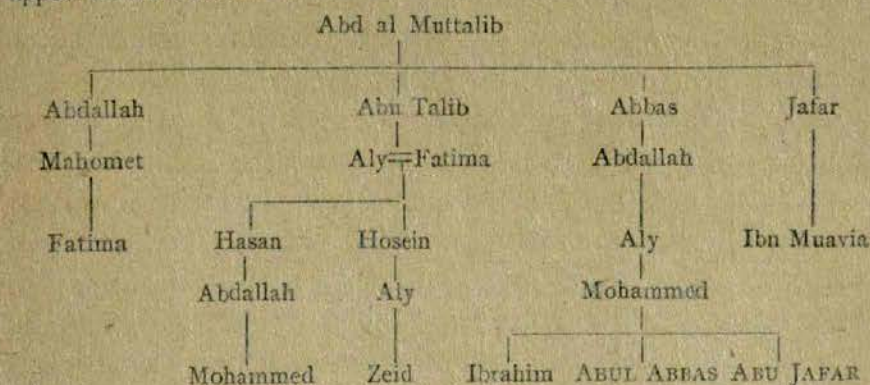


kind of profanity ;—charges, indeed, for which the dynasty had too often given good ground. A.H. 105-125.

Deputations from Mohammed, who lived in a retreat to the south of Palestine, frequently visited Khorasan, in the garb of merchants. They plotted in secret, and though often discovered and put to a cruel death, persevered in their canvass and nursed the cause. Such emissaries burrowed busily in the purlieus of all the great towns throughout the East, and the Abbassides began to gain in name and popularity throughout Irac and Persia, as well as Khorasan¹. Abbasside canvass.

One of Hisham's first acts was to supersede Omar Ibn Hobeira in the government of Irac, to which he nominated Khalid, a favourite courtier of Yemenite descent. Ibn Hobeira met the too common fate in those days of fallen rulers, being cast into prison and tortured for arrears of revenue. He escaped, but was pursued and murdered. The Caliph caused the murderer to be put to death ; but contented himself with an expression of displeasure towards Khalid, who had apparently instigated the deed. Khalid gave his brother Asad the command in Khorasan, and himself continued for fifteen years in the government of Irac. Towards the end of that period that were several Khalid governor of Kufa, 105 A.H.

¹ The relation of the Shie-ite, or Alyite family, to that of the Abbassides, as descended respectively from Abbas and Abu Talib, uncles of the Prophet, will appear from this tree :—



Abul Abbas (Saffah) and Abu Jafar were the first two Abbasside Caliphs. Aly, Mohammed's father, having given offence to the Caliph Abd al Melik by marrying a wife divorced by him, and being on that account ill-treated at court, had retired to Homeima, a village on the borders of Arabia, where the alleged transfer of the Hanefite's rights is said to have taken place.



A.H. 105-
125.

Kharejite
outbreaks
in Irac,
118-119
A.H.

Kharejite outbreaks. One of these, led by a sorcerer, though followed by only a few disciples, is remarkable for the strange doctrines, such as the divinity of Aly, held by them, as well as for their barbarous end. They were burnt to death at the stake with faggots steeped in naphtha. Another of a more serious character was raised by a man from Wasit, who declaimed against the use of wine, and denounced Khalid as 'the son of a Christian' (his mother having been of that faith), 'who let mosques go to ruin, while he builded churches and synagogues, gave office to magicians, and favoured marriage between Moslems and unbelievers.' The cause was popular. Great numbers rallied under his black standard and fought with determined bravery. Twice they routed considerable columns sent against them, and it was only by an army drawn at once from Syria, Kufa, and Mosul, that they were at last dispersed and their leader slain. Several other equally fanatical insurrections had to be put down by military force. The leader of one of these, after committing many outrages, was brought in wounded, with a body of his followers. Khalid, astonished by his doctrine and knowledge of the Coran, sought to spare him: but the Caliph resented his repeated intercession; and so with his whole company the rebel was committed to the flames, all the while reciting passages from the Coran. He died with this verse on his lips: 'Say, the fire of hell is fiercer in its heat, if they but knew it ¹.' Such was the wild fervour of these fanatics.

Fall of
Khalid,
120 A.H.
737 A.D.

Apart from such insurrections, which in themselves caused some anxiety, Khalid, after many years of faithful service, at last lost the favour of his master, who either suspected embezzlement, or was jealous, perhaps not without cause, of disloyal attachment to the house of Hashim ². He therefore appointed Yusuf, governor of Yemen, to succeed him. Without warning, Yusuf ap-

¹ *Sura ix.* 82.

² He possibly was so in reality, though not openly. When accused of partiality towards the house of Aly, and of lending them money, he answered how could that be, when every day he cursed Aly in the public prayers; but that the people said was merely to curry favour.



peared at Kufa to Khalid's dismay, carrying with him the Caliph's command to realize with all due severity the last farthing of arrears, from 'the son of the Nazarene' and his lieutenants. Yusuf was nothing loth to execute his commission; for he sorely hated Khalid as the persecutor of his clansman, the son of Hobeira. It was now the turn of the officers of Khalid to be cruelly treated, and on himself a demand was made altogether beyond his power to liquidate. He was tortured (meet reward for the cruel treatment of his predecessor) and cast into prison. After a year and a half, the Caliph ordered his release, and allowed him, against the reclamations of Yusuf, to join the army then fighting against the Greeks. But in the next reign, as we shall see, he was again pursued by the relentless hate of Yusuf.

A.H. 105-125.

The supersession of Khalid was highly unpopular, especially with the Yemenite clan in Irac. His successor, besides being of Modhar blood, had already distinguished himself, by a tyrannous administration in South Arabia. He is praised, indeed, for restoring the prestige of Islam, and humiliating the Jewish and Christian faiths. But though devout and given to long prayers, soft in speech, and a master in poetry, Yusuf was of a cruel and even savage nature¹. In the course of his enquiries, he discovered that Khalid had made over large sums of money to Zeid, a grandson of Hosein, suspected of pretensions to the throne. The Caliph summoned him to his presence, and, dissatisfied with his attitude, sent him for further

Yusuf appointed to succeed him.

Canvass of Zeid, grandson of Hosein.

¹ For example, he was capricious about his garments, and chastised the tailor if they were not fitting to his taste. He would draw his nail across the stuff, and if it stuck anywhere, have the weaver beaten, or even his hand cut off. His secretary one day, slack at work, complained of tooth-ache as the cause; the barber removed the suffering tooth, and the next one also as a punishment. One of the tales passes belief. Preparing for a journey, he asked one of his slave-girls whether she wished to follow; on her answering in the affirmative, he abused her as thinking of nothing but love, and had her beheaded; a second, preferring to stay with her child, shared the same fate. A third replied in terror that she knew not what to say, as either way she must give offence, and for presuming thus to argue, she too was beheaded. The currency of such tales, even if not actually founded on fact, shows what a tyrant they had to deal with, and also throws a lurid light on the habits and morals of the day.



A.H. 105-
125.

inquiry to Yusuf. Zeid, however, managed to retire into privacy, and canvassed the Arab tribes in Irac, living now with one and now with another, and ingratiating himself especially by frequent matrimonial alliances with maidens of the Yemen line¹. He soon accepted homage as the rightful Caliph from thousands in Kufa and its vicinity, with the pledge to fight under his banner. This went on for months. At last his followers urged him, 'now that the full time had come for the downfall of the Omeyyad house,' no longer to delay. It is significant of the yet undefined relation of the two branches of the Hashimite stock,—the descendants of Aly and those of Abbas,—that Daud, one of the latter, sought to dissuade him from a step so premature. He bid him not to trust in his twenty, or even forty thousand²; 'for think,' he said, 'how many of the 80,000 fickle Kufans pledged to fight for Hosein, stood by him in the hour of need?' The advice was good, but unheeded. In one respect the theocratic zealots were dissatisfied with Zeid; for, like Zobeir, he declined to say that Abu Bekr and Omar were usurpers of the Caliphate. Apart, however, from any such scruples, the light-hearted and pleasure-loving Kufans were hardly prepared for a serious rising. They were ready enough to covenant, but lacked the covenanting spirit. At last Zeid fixed the day. Secret information reached Yusuf, who, from his palace in the vicinity at Hira, gave command for the citizens to be gathered, both for safety and lest perchance they too might rise, into the court of the Great mosque. During the night the Shie-ite banner paraded the city, with the old battle-cry, *Ya Mansur!* In the early morning, Zeid issued forth,

His rebellion at
Kufa,
122 A.H.
740 A.D.

¹ The names of two are given. A charming lady, but of mature years, came to do homage as an ardent Shie-ite; and Zeid, her age notwithstanding, asked her to be his bride. Excusing herself on her being no longer young, she suggested that her daughter, fairer and more elegant than she, would be more suitable. Zeid laughed, and was well pleased to accept the daughter in the mother's stead.

² The numbers are variously given at from 15,000 to 40,000. These all took an oath 'to set up the Book and the testimony and godly discipline, to follow the descendants of the Prophet, and to fight against the enemies of the same both in secret and in public.' Whereupon the covenanter placed his hand within Zeid's, and the obligation and homage were complete.



expecting to find a multitude ready to salute him. There were but 218. Nevertheless, he made his progress through the streets, driving the police and soldiery before him, from quarter to quarter, but with little other result. He was watched by Yusuf and the chief men of Kufa from afar. 'Where are my men,' he cried, 'the 40,000 men that pledged their troth to me?' but none responded to the martial call. A follower answered, more sanguine than the rest, 'They are shut up within the Mosque; let us march and set them free.' Arrived there, they waved their banners high over the gates, and shouted, 'Come from shame to glory; come forth for this world and also for the next; of neither have ye now any part nor lot!'. But the answer was only a shower of stones. Darkness coming on, Zeid retired to the great storehouse of the city, where with his little company he passed the night. Next morning he was attacked by a Syrian column, which he bravely met, and killing seventy drove them back from place to place. So passed the day; but as night set in, an arrow struck him on the temple. He was carried to the house of a follower, where, so soon as the arrow was drawn, he died. They buried him secretly; but Yusuf discovering the place, sent the head to Hisham, and had the body, with those of the other leaders, hung up in a public place. The head was stuck for a time on one of the gates of Damascus, and then sent to be similarly exhibited at Medina. The body remained exposed at Kufa till Welid II, on his accession, had it taken down and burned.

A.H. 105-
125.Defeated
and slain.

This emeute, though apparently unimportant in itself, proved the turning-point in the destiny of the house of Aly. Although Yahya, the son of Zeid, escaped, to the Caliph's great mortification, the Shie-ite cause had hopelessly collapsed. Up to this time, the aspiration of the Abbassides, as descendants of the Prophet's uncle, had paled before that of the Alyites, in whose veins ran the blood of the Prophet himself. The Hashimite interest in the impending canvass now centred in the Abbassides alone, and they were able to enter upon it with invigorated hope and redoubled effort. The Omeyyads could have done their

Abbasside
way cleared
thereby.



A.H. 105-125. antagonists no better service than thus rid them of such dangerous rivals in the struggle for the throne¹.

Various campaigns in Khorasan.

Asad, brother of Khalid, 105-109.

Throughout the twenty years of this reign, the Moslem arms suffered many reverses beyond the Oxus, where things at the last remained pretty much as at the first. Asad had been early appointed by his brother Khalid as lieutenant there. But he was a tyrant, and having inflicted chastisement on certain leading men, who had incurred his displeasure, was recalled. During this period, the Khacan with his hordes kept the country in chronic disquiet; and there was at least one serious defeat, the Moslem host being surrounded for many days, and with difficulty effecting its escape. An emeute also, causing some anxiety, broke out between the Yemen and Modhar tribes, which ended, not without bloodshed, in favour of the latter.

Ashras, 109-111 A.H.

Ashras, the new governor, threw the entire country of Bokhara and Soghd into rebellion by his breach of faith in first promising remission of capitation-tax for all who embraced Islam, and again reimposing it. The rebels were supported by the Khacan, and the Moslems suffered greatly at his hands². In 111 A.H., to better matters, Joneid was transferred from Sind³; but though an able warrior, he was less fortunate even than his predecessor. On his way to join the army at Bokhara, he narrowly

Joneid succeeds.

¹ It is true that there was extant another branch descended from Aly, the progeny namely of Hasan, brother of Hosein; but like Hasan himself, who resigned the Caliphate into the hands of Muavia, they had but little ambition. An amusing, but not very edifying, account is preserved of a disputation held before Khalid (who is supposed to have had Shic-ite leanings) between Zeid as descendant of *Hosein*, and the head of the house of *Hasan*, who both, in gross Arab style, fell to abusing each other's mothers. But the descendants of Hasan never seem as yet to have taken any practical step as aspirants to the throne.

² For example, Kamanja, 'one of the greatest cities in Khorasan, and full of Mussulmans,' was besieged by the Khacan for fifty-eight days with innumerable hordes drawn from Ferghana, Nasaf, and the country all around Bokhara. A chief having been killed by an arrow from the battlements, the Turks slew the Mussulman prisoners, 100 in number, and cast their heads over the wall into the citadel, on which the Moslems in revenge slew 200 hostages in their hands. At last, driven to extremities for water, the siege was raised on condition that the Moslem should retire.

³ Joneid owed his promotion (easy way of earning a command) to offering the wife of Hisham a rare and costly piece of Indian jewelry, which Hisham admired so much that Joneid presented another like it to him.



escaped capture by the Khacan. In the following year, marching on Takharistan, he received an alarming message from Saurat, governor of Samarcand, that the Khacan had surrounded the city, which, being from its great circuit beyond his power to defend, he must at all hazards, if not quickly relieved, go out and fight the enemy. Joneid resolved on marching to his relief, but the forces under his command were scattered in all directions, and he had but an inadequate column, with which, against the reclamation of his officers, he at once set out. When about half way, he was surrounded by the hordes of the Khacan, and the battle raged with terrible slaughter. Prodigies of valour, as of old, held the enemy at bay. One who had just returned from pilgrimage to Mecca, where he besought his mother to pray that he might be blessed with martyrdom, and had with the same object lavished charity, obtained now the longed-for prize. Another, while the fight was hot, returned to prepare his wife for his being brought in all gory from the battle: rending her garments, she exclaimed in agony, 'Ah why, leaving thine earthly love, wilt thou seek the embrace of the Houris in Paradise?' Heedless of her cry, he hastened back to the field, and met the fate he coveted. Joneid was in despair; he called his cavalry to dismount, and they fought fiercely hand to hand with the barbarians. Eighteen leaders bearing the great banner fell one after another, and the dead were strewed over the field in hundreds. At last he retired to a defile, threw up entrenchments, and called a council of war. 'Either thou must perish,' they said, 'or Saurat.' So he sent to Saurat, ordering him to march out of Samarcand, and so draw off the enemy. Saurat remonstrated against the mad attempt; but on Joneid angrily threatening to supersede him by one who was his bitter enemy, he issued forth with 12,000 men. After a long march, when close to Joneid, the Khacan turned upon him, and a fierce encounter ensued. The day was hot, and the Turks set fire to the dry jungle behind. Saurat resolved on a dash through the enemy's host, so to reach Joneid's camp now close at hand. The Khacan giving way, drew him into the

A.H. 105-125.

Samarcand attacked by the Khacan, 112 A.H.

Joneid sacrifices Saurat and garrison of Samarcand.



A.H. 105-
125.

Joneid
forces his
way to
Samar-
cand,
ix. 112 A.H.

midst of the burning grass, hidden by the clouds of dust raised by his horse. There, part enveloped in the flames, and part slain by the sword, ten or eleven thousand perished. The remnant escaped to a supposed friendly chieftain, who betrayed them to the Khacan. They were all but seventeen cruelly massacred; and in the end, but three out of the 12,000 got safely away. Having thus sacrificed Saurat, Joneid seized the opportunity to emerge from his retreat, but coming on the flaming jungle he again retired; and then the Khacan came down upon him. In this strait, he proclaimed that if the slaves of his camp would fight with him, they should have their liberty; and they did fight with such prodigious bravery, that Joneid was able to force his way to Samarcand. He had not, however, been long there when tidings came that the Khacan now threatened Bokhara. So leaving a garrison behind, he fought his way back, carrying with him the families of the annihilated force, who were sent safely on to Merve. The Caliph was deeply affected by the loss of Saurat and his army; and reinforced Joneid with five-and-twenty thousand troops from Irac¹.

Trans-
oxiana,
113-115
A. H.

Fall of
Joneid,
116 A.H.

With the help of these reinforcements and the able generals with whom he surrounded himself, Joneid succeeded during the next two or three years in restoring order beyond the Oxus². But he had no sooner done so than (such was the caprice of the rulers of the day) he was ignominiously deposed for no other reason than that he had married a daughter of the rebel Zeid, son of Mohallab; and Asim, an enemy of his, was appointed in his place. Joneid at the moment lay sick of a fatal illness; but Hisham was so enraged at the alliance he had formed, that, aware of his condition, he bade Asim, if breath still remained, to put the dying man to torture. Death happily

¹ The campaign of Joneid is told with much fervour by the historians: prodigies were seen in the sky at the battle of the defile, a pavilion in the heavens, smell of musk on the field of the slain, &c. Joneid, in reporting his defeat to Hisham, laid the blame on Saurat for not staying, as he had ordered him, by the stream which lay between them: but it would seem unjustly.

² Above all others Joneid knew how to select his men, and his generals are described as masters of war each in his own department.



released Joneid from the hands of the new governor; who vented his spleen, according to the wont of the day, on those who had held office under his unfortunate predecessor. As one result of this harsh treatment, a leader named Harith raised the standard of revolt, with the Kharejite cry, 'To the law and to the testimony and the will of the people.' He possessed himself of Balkh and all the surrounding country. Then followed by 60,000 Arabs, chiefly of Azd and Temim descent, he unwisely advanced on Merve, where deserted by many of his followers, he suffered defeat and loss, and with the remnant was forced to recross the Oxus. Notwithstanding, several thousand Arabs still followed his banner, and the provinces in Central Asia, owing to the inaction of Asim, remained long in a state of revolt.

A.H. 105-125.

Rebellion of Harith.

After a year of misgovernment and mishap, Asim was deposed, and Asad again appointed to Khorasan¹. His hand was soon felt in the reduction of the country, and the defeat of Harith and other rebellious leaders. The followers of Harith came to a grievous end. A party of his relatives and their dependants were by Asad's troops captured in a fort, and sold, noble-born Arabs with the rest, as slaves to the highest bidder in the bazaar of Balkh. In another fortress, 450 dying of thirst had to surrender at discretion. The chiefest of these, fifty in number, were beheaded. The rest were, by Asad's order, divided into three lots, of which one was slain, a second had hands and legs both cut off, while the third their hands only. Such was the barbarity of Asad. Harith himself effected his escape; and (a thing hitherto unheard of in Islam) joined himself to the pagan Turk.

Asad re-appointed, 117 A.H.

Balkh, which must have suffered badly throughout the insurrection, was now rebuilt and beautified by Barmek (father of the Barmecides) and a cantonment laid out in its vicinity². An exchequer, with offices of civil and military administration, was established at this new capital of Balkh made capital of Central Asia, 118 A.H. 736 A.D.

¹ The appointment of Viceroy was in the gift of his brother Khalid, governor of Irac. Khorasan seems sometimes to have been thus immediately under Irac, at others administered direct from Damascus.

² The troops had previously been cantoned at Barucan, two parasangs off.



A.H. 105— the provinces in Central Asia, which thus settled down
125. into comparative order. Asad now set on foot a campaign
into Khottal, which the Khacan hearing of, marched, with
Harith in his train, upon Balkh. He had surprised Asad's
advanced column, taking the camp with much spoil and all
the women, when Asad came up just in time to save the
force from being cut to pieces, and a parley ensued.
The Khacan, interpreted through one of Harith's followers,
charged Asad with the lust of conquest in seeking to wrest
from him Khottal, which had been his people's for genera-
tions past: 'Rest satisfied,' he said, 'with what is beyond
the river to the south, for that alone is yours.' The con-
ference ended without result; and Asad, not prepared for
battle, retired to winter at Balkh, and the Khacan to
Takharistan.

Asad beats
Khacan
and Harith,
119 A.H.

In the following spring Asad went forth again with a
strong army, completely routed the Khacan, and rescued
from captivity all the Moslem prisoners, male and female.
The enemy fled to Takharistan, from whence the Khacan,
supported by Harith, was about to attack Samarcand, when
he was waylaid and killed by one of his chiefs with whom
he had a quarrel. The joy at Damascus was unbounded.
Hisham refused to believe the good tidings till confirmed
by a second messenger; and then he prostrated himself in
thanksgiving before the Lord.

Death of
Asad.
Nasr
pacifies
Trans-
oxiana.
120 A.H.

In the following year Asad died, fortunately just before
the fall of his brother Khalid, or he would have shared in
the evils that befell him¹. Nasr, who succeeded, was a
wise and able ruler. He carried his arms into Ferghana.
The task was now comparatively easy; for since the fall of
the Khacan, the Turcoman hordes had broken up into
parties, which offered no effective resistance. By the pro-
mulgation of a general amnesty, the Soghdians were
brought back to their allegiance. And so after having
been so long harassed by rapine and war, the provinces
in Central Asia at last enjoyed repose.

In Sind and Western India there is little to record of

¹ The immediate cause of his death was indulgence in pears, brought as a
rare present from Herat,—the first apparently which the Moslems had seen.



progress during the present reign. Joneid, the governor, afterwards transferred to Merve, made some successful raids in the East; but he injured the Moslem name by warring against Jeishaba, an Indian prince, who, notwithstanding his profession of the faith, was made prisoner in a sea-fight and put to death. His brother set out for Kufa to lodge complaint against this unjust attack, when he too was caught on the way in the tyrant's toils and put to death. The result of such treatment was that under his successor, a general revolt was made against a rule hateful to the Indians; and so it became necessary to found in the tract bordering on the Indus, two strongly fortified garrisons, *Mahfuzah* and *Mansurah*¹. By these the surrounding country was long held in check, and forward movement from them made into the rich provinces of the Deccan.

A.H. 105-125.

Sind and India,
107 A.H.
725 A.D.

Against the Greeks there was as usual a yearly campaign. The Byzantine empire being at this time weakened by opposition to the iconoclastic energy of Leo, the Moslems were, upon the whole, more successful here than elsewhere. But fortune was varied by severe reverses; and on one occasion a whole column of 1000 men was cut to pieces. Battâl, a famous general, took captive a Greek prince, who was sent to Jerusalem, and there, an unwonted sight, allowed to walk abroad². After a famous career, in which Battâl struck such terror throughout Asia Minor that mothers used to frighten their crying children by his name, he lost his life in a serious defeat.

Asia Minor.

Battâl, a famous general, killed,
123 A.H.

In Armenia, the conquests already achieved were retained with difficulty and not without some terrible

Armenia and Caspian border.

¹ That is, the Protected and the Victorious.

² The sight, however, might not have been so unwonted, as pilgrims still flocked thither from the West, though clad, no doubt, in pilgrim garb, and therefore not distinguishable in race or rank. The Greek prince is named Constantine, afterwards emperor; but, as the Byzantine authors say nothing, it must have been some less notable person.

Of Battâl marvellous stories are told. Falling sick on a journey, he was carried insensible into a convent, and tended by a nun. A neighbouring Patrician, angry at her attention to a Mussulman, was set upon by Battâl, who singly put his whole relinque to flight, slew the Patrician, cast his head into the convent, and carried the whole body of nuns to the army. He married the nun who had tended him, and she was known long after as 'the mother of Battâl's children.'



A.H. 105-
125.

Jarrah and
his army
slain,
112 A.H.

Maslama

Merwan's
victories,
118-122
A.H.

Reverses
in Africa,
116-124
A.H.

disasters. Peace had been restored and the country to the shore of the Caspian made tributary, when war again broke out, and Jarrah, the commander (who had been removed from Khorasan), was overtaken by hordes of Turcomans, and with his whole army destroyed. A new levy was forthwith despatched, and swelled by Ghazies on its way. The calamity was thereby retrieved; after repeated engagements, the Khizrs were driven back, and the family of Jarrah and other Moslem ladies recovered. Maslama, now sent by his brother to take the command, ravaged the country north as far as Derbend, when he too was surrounded by the Turcomans, and in the ignominious flight lost his life. The Mesopotamian border was by this defeat so seriously threatened, that Merwan¹, who was with the discomfited army, hastened in person to inform his cousin Hisham of the disaster. A great army of 120,000 men was gathered from every quarter, with which Merwan, now appointed to the command, beat back the enemy, and recovered the country as far as the Caspian Sea. The chief of the Turcomans now submitted to the terms imposed by Merwan. These among other things included the tribute of 1000 head of cattle, 500 slaves, and 500 'black-haired' girls, the first of the fair Circassian maidens that were in the future so plentifully to grace the harems of the East. In 118 and again in 122 A.H., Merwan carried the Moslem arms against the hordes to the south of the Caspian as far as Tabaristan, thus effecting a junction with Khorasan. But beyond successful raids and siege of towns, with the slaughter of the men and slavery of the women that fell into the conqueror's hands, little further is to tell.

More serious were the disasters in Africa and Spain, where the Moslem arms not only suffered frequent defeat, but, worse than all, the bond of subjection to Damascus became daily weaker. In the year 116 there was a general rising of the Berbers along the coast of Africa, caused partly by the reimposition of taxes on the Moslem converts, as though they had been heathen, and partly by the out-

¹ Grandson of Merwan I, and nephew of Abd al Melik; afterwards Merwan II, and last of the Omeyyads.



break of new Kharejite factions¹. The loyalist armies A.H. 105-125.
were again and again beaten with great loss, and victory in the end hardly won. A famous battle, known as 'the Field of idols,' was fought a few miles from Cairowan, 117 A.H., against 300,000 Berbers; the issue, long doubtful, was at last gained by the Arabs, urged forward by the 'Readers,' the cries of the women and fear of the fate that might await them². The western provinces of Africa continued all in uproar till 124 A.H., when the governor of Egypt was sent to stem the insurrection, and peace was at last restored. During this period the navy was not inactive. In the year 111 A.H. a descent was made on Sicily, and great spoil brought back; but three years after, the fleet was wrecked; and the admiral, for exposing it to the winter storms, cast into prison and publicly beaten in the streets of Cairowan. In 117 Sardinia was ravaged; and in 122, Sicily was again invaded, and Syracuse laid under tribute. A project set on foot for reducing the whole island was dropped, owing to the troubled state of Africa.

Spain, as a dependency of Africa, was closely affected Spain. by the insurrection there, and by the constant change of governors. Its rule was also distracted by the disloyalty of the Berber population, which streamed across the strait, and vastly outnumbered the Arabs, who, as elsewhere, were divided among themselves by their chronic tribal enmity. Elements of trouble thus rife all round produced the natural result of disorder and revolt.

Anbasa, appointed to the government early in this reign, Campaign in France, 107 A.H. 725 A.D. occupied himself at first in restoring order within the Peninsula. Afterwards he crossed the Pyrenees, with the view of restoring the shattered prestige of the Moslem arms in France. Carcassone was stormed; Nismes fell

¹ A new branch arose, called from its founder Soffarides. These and the other sects that swarmed along the coast recognized the claim neither of the Hashimites nor of any other to the Caliphate, but were pure theocrats, or it may be socialists.

² '180,000 were counted on the battle-field; there was no such battle since the days of Bedr as the battle of the Place of idols.' Another engagement was named 'the battle of the Nobles, from the vast number of Arab chiefs slain in it.' It would be unprofitable to follow these campaigns farther in their wearisome and often fabulous detail.



A.H. 105-
125.

Abd al
Rahman,
113 A.H.
Over-
thrown by
Charles
Martel,
ix. 114 A.H.
Oct.,
732 A.D.

into his hands; the south of France was overrun; the churches and convents despoiled. Shortly after, he was killed; and the restless state of Spain prevented further action for the time. Some six years after, Abd al Rahman, again appointed to command, renewed offensive operations, and chastised Abu Nesa, an Arab chief, who had rebelled and joined Count Eudo¹. In the following year he marched from Spain with an enormous force, and overran the land as far as Poitiers. It was then that Charles Martel, in answer to the bitter cry of Eudo for help, hurried south to stem the sweeping Moslem wave. Between Tours and Poitiers the armies met; the field was hotly contested, but at last the invaders were driven back and fled in confusion, leaving Abd al Rahman dead on the field. Next morning, the conqueror, ready to renew the conquest, found not a single soldier within sight; all had disappeared². The fate of France, perhaps of Christendom, hung on the issue of that day. And in God's good providence Christendom was saved.

Further
campaign
in France,
116-119
A.H.
734-737
A.D.

Two years later, Ocba, son of Hajjaj, returned to the charge, and effecting a junction with a body of Frank nobles hostile to Eudo, again invaded France. Arles, Avignon, and other places were surrendered into his hands, Valencia and Lyons besieged, Burgundy and Dauphiné ravaged as far as the Rhone. But Charles Martel, freed now from the Saxon war, again came to the rescue, reconquered Avignon, and drove the Arabs back as far as Narbonne. Hostages were then taken from the disloyal chiefs of Southern France, not again to make common cause with the enemy. Ocba died soon after, in the midst of Spanish anarchy. One general after another usurped command. The Berbers sought to be independent of the Arabs, and the Arabs were split up amongst themselves. Order was not restored till after the death of Hisham. Meanwhile the Christians in the mountainous regions of the North,

Misrule in
Spain.

¹ Abu Nesa is changed by European writers to Munuza.

² Ramzan 114, or Oct. 732. The victory is ascribed to the Franks finding their way to the enemy's camp, when the invaders, fearing the loss of their spoil, hurried back to save it.



profiting by the misrule elsewhere, maintained their independence¹. A.H. 105-125.

Such was the long and chequered reign of Hisham,—with all his demerits, if we except occasional outbreaks of cruel tyranny,—one of the most exemplary of the Caliphs either before or after. It was not his fault that the empire, already undermined, continued sinking. Abbasside emissaries on the one hand, and Kharejite theocrats on the other, labouring in the dark, left no stone unturned to overthrow the dynasty, casting the blackest and often undeserved obloquy upon it. His virtues failed to arrest the downward progress. The archives of state were during his time kept with a scrupulous care unequalled in any other reign. There was no extravagance, and he left the imperial treasury full. Indeed, it was unwillingness to scatter largesses, and parsimony degenerating often into a mean and miserly habit, that injured his popularity and impaired his influence². As an instance of his justice, he refused to let a Christian be punished for having chastised a Moslem servant, and chided his son for urging it. Scandalized at the dissolute character of his nephew Welid, the heir-apparent, who even on the pilgrimage to Mecca indulged in wine and hounds,—abomination to the true believer³,—he had some thoughts of superseding him by his own son, till he found that he was little better. Welid was not only intemperate in his life, but impatient of control, and insolent in his attitude towards his uncle; and so leaving the Court betook himself to a country retreat in Palestine. Hisham removed from him his evil advisers, and imprisoned his secretary, after

Dissolute character of Welid, heir-apparent.

¹ As regards the invasion of France, the Arabian authorities are very brief. I have borrowed largely from Weil and Reinaud.

² As a specimen of his meanness, a man is said once to have brought as an offering two rare and beautiful birds, expecting a present in return. 'What shall I give thee?' said the Caliph. 'Whatever thou pleasest,' he replied. 'Then take one of the birds for thine own.' He chose the most beautiful. 'So thou art leaving me the worst of the two,' said the Caliph; 'I will keep them both.' And he ordered him the shabby gift of a few silver pieces.

³ This was nine years before Hisham's death. The wild youth had even thought of pitching a pavilion hard by the Kaaba wherein to have a carousal with his boon companions; but was dissuaded from the mad design. The tale is almost incredible, and may have been invented or coloured by Abbasside historians, always ready to blacken this dynasty. But no doubt he was bad enough.



A.H. 105-
125.

inflicting stripes upon him. Welid, resenting the indignity, addressed the Caliph a satire breathing hatred and contempt. He remained in his retreat during the rest of the reign.

Hisham
refrained
from re-
viling Aly.

When Hisham was on pilgrimage, the year after his accession, he refrained in the public services from the customary imprecation on the name of Aly. He was urged by one of Othman's descendants to 'resume it;—'This is the holy place,' he said, 'and it becomes the Commander of the Faithful to rescue the memory of the murdered Caliph in the same.' Hisham, displeased at his words, replied,—'I come not here to revile any one, nor to curse; but to perform the rites of pilgrimage.' On another occasion having unadvisedly reviled a courtier, he was much

Occasional
acts of
cruelty.

distressed, and humbly made apology. Although thus in general disposition mild and upright, the reader will remember instances in which he was severe and cruel, not to say unjust, towards lieutenants who had fallen under his displeasure. One heretic he caused to be put to death for denying that the Coran was uncreate. Another, who rejected the doctrine of inspiration, was by his command impaled after his limbs had first been cut asunder. There is the less doubt about such accounts, for though handed down by the unfriendly pen of Abbasside writers, they would not be regarded by them as discreditable to the Omeyyad race, but rather as meritorious acts of faith.

Death of
Hisham,
iv. 125 A.H.
Feb., 743
A.D.

Damascus was much exposed to epidemic plague, and to avoid contagion the Caliphs with their families were in the habit of seeking the purer air of the desert. Such favourite retreat was Rusafa, a city adorned with Roman buildings near to Kinnisrin. There Hisham spent much of his time; and there he died of quinsey in the 20th year of his reign, aged 56.



CHAPTER LVI.

WELID II, AND YEZID III.

A.H. 125-126. A.D. 743-744.

THESE two brief reigns contributed nothing but disaster 125 A.H.
743 A.D. to the Omeyyad cause and to the empire at large.

The tidings of his uncle's death were received by Welid Accession
of Welid II. with indecent delight. Notorious profligacy and incapacity notwithstanding, he succeeded without opposition to the throne. He made haste to send and seize the property of the late Caliph's relatives and favourites and to treat them with every indignity. Hisham's son Soleiman was beaten, shaven, exiled, and cast into prison. The well-filled treasury was quickly emptied by largesses to his courtiers and increased pay to the soldiery. Such free hand, and a generous provision for the blind and infirm, gained for Welid a certain degree of popularity. But his intemperate Dissolute
and pro-
fane. and dissolute life caused great scandal throughout the nation. Besides such conventional profanities as wine, music, and hounds, his debauched habits alienated from him the regard of all the better classes. He was accused of tampering with the virtue of his predecessor's harem, and even darker vices were bruited abroad. To make matters worse, he appointed two sons of tender age his successors, and such as refused the oath of allegiance were imprisoned. The discontent rose to such a pitch, that even the Omeyyads plotted against him and encouraged Yezid, another grandson of Abd al Melik, to seek his downfall.

Khalid, the former governor of Kufa, having escaped the



A.H. 125-
126.

Khalid
tortured to
death by
Yusuf.

tyranny of Yusuf, was now living at Damascus. Loyal to the throne, he refused to join the conspirators: and fearing that the Caliph might be waylaid on an intended pilgrimage to Mecca, dissuaded him from attempting the journey. The Caliph, angry because Khalid did not tell him more of the suspected intrigues abroad, and also declined to do homage to his sons, had him beaten and cast into prison; and he farther revived against him the demand for arrears of revenue which Hisham had allowed to drop. Yusuf, still bent on the ruin of Khalid, now saw his opportunity, and visiting Damascus with large gifts for the Court, 'bought' his victim from Welid at the price of that demand, amounting to fifty million of pieces. The unfortunate Khalid was then carried back to Kufa, where he expired under the barbarous treatment of Yusuf, and was buried with indignity¹.

Yezid, son
of Welid I,
rebels
against
Welid II,
vi. 136 A.H.
April, 744
A.D.

The treatment of Khalid kindled the indignation of the Yemen stock from which he sprang. Verses taunting these with cowardice in suffering their kinsman to be thus trampled under foot, were freely circulated, and roused an intense excitement against the Caliph. His cousin Yezid had by this time gained a large following. Abbas his brother, and also Merwan, commanding in Armenia, both endeavoured to dissuade him from his traitorous design, which they foresaw must hasten the downfall of their dynasty. But he persisted; and now supported by the Yemenite malcontents, who flocked around and saluted him as Caliph, he raised the standard of rebellion, and marched upon Damascus. The Court and chief officers were mostly away in the country, to avoid the pestilential air of the capital, and so Yezid easily possessed himself of the treasury. Then with its contents bribing the soldiery, he despatched a body of troops against Welid. The wretched Caliph, enjoying for the moment a retreat in the south of Syria, with but a small following for his

¹ According to some traditions, he had his legs broken, and the rack drawn over his chest, under which he died. His mother was a captive Greek who never embraced Islam. Khalid built a church or convent for her, which made him unpopular with strict believers.



defence, took refuge in a neighbouring fortress. Abbas, A.H. 125-126. brother of the conspirator, was on his way to support the Caliph, when he was taken by the rebels and forced to join their standard. ^{Welid II slain.} Welid at first sought to parley with his enemies, who would not listen, but covered him with reproaches for his ungodly life. He then issued forth and fought bravely, but was forced by overpowering numbers back into the fort. There he took the Coran into his hands and began to read its pages, saying—'It is this day, as it was in the day of Othman,' and so was slain. His head was carried to Yezid, and by him paraded in the streets of Damascus. He had reigned but little more than a year.

Yezid III now ascended his illgotten throne. From the first he had serious difficulties to contend with. Owing his victory to the Yemenites, the Modhar (or 'Northern') tribes ^{Yezid III, vi. 126 A.H. April, 744 A.D.} were naturally his enemies, and moreover, the murdered Caliph came of their stock on the mother's side. Though not a profane person, like his predecessor, he was obnoxious to the Orthodox, because he denied the doctrine of predestination. The people at large, accustomed to the sacredness of the Caliph's person, were shocked at the murder of Welid; while the army murmured at the withdrawal of the increase lately granted, which the failing treasury rendered it impossible to continue. The inhabitants of Hims, stirred by the wailing of the late Caliph's household domiciled there, plundered the house of Yezid's brother Abbas, and outraged the sanctity of his harem. Gaining over the troops, they then set out, with the cry of revenge for the blood of Welid, to attack Damascus. ^{Fighting at the capital and in Palestine.} Yezid on this despatched two strong columns under his brother Masrur, and Soleiman son of Hashim who had escaped from confinement and joined the new Caliph. These met the insurgents a few miles from the capital, and after a severe engagement, put them to flight; upon which the oath of allegiance to Yezid was taken both at Hims and Damascus. Soon after a still more serious rising took place in Palestine, which it required an army of 80,000 to put down, as well as promise of office and largess to the rebel leaders. Such



A.H. 125-126. were the weakness and confusion into which the body politic had fallen.

Troubles
at Kufa.

In Irac things were not much better. Kufa was glad to be rid of the tyrant Yusuf, who fled for his life to Syria. Arrested there in woman's disguise, he was cast with contumely into prison. His successor was hated as a godless man sharing the Caliph's heretical opinions. Yezid was therefore obliged to remove him and send in his place Ibn Omar, son of the pious Caliph, saying that the Kufans would surely reverence him for his father's sake. But troubles continued to break out, and uproar between the discordant tribes in Syria and Irac.

Khorasan:
Abbasside
canvass.

While authority was thus relaxed at home, the out-lying provinces had it much their own way. Khorasan especially was in a state of unrest, and strange apprehensions were abroad of coming change. Mohammed, the Abbasside pretender, had died the year before, aged 73¹; and now his son Ibrahim, who succeeded him as 'Imam,' sent a deputation, with tidings of the Pretender's death, to his adherents, who formed a strong and increasing body at Merve. These kissed the testament in which Ibrahim was named successor, and forwarded to him large offerings, which they had gathered for his house. But as yet the canvass was concealed from public view.

Nasr holds
on there.

Nasr still held the viceroyalty there. Welid, in his wild caprice, had directed Yusuf to summon him to Court with a rich assortment of gold and silver vessels, falcons, palfreys, games, and every kind of musical instrument, and with a following of maidens also. Nasr obeyed, but, foreseeing storms, journeyed slowly; and so, before he reached Irac, getting tidings of Yezid's rebellion, he returned to Merve. The new governor of Kufa sought to supersede him by a creature of his own; but Nasr would not give way, and so succeeded in holding on. To lighten his treasury, a dangerous temptation for the rebels all around him, he distributed the vast store of precious things and slave-girls, gathered for Welid, among his own family and retainers, as well as in payment of the troops. The old feud of Modhar

¹ See table at p. 391. His father Aly died seven years before.



and Yemen was, however, continually breaking out afresh. The Yemenites were at this time headed by one called (from his birth-place) Kirmany, and riots and fighting prevailed between the two clans. Nasr, who belonged to the Modharite faction, was hard pressed by the other. Things were composed for a time; but Nasr had dark days before him.

A.H. 125-126.

It was at this juncture that Harith, who had gone over to the Khacan, and fought under the Turcoman banner against his fellows, returned. At the instance of Nasr, who, surrounded by enemies, feared his hostility and that of the Turks, he was pardoned by the Caliph and allowed, after having for twelve years fought on the enemy's side, to come back and resume his position among his brethren; a singular instance of condonation of an apostate's crime. We shall hear more of him hereafter¹.

Harith returns to his confederates.

Yezid was at last to be threatened by an enemy far more formidable than any that had hitherto appeared. This was Merwan, grandson of Merwan I, and conqueror of the Caucasus, who had vainly sought to dissuade him from his treason against Welid. Merwan's son, on returning from the summer campaign in Asia Minor, found Mesopotamia in confusion, took possession of Harran, and wrote to his father urging him to hasten and avenge the blood of Welid. Merwan set out from Armenia, and from Harran despatched an army thence against Damascus. Yezid in alarm meanwhile sent to offer terms;—he would continue Merwan as Viceroy of all the provinces which his father and he had held, including Mesopotamia, Armenia, Mosul and Adzerbijan. Merwan accepted the offer, and did allegiance to Yezid.

Merwan attacks Yezid III.

Compromise between them.

Towards the close of the year, Yezid fell sick, and in anticipation of decease was persuaded by his heretic friends to appoint his brother Ibrahim, also an adherent of the Free-will doctrine, as his successor. Shortly after he died

Death of Yezid III, xii. 126 A.H. Oct., 744 A.D.

¹ I remember no other instance of a Moslem joining the ranks of a pagan enemy. On returning, Harith expressed his penitence, saying that during these twelve years he never had a moment's peace till he was received back into the bosom of Islam.



A.H. 125-- at Damascus, aged forty-six, having reigned but six months.
126. His mother was the grand-daughter of Yezdegird, brought
as a captive maid from Khorasan¹.

¹ Her great-grandmother was a daughter of the Caysar, married to the Chosroes, and also descended from a daughter of one of the Khacans, so that she had thus the blood of all three potentates in her veins. Yezid used therefore to sing:—

I am son of Chostroes; my father was Merwan:
Caysar was my ancestor, and so was the Khacan.



CHAPTER LVII.

IBRAHIM AND MERWAN II, LAST OF THE OMEYYADS.

126-130 A.H. 744-48 A.D.

IBRAHIM can hardly be said to have succeeded his brother Yezid. He assumed indeed the government at Damascus, and held it for three or four months. He was addressed by some as Caliph, by others only as Ameer. No general homage was done to him. It seems to have been felt that he had no proper hold on the Caliphate, as events, in point of fact, did soon determine.

Ibrahim's
partial
succession,
126 A.H.
744 A.D.

For Merwan, immediately on receiving tidings of Yezid's decease, started from Harran, his residence in Mesopotamia, with a heavy force for Syria. At Kinnisrin, the Modharite party gave up two brothers of the late Caliph who were in command there, and joined his standard. Strengthened by their adherence, he advanced on Hims, which refusing to acknowledge Ibrahim, had been invested by his troops. Raising the siege, and with an army now of 80,000 men, he continued his march upon the capital. A force had already started from thence to stay his approach. It was commanded by Soleiman son of Hisham, and composed chiefly of the Yemenite and other adherents of the late Caliph, numbered 120,000 men. Merwan's ranks, however, were full of veterans used to the field. They met in a valley between Baalbec and Damascus. Merwan demanded of his enemy the release of two sons of Welid, now in confinement at Damascus, promising that if this were done, he would spare all those concerned in their father's

Merwan
advances
on Damas-
cus.



A.H. 126-
130.

Defeats
Ibrahim's
army.

death. It was refused, and the armies joined battle. They fought all day, but Merwan, used to warlike tactics, in the evening sent a column by a circuit, which taking his enemy in the rear put them to a disastrous flight; 17,000 were left on the field and as many more taken prisoners. Damascus thus left defenceless, Ibrahim and Soleiman made their escape from thence, but not before they had plundered the treasury and put the two sons of Welid to death, also Yusuf, the late tyrant of Kufa. They had no sooner fled than the adherents of Welid rose upon the relatives of the fallen ruler with slaughter and riot, and having exhumed the body of Yezid III, impaled it at the Jabia gate of the city. Merwan, on coming up, had the bodies of Welid's sons honourably buried, as also that of Yusuf. And, there being now none with a better claim, he was saluted Caliph, and thereafter returned to his palace at Harran. Ibrahim, who survived only a year or two, was admitted to amnesty; and so also was Soleiman, who to outward appearance was reconciled, and in token thereof gave his sister in marriage to the son of Merwan.

Is saluted
Caliph as
Merwan II,
127 A.H.,
745 A.D.

Merwan
surrounded
by diffi-
culties.

His success notwithstanding, embers of disaffection were ever bursting into flame around Merwan. The support accorded him by the Modhar clan, and the sanguinary defeat inflicted by them, rankled in the breast of the Yemen tribes. Kharejite adventurers sprang up in every quarter of the empire; and the Hashimite conspiracy spread with alarming rapidity, especially in the East. Disaffection brooded over the empire. Merwan, with all his strength and warlike prowess, was ever endeavouring to stem the rising wave. His reign was one continual struggle, which, spite of all his difficulties, would without doubt have put rebellion down, had the Syrian forces held a united and faithful front; but that, tribal jealousies prevailing, they failed to do, and the result was fatal to Omeyyad rule.

Various in-
surrections.

Merwan had not returned to Harran three months, when Hims, incited by the Yemenite faction, broke out into rebellion. It was reduced, but not without great slaughter. The city walls were demolished and 500 bodies of the rebels hung around it. At the same time, the Yemen tribes



settled in and about Damascus attacked that city; they were discomfited by a detachment from Hims, and their villages in the beautiful vale of the Barada burned to the ground. Shortly after a serious insurrection breaking out in Palestine, threatened Tiberias; the rebel leader, one of Merwan's own generals in the Caucasus, was taken prisoner with three sons. The arms and legs of all four were cut off, and their bodies impaled at the gates of Damascus. Tadmor also rose against the Caliph, but was reduced and its walls demolished. And now that Syria was quieted Merwan retired to his palace at Rusafa. His two sons were declared Heirs-apparent, and, to conciliate the other branches of the Omeyyad family, married to daughters of Hisham. But he had not rested long when troubles afresh broke out.

A.H. 126-130.

It is a sign of the restlessness of Moslem feeling at this time, that besides the claims of the representatives of Abbas the uncle, and of Aly the cousin and son-in-law of Mahomet, a pretender from another branch of which we hear nothing before, now appeared at Kufa, in the person of Ibn Muavia, great-grandson of Jafar, brother of Aly, who was killed in the battle of Muta¹. This man was honoured on account of his birth by the governor Ibn Omar, who even provided for his support, but kept a watchful eye upon him. His pretensions to the throne were warmly espoused by the citizens. When after the accession of Merwan, Ibn Muavia stepped forth to claim his pretended right, crowds followed after him, so that the plain from Kufa to Hira was white with them. But immediately a force was directed against him, his brave supporters, after the fashion of the fickle city, fell away. And so, after some desultory fighting, he was allowed, with the adherents still clinging to him, to depart across the Tigris to Medain. There he succeeded in establishing a footing. Many flocked to his standard, including crowds of the servile class from Kufa. With their aid he gained possession of Holwan and the hill country east of the Tigris. In the next two years, supported by the Kharejites, he played

Rebellion of Ibn Muavia, descendant of Jafar, 126 A.H. 744 A.D.

Expelled from Kufa, 127 A.H. 745 A.D.

¹ *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 409, 410. Jafar was the son of Abd al Muttalib: see table supra, p. 391. He was killed two years before Mahomet's death.



A.H. 128-
130.

Success in
Persia,
128 A.H.
746 A.D.
Defeated
by Ibn
Hobeira,
129 A.H.
747 A.D.

Put to
death by
Abu Mus-
lim.

Rebellion
of Solei-
man,
127 A.H.
745 A.D.

a marvellous rôle in Persia, establishing his court at Istakhr, and acknowledged in Ispahan, Rei, Cumis, and other chief cities in the East. In 129, however, the Kharejites having been subdued, the followers of the pretender were dispersed by the Syrian columns, and he himself forced to fly to the far East¹. By this time Abu Muslim (of whom we shall hear more shortly) had established himself in the Hashimite interest at Merve; and Ibn Muavia, learning that he was fighting for the house of Hashim, repaired to the governor of Herat and urged his claims as a scion of the same. 'Give us thy pedigree,' said the governor, 'that we may know who thou art.' 'The son of Muavia, who was the son of Abdallah, who was the son of Jafar.' But *Muavia*, as the reader will understand, was a name of evil omen to a Hashimite; and so the answer ran, — 'Abdallah we know, and Jafar we know; but as for *Muavia*, it is a name we know not of.' 'My grandfather,' explained the fugitive, 'was at the court of Muavia when my father was born, and the Caliph bade him call the infant by his name, and for that received the gift of 100,000 dirhems.' — 'An evil name, verily, for a small price,' was the reply; 'we recognize thee not.' On the matter being reported to him, Abu Muslim bade them release the rest of the party: but Ibn Muavia was too dangerous a fugitive as a descendant of Abu Talib, to be spared, and so, by command of the Abbasside viceroy, he was smothered under a mattress, and buried at Herat, where, says the historian, his tomb has become a place of pilgrimage. Abu Muslim had cause to rue the cruel deed.

No sooner had Ibn Muavia quitted Kufa, than a serious rebellion broke out in Irac under a Kharejite leader named Dhahhak. To suppress this, Merwan gathered a force at Kirkesia to be led by Yezid ibn Hobeira². But as it was assembling, 10,000 of the number, Yemenites from Syria, conspired against the Caliph, and persuaded the ungrateful Soleiman, by the prospect of the throne, to put himself at

¹ His following must still have been great, as 40,000 are said to have been taken prisoners, but released by Ibn Hobeira.

² Yezid was son of Omar ibn Hobeira, murdered by Khalid (p. 391); but like his father he is ordinarily called simply Ibn Hobeira.



their head. Crowds of disloyalists flocked to his banner at Kinnesrin, and Merwan had to recall Ibn Hobeira from pursuit of Dhahhak to oppose the army, now swelled to 70,000, led by this new and formidable rival. After a heavy battle, Soleiman was completely defeated, losing his sons and 30,000 men; for Merwan would allow no quarter nor prisoners to be taken. Soleiman fled to Hims; and on his followers being again beaten, escaped to Dhahhak. Merwan was still held back from attacking the Kharejites by Hims, which, having thrown off its allegiance, had to be besieged. Though surrounded by eighty catapults, which threw shot day and night over the walls, it held out for ten months, but at last capitulated.

A. H. 126-130.

Defeated; joins Dhahhak.

Hims besieged.

Meanwhile Irac was in a state of dangerous rebellion. After the expulsion of Ibn Muavia, the never-ending feud of Yemen and Modhar broke out with redoubled violence at Kufa,—the latter clan siding naturally with Merwan's governor, the former with his ousted predecessor, the Son of Omar, who took possession of Hira; and thus for four months a civil war was kept up between Kufa and its suburb. Dhahhak, who with a large body of Kharejites and Soffarides had taken advantage of the troubled times to ravage Mesopotamia, now hearing of this state of things, seized the opportunity for attacking Kufa; and, although both sides joined to resist him, they were beaten and the invaders took possession of the city. Ibn Omar fled to Wasit, but after three months he gave in and joined Dhahhak, in whose ranks he found Soleiman also. Dhahhak had now been above a year and a half master of the greater part of Irac when, thus reinforced, he was invited by the men of Mosul to take possession of their city, which he did. Merwan, still at Hims, sent his son Abdallah with a column of 8000, to hold him in check; but he had no sooner, with this view, thrown himself into Nisibin, than Dhahhak besieged him there with an army of 100,000. Hims having surrendered, it was now high time for Merwan himself to take the field; and this he did with all the force at his disposal. The two armies met near Mardin: the battle raged all day and

Rebellion of Dhahhak, 127 A. H. 745 A. D.

Beaten by Merwan II. End of 128 A. H. 746 A. D.



A. H. 126-
180.

who retakes
Mosul,
129 A. H.
747 A. D.

Various
Kharejite
risings.

well on into the night, when search being made on the field, the body of Dhahhak, who with 6000 sworn followers dismounted to fight to the death, was found pierced through with twenty wounds. Next day, battle renewed, the leader of the Kharejites, by a wild onset on the imperial centre, placed Merwan in such peril, that he fled for several miles, but returning found that the wings holding firm, the enemy had been completely routed¹. Having sent the rebel's head all round Mesopotamia, Merwan pursued the Kharejites, who still held together 40,000 strong, to Mosul, and after several months' fighting drove them across the Tigris and dispersed them in the East. Soleiman escaped, but only to meet his end at the hands of the coming dynasty². Irac was still in the hands of the rebels; and it was not till the middle of 129 A. H., that Ibn Hobeira, after more fighting, expelled them from Kufa and Bussorah. Though order was thus at last restored to the nearer parts of the empire, the Kharejites had entire possession of Azerbaijan, from which they drove out the imperial troops. Throughout Arabia also they more or less prevailed, and Abu Hamza their leader was so powerful that at one time he had possession of both the Holy cities; and the Caliph was obliged to send a large force to restore order there. Though Abu Hamza appeared at the Pilgrimage with 700 followers against the Omeyyads, clad in black and with black banners the emblem of the Abbassides, yet as a Kharejite he was equally opposed to the Hashimite pretender; for neither the Omeyyad nor yet for the Abbasside race did he profess any partiality or respect, but rather for the memory of Abu Bekr and Omar. It will thus appear that these Puritan covenanters, all over the empire, if not in the

¹ We are told that after this engagement, *battle in line* was given up, and fighting carried on by battalions (*karâdis*).

² We may here follow Soleiman to his end. He escaped with his family and retainers to Sind, and eventually presented himself, as an enemy of the Omeyyads, before the Hashimite Caliph, who at the first received him graciously. One of his courtiers seeing this recited verses warning the Caliph against appearances, and the danger of sparing any Omeyyad. Thereupon he retired, and shortly after gave orders for Soleiman, like the rest of his race, to be put to death.



ascendancy, were yet powerful enough, even where baffled, A. H. 126-130. to confuse and often paralyze the government.

In the West, as elsewhere, the administration was weak and unsettled. The governors throughout Africa had to keep up a continual contest against the Berbers and the Kharejites. In Spain, the Kharejite element was weak, and the Hashimite unknown; but in all other respects, Syria repeated itself in the Peninsula. The Arabs flocking thither in vast multitudes were taught to forget their native land, or rather to reproduce it in the West. Spain became to them a second home. The landscape of the Peninsula, to the Bedouin imagination, conjured up the lands of Syria and of Palestine, and the Bedouins seemed to nestle again in the scenes of their childhood. 'Thus,' we read, that 'the Arabs spread themselves over the land; the men of Damascus settled in Albera because of its likeness to their native vale, and called it Damascus;' and so on with those who had come from Tadmor, Hims, Kinnesrin and other cities of the East¹. But with the similitude of the old country, arose also its wretched feuds. Yemen fought against Modhar, and Modhar against Yemen. The contest was maintained even more fiercely than against the infidel, till at last they agreed to appoint a neutral chief of the Coreish. But even this failed, and for some months, there being no Ameer, anarchy was rife. Then they settled to have an Ameer one year from the Modhar, and the next from the Yemen tribe. But at the end of the first term the Modharite ruler refused to resign. And so things went on in the distracted land, till, as we shall see, Spain slipped entirely from the grasp of the eastern Caliphate.

Spain gradually slipping from Eastern control.

At various periods, the Greeks made inroads upon the border lands of Asia Minor and Syria, which Merwan, with trouble on his hands at home, had no means

Growing difficulties.

¹ Other places are mentioned, thus:—'The men of Hims settled in Ishbelia, and called it Hims; of Kinnesrin, in Jian, and called it Kinnesrin; of Jordan, in Berea, and called it Jordan; of Palestine, in Shadzuna, and called it Palestine; of Egypt, in Todmir, and called it Egypt, from its similitude to the same;' and so on.