

THE
LIFE OF MAHOMET

FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

BY

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PREFACE

TO
THE PRESENT EDITION

EIGHTEEN years have passed since the last edition of this Book was sent to press. Having in that period studied much that bears on the subject, I have made free use of a New edition to introduce alterations wherever advisable, as well as to omit certain passages which unduly burdened the page, and in some instances may have embodied speculations at the best but conjectural.

The original work was published in 1861 in four volumes, with profuse notes and references, also with introductory chapters on the 'Early History of Arabia' and an Essay on the 'Sources for the Biography of Mahomet—the Coran and Tradition.' In the Second edition most of these were omitted, and the Essay was removed to the close of the Volume. But as the value of a history depends entirely on the credibility of the evidence on which it is based, I have placed the Essay on the subject at the beginning of the present volume.

W. M.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY: 1894.

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION

THE present volume is an abridgment of the 'LIFE OF MAHOMET' published in four volumes in 1861. The introductory chapters on the pre-Islamite history of Arabia, and most of the notes, with all the references to original authorities, have been omitted. The text, though here and there slightly enlarged, and throughout amended, is in both editions substantially the same.

The chapter on the Coran and Tradition has been retained as an Appendix, with the view of showing to those interested what reliance may be placed on the materials for this history.

If the reader should wish to verify the authority for any particular statement, I must ask him to consult the references which have been freely given in the larger edition.

W. M.

SIMLA: 1876.

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ARABIAN CALENDAR.

Arabian Months	Corresponding Months	
Moharram	April	<p>The Arabian month is lunar, and the year was originally corrected by the intercalation of a month every third year. The reckoning was thus luni-solar until, at the Farewell pilgrimage, Mahomet, by abolishing intercalation, made the Mussulman or <i>Hegira</i> year a purely lunar one.</p> <p>This table gives the months as they stood at the time of Mahomet's flight to Medina, and they were so maintained, by intercalation, with little variation till the Farewell pilgrimage. After that the year is of course shorter by about eleven days than the solar year.</p> <p>The calculation is according to M. C. de Perceval.</p>
Safar	May	
Rabi I.	June	
Rabi II.	July	
Jumâd I.	August	
Jumâd II.	September	
Rajab	October	
Shabân	November	
Ramadhan	December	
Shawwâl	January	
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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I.

SOURCES FOR THE BIOGRAPHY OF MAHOMET. THE CORAN AND TRADITION.

CONFIDENCE in a narrative must vary with the medium through which it has been transmitted. The exploits of Hercules carry less conviction than the feats of the heroes of Troy ; while, again, the wanderings of Ulysses and the adventures of the early founders of Rome, are regarded with incomparably less trust than the history of the Peloponnesian war or the fortunes of Julius Cæsar. Thus there are three great divisions of ancient narrative. **Legendary** tales are based upon visionary materials, and it is doubtful whether they shadow forth facts or only myths and fancies. **Tradition** and the rhapsodies of bards have for their object actual or supposed events ; but the impression of these events is liable to become distorted from the imperfection of the vehicle which conveys them. It is to **contemporary** history alone, or to history deriving its facts from contemporary records, that we accord a reliance which, proportioned to the means and the fidelity of the observer, may rise to absolute certainty.

Ancient story, legendary, traditional, or contemporary

The narrative which we now possess of the origin of Islam does not belong exclusively to any one of these classes. It is *legendary*, for it contains multitudes of pure myths, such as the 'Light of Mahomet,' and the 'Cleansing of his Heart.' It is *traditional*, since the main material of the story was handed down by oral recitation not generally recorded until Islam had attained to a full growth. But it possesses also some of the elements of *History*, because there are certain contemporary records of undoubted authenticity, to which we can refer. Moreover, Moslem tradition is of a peculiar and systematic character, bearing in some respects an authority superior to that of common tradition.

Rise of Islam belongs to all three classes

From such imperfect and incoherent materials it might be

supposed difficult, if not impossible, to frame a uniform and consistent biography of the Arabian Prophet, the various points of which shall be supported by sufficient evidence or probability. It will be my attempt to elucidate this topic ; to inquire into the available sources for such a narrative ; and the degree of credit to which they are severally entitled.

Sources specified

We have two main sources from which to draw materials for the life of Mahomet and rise of Islam—the CORAN and TRADITION. Two minor classes may be added, namely, contemporary documents and Arab poetry ; but these have been, for the most part, transmitted also by tradition, and may with propriety be treated as coming under the same head. What dependence, then, can be placed on these sources ? What is their individual merit as furnishing historical evidence, and what their comparative value in relation to each other ? The solution of these questions will form the subject of this Essay.

Value, absolute and comparative

CORAN. How preserved during Mahomet's lifetime

The CORAN consists exclusively of the revelations or commands which Mahomet professed, from time to time, to receive through Gabriel, as a message direct from God ; and which, under alleged divine direction, he delivered to those about him.¹ At the moment of inspiration or shortly after, each passage was recited by Mahomet before the friends or followers who happened to be present, and was generally committed to writing by some one amongst them, at the time or afterwards, upon palm-leaves, leather, stones, or such other rude material as conveniently came to hand.² These divine messages continued throughout the three

¹ According to the orthodox doctrine, every syllable of the Coran is of divine origin, eternal and ' uncreate ' as the Deity itself. Some of the earliest rhapsodies, indeed (as the 91st, 100th, 102nd, and 103rd Suras), do not seem to have been intended as revelations at all. But when Mahomet's die was cast of assuming the Most High as the immediate speaker, then these earlier Suras also came to be regarded as emanating directly from the Deity. Hence Mahometans rigidly include *every word* of the Coran, at whatever stage delivered, in the category of ' Thus saith the Lord.' And it is one of their arguments against our Scriptures, that they are not exclusively oracles professing to proceed directly from the mouth of God.

² The Prophet himself neither read nor wrote. His being an *Ummy* (unlearned) is held to enhance the marvel of his revelation. At Medina, he had many Arabic amanuenses; some of them occasional as Aly and Othman, others official as Zeid ibn Thâbit, who also learned Hebrew for the purpose. In Wakidy's collection of despatches, the writers are named, and they amount to fourteen. Some say there were four-and-twenty followers whom Mahomet used as scribes; others as many as forty-two. In his early Meccan life, he could not have had these facilities; but even then Khadija, Waraca, Aly, or Abu Bekr, who could all read, might have recorded his revelations. At Medina, Obey ibn Kab is mentioned as one who used to do so. Another, Abdallah (Abu Sarh), was excepted from the Meccan amnesty,

and twenty years of his prophetic life, so that the last portion did not appear till near the time of his death. The canon was then closed; but the contents during the Prophet's lifetime were never as a whole systematically arranged or even collected together. We have no certain knowledge how the originals were preserved. That there did not exist any special depository for them, is evident from the mode in which, after Mahomet's death, the various fragments had to be sought for. Much of the Coran possessed only a temporary interest, arising out of circumstances which soon ceased to be important; and it is doubtful whether the Prophet intended such passages to be used for public or private worship, or even maintained in currency at all. Such portions it is little likely he would take any pains to preserve. Whether he retained under his own eye and custody the more important parts, we have no indication; perhaps he regarded them as sufficiently safe in the current copies, guarded by the miraculous tenacity of the Arab memory. The later, and the more important, revelations were probably left with the scribes who recorded them, or laid up in the habitation of some one of the Prophet's wives.¹ However this may have been, it is very certain that, when Mahomet died, there was nowhere any deposit of the complete series, and it may be doubted whether the *original* transcripts themselves were anywhere preserved.

But the preservation of the various Suras, during the lifetime of Mahomet, was not altogether dependent on any such archives. The divine revelation was the corner-stone of Islam. The recital of a passage from it formed an essential part of daily prayer public and private; and its perusal and repetition were enforced as a duty and privilege fraught with religious merit. Such is the universal voice of early tradition, and may be gathered also from the revelation itself. The Coran was accordingly committed to memory more or less by *every* adherent of Islam, and the extent

Committed
to memory
by early
Moslems;

because he had falsified revelations dictated by the Prophet before the Flight.

It is also evident that the revelations were recorded, because they are called in the Coran itself *Kitāb*, i.e. 'what is written' or 'Scriptures.' The name *Coran* signifies simply 'recitation,' and does not necessarily imply a written original.

¹ If the originals were retained by Mahomet himself, they must needs have been in the custody of one of his wives; since at Medina the Prophet had no special house of his own, but dwelt by turns in the abode of each of his wives. Omar committed his exemplar (as we shall see) to the keeping of his daughter Haphsa, one of the widows of Mahomet, and this may have been done in imitation of the Prophet's own practice. The statement made by Sale, that the fragmentary revelations were cast promiscuously into a chest, is not borne out by any good authority that I have met with:

to which it could be recited was one of the chief distinctions in the early Moslem empire.¹ The custom of Arabia favoured the task. Passionately fond of poetry, but without the ready means for committing to writing the effusions of their bards, the Arabs had long been used to imprint these, as well as the tradition of genealogical and tribal events, on the living tablets of the heart. The recollective faculty was thus cultivated to the highest pitch; and it was applied, with all the ardour of an awakened spirit, to the Coran. Such was the tenacity of their memory, and so great their power of application, that several of his followers could, during the Prophet's lifetime, repeat with scrupulous accuracy the whole as then in use.²

But not in
any fixed
order of
parts

We are not, however, to assume that the entire Coran was at this period repeated in any fixed order. The present compilation, indeed, is held by the Moslems to follow the arrangement prescribed by Mahomet; and early tradition might appear to imply some known sequence.³ But this cannot be admitted; for had any fixed order been observed or sanctioned by the Prophet, it would unquestionably have been preserved in the subsequent collection. Now the Coran, as handed down to our time, follows in the disposition of its several parts no intelligible arrangement

¹ Thus, among a heap of warrior martyrs, he who had been the most versed in the Coran was honoured with the first burial. The person who in any company could most faithfully repeat the Coran was of right entitled to be the *Imam*, or conductor of the public prayers (a post ordinarily implying also military command) and to pecuniary rewards. Thus after the usual distribution of the spoils taken on the field of Cadesia, A.H. 14, the residue was divided among those who knew most of the Coran.

² Four or five such persons are named; and several others also who could very nearly repeat the whole before Mahomet's death.

³ Thus we read of certain Companions, who could repeat the whole Coran in a *given time*, which might be held to imply some usual connection of the parts; but the original tradition may have intended such portions only as were commonly used in public worship, and these may have followed, both in copying and repetition from memory, some understood order; or the tradition may refer to a later period when the order had been fixed by means of Omar's compilation. There was no fixed order observed (as with 'Lessons' in Christian worship) in the portions of the Coran recited at the public prayers. The selection of a passage was dependent on the will and choice of the Imam. Thus Abu Hureira one day took credit to himself for remembering which Sura the Prophet had read the day before; and on urgent occasions we hear of a *short* Sura being used. It is only in private recitals that the whole, or large portions, of the Coran are said to have been recited consecutively.

The common idea of the Mahometans, that the Coran was fixed by Mahomet as we have it now, originates in the tradition that Gabriel had an annual recitation of the whole Coran with the Prophet, as well as in the desire to augment the authority of the book as it now stands.

whatever, either of subject or time ; and it is inconceivable that Mahomet should have enjoined its recital invariably in this order. We must even doubt whether the number of the Suras, or chapters, was determined by Mahomet as we now have them.¹ The internal sequence at any rate of the contents of the several Suras cannot, in most cases, have been that intended by the Prophet. The constant chaotic mingling of subjects, disjoined as well by chronology as by the sense ; a portion produced at Medina sometimes immediately preceding a passage revealed long before at Mecca ; a command put in some places directly after a later one which cancels or modifies it ; or an argument suddenly disturbed by the interjection of a sentence foreign to its purport ; all this forbids us to believe that the present, or indeed any complete, arrangement was in use during Mahomet's lifetime.

On the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that several at least of the Suras are precisely the same, both in matter and order, as Mahomet left them ;² and that the remainder, though

Fragments
from which
Coran
compiled,
faithfully
preserved

¹ But there is reason to believe that the chief Suras, including all passages in most common use, were fixed and known by name or other distinctive mark. Some are spoken of, in early and well-authenticated traditions, as having been so referred to by Mahomet himself. Thus he recalled his fugitive followers at the discomfiture of Honein, by shouting to them as 'the men of the *Sura Baqr*' (i.e. Sura ii.).

Several persons are stated by tradition to have learnt by heart a *certain number* of Suras in Mahomet's lifetime. Thus Abdallah ibn Mas'ud learned seventy Suras from the Prophet's own mouth, and Mahomet on his death-bed repeated seventy Suras, 'among which were the Seven long ones.' These traditions signify a recognised division of at least some part of the revelation into Suras, if not a usual order in repeating the Suras themselves.

The liturgical use of the Suras by Mahomet must, no doubt, have in some measure fixed their form, and probably also their sequence. But I fail to follow Sprenger in his conclusions as to 'double' Suras, and Suras 'in groups' (*mathâni* and *natzair*).

² Where whole Suras were revealed at once, this would naturally be the case ; but short passages were often given out in dribblets, and even single verses, as occasion required. With regard to these, it is asserted in some traditions that Mahomet used to direct his amanuensis to enter them 'in the Sura which treated of such and such a subject.' This, if authentic (and it is probably founded on fact), would indicate that Mahomet intended the Coran to be arranged according to its matter, and not chronologically. There are also several Suras which, from the unity of subject, or from the form of composition, are evidently complete and integral. Such are the history of Joseph, Sura xii. ; and the psalm descriptive of Paradise, Sura lv., quoted in ch. iv.

The traditions just cited as to the number of Suras which some of the Companions could repeat, and which Mahomet himself repeated on his death-bed, also imply the existence of such Suras in a complete and finished form.

often resembling a mosaic of various material rudely dovetailed together, are yet composed of genuine fragments, generally of considerable length, each for the most part following the connection in which it was recited in public, and committed to memory or to paper from the mouth of the Prophet by his followers.¹ The irregular interposition and orderless disposal of the smaller fragments have indeed frequently destroyed the sequence, and produced a perplexing confusion. Still, the fact remains, that the fragments themselves were strictly and exclusively Mahomet's own composition, and were learned or recorded under his instructions; and this fact stamps the Coran, not merely as formed out of the Prophet's own *words* and *sentences*, but to a large extent as his in relation to the *context* also.

Ability to write common both at Mecca and Medina

However retentive the Arab memory, we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source. But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Coran, or nearly the whole, were during his lifetime made by the Prophet's followers. Writing was without doubt generally known at Mecca long before Mahomet assumed the prophetic office. And at Medina many of his followers were employed by the Prophet in writing his letters or despatches. Though himself delighting in the title of the 'illiterate Prophet,' and abstaining, whether from inability or design from the use of penmanship, he by no means looked with a jealous eye upon the art. The poorer captives taken at Bedr were offered their release on condition that they taught a certain number of Medina citizens to write. And although the people of Medina were not so generally educated as those of Mecca, yet many are noticed as having been able to write before Islam.² The ability thus existing, it may be safely inferred that the verses so indefatigably committed to memory would be likewise committed carefully to writing.

¹ Anecdotes are told of persons who in reciting the Coran, from an imperfect memory, or when tired, omitted passages—passing from one to another, because of the similar termination, and of others who, having been guilty of such omission, could spontaneously correct themselves. (*Homoio-teleuta* are of very frequent recurrence in the Coran, from the rhythm of the verses being often formed by the repetition of set phrases at their close, such as the attributes of God, &c.) These anecdotes certainly suppose a settled order of the parts repeated; and though the period referred to is subsequent to Mahomet's death, yet the habit of such connected repetition was most probably formed during his lifetime, and before the collection into one volume.

² Thus, to cite out of a score of instances, Wakidy says that 'Abu Abbas used to write Arabic before the rise of Islam, while as yet writing was rare among the Arabs.'

We also know that when a tribe first joined Islam, Mahomet was in the habit of deputing one or more of his followers to teach them the Coran and the requirements of the faith. We are frequently informed that they carried *written* instructions with them on the latter point, and they would naturally provide themselves also with transcripts of the more important parts of the Revelation, especially those upon which the ceremonies of Islam were founded, and such as were usually recited in the public service. Besides the reference in the Coran to its own existence in a written form, express mention is made, in the account of Omar's conversion, of a copy of the 20th Sura as used in his sister's family.¹ This refers to a period preceding, by three or four years, the emigration to Medina. If transcripts of the revelations were made, and in common use, at that early time when the followers of Islam were few and oppressed, it is certain that they must have multiplied exceedingly when the Prophet came to power, and his Book formed the law of Arabia.

Transcripts of portions of Coran common among early Moslems

But such transcripts were (like the portions committed to memory) mere fragments compiled and put together with little or no connection of subject and date. The Suras used in public worship, or for private perusal and recitation, would be those of which the greatest number of copies existed. Transcripts of the earliest Suras, and of those of evanescent interest, if extant at all, would be few in number.

But incomplete and fragmentary

Such was the condition of the text during Mahomet's lifetime, and such it remained for about a year after his death, imprinted upon the hearts of his people, and fragmentary transcripts increasing daily. The two sources would correspond closely with each other ; for the Coran, even during the Prophet's lifetime, was regarded with a superstitious awe as containing the very words of God ; so that any variations would be reconciled by a direct reference to Mahomet himself,² and after his death to the originals, or to copies, or to the memory of the Prophet's confidential friends and amanuenses.

State of Coran up to the year after Mahomet's death.

It was not till the overthrow of Moseilama, when great carnage took place amongst the Moslems at Yemama, and large numbers of the best reciters of the Coran were slain, that a misgiving arose in Omar's mind as to the uncertainty which would be experienced regarding the text, when all those who had

Coran collected, A.H. XI.-XIV. by Zeid ; his text authoritative

¹ 'The Coran, . . . none shall touch the same, excepting such as are clean.' This passage was referred to by the sister of Omar when at his conversion she refused to let him take her copy of Sura xx. into his hands.

² We meet with instances of such references made in case of doubt to Mahomet by Omar, Ibn Mas'ud, and Obey ibn Kab.

during the
Caliphate
of Omar

stored it in their memories should have passed away. 'I fear,' said he, addressing the Caliph Abu Bekr, 'that slaughter may again wax hot amongst the reciters of the Coran, in other fields of battle; and that much may be lost therefrom. Now, therefore, my advice is, that thou shouldest give speedy orders for the collection of the Coran.' Abu Bekr agreed, and thus made known his wishes to Zeid ibn Thâbit, the Prophet's chief amanuensis: 'Thou art a young man, and wise; against whom no one amongst us can cast an imputation; and thou wast wont to write down the inspired revelations of the Prophet of the Lord. Wherefore now search out the Coran, and bring it together.' So new and unexpected was the enterprise that Zeid at first shrank from it, and doubted the propriety, or even lawfulness, of attempting that which Mahomet had neither himself done nor commanded to be done. At last, yielding to the joint entreaties of Abu Bekr and Omar, he sought out the Suras and fragments from every quarter, and 'gathered them together, from date-leaves, and tablets of white stone, and from the breasts of men.'¹ By the labours of Zeid, these scattered and confused materials were within two or three years reduced to the order and sequence in which we now find them, and in which it is said that Zeid used to repeat the Coran in the presence of Mahomet. The original copy thus prepared was committed by Omar to the custody of his daughter Haphsa, the Prophet's widow. The compilation of Zeid, as embodied in this exemplar, continued during Omar's Caliphate to be the standard and authoritative text.

Recension
in Oth-
man's Cali-
phate
A.H. XXX.

But variety of expression either prevailed in the previous transcripts and modes of recitation, or soon crept into the copies which were made from Zeid's edition. The Moslem world was scandalised. The Revelation as sent down from heaven was ONE, but where was now its unity? Hodzeifa, who had warred in Armenia and Adzerbaijan and had observed the different readings of the Syrians and of the men of Irac, was alarmed at the number and extent of the variations, and warned Othman to interpose, and 'stop the people, before they should differ regarding their Scripture, as did the Jews and Christians.' The Caliph was convinced, and to remedy the evil had recourse again to Zeid, with whom he associated a syndicate of three of the Coreish.

¹ Other traditions add, fragments of parchment or paper, pieces of leather, and the shoulder and rib bones of camels and goats. Leather was frequently used for writing, and many of Mahomet's treaties and letters were recorded on it. There is a curious tradition regarding a man who used a leather letter, received from Mahomet, for the purpose of mending his bucket, and whose family were thence called the 'children of the *cobbler*.'

The original copy of the first edition was obtained from Haphsa's depository, the various readings were sought for throughout the empire, and a careful recension of the whole set on foot. In case of difference between Zeid and his coadjutors, the voice of the latter, as conclusive of the Coreishite idiom, was to be followed, and the collation thus assimilated exclusively to the Meccan dialect.¹ Transcripts were multiplied and forwarded to the chief cities in the empire, and previously existing copies were all, by the Caliph's command, committed to the flames. The original was returned again to Haphsa's custody.

The recension of Othman has been handed down to us unaltered. So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved, that there are no variations of importance—we might almost say no variations at all—to be found in the innumerable copies scattered throughout the vast bounds of the empire of Islam. Contending and embittered factions, taking their rise in the murder of Othman himself within a quarter of a century from the death of Mahomet, have ever since rent the Mahometan world. Yet but ONE CORAN has been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by all of the same Scripture in every age to the present day is an irrefragable proof that we have now before us the very text prepared by command of the unfortunate Caliph.² There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries

Which remains unaltered to the present day

¹ It is one of the maxims of the Moslem world (supported perhaps by Sura xi. 2) that the Coran is incorruptible, and that it is preserved from error and variety of reading by the miraculous interposition of God himself. In order, therefore, to escape the inconsistency of a revision, it is held that the Coran, as to external form, was revealed in *seven dialects* of the Arabic tongue, so that no change was made in the integrity of the text.

² The Moslems would have us believe that some of the *self-same copies*, penned by Othman or by his order, are still in existence. The copy which the Caliph held in his hand when he was murdered is said to have been preserved in the village of Antartus. Others hold that leaves of it were treasured up in the Mosque of Cordova, and Edrisi describes the ceremonies with which they were treated; they were finally transferred to Fez or Telemsan. Ibn Batuta, when in the fourteenth century he visited Bussorah, declares that this MS. was then in its Mosque, and that the marks of the Caliph's blood were still visible (according to tradition) at the words 'God shall avenge thee against them' (Sura ii. 138). Other of Othman's originals are said to be preserved in Egypt, Morocco, and Damascus, as well as at Mecca and Medina. The Medina copy has a note at the end, relating that it was compiled by the injunctions of Othman; and the compilers' names are also given. But it appears very unlikely that any of Othman's copies can have escaped the innumerable changes of dynasty and party to which every part of the Moslem world has been subjected. Any very ancient copy might come to be called that of Othman.

with so pure a text. The various readings are wonderfully few in number, chiefly confined indeed to differences in the vowel points and diacritical signs. But these, invented at a later date, can hardly be said to affect the text of Othman.¹

I. Was Othman's text a faithful reproduction of Zeid's?

Reasons for believing that it was so

Assuming, then, that we possess unchanged the text of Othman's recension, it remains to inquire whether that text was an honest reproduction of Zeid's, with the simple reconciliation of unimportant variations. There is the fullest ground for believing that it was so. No early or trustworthy tradition throws suspicion upon Othman of tampering with the Coran in order to support his own claims. The Shiah, indeed, of later times pretend that Othman left out certain Suras or passages which favoured Aly. But this is incredible. When Othman's edition was prepared, no open breach had taken place between the Omeyyads and the Alyites. The unity of Islam was still unthreatened. Aly's pretensions were as yet undeveloped. No sufficient object can, therefore, be assigned for the perpetration by Othman of an offence which Moslems would have regarded as one of the blackest dye. Again, at the time of the recension, there were still multitudes alive who had the Coran by heart as they had heard it originally delivered; and copies of any passages favouring Aly—had any ever existed—must have been in the hands of his numerous adherents, both of which sources would have proved an effectual check upon any attempt at suppression. Farther, the party of Aly, immediately upon Othman's death, assumed an independent attitude, and raised him to the Caliphate. Is it conceivable that, when thus arrived at power, they would have tolerated a mutilated Coran—mutilated expressly to destroy their leader's claim? Yet we find that they continued to use the same Coran as their opponents, and raised no shadow of an objection against it.² The insurgents, indeed, made it one of their complaints against Othman that he had caused the revision, and

¹ There are, however, instances of variation in the letters themselves, not confined always to difference in the dots, but extending sometimes to the *form* of the letters also; these too, however, are immaterial. This almost incredible purity of text, in a book so widely scattered over the world, and continually copied by people of different tongues and lands, is without doubt owing mainly to Othman's recension and to the official promulgation and maintenance of his edition. To countenance a various reading was an offence against the State, and as such would still to this day be punished. We need not wonder then that, with such means resorted to, perfect uniformity of text has been maintained. To compare (as the Moslems are fond of doing) their pure text with the various readings of our Scriptures, is to compare things between which there is no analogy.

² So far from objecting to Othman's revision, Aly multiplied copies of it. Among other MSS. supposed to have been written by Aly himself, one is

ordered all previous copies of the sacred volume to be burned ; but these proceedings were objected to simply as in themselves unauthorised and sacrilegious. No hint was dropped of ulterior object, or of any alteration and omission. Such supposition, palpably absurd at the time, is altogether an after-thought of the Shiah sect.

We may then safely conclude that Othman's recension was, what it professed to be, namely, the reproduction of the text of Zeid, with a more perfect conformity, it is true, to the dialect of Mecca, and the elimination of the various readings prevalent throughout the realm, but still a faithful reproduction. The most important question yet remains, viz. *Whether Zeid's collection was itself an authentic and exhaustive collection of Mahomet's Revelations.* The following considerations warrant the belief that it was authentic and in the main as complete as at the time was possible.

First.—Abu Bekr, under whose direction it was undertaken, was a sincere follower of Mahomet, and an earnest believer in the divine origin of the Coran. His faithful attachment to the Prophet's person, conspicuous for the last twenty years of his life, and his simple, consistent, and unambitious deportment as Caliph, admit no other supposition. Believing the revelations of his friend to be the revelations of God himself, his first object would be to secure a pure and complete transcript of them. A similar argument applies with equal force to Omar, under whose Caliphate the revision was completed. From the scribes employed in the compilation, to the humblest Believer who brought to Zeid his little store of writing on stones or palm-leaves, all would be influenced by the same earnest desire to reproduce the very words their Prophet had declared to be his message from the Lord. A similar guarantee existed in the feelings of the people at large, in whose soul no principle was more deeply rooted than an awful reverence for the supposed word of God. The Coran itself con-

II. Was Zeid's edition a faithful copy of Mahomet's revelations ?

Reasons for believing it was so : *First*—Sincerity and faith of Abu Bekr and early Moslems

said to have been preserved at Meshed Aly as late as the fourteenth century, which bore his signature. Some leaves of the Coran, said to have been copied by him, are now in the Lahore *Tosha-Khana* ; others in the same repository are ascribed to the pen of his son, Hosein. Without leaning on such uncertain evidence, it is sufficient for our argument that copies of Othman's Coran were notoriously *used and multiplied by Aly's partisans*, and have been so used and multiplied to the present day. Aly was, moreover, deeply versed in the Coran, and his memory (if tradition be true) would amply have sufficed of itself to detect, if not to restore, any passage that had been tampered with. Aly said of himself : ' There is not a verse in the Coran of which I do not know the matter, the parties to whom it refers, and the place and time of its revelation, whether by night or by day, whether in the plains or upon the mountains.'

tains frequent denunciations against those who should presume to 'fabricate anything in the name of the Lord,' or conceal any part of that which He had revealed. Such an action, declared to be the height of impiety, we cannot believe that the first Moslems, in the early ardour of their faith and love, would have dared to contemplate.

Second.—
Coran, as
delivered
by Maho-
met, yet
fresh in
memory of
his fol-
lowers

Second.—The compilation was made within two or three years of Mahomet's death. We have seen that some of his followers had the entire revelation (excepting perhaps some obsolete fragments) by heart; that every Moslem treasured up portions in his memory; and that there were official Reciters of it, for public worship and tuition, in all countries to which Islam extended. These formed a living link between the Revelation fresh from Mahomet's lips, and Zeid's collection. Thus the people were not only sincere in wishing for a faithful copy of the Coran, they were also in possession of ample means for realising their desire, and for testing the accuracy and completeness of the book now placed in their hands.

Third.—
It must
have corre-
sponded
with nu-
merous
transcripts
in daily use

Third.—A still greater security would be obtained from the copies of separate portions made in Mahomet's lifetime, and which must have greatly multiplied before the Coran was compiled. These were in the possession, probably, of all who could read. And as we know that the compilation of Zeid came into immediate and unquestioned use, it is reasonable to conclude that it embraced and corresponded with every extant fragment; and therefore, by common consent, superseded them. We hear of no fragments, sentences, or words omitted by the compilers, nor of any that differed from the received edition. Any such would undoubtedly have been preserved and noticed in those traditional repositories which treasured up the minutest and most trivial acts and sayings of the Prophet.

Fourth.—
Internal
evidence of
simplicity
and faith-
fulness of
compilers

Fourth.—The contents and arrangement of the Coran speak forcibly for its authenticity. All the fragments have, with artless simplicity, been joined together. The patchwork bears no marks of a designing genius or moulding hand. It testifies to the faith and reverence of the compiler, and proves that he dared no more than simply collect the sacred remains and place them in juxtaposition. Hence the interminable repetitions; the wearisome reiteration of the same ideas, truths, and doctrines; scriptural stories and Arab legends, told over and over again, with little or no verbal variation; hence also the pervading want of connection, and the startling chasms between adjacent passages. Even the frailties of the Prophet, as noticed by the Deity, have with evident faithfulness been entered in the Coran. Not less undisguised are the many passages contradicted or abrogated by later

revelations.¹ Thus the editor plainly contented himself with compiling and copying in a continuous form, but with scrupulous accuracy, the fragmentary materials within his reach. He neither ventured to select from repeated versions of the same incident, or to reconcile differences, or by the alteration of a letter to connect abrupt transitions of context, or by tampering with the text to soften discreditable appearances. In fine, we possess every internal guarantee of confidence.

But it may be objected,—If the text of Zeid was pure and universally received, how came it to be so soon deteriorated as to require, in consequence of its variations, an extensive recension? Tradition does not afford sufficient light to determine the cause of these discrepancies. They may have been due to various readings in transcripts that remained in the possession of the people, or have originated in the diverse dialects of Arabia, and different modes of pronunciation and orthography; or have sprung up naturally in the already vast domains of Islam, before strict uniformity was officially enforced. It is sufficient for us to know that in Othman's revision recourse was had to the *original* exemplar of the first compilation, and that there is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Mahomet himself gave forth and used.

While, however, it is maintained that we now have the Coran *as it was left* by Mahomet, there is no ground for asserting that passages, once put forth as inspired, may not at some subsequent period have been changed or withdrawn *by the Prophet himself*. On the contrary, repeated examples of withdrawal are noticed in tradition; and alterations (although no express instances are given) seem to be clearly implied. The Coran itself recognises the withdrawal of certain passages, after they had been promulgated as a part of the Revelation: 'Whatever verses We cancel, or *cause thee to forget*, We give thee better in their stead, or the like thereof' (Sura ii. 100).

Any passages which Mahomet, finding to be inconvenient, or otherwise inexpedient for publication, withdrew before coming into circulation, will, of course, not be found in our present Coran; nor would an altered passage remain but in its altered form. But this does not in any measure affect the value of the Coran as an exponent of Mahomet's opinions, or at least of the opinions he finally professed to hold; since what we now have,

Recension of Abu Bekr's edition, why required?

Coran may not contain some passages once revealed but subsequently cancelled,

¹ Though the convenient doctrine of abrogation is acknowledged in the Coran, yet the Mussulman doctors endeavour as far as possible to explain it away. Still they are obliged to allow that the Coran contains no fewer than 225 verses cancelled by later ones.

though possibly corrected and modified by himself, is still *his own*.

Nor some obsolete, suppressed, or ephemeral passages

It is, moreover, not impossible that verses which had been allowed to fall into abeyance and become obsolete, or the suppression of which Mahomet himself desired, may have been sought out by the blind zeal of his followers, and, with pious veneration for everything believed to be the word of God, entered in Zeid's collection. On the other hand, many early passages of ephemeral interest may, without design on the part of Mahomet, have disappeared in the lapse of time; and, no trace being left, must necessarily have been omitted from the compilation.

CONCLUSION.
Coran authentic record of Mahomet's revelations

The conclusion, which we may now with confidence draw, is that the editions of Zeid and Othman were not only faithful, but both of them, so far as the materials went, complete; and that whatever omissions there may have been, were not on the part of the compilers intentional. The real drawback to the inestimable value of the Coran as a contemporary and authentic record of Mahomet's character and actions, is the want of arrangement and connection which pervades it; so that, in inquiring into the meaning and force of a passage, no certain dependence can be placed upon adjacent sentences as the true context. But, bating this serious defect, we may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Coran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mahomet himself, and conclude with at least a close approximation to the verdict of Von Hammer: *That we hold the Coran to be as surely Mahomet's word, as the Mahometans hold it to be the word of God.*

Importance of Coran as contemporary evidence of Mahomet's words and character

The importance of this deduction can hardly be over-estimated. The Coran becomes the groundwork and the test of all inquiries into the origin of Islam and the character of its Founder. Here we have a storehouse of *Mahomet's own words recorded during his life*, extending over the whole course of his public career, and illustrating his religious views, his public acts, and his domestic character. By this standard of his own making, we may safely judge his life and actions, for it must represent either what he actually thought, or what he affected to think. And so true a mirror is the Coran of Mahomet's character, that the saying became proverbial among the early Moslems, *His character is the Coran*. 'Tell me,' was the curious inquiry often put to Ayesha, as well as to Mahomet's other widows, 'tell me something about the Prophet's disposition.' 'Thou hast the Coran,' replied Ayesha; 'art thou not an Arab, and readest the Arabic tongue?' 'Yea, verily.' 'Then why take the trouble to inquire of me? For the Prophet's disposition is no other than

the Coran itself.' Of Mahomet's biography the Coran is the key-stone.

Having gained this firm position, we proceed to inquire into the credibility and authority of the other source of early Mahometan history, viz. TRADITION. This must necessarily form the chief material for the biography of the Prophet. It may be possible to establish from the Coran the outlines and some of the details of his life, but tradition alone enables us to determine their relative position, and to weave them into the tissue of intermediate affairs.

TRADITION, the chief material of early Moslem history

Mahometan tradition consists of the sayings of the friends and followers of the Prophet, handed down by an alleged chain of narrators to the period when they were collected, recorded, and classified. The process of transmission was for the most part oral. It may be sketched as follows.

Described

After the death of Mahomet, the main employment of his followers was arms. The pursuit of pleasure, and the formal round of religious observances, filled up the intervals of active life, but afforded scanty exercise for the higher faculties of the mind. The tedium of long and irksome marches, and the lazy period from one campaign to another, fell listlessly upon a simple and semi-barbarous race. These intervals were occupied, and that tedium beguiled, chiefly by calling up the past in familiar conversation or more formal discourse. On what topic, then, would the early Moslems more enthusiastically descant than on the acts and sayings of that wonderful man who had called them into existence as a conquering nation, and had placed in their hands 'the keys both of this World and of Paradise'?

Habits of the early Moslems favoured growth of tradition

Thus the converse of Mahomet's followers would be much about him. The majesty of his character gained greatness by contemplation; and as time gradually removed him farther from them, the lineaments of the mysterious mortal who was wont to hold familiar intercourse with the messengers of heaven rose into dimmer but more gigantic proportions. The mind was unconsciously led on to think of him as endowed with supernatural power and surrounded by supernatural agency. Here was the material out of which Tradition grew luxuriantly. When there was at hand no standard of fact whereby these recitals might be tested, the Memory was aided by the unchecked efforts of the Imagination; and as days rolled on imagination gained the ascendancy.

Lapse of time invested Mahomet with supernatural attributes

Such is the influence which the lapse of time would naturally have upon the minds and the narratives of the 'COMPANIONS' of Mahomet—more especially of those who, being young when he

Superstitious reverence with which tra-

ditions of
Companions
were
regarded
by succeeding
generation

died, lived long into the next generation. And then another race sprang up who had never seen the Prophet, who looked up to his contemporaries with a superstitious reverence, and listened to their stories of him as to the tidings of a messenger from the other world. 'Is it possible, father of Abdallah! that thou hast been with Mahomet?' was the question addressed by a pious Moslem to Hodzeifa, in the Mosque of Cufa; 'didst thou really see the Prophet, and wert thou on terms of familiar intercourse with him?' 'Son of my uncle! it is indeed as thou sayest.' 'And how wert thou wont to behave towards the Prophet?' 'Verily, we used to labour hard to please him.' 'Well, by the Lord!' exclaimed the ardent listener, 'if I had been but alive in his time, I would not have allowed him to put his blessed foot upon the earth, but would have borne him on my shoulders wheresoever he listed.' On another occasion, the youthful Obeida listened to a Companion who was reciting before an assembly how the Prophet's head was shaved at the Pilgrimage, and the hair distributed amongst his followers; the young man's eyes glistened as the speaker proceeded, and he interrupted him with the impatient exclamation: 'Would that I had even a single one of those blessed hairs! I would cherish it for ever, and prize it beyond all the gold and silver in the world.' Such were the natural feelings of fond devotion with which the Prophet came to be regarded by the generation which followed the 'Companions.'

Successors
belong to
latter half
of first
century

As the tale of the Companions was thus taken up by their followers, distance began to invest it with an increasing charm, while a living faith and warm imagination were fast degenerating into superstitious credulity. This new generation is termed in the language of the patristic lore of Arabia, *Successors*. Here and there a *Companion* survived till near the end of the first century; but, for all practical purposes, they had passed from the stage long before its close. Their first *Successors*, who were in some measure also their contemporaries, flourished in the latter half of the same century, and some of the older may have survived for a time even in the second.¹

Meanwhile a new cause was at work, which gave to the tales

¹ Companions, termed *As-hâb اصحاب*; their followers, or *Successors*, *Tâbiîn طابعون*. For practical purposes, the age of Companions may be limited to the first half or three-quarters of the 7th century A.D. Thus, supposing a Companion to have reached his sixty-third year in A.D. 674, he would have been only twenty years of age at the Prophet's death, and but ten years of age at the time of the Flight. A margin of ten or twelve additional years may be left for cases of greater age and unusual memory.

of Mahomet's Companions a fresh and an adventitious importance. The Arabs, a simple and unsophisticated race, found in the Coran ample provisions for the regulation of their affairs, religious, social, and political. But the aspect of Islam soon underwent a mighty change. Scarcely was the Prophet buried when his followers issued forth from their barren Peninsula resolved to impose the faith of Islam upon all the nations of the earth. Within a century they had, as a first step, conquered every land that intervenes from the banks of the Oxus to the farthest shores of Northern Africa, and enrolled the great majority of their peoples under the standard of the Coran. This vast empire differed widely from the Arabia of Mahomet's time ; and that which sufficed for the patriarchal simplicity of the early Arabs was found altogether inadequate for the multiplying wants of their descendants. Crowded cities, like Cufa, Cairo, and Damascus, required elaborate laws for the guidance of their courts of justice : widening political relations demanded a system of international equity : the speculations of a people before whom Literature was throwing open her arena, and the controversies of eager factions on nice points of doctrine, were impatient of the narrow limits which confined them :—all called loudly for the enlargement of the scanty and naked dogmas of the Revelation, and for the development of its rudimental code of ethics.

Wants of expanding empire required enlargement of code of Coran

And yet, by the first principles of Islam, the standard of Theology, Politics, and Law was the Coran alone. By the divine Revelation, Mahomet himself ruled. To it in his teaching he always referred. From the same infallible source he professed to derive his opinions, and upon it to ground his decisions. If he, the Messenger of the Lord, and the Founder of the faith, was thus bound by the heavenly Revelation, how much more the Caliphs, his uninspired successors ! But new and unforeseen circumstances were continually arising, for which the Coran had made no provision. It no longer sufficed for the needs of society. How, then, was the deficiency to be supplied ?

Coran at first sole authoritative rule of conduct

The difficulty was resolved by adopting the CUSTOM ('SUNNAT') of Mahomet ; that is, his *sayings* and his *practice*, as supplementary of the Coran. The recitals regarding the life of the Prophet now acquired an unlooked-for value. *He* had never held himself infallible, except when directly inspired of God ; but this new doctrine assumed that a heavenly and unerring guidance pervaded every word and action of his prophetic life. Tradition was thus invested with the force of law, and with something of the authority of inspiration. It was in great measure owing to the rise of this theory, that, during the first century, the cumbrous recitals of tradition so far outstripped the dimensions of reality. The

Deficiency supplied by the SUNNAT, or sayings and practice of Mahomet

prerogative now claimed for Tradition stimulated the growth of evidence, and led to the preservation of every kind of story, spurious or real, touching the Prophet. Before the close of the century it had imparted an incredible impulse to the search for traditions, and had in fact given birth to the new profession of *Collectors*. Men devoted their lives to the business. They travelled from city to city, and from tribe to tribe, over the whole Mahometan world; sought out by personal inquiry every vestige of Mahomet's biography yet lingering among the *Companions*, the *Successors*, or their descendants; and committed to writing the tales and reminiscences with which these were wont to edify their wondering and admiring auditors. They also established in every leading city schools of tradition, in which they held lectures, and recited their Collections with the string of authorities on which they rested. Each circle of pupils took notes from their master's oral delivery; and thus the compilations of the most popular Collectors were preserved and spread abroad.

Legendary
tales of
strolling
story-
tellers

I need here only allude to another body of so-called tradition, namely, the legendary tales of the strolling minstrel or story-teller. This personage has always been popular in the East, and in the early days of Islam had special opportunities for the exercise of his vocation. As he travelled from city to city and village to village, crowds gathered around, and hung upon his lips while he recited in glowing terms some episode of the Prophet's life, his birth and childhood, the heavenly journey, or the battle of Bedr. Great latitude both in detail and colouring was allowed to these story-tellers, whose object was at once to entertain and edify. Such tales, no doubt, formed the groundwork of the biographical legends so popular all over the Mahometan world. They are still recited on special occasions (as the birth and childhood of Mahomet in the first ten days of Rabi 1.); and they form the staple of the modern biographies of the Prophet. It is needless to add that, being utterly uncritical, they are possessed as historical sources of no authority whatever.¹

General
collections
of biographical
tradition

It was soon found that the work of collecting and circulating authoritative traditions too closely affected the public interests and the political aspect of the empire to be left entirely to private responsibility and individual zeal. About a hundred years after Mahomet, the Caliph Omar II. issued circular orders for the formal collection of all extant tradition. The task, thus begun, continued to be vigorously prosecuted; but we possess no authen-

¹ See Sprenger, i. 341; and for samples of these legends as current at the present time, an article by myself in the *Calcutta Review* on Biographies of Muhammad for India, No. xxxiv., Art. 6.

tic remains of any compilation of an earlier date than the middle or end of the second century of the Hegira. Then, indeed, ample materials had been amassed, and they have been handed down to us both in the shape of *Biographies* and of *General collections* which bear upon every imaginable point of Mahomet's character, and record the minutest incidents of his life.

It thus appears that the traditions we now possess remained generally unrecorded for at least the greater part of a century. It is not, indeed, asserted that some of Mahomet's sayings may not have been noted down in writing during his lifetime, and from that source copied and propagated afterwards. But the evidence in favour of any such record is meagre, suspicious, and contradictory. And few and uncertain as are the statements of the practice, there was a motive to invent them in the additional credit with which the traditions of a Companion supposed to have committed them to writing would be invested. It is indeed hardly possible that, if the writing down of Mahomet's sayings had prevailed as a custom during his life, we should not have had frequent intimation of the fact, with notices of the writers, and special references to the nature, contents, and peculiar authority of their records. But no such references or quotations are anywhere to be found. It cannot be asserted that the Arabs trusted so implicitly to their memory that they regarded oral to be as authoritative as recorded narratives, and therefore had these existed would not have cared to notice them; for we see that Omar was afraid lest even the Coran, believed by him to be divine and itself the subject of heavenly care, should become defective if left to the memory of man. Just as little weight, on the other hand, should be allowed to the tradition that Mahomet *prohibited* his followers from the practice of noting down his words. The truth appears to be that there was at the first no such practice; and that the story of the prohibition, though spurious, embodies the after-thought of serious Mahometans as to what Mahomet *would have said* had he foreseen the loose and fabricated stories that sprang up, and the danger his people would fall into of allowing *Tradition* to supersede the *Coran*. The risks of Tradition, in truth, were as little thought of as its value was perceived, till many years after Mahomet's death.

But even admitting all that has been advanced, it would prove no more than that *some of the Companions used to keep memoranda* of the Prophet's sayings. Now, unless it were possible to connect any given traditions with such memoranda, the concession would be useless. But it is not, so far as I know, demonstrable of any single tradition or class of traditions now in existence, that they were copied from such memoranda, or have

Tradition not recorded as a rule till latter part of first century

Even if memoranda were recorded in Mahomet's lifetime, none connected with extant tradition

been derived in any way from them. To prove, therefore, that *some* traditions were at first recorded, would not help us to a knowledge of whether any of these still exist, or to discriminate between them and such as rest on a purely oral basis. The very most that could be urged from the premises is, that our present collections *may* contain some traditions founded upon a recorded original, and handed down in writing. The entire mass of extant tradition rests in this respect on the same uncertain ground, and the uncertainty of any one portion (apart from internal evidence of probability) attaches equally to the whole. In fine, it cannot, with the least show of likelihood, be confidently affirmed of any tradition that it was recorded till nearly the end of the first century of the Hegira.

Mahometan tradition affected by bias and prejudice

We see, then, how entirely Tradition, as now possessed, rests its authority on the *memory* of those who handed it down; and how dependent it must have been upon their convictions and their prejudices. For, in addition to the frailty of the faculty itself rendering such evidence notoriously infirm, and to the errors and exaggerations which must distort a narrative transmitted orally through many witnesses, there exist in Mahometan tradition abundant indications of actual fabrication; and there may everywhere be traced the indirect but not less powerful and dangerous influence of a latent bias, which insensibly gave colour and shape to the stories of their Prophet treasured up in the memories of Believers. To form an adequate conception of the value and defects of Tradition, the nature and extent of these influences must be thoroughly understood; and for this purpose the reader should possess an outline of the political aspect of the empire of Islam from the death of Mahomet to the period at which our *written* authorities commence. Such an outline I will now endeavour to supply.

Historical review necessary

During first two Caliphates, faction unknown

Mahomet survived for ten years the era of his *Hegira* or flight to Medina. The Caliphates of Abu Bekr and Omar occupied the thirteen succeeding years, during which the new-born empire, animated by the ruling passion of universal dominion, was unbroken by schism. The distorting medium of Faction had not yet interposed betwixt us and Mahomet. The chief tendency to be dreaded in tradition as transmitted through this period, or originating in it, is one which was then perhaps even stronger and more busy than in the approaching days of civil broil, namely, the disposition to exalt the character of Mahomet, and endow it with superhuman attributes.

A. H. 23-35. First effect on tradition

The weak and vacillating policy of Othman gave birth to the attack of the conspirators on Medina, which, ending in the murder of the aged Prince, caused a fatal rent in the unity of

the empire, and left it a prey to contending factions of new competitors for the Caliphate. The immediate effect of this disunion was not unfavourable to the historical value of Tradition. For although each party would be tempted to colour its recollections by their own factious bias, they must still do so in the face of a hostile criticism. And, while as yet there were alive on either side eye-witnesses of the Prophet's actions, both parties would be cautious in advancing what might be liable to dispute, and eager to denounce and expose any false statement of their opponents.¹

of Othman's murder not unfavourable

The Caliphate of Aly, after a troubled and doubtful existence of four and a half years, was terminated by assassination, and the opposing faction of the Omeyyads then gained undisputed supremacy. During the long reign of Muavia, *i.e.* to 60 A.H., and, indeed, more or less throughout the Omeyyad rule, the influence of the reigning power directly opposed the interested dogmas of the adherents of Mahomet's immediate family. The authority of a line deriving its descent from Abu Sofian, so long the grand opponent of the Prophet, may have softened the asperity of Tradition regarding the conduct of their progenitor, while it aided in the chorus of glory to Mahomet. But it would be tempted to none of those distorting elements the object of which was to make out a divine right of succession in favour of the descendants of the Founder of Islam; and which, for that end, invested their heroes with virtues, and attributed to them actions, which never had existence. Such in the process of time were the motives, and such the practice, of the partisans of the houses of Aly and of Abbas, the Son-in-law and Uncle of Mahomet. In the early part, however, of the Omeyyad succession, these insidious tendencies had but little room for play. The fiction of divine right, even had it been thought of, contradicted too directly the knowledge and convictions of the early Moslems to have met with support. The unqualified opposition of a large

A.H. 35-60
Omeyyad
Caliphate
favourable
to truthful
tradition

¹ Othman (when Caliph) commanded, saying: 'It is not permitted to any one to relate a tradition as from the Prophet, which he hath not already heard in the time of Abu Bekr or Omar. And verily nothing hinders me from repeating traditions of the Prophet's sayings (although I be one of those endowed with the most retentive memory amongst all his Companions) but that I have heard him say, *Whoever shall repeat of me that which I have not said, his resting-place shall be in Hell.*' This tradition, if well founded, gives pretty clear intimation that, even before Othman's murder, fabricated traditions were propagated by opponents to shake his authority, and that the unfortunate Caliph endeavoured to check the practice by forbidding the currency of traditions not already known in the reign of his two predecessors.

section of Mahomet's most intimate friends to Aly himself, shows how little ground there was for regarding him as the peculiar favourite of Heaven. The Khârijites, or sectarians of the theocratic principle and the extreme opponents of the Omeyyads, went the length of condemning and rejecting Aly for the scandalous crime of parleying with the denounced Muavia. It is hence evident that the extravagant pretensions of the Alyites and Abbassides were not entertained, or even dreamt of, in the early days of the Omeyyad Caliphate.

Type cast in first century, never materially altered

During the first century the main fabric of Tradition grew up, and assumed permanent shape. Towards its close, all surviving traditions began to be systematically sought out, and openly put on record. The type then moulded could not but be maintained, at least in its chief features, ever after. Subsequent sectaries might strive to re-cast it ; their efforts could secure but partial success, because the only standard they possessed had been formed under Omeyyad influence. In the traditional impress of this period, although the features of the Prophet were magnified into majestic and supernatural dimensions, yet the character of his friends and followers, and the general events of early Islam, were undoubtedly preserved with very tolerable accuracy, and thus a broad basis of historical truth maintained.

Alyites and Abbassides conspire to supplant Omeyyad line ;

But in the latter part of the first century an under-current of great volume and intensity commenced to flow. The adherents of the house of Aly, beaten in the field and in all their attempts to dethrone the Omeyyads, were driven to other expedients ; and the key-stone of their machinations was the divine right of the family of the Prophet to both temporal and spiritual rule. They established secret associations, and sent forth emissaries in every direction, to decry the Omeyyads as godless usurpers, and canvass for the Alyite pretender of the day. These claims were ever and anon strengthened by the mysterious report that the divine Imam or Leader of Aly's race was about to step forth from his hidden recess, and stand confessed the Conqueror of the world. Such attempts, however, issued in no more permanent results than a succession of rebellions, massacres, and fruitless civil wars, until another party leagued themselves in the struggle. These were the Abbassides, who desired to raise to the throne a descendant of the Prophet's uncle, Abbas. They combined with the Alyites in denouncing as usurpers the reigning dynasty, which, though sprung from the Coreish, was but distantly related to Mahomet. By their united endeavours they at length succeeded in supplanting the Omeyyads, when the Alyites found themselves over-reached, and an Abbasside Caliph was raised to the throne.

It is not difficult to perceive how much Tradition must have been affected by these unwearied conspirators. Perverted tradition was, in fact, the chief instrument employed to accomplish their ends. By it they blackened the memory of the forefathers of the Omeyyads, and exalted the progenitors of the Abbassides. By it they were enabled almost to deify Aly, and to assert their principle that the right of empire vested solely in the near relatives of the Prophet, and in their descendants. For these ends no device was spared. The Coran was glossed over, and tradition coloured, distorted, and fabricated. Their operations were concealed. Studiously avoiding the eye of anyone likely to oppose them, they canvassed in the dark. Thus they were safe from criticism; and the stories and glosses of their traditional schools gradually acquired the character of prescriptive evidence.

And for that object fabricate and pervert tradition

In the 132nd year of the Hegira, the Abbassides were installed in the Caliphate; and the factious teaching, which had hitherto flourished only in the distant satrapies of Persia or, when it ventured near the throne, lurked in the purlieus of crowded cities, now stalked forth with the prestige of sovereignty. The Omeyyads were pursued even to extirpation, and their names and descent overwhelmed with obloquy.

Accession of the Abbassides, A.H. 132

It was under the auspices of the first two Abbasside Caliphs that the earliest biography of which we have any remains was composed; that, namely, of IBN ISHAC. It is cause for little wonder that this author followed in the steps of his patrons; and that, while lauding their ancestors, he sought to stigmatise the Omeyyads, and to denounce those of their forefathers who acted a prominent part in the first scenes of Islam.

Under whom first biography of Mahomet compiled

The fifth Caliph from this period was the famous Mamun, who, during a reign of twenty years, countenanced with princely support the pursuits of literature. He effected a combination with the followers of Aly, who had been bitterly persecuted by his predecessors;¹ and he adopted with enthusiasm the peculiar teaching of the Motazelites—a sect whom the learned Weil applauds as the *Rationalists* of Islam. But however freely this Caliph may have derided the doctrine of the ‘eternity of the Coran,’ and in opposition to orthodox believers asserted the freedom of the human will, he was not a whit less bigoted or

Intolerant Caliphate of Mamun. A.H. 198-218

¹ When the Abbassides reached the throne, they cast aside the Alyite platform from which they had made their fortunate ascent. They were then obliged in self-defence to crush with an iron hand every rising of the Alyites, who found to their cost that they had become the unconscious tools for raising to power a party which had in reality as little fellow-feeling with them as with the Omeyyads. They deserved their fate.

intolerant than his predecessors. He not only declared Aly to be the noblest of mortals, and Muavia the basest, but he denounced and punished anyone who should venture to speak evil of the one, or attribute good to the other. He made strenuous efforts to impose his theological views upon all. He went so far as to establish even a species of inquisition, and visited with penalties those who dared to differ from him. Unhappily for us, this very reign was the busiest age of the traditional writers, and the period at which (excepting only that of Ibn Ishac) the earliest extant biographies of Mahomet were composed. It was under Mamun that WAKIDY, IBN HISHAM, and MADAINI, lived and wrote. Justly, indeed, may we grieve over this as a coincidence fraught with evil to the interests of historical truth. 'We look upon it,' says Weil, 'as a great misfortune, that the very three oldest Arabic histories, which are nearly the only sources of authority for the first period of Islam, were written under the government of Mamun. At a period when every word in favour of Muavia rendered the speaker liable to death, and when all were declared outlaws who would not acknowledge Aly to be the most distinguished of mankind, it was not possible to compose, with even the smallest degree of impartiality, a history of the Companions of Mahomet and of his successors.'

Its beneficial influence on tradition

General collections of tradition made under similar influences

But besides the biographers of Mahomet, the *Collectors of general tradition*, who likewise flourished at this period, came within the circle of Abbasside influence, and some of them under the direct patronage of Mamun. This class, as shown above, travelled over the whole empire, and searched after every kind of tradition which bore the slightest relation to their Prophet. The mass of narrations gathered by this laborious process was sifted by a pseudo-critical canon, founded on the repute of the narrators forming the chain from Mahomet downwards; and the approved residuum was published under the authority of the Collector's name. Such collections were far more popular than the biographical or historical treatises. They formed, in fact, and still form, the groundwork of the different theological schools of Islam; and, having been used universally and studied continuously from the period of their appearance, exist to the present day in an authentic and genuine shape. Copies of them abound in all Moslem countries; whereas the early biographies can only be procured with difficulty.

Two schools; *Sunni*, and *Shiah*

The six standard *Sunni* collections were compiled exclusively under the Abbasside Caliphs, and the earliest of them partly during the reign of Mamun. The four canonical collections of the *Shiahs* were prepared somewhat later, and are incomparably less trustworthy than the former, because their paramount object

is to build up the divine *Imāmat* or headship of Aly and his descendants.

That the Collectors of tradition rendered an important service to Islam, and even to history, cannot be doubted. The vast flood of tradition, poured forth from every quarter of the Moslem empire, and daily gathering volume from innumerable tributaries, was composed of the most heterogeneous elements ; without the labours of the traditionists it must soon have formed a chaotic mass in which truth and error, fact and fable, would have mingled together in undistinguishable confusion. It is a legitimate inference from the foregoing sketch, that Tradition in the Second century embraced a large element of truth. That even respectably derived traditions often contained much that was exaggerated and fabulous, is an equally sure conclusion. It is proved by the testimony of the Collectors themselves, that thousands and tens of thousands of traditions were current in their times which possessed not even the shadow of authority. The prodigious amount of base and fictitious material may be gathered from the estimate even of Mahometan criticism. To quote again from Dr. Weil : 'Reliance upon oral traditions, at a time when they were transmitted by memory alone, and every day produced new divisions among the professors of Islam, opened up a wide field for fabrication and distortion. There was nothing easier, when required to defend any religious or political system, than to appeal to an oral tradition of the Prophet. The nature of these so-called traditions, and the manner in which the name of Mahomet was abused to support all possible lies and absurdities, may be gathered most clearly from the fact that Bokhary, who travelled from land to land to gather from the learned the traditions they had received, came to the conclusion, after many years' sifting, that out of 600,000 traditions, ascertained by him to be then current, only 4,000 were authentic ! And of this selected number, the European critic is compelled, without hesitation, to 'reject at least one-half.' Similar appears to have been the experience of other intelligent compilers of the day. Thus Abu Daūd, out of 500,000 traditions which he is said to have amassed, threw aside 495,200, and retained as trustworthy only 4,800.¹

The heavenly vision which induced Bokhary to commence his pious and herculean task is significant of the urgent necessity

¹ Even of this number a portion is spoken of as doubtful. 'I wrote down,' says Abu Daūd, '500,000 traditions respecting the Prophet, from which I selected those, to the number of 4,800, contained in this book. I have entered herein the authentic, those which seem to be authentic, and those which are nearly so.'

Service rendered by Collectors

Immense proportion of fictitious tradition current in second century

Rejected even by Mahometan Collectors

Anecdote of Bokhary

which then existed for searching out and preserving the grains of truth scattered here and there amid the chaff. 'In a dream I beheld the Messenger of the Lord (Mahomet), from whom I seemed to be driving off the flies. When I awoke I inquired of an interpreter of dreams the meaning of my vision. *It is, he replied, that thou shalt drive away lies far from him.* This it was which induced me to compile the *Sahih*.'¹ And well, indeed, in the eyes of Mahometans, did he fulfil the heavenly behest; for to this day, the SAHIH BOKHARY is regarded by them as one of the most authentic treasuries of tradition.

Collectors, though unsparing in rejection of untrustworthy traditions, did not discriminate by any intelligent canon

It is evident, then, that some species of criticism was practised by the Compilers; and that, too, so unsparingly that out of every hundred traditions on an average ninety-nine were rejected. But the European reader will be grievously deceived if he at all regards such criticism, rigorous as it was, in the light of a sound and discriminating investigation into the credibility of the traditional elements. It was not the *subject-matter* but simply the *names* responsible for it, which decided the credit of a tradition. Its authority must rest first on some Companion of the Prophet, and then on the character of each individual in the long chain of witnesses through whom it was handed down.² If these were unimpeachable, the tradition *must be received*. No inherent improbability, however glaring, could exclude a narration thus attested from its place in the authentic collections. The compilers would not venture upon the open sea of criticism, but steered slavishly by this single canon. They dared not inquire into internal evidence. To have arraigned the motives of the first author or subsequent rehearsers of a story, discussed its probability and brought it to the test of historical evidence, would have been a strange and uncongenial task. The spirit of Islam would not brook free inquiry and real criticism. Implicit faith in Mahomet and in his followers spurned the aids of investigation and of evidence. *Thus saith the Prophet of the Lord*, and every rising doubt must be smothered, every question vanish. If doubts did arise, the sword was unsheathed to dispel and silence them. The temporal power was so closely welded with the dogmas of Islam, that it had no option but to enforce with a stern front and iron hand an implicit acquiescence in those dogmas. Upon the apostate Moslem the sentence of death—an award resting on the Prophet's authority—was rigorously

Political element of Islam extinguished free inquiry and real criticism

¹ Sahih means *True*.

² Out of 40,000 men, who are said to have been instrumental in handing down Tradition, Bokhary and Muslim acknowledged the authority of only 2,000 by receiving their traditions. Later collectors were less scrupulous.

executed by the civil power ; and between the heterodoxy of the free-thinker, and the lapse of the renegade, there existed but a vague and narrow boundary. To the combination, or rather the *unity*, of the spiritual and political elements in the unvarying type of Mahometan government, must be attributed the absence of candid and free investigation into the origin and early incidents of Islam, which so painfully characterises the Moslem mind even to the present day. The faculty of criticism was annihilated by the sword.

Upon the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that the Collectors were sincere and honest in doing that which they professed to do. It may well be admitted that they sought out in good faith all traditions actually current, inquired carefully into the authorities on which they rested, and recorded them with scrupulous accuracy. The sanctions of religion were at hand to enforce diligence and caution. Thus Bokhary, who, as we have just seen, commenced his work on a supposed divine monition, was heard to say ' that he never inserted a tradition in his *Sahih*, until he had made an ablution, and offered up a prayer of two *rakaats*.' The prepossessions of the several Collectors would undoubtedly influence them in accepting or rejecting the chain of witnesses to any tradition ; but there is no reason to suppose that they at all tampered with the traditions themselves. Thus a Shiah collector would cast aside a tradition received from Ayesha through an Omeyyad channel ; whilst one of Omeyyad predilections would discard every traditional chain in the links of which he discovered an emissary of the house of Aly. But neither the one nor the other would venture to *fabricate* a tradition ; or to tamper with a narration, whatever its purport or bearing might be, if only it were attested by a chain of unexceptionable names.

The honesty of the compilers is warranted by the style and contents of their works. The series of witnesses, by which each tradition is traced up through each stage of transmission to one or other of the Prophet's Companions, is invariably prefixed ; and we cannot but admit the authority which even the names of at least the later witnesses in such a chain would impart.¹ These could not be feigned names, but were the names of real characters,

But Collectors were honest in accomplishing what they professed

Guarantees and evidence of their honesty

¹ A tradition is always given in the direct form of speech in which it is supposed to have been originally uttered. Thus : ' A informed me, saying that B had spoken to the effect that C had told him, saying D mentioned that he heard E relate that he had listened to F, who said, *I heard G inquiring of Ayesha, " What food did the Prophet of the Lord like ? " and she replied, " Verily, he loved sweetmeats and honey, and greatly relished the pumpkin."*'

many of them personages of note. The traditional collections were openly published, and the credit of the compilers would have been endangered by the fabrication of such evidence. The Collector was likewise, in general, the centre of a school of traditional learning which, as it were, challenged the public to test its authorities. So far, then, as this kind of attestation can give weight to hearsay, that weight may be readily conceded. Again, the simple manner in which the most contradictory traditions are accepted, and placed side by side, is guarantee of sincerity. All that could be collected was thrown together with scrupulous fidelity. Each tradition, though the bare repetition, or possibly the direct opposite, of a dozen preceding it, is noted down unquestioned, with its special chain of witnesses; whilst no account whatever is made of the most violent improbabilities, of incidents plainly fabulous, or even of patent contradictions.¹ Now this is evidence at least of honest design. Pains would otherwise have been taken to exclude or soften down opposing statements; and we should not have found so much allowed to be credible tradition, which either on the one hand or on the other must have crossed the views and prejudices of the compiler. If we suppose *design*, we must suppose at the same time a less even-handed admission of contrary traditions.

How far do the collections of tradition contain elements of truth?

Conceding, then, the general honesty of the Collectors in making their selection, upon an untenable principle indeed, yet *bonâ fide* from existing materials, let us now turn to their selected compilations, and inquire whether they contain any authentic elements of the life of Mahomet; and if so, how and to what extent these have become commingled with adventitious or erroneous matter.

Fragmen-
tary and
isolated
character
of each tra-
dition pre-
vents appli-
cation of
ordinary
tests

In the first place, how far does the present text afford ground for confidence that its contents are identical with the supposed evidence originally given by contemporary witnesses? To place the case in the strongest point of view, we shall suppose a class of traditions purporting to have been *written down* by the Companions, and to have been recorded afresh at every successive stage of transmission. There is a peculiarity in traditional composition which, even upon this supposition, would render it always of doubtful authority; namely, that each tradition is short and abrupt, and completely isolated from every other. The isolation extends not simply to the traditions themselves as finally compiled by the Collector, but to their whole history and descent

¹ The biographers of Mahomet, when they relate contradictory or varying narratives, sometimes add an expression of their own opinion as to which is preferable. They also sometimes mark doubtful stories by the addition: 'The Lord knoweth whether this be false or true.'

throughout the long period preceding their collection. At every point each tradition was completely detached and independent ; and this, coupled with the generally brief and fragmentary character of the statements made in them, deprives us of the checks and critical appliances which are brought to bear on a continuous composition. There is little or no context whereby to judge the soundness of a tradition. Each witness in the chain, though professing simply to repeat the words of the first narrator, is in effect an independent authority ; and we cannot tell how far, and at what stages, variations may or may not have been allowed, or fresh matter interpolated by any of them. Even were we satisfied of the integrity of all the witnesses, we are unacquainted with their views of the liberty with which tradition might be treated. The style of the narrations marks them for the most part as communicated, at the first, with the freedom of social conversation, and with much of the looseness of hearsay ; and a similar informality and looseness may have attached to any of the steps in their subsequent transmission.

Again, each tradition was not only isolated, but was held by the collectors to be an *indivisible unit*, and as such received or rejected. If the traditional links were unexceptionable, the tradition must be accepted *as it stood*, whole and entire. There could be no sifting of component parts. Whatever in each tradition might be true, and whatever might be fictitious,—the probable and the fabulous,—composed an indissoluble whole ; so that the acceptance or rejection of one portion involved the acceptance or rejection of every portion, as equally credible or undeserving of credit. The power of eradicating interpolated words, or of excluding such parts of a tradition as were evidently unfounded or erroneous, was thus renounced. The good seed and the tares were reaped together, and the latter vastly predominated.

Such is the uncertainty that would attach to tradition, even if we should concede that it had been recorded from the first. But (as we have seen) there is no ground for believing that the practice of writing down traditions was observed in the first days of Islam, or became general until many years, perhaps the greater part of a century, had elapsed. The existence of an early record would have afforded *some* check ; but as the facts stand, there is no check at all. A record would have at least fixed the terms in which the evidence was given ; whereas tradition purely oral is affected by the character and habits, the associations and the prejudices, of each witness in the chain of repetition. No precaution could hinder the commingling in oral tradition of mistaken or fabricated matter with what at the first may have

Each tradition was regarded as a unit, to be accepted or rejected as a whole

Exclusive oral character deprives early tradition of check against error and fabrication

been trustworthy evidence. The flood-gates of error, exaggeration, and fiction were thrown wide open ; and we need only look to the experience of every country and every age, to be satisfied that but little dependence can be placed on the recital of historical incident, and none whatever upon supernatural tales, conveyed for any length of time through such a channel. That Islam forms no exception to the general principle is amply proved by the puerile extravagances and splendid fabrications which adorn or disfigure the pages of its early history. The critical test applied by the Collectors had no reference whatever to these pregnant sources of error ; and, though it may have rejected multitudes of the more recent fabrications, it failed to place the earlier traditions upon any certain basis, or to supply the means of discerning between the actual and the fictitious, the offspring of the imagination and the sober evidence of fact.

Tradition
as tested
by Coran

It remains to examine the traditional collections with reference to their contents and internal probability. And here we fortunately have in the Coran a standard of comparison which has been already proved a genuine and contemporary document.

Main
historical
and bio-
graphical
outlines
agree

We find accordingly that in its main historical outlines the Coran is at one with the received traditional collections. It notices, either directly or incidentally, those topics which, from time to time, most interested Mahomet ; and with these salient points, tradition is found upon the whole to tally. The statements and allusions of this description in the Coran, though themselves comparatively few, are linked more or less with a vast variety of important incidents which refer as well to the Prophet individually and his domestic relations, as to public events and the progress of Islam. A just confidence is thus imparted that a large amount of historical truth has been conveyed by tradition.

Disagree-
ment in
certain im-
portant
points, as
power to
work
miracles

Upon the other hand, there are subjects in which the Coran is at variance with Tradition. For example, there is no position more satisfactorily established by the Coran than that Mahomet did not in any part of his career perform miracles, or lay claim to the power of performing them. Yet tradition abounds with miraculous acts belying the plain declaration of the Coran. Moreover, such miracles, if at all based on fact, would undoubtedly have been mentioned in the Coran itself, which omits nothing, however trivial, calculated to strengthen the prophetic claim. Here, therefore, in matters of simple narration and historical incident, we find tradition discredited by the Coran.

Perplexing
alternative

The result of the comparison, then, is precisely that already arrived at, *a priori*, from the foregoing historical review. But though it strengthens our conclusion, the comparison does not

afford us much help in the practical treatment of Tradition itself. Excepting in a limited number of events, it furnishes us with no rule for eliminating falsehood. Facts which we know from the Coran to be well founded, and tales which we know to be fabricated, are indiscriminately woven together; and of both the fabric and colour are so uniform, that we are at a loss for any means of distinguishing the one from the other. The biographer of Mahomet continually runs the risk of substituting for the realities of history some puerile fancy or extravagant invention. In striving to avoid this danger he is exposed to the opposite peril of rejecting as pious fabrication what may in reality be important historical fact.

It is, indeed, the opinion of Sprenger that 'although the nearest view of the Prophet which we can obtain is at a distance of one hundred years,' and although this long vista is formed of a medium exclusively Mahometan, yet our knowledge of the bias of the narrators 'enables us to correct the media, and to make them almost achromatic.' The remark is true to some extent; but its full application would carry us much beyond the truth. The difficulties of the task cannot without danger be underrated. To bring to a right focus the various lights of Tradition, to reject those that are fictitious, to restore to a proper direction the rays reflected by a false and deceptive surface, to calculate the extent of aberration, and make due allowance for a thousand disturbing influences;—this is indeed a work of entanglement and complication, which would require for its perfect accomplishment a finer discernment, and deeper analytic power, than human nature can boast. Nevertheless, it is right that an attempt should be made, and it is possible that, by a comprehensive consideration of the subject, and careful discrimination of the several sources of error, we may reach at the least a fair approximation to the truth. With this view I will endeavour to lay down some principles which may prove useful to the inquirer in separating the true from the false in Mahometan tradition.

Opinion of Sprenger too favourable to tradition

Attempt to frame tests discriminating what is reliable in tradition

The grand defect in the traditional evidence consists in its being wholly *ex parte*. It is the statement of witnesses, in which the license of partiality and self-interest is unchecked by any opposing party, and the sanction even of a neutral audience is wanting. But what is thus defective in the process, may in some measure be corrected or repaired by close scrutiny of the record. By analysing the evidence, and considering the position and qualifications of the witnesses, we may find internal grounds for credit or for doubt; while, in reference to some classes of statements, it may even appear that a Moslem public would itself

Traditional evidence *ex parte*. Tests must depend on internal examination

supply the place of an impartial censor. In this view, the points on which the probability of a tradition will mainly depend appear to be *first*, whether there existed a bias in the mind of the nation at large on the subject narrated; *second*, whether there are traces of any special interest, prejudice, or design, on the part of the narrator; and *third*, whether the narrator had opportunity for personally knowing the facts. These topics will perhaps best be discussed by considering the *Period* to which a narration relates, and then the *Subject* of which it treats.

Two divisions; *period* and *subject* of events narrated

I. PERIOD. *First*.—Before Mahomet's entry on public life. Witnesses younger, most of them much younger, than Mahomet

I. A.—The PERIOD to which a tradition purports to refer is a point of vital importance. The original authors of all reliable tradition were the *Companions* of Mahomet himself. But Mahomet was above threescore years old when he died; and few of his then surviving Companions, from whom tradition has come down, were of equal age,—hardly any of them older. In proportion to their years, the number of aged men was small and the period short during which they outlived Mahomet; and these are precisely the considerations by which their influence, in the formation of tradition, must be limited also. The great majority were young; and in proportion to their youth was the number that survived longest, and gave the deepest impress to tradition.¹ We may, then, fix the term of Mahomet's own life as the extreme backward limit within which our witnesses range themselves. In other words, we have virtually no original witnesses who lived at a period anterior to Mahomet; few, if any, were born before him; the great majority, many years after him. They are not, therefore, trustworthy authorities for events preceding Mahomet's birth, or for details of his childhood; few of them, even, for the incidents of his youth. They could not by any possibility possess a personal knowledge of these things; and to admit that they gained their information at second-hand is to impair the value of their testimony as that of contemporary witnesses.

Personal knowledge cannot go farther back than his youth at earliest

B.—Again, the value of evidence depends upon the degree in which the facts were noticed by the witness at the time of their occurrence. If attention was not specially attracted, it would be in vain to expect a full and careful report; and after the lapse

Attention not attracted till Mahomet had publicly assumed prophetic office

¹ Abu Bekr, for instance, was within two years of Mahomet's age; but then he survived him only two-and-a-half years. Most of the elderly Companions either died a natural death, or were killed in action before the practice of tradition came into vogue. Thus Wakidy: 'The reason why many of the chief men of the Companions have left few traditions, is that they died before there was any necessity for referring to them. The chiefest among the Companions, Abu Bekr, Othman, Talha, &c., gave forth fewer traditions than others. *There did not issue from them anything like the number of traditions that did from the younger Companions.*'

of many years, the utmost that could be looked for would be a bare general outline. This principle applies forcibly to the biography of Mahomet up to the time when he became the prominent leader of a party. Before, there was nothing remarkable about him. A poor orphan, a quiet, inoffensive citizen, he was perhaps of all the inhabitants of Mecca the least likely to have the eyes of his neighbours turned upon him, and their memory and imagination busy in noting the events of his life, and conjuring up anticipations of coming greatness. The remark may be extended, not merely to the era when he first laid claim to inspiration (for that excited the regard of a few only among his earliest adherents); but to the entire interval preceding the period when he stood forth *publicly* to assume the prophetic rank, oppose polytheism, and enter into open collision with the chiefs of Mecca. Then, indeed, he began to be narrowly watched; and thenceforward the Companions of the Prophet are not to be distrusted on the score at least of insufficient attention.

c.—It follows that, in traditions affected by either of the foregoing rules, circumstantiality will be a strong token of fabrication. And we shall do well to adopt the analogous canon of Christian criticism, that any tradition whose origin is not strictly contemporary with the facts related is *worthless exactly in proportion to the particularity of detail*.¹ This will relieve us of a vast number of extravagant stories, in which the minutiae of close narrative and sustained colloquy in early passages of the Prophet's life are preserved with the pseudo-freshness of yesterday.

For events prior to Mahomet's public life circumstantiality ground of suspicion

d.—It will, however, be just to admit an exception for the main outlines of Mahomet's life, which under ordinary circumstances his friends and acquaintance would naturally remember or might learn from himself, and would thus be able in after days to call up with tolerable accuracy. Such, for instance, are the death of his father, his nurture as an infant by the Beni Sad, his mother's journey with him to Medina, and the expedition with his uncle to Syria while yet a boy. A still wider exception must be allowed in favour of public personages and national events, even preceding Mahomet's birth; because the attention of the people at large would be actively directed to these topics, while the patriarchal habits of the Arabs and their spirit of clanship would

Exception in favour of leading outlines of Mahomet's life,

Public events,

¹ The remarks of Alford are strikingly in point: 'As usual in traditional matter, on our advance to later writers, we find more and more particular accounts given; the year of John's life, the reigning Emperor, &c., under which the Gospel was written.' But Christian traditionists were mere tyros in the art of discovering such particulars in comparison with Moslems, at the talisman of whose pen distance vanishes, and even centuries deliver up the minutest details which they had engulfed.

be propitious to tenacious recollection. Thus the conversation of Mahomet's grandfather with Abraha, the Abyssinian invader, is far more likely to be founded in fact than any of the much later conversations which Mahomet himself is said to have had with the monks on either of his journeys to Syria; and yet the leading facts regarding these journeys there is no reason to doubt.

And national history

Under the same exception will fall those genealogical and historical facts, the preservation of which for several centuries by the memory alone, is so wonderful a phenomenon in the story of Arabia. Here poetry, no doubt, aided the retentive faculty. The rhapsodies of the bard were at once caught up by his admiring clan, and soon passed into the mouths even of the children. In such poetry were preserved the names of the chieftains, their feats of bravery, their glorious liberality, the unparalleled nobility of their breeds of camel and horse. Many of these odes became national, and carried with them the testimony, not of the tribe alone, but of the whole Arab family. Thus poetry, the passion for genealogical and tribal reminiscences, and the singular capacity of imprinting them indelibly on the memory for generations, have secured to us the interwoven details of many centuries with a minuteness and particularity that would excite suspicion were not their reality in many instances established by other evidence and by internal coincidence.¹

Second period.—From entrance on public life to taking of Mecca, i.e. B.H. 10 to A.H. 8

E.—A second marked section of time is that which intervenes between Mahomet's entrance on public life and the taking of Mecca. Here, indeed, we have two opposing parties, marshalled against each other in mortal strife, whose statements might have been a check one upon the other. But during this interval (*i.e.* for some 18 years), or very shortly after, one of the parties came wholly to an end. Its chief leaders were nearly all killed in

¹ M. Caussin de Perceval who, with incredible labour, has sought out and arranged these facts into a uniform history, thus expresses his estimate of the Arab genealogical traditions: 'J'ai dit que toutes les généalogies Arabes n'étaient point certaines; on en trouve en effet un grand nombre d'évidemment incomplètes. Mais il en est aussi beaucoup d'authentiques, et qui remontent, sans lacune probable, jusqu'à environ six siècles avant Mahomet. C'est un phénomène vraiment singulier chez un peuple inculte et en général étranger à l'art de l'écriture, comme l'étaient les Arabes, que cette fidélité à garder le souvenir des ancêtres. Elle prenait sa source dans un sentiment de fierté, dans l'estime qu'ils faisaient de leur noblesse. Les noms de aïeux, gravés dans la mémoire des enfants, étaient les archives des familles. À ces noms se rattachaient nécessairement quelques notions sur la vie des individus, sur les événements dans lesquels ils avaient figuré; et c'est ainsi que les traditions se perpétuaient d'âge en âge.'

battle, and the remainder went over to the victors. We have therefore no surviving evidence whatever on the side of the Prophet's enemies. Not a single advocate was left to explain their actions, often misrepresented by hatred, or to rebut the accusations of Mahomet and his followers. On the other hand, we have no witnesses of any kind against Mahomet and his party, whose one-sided assertions might perhaps otherwise have been often liable to question. The intemperate and unguarded language of the fathers of tradition is sufficient proof that, in speaking of adversaries, their opinion was seldom impartial, and their judgment not always unerring.

No surviving evidence on side of Meccans ; or against Mahomet and his party

f.—It may be urged in reply that the great body of the hostile Meccans who eventually went over to Islam would still form a check upon any material misrepresentation of their party. It may be readily admitted that they did form some check on the perversion of public opinion in matters not vitally connected with the credit of Islam and its Founder. Their influence would also tend to preserve the reports of their own individual actions, and perhaps those of their friends and relatives, in as favourable a light as possible. But this influence at best was partial. It must be borne in mind that the enemies of the Prophet who now joined his ranks acquired at the same time, or very shortly after, all the *esprit de corps* of Islam.¹ And, long before the stream of tradition commenced, these very men had learned to look back upon the heathenism of their own career at Mecca with horror and contempt. The stains of a Believer's previous life were, on his conversion, washed away, and imparted no tarnish to his subsequent character. He had sinned 'ignorantly in unbelief ;' but now, both in his own view and in the eyes of his comrades, he was *another man*. He might now, therefore, well speak of his mad opposition to 'the Prophet of the Lord' and the divine message, with as hearty a reprobation as others ; nay, the violence of reaction might make his language even stronger. Such are the witnesses who constitute our only check upon the *ex-parte* story told of the long struggle with the idolaters of Mecca.

To what degree Meccan party, as finally incorporated with Moslem, proved a check upon misrepresentation

g.—It is therefore incumbent upon us, in estimating the folly, injustice, and cruelty of the Unbelievers at Mecca, to make much allowance for the hostile tendency of the evidence. On the other hand, looking to the merit of suffering for the faith, we may suspect exaggeration in the tales of hardship and persecution endured by Believers at their hands. Above all,

Evidence against opponents of Mahomet to be received with caution

¹ Thus Abu Sofian, leader in the last stage of opposition to Mahomet, became shortly after a zealous Moslem, and fought under the banners of his own son in the first Syrian campaign.

the history of those who died in unbelief, before the conquest of Mecca, and under the ban of Mahomet, must be subject to a rigid criticism. For such men as Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, hated and cursed by the Prophet, what Believer dare be the advocate? To the present day, the hearty ejaculation, *The Lord curse him!* is linked by every Moslem with the name of those 'enemies of the Lord, and of his Prophet.' What voice would be raised to correct the pious exaggerations of the faithful in the stories of their execrable deeds, or to point out just causes of provocation which they may have received? Impious attempt, and mad perversity! Again and again was the sword of Omar brandished over the neck of a luckless offender for conduct far more excusable and far less offensive to Islam.

So also with Jewish, Christian, and Pagan tribes of Arabia

H.—Precisely similar limitations must be brought to bear on the evidence against the Jewish inhabitants in the vicinity of Medina, whom Mahomet either expatriated, brought over to his faith, or utterly extirpated. The various Arab tribes also, whether Christian or Pagan, whom Mahomet at different times of his life attacked, come more or less under the same category.

Similar considerations apply to disaffected inhabitants of Medina

I. The same considerations apply also, though in a modified form, to the 'Hypocrites,' or disaffected population of Medina, who covertly opposed the claim of Mahomet to temporal authority over that city. The Prophet did not wage the same war of defiance with these as he did with his Meccan opponents, but sought to counteract their influence by skilful tactics. Neither was this class so suddenly rooted out as the idolaters of Mecca; they rather vanished gradually before the increasing authority of Islam. Still its leaders are held in abhorrence by the traditionists, and the historian must keep a jealous eye on the testimony against them.

II. SUBJECT-MATTER; *personal, party, or national, bias*

II.—The SUBJECT-MATTER of tradition itself, both as regards the motives of its authors and the views of early Moslem society at large, will help us to an estimate of its credibility. The chief aspects in which this argument may be treated refer to *personal, party, and national bias*.

1. *Personal ambition of being associated with Mahomet*

A.—*Individual prepossession and self-interested motives* would cause exaggeration, false colouring, and even invention. Besides the more obvious cases falling under this head, there is a fertile class which originates in the ambition of the narrator to be associated with Mahomet. The name of the Prophet threw a halo around every object connected with it; while his friendship imparted a rank and dignity acknowledged by the universal voice of Islam. It is difficult to conceive the reverence and court enjoyed by his widows, friends, and servants. Interminable inquiries were put to them; and their responses received with

implicit deference. All who possessed personal knowledge of the Prophet, and especially those who had been honoured with his familiar acquaintance, were admitted by common consent into the envied circle of Moslem aristocracy; and many a picturesque scene is sketched by traditionists of the crowds which listened to these men as they delivered their testimony in the Mosques of Cufa or Damascus. The sterling value of such qualifications would induce imitation. Some who may have had but a distant and superficial knowledge of Mahomet would be tempted, by the consideration it imparted, to counterfeit a more perfect intimacy; and the endeavour to support their equivocal position by particularity of detail would lead the way to loose and unfounded narratives of the life and character of the Prophet. Equally misleading was the ambition, traceable throughout the traditions of Companions, of being closely connected with any of the supposed mysterious visitations or supernatural actions of Mahomet. To have been *noticed* in the Revelation was the highest honour that mortal man could aspire to; and in any way having been linked with the heavenly phases of the Prophet's life, reflected a divine lustre on the fortunate aspirant.¹ Thus a premium was put upon the invention or exaggeration of superhuman incidents.

B.—Under the same head are to be classed the attempts of narrators to exaggerate their labours and exploits, and to multiply their losses and perils in the service of the Prophet. The tendency thus to appropriate a special, and often an altogether unwarrantable, merit is obvious on the part of many of the Companions.² A reference to this tendency may even occa-

Exaggeration of personal merit in the service of Mahomet.

¹ Thus Ayesha's party having been long delayed when with the Prophet on a certain expedition, the verse permitting the substitution of sand for lustration was in consequence revealed. The honour conferred upon her father by this indirect connection with a divine revelation is thus eulogised: 'This is not the least of the divine favours poured out upon you, ye house of Abu Bekr!'

² We have many examples of the glory and honour lavished upon those who had suffered persecution. Thus when Omar was Caliph, Khobáb showed him the scars of the stripes he had received from the unbelieving Meccans twenty or thirty years before. Omar seated him upon his throne, saying that there was but one man more worthy of this favour than Khobáb (as having been also tortured), namely, Bilál. But Khobáb replied: 'And why is he more worthy? He had his friends among the idolaters whom the Lord raised up to help him. But I had none. I well remember one day they kindled a fire, and threw me therein upon my back; and a man stamped with his foot upon my chest, my back being all the while upon the ground. And when they uncovered my back, lo! it was blistered and white.'

sionally tend to exculpate the Prophet from questionable actions. For example, Ibn Omeyya, in narrating his mission by Mahomet to assassinate Abu Sofian, so magnifies the dangers and exploits of his adventure as might have involved that dark mission itself in suspicion, were there not collateral proof to support it.

Small chance of exaggerations and fictions being checked

It may be objected,—Would not untrue or exaggerated tales like these receive a check from other parties, free from the interested motives of the narrator? They would to some extent. But to prove a negative position is generally difficult, and it would not often be attempted without some strong impelling cause, especially in the early spread of Islam when the public mind was in the highest degree impressible and credulous. Such traditions, then, were likely to be opposed only when they interfered with the private claims of others, or ran counter to public opinion, in which case they would fall into discredit and disuse. Otherwise they would be carried down upon the traditional stream of mingled legend and truth, and with it find a place in the unquestioning record of the Second century.

2. Party. Party traditions come into general currency

c.—We have undoubted evidence that the bias of PARTY effected a deep and abiding impress upon tradition. Where this spirit tended to produce or embellish a tale adverse to the interests of another party, and the denial of the facts involved nothing prejudicial to the honour of Islam, endeavour might be made to rebut the fictitious statement, and the discussion so produced would subserve the purity of tradition. But this could seldom occur. The tradition would often affect that section alone in whose favour it originated, and therefore would not be controverted. The story would probably at the first be confined within the limits of the party which it concerned, and no opportunity afforded for its contradiction until it had taken root and acquired a prescriptive claim. Under any circumstances, the consi-

The same principle led the Moslems to magnify the hardships which *Mahomet himself* endured; such as Ayesha's strange exaggeration of the Prophet's poverty and frequent starvation, which she carries so far as to say that she had not even oil to burn in her chamber while Mahomet lay dying there. The subsequent affluence and luxury of the conquering nation, also, led them by reaction fondly to contrast it with their former simplicity and want, and even to weep at the remembrance. Thus of the same Khobâb it is recorded: He had his winding-sheet made ready of fine Coptic cloth; he compared it with the wretched pall of Hamza (killed at Ohod), and contrasted his own poverty when he possessed not a dinar, with his present condition: 'and now I have in my chest by me in the house 40,000 pieces of gold. Verily, I fear that the sweets of the present world have hastened upon us. Our companions have received their reward in Paradise; but truly I dread lest my reward consist in these benefits I have obtained after their departure.'

derations advanced in the preceding paragraph are equally applicable here ; so that without doubt a vast collection of exaggerated tales have come down to us, owing their existence to party spirit.

By the bias of party is not to be understood simply the influence of faction, but likewise the partiality and prejudice of lesser circles forming the ramifications of Mussulman society. The former we are less in danger of overlooking. Where the full development of faction laid bare the passions and excesses to which it gave rise, the reader is on his guard against misrepresentation ; he receives with caution the darkened or resplendent phases of such characters as Aly and Abbas, Muavia and Abu Sofian. But, though on a less extensive scale, the influences of tribe, family, and the smaller associations of party clustering around the several heroes of Islam, were equally real and effective. The spirit of clanship, which ran so high among the Arabs that Mahomet endeavoured in vain at Medina to supplant it by a so-called ' Brotherhood,' perpetuated the confederacies and antipathies of ante-Mahometan Arabia far down into the annals of Islam, and often exerted, as in the rivalries of the Cays and Modhar Clans, a potent influence upon the destinies of the Caliphate itself. It cannot be doubted that these combinations and prejudices imparted a strong and often a deceptive hue to the sources of tradition. As an example, may be specified the rivalry which led the several families or parties to claim the earliest converts to Islam until in the competition they arrived at the conclusion, and consequently propagated the tradition, that some of their patrons or ancestors were Moslems before Mahomet himself.

Prejudicial influence of such associations as Tribe, Family, Patron, &c.

D.—We now come to the class of motives incomparably the most dangerous to the purity of Tradition, namely, those which were *common to the whole Moslem body*. In the previous cases the bias was confined to a fragment, and the remainder of the nation might form a check upon the fractional aberration. But here the bias was universal, pervading the *entire medium* through which we have received tradition, and leaving us, for the correction of its divergencies, no check whatever.

3. *National bias*; common to whole of Islam ; therefore most fatal

To this class must be assigned all traditions the object of which is to glorify Mahomet, and to invest him with supernatural attributes. Although in the Coran the Prophet disclaims the power of working miracles, yet he implies that there existed a continuous intercourse between himself and the agencies of the other world. The whole Coran, indeed, assumes to be a message from the Almighty, communicated through Gabriel. Besides being the medium of revelation, that favoured angel is often referred to as bringing directions from the Lord for the guidance of his Prophet in the common concerns of life. Familiar in-

Tendency to exalt Mahomet, and ascribe to him supernatural attributes

tercourse with heavenly messengers, thus countenanced by the Prophet, was implicitly believed by his followers, and led them even during his lifetime to regard him with superstitious awe. On a subject so impalpable to sense and so congenial with imagination, it may be fairly assumed that reason had little share in controlling the fertile productions of fancy ; that the conclusions of his susceptible and credulous followers far exceeded the premises granted by Mahomet ; that even simple facts were construed by excited faith as pregnant with supernatural power and unearthly companionship ; and that, after the object of their veneration had passed from their sight, fond devotion perpetuated and enhanced the fascinating legends. If the Prophet gazed into the heavens, or looked wistfully to the right hand or to the left, it was Gabriel with whom he was holding mysterious converse. Passing gusts raised a cloud from the sandy track ; the pious Believer exulted in the conviction that it was the dust of the Archangel with his mounted squadrons scouring the plain, as they went before them to shake the foundations of some doomed fortress. On the field of Bedr, three stormy blasts swept over the marshalled army ; again, it was Gabriel with a thousand horse flying to the succour of Mahomet, while Michael and Seraphil each with a like angelic troop wheeled to the right and to the left of the Moslem front. Nay, the very dress and martial uniform of these helmed angels are detailed by the earliest and most trustworthy biographers with as much *naïveté* as if they had been veritable warriors of flesh and blood ; while the heads of the enemy were seen to drop off before the Moslem swords had even touched them, because the unseen scimitars did the work more swiftly than the grosser steel of Medina ! Such is a specimen of the vein of legend and extravagance which runs throughout even the purest sources of tradition.

Difficulty of discriminating what originated with Mahomet in such tales

It will frequently be a question, extremely difficult to decide, what portions of these supernatural stories either originated in Mahomet himself, or received his countenance ; and what portion owed its birth, after he was gone, to the excited imagination of his followers. No doubt, facts have not seldom been adorned or distorted by a superstitious fancy. The subjective conceptions of the fond believer have been reflected back upon the biography of the Prophet, and have encircled even the realities of his life, like the figures of our saints, with a lustrous halo. The false colouring and fictitious light so deluge the picture, as often to place its details altogether beyond the reach of analytical criticism.¹

¹ The corpse of Sad lay in an empty room. Mahomet entered alone, picking his steps carefully, as if he walked in the midst of men seated

E.—To the same universal desire of glorifying their Prophet, must be ascribed the miraculous tales with which even the earliest biographies abound. They are such as the following : A tree from a distance moves towards the Prophet, ploughing up the earth as it advances, and then similarly retires ; oft-repeated attempts at murder are miraculously averted ; distant occurrences are instantaneously revealed, and future events foretold ; a large company is fed from victuals hardly adequate for the supply of a single person ; prayer draws down immediate showers from heaven, or causes their equally sudden cessation. A frequent class of miracles is for the Prophet to touch the udders of dry goats which immediately distend with milk ; or to make floods of water well up from parched fountains, gush forth from empty vessels, or issue from betwixt his fingers. With respect to all such stories, it is sufficient to say that they are opposed to the clear declarations and pervading sense of the Coran.

Miracles

It by no means, however, follows that, because a tradition relates a miracle, the collateral incidents are thereby discredited. It may be that the facts were fabricated to illustrate or embellish a popular miracle ; but it is also possible that the miracle was invented to adorn, or to account for, well-founded facts. In the former case, the supposed facts are worthless ; in the latter, they may be true and valuable. In the absence of other evidence, the main drift and apparent design of the narrative is all that can here guide the critic.

That it mentions a miracle does not altogether discredit a tradition

F.—The same propensity to fabricate the marvellous must be borne in mind when we peruse the childish tales and extravagant legends put by tradition into the mouth of Mahomet. The Coran, it is true, imparts a far wider basis of likelihood to the narration by Mahomet of such tales, than to his assumption of miraculous powers. When the Prophet ventured to place such fanciful fictions as those of 'Solomon and the Genii,' of 'The Seven Sleepers,' or 'The Adventures of Dzul Carnein,' in the pages of a *divine* Revelation, to what puerilities might he not stoop in the familiarity of social converse ! It must, on the other hand, be remembered that Mahomet was taciturn, laconic, and reserved, and is therefore not likely to have given forth more than an infinitesimal part of the masses of legend and fable which tradi-

Tales and legends how far ascribable to Mahomet

closely on the ground. On being asked the cause, he replied : ' True, there were no men in the room, but it was so filled with angels, all seated on the ground, that I found nowhere to sit down, until one of the angels spread out his wing for me on the ground, and I sat thereon.' It is almost impossible to say what in this is Mahomet's own, and what has been concocted for him. Other supernatural tales connected with the same occasion will be seen below.

tion represents as gathered from his lips. These are probably the growth of successive ages, each of which added its contribution to the nucleus of the Prophet's pregnant words, if indeed there ever was such a nucleus at all. For example, the germ of the elaborate pictures and gorgeous scenery of the Prophet's heavenly journey lies in a very short and simple recital in the Coran. That he subsequently expanded this germ, and entertained or edified his Companions with the minutiae which have been brought down to us by tradition, is *possible*. But it is also possible, and (by the analogy of Mahomet's miracles) far more probable, that the vast majority of these fancies have no other origin than the heated imagination of the early Mussulmans.¹

Supposed
anticipa-
tions of
Mahomet
by Jews
and Chris-
tians

g.—Connected indirectly with Mahomet's life, but more immediately with the foundations of Islam, is another class of narrations which would conjure up on all sides prophecies regarding the Founder of the faith and anticipations of his approach. These probably, for the most part, depended upon some general declaration or incidental remark of the Prophet himself, which his enthusiastic followers deemed themselves bound to prove and illustrate. For example, the Jews are often accused in the Coran of wilfully rejecting Mahomet, although, in point of fact, 'they recognised him as they did one of their own sons.' Tradition provides us, accordingly, with an array of Jewish rabbins and Christian monks, who found it written in their books that the last of the Prophets was at this time about to arise at Mecca, and asserted that not only his name, but appearance, manners, and character were therein depicted to the life, so that recognition could not but be certain and instantaneous; and among other particulars, that the very city of *Medina* was named as the place where he would take refuge from the persecution of his people. Again, the Jews are in the Coran accused of grudging that a Prophet should arise among the Arabs, and that their nation should thus be robbed of its prophetic dignity; and so, in fit illustration, we have repeated stories of Mahomet having been recognised by the rabbins, and of attempts made by them to kill him; and this, too, long before he had any suspicion himself that he was to be a prophet, nay *during his very infancy!* It is enough to have alluded to this class of fabrications.

Anticipa-
tions of
Islam

h.—Such unblushing inventions will lead us to treat with caution the whole series of tales in which it is pretended that Mahomet and his religion were *foreshadowed*, so that pious men

¹ Sprenger holds that the narrative, in its main features, emanated from Mahomet himself, because (says he) *There is no event in his life, on which we have more numerous and genuine traditions than on his nightly journey.* The fact is significant, but the conclusion doubtful.

anticipated, long before the Prophet arose, many of the peculiar rites and doctrines of Islam. It was a fond conceit of Mahomet that Islam is as old as Adam, and has been from the beginning the faith of all good men, who looked forward to him as the Prophet charged with winding up all previous dispensations. It was therefore natural for his credulous followers to carry out this idea, and to invest the memory of any serious-minded man or earnest inquirer who preceded Mahomet with some of the dawning rays of the divine effulgence about to burst upon the world.

I.—To the same spirit we may attribute the palpable endeavour to make Mahometan tradition and the legends of Arabia tally with the *Scriptures of the Old Testament, and with Jewish tradition*. This canon has little application to the biography of Mahomet himself, but it has a wide and most effective range in reference to the legendary history of his ancestors and of early Arabia. The desire to regard the Prophet of Islam as a descendant of Ishmael, and possibly the endeavour to prove it, began even in his lifetime. Many Jews, versed in the Scriptures, and won over by the inducements of Islam, placed themselves at the service of Mahomet and his followers. Jewish tradition had long been well known in Medina and in the countries over which Islam early spread, and the Moslem system was now made to fit upon it; for Islam did not ignore, but professed merely to supersede, Judaism and Christianity, as the whole does a part, or rather as that which is complete swallows up the inchoate. Hence arose such strange anachronisms as the attempt to identify Cahtan with Joktan (between whom, at the most moderate estimate, fifteen centuries intervene); and thus also were cast the earlier links of the Abrahamic genealogy of Mahomet, as well as numberless tales of Ishmael and the Israelites, all in a semi-Jewish semi-Arab mould. These, though professing to be original traditions, can generally be recognised as mere plagiarisms from rabbinical lore, or as Arabian legends forced into accommodation with them.

History of ancestors, and early Arabia, borrowed from Jews

J.—Of analogous nature may be classed such traditions as affirm that Jews and Christians mutilated or interpolated their Scriptures. After repeated examination of the Coran, I have been unable to discover any grounds for believing that Mahomet himself ever expressed a doubt in regard either to the authority or the genuineness of the Old and New Testaments, as extant in his time.¹ He was profuse in assurances that his system was in

Traditions as to Jewish and Christian Scriptures being mutilated and interpolated

¹ The reader will find all passages of the Coran relating to the Scriptures in a little work called *The Coran and the Testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures*, published by the S.P.C.K.

close correspondence with both, and that he had been foretold by former prophets. As compliant Jews and Christians were at hand to confirm his words, and as the Bible was little known among the generality of his followers, these assurances were implicitly believed. But as Islam spread abroad and began to include countries where the Holy Scriptures were familiarly read, the discrepancies between them and the Coran became patent. The sturdy believer, with an easy conscience, laid the blame at the door of the dishonest Jews and Christians, the former of whom their Prophet had accused in the Coran of 'hiding' and 'dislocating' the prophecies regarding himself; and, according to Moslem wont, a host of stories with details of Jewish fabrication soon grew up, exactly suited to the charge.¹

Why such
extrava-
gant and
unfounded
traditions
not con-
tradicted

If it appear strange that extravagant and unreasonable tales of the kind described in the last few paragraphs should not have been contradicted by the more upright and reasonable Moslems of the first age, and thus nipped in the bud, it must be remembered that criticism and freedom of opinion were stifled under the crushing dogmas of Islam. Any simpleton might fancy, and every designing man could with ease invent, such tales; when once current, the attempt to disprove them would be difficult and dangerous. Supposing that they contradicted no well-known fact or received dogma, by what arguments were they to be rebutted? If anyone had contended that human experience was opposed to the marvellous foreknowledge of the Jews regarding the person of Mahomet, he would have been scouted as an infidel. Honest inquiry, such as might touch the foundations of Islam, was not tolerated. Who would dare to argue that the ascription of a miracle to Mahomet was in itself improbable, that the narrator might have laboured under a false impression, or that in

¹ As examples, take the following. A Copt, reading his uncle's Bible, was struck by finding two leaves closely glued together. On opening them, he discovered copious details regarding Mahomet, as a Prophet immediately about to appear. His uncle was displeased at his curiosity and beat him, saying that the Prophet had not yet arisen. Again, there was in the kingdom of Syria a Jew who, while busied on the Sabbath perusing the Old Testament, perceived on one of the leaves the name of the blessed Prophet in four places; and out of spite cast that leaf into the fire. On the following day, he found the same name written in eight places: again he burnt the pages. On the third, he found it written in twelve places. The man marvelled exceedingly. He said within himself: 'The more I remove this name from the Scripture, the more do I find it written therein. I shall soon have the whole Bible filled with the same.' At last he resolved to proceed to Medina and see the Prophet. He arrived soon after Mahomet's death, embraced his garments, 'and expired in the arms of his love.'

the Coran itself miraculous powers were disclaimed by the Prophet? The argument would have placed the neck of the honest inquirer in jeopardy; for it has been already shown that the faith and the polity of Islam were one, and that free opinions and heresy were synonymous with conspiracy, treason, and rebellion.¹ And thus, under the shelter of the civil arm and the fanatical credulity of the people, these marvellous legends grew up in perfect security from the attacks of doubt and of rational inquiry.

κ.—The converse is likewise true; that is to say, traditions, founded upon good evidence, and undisputed because notorious in the first days of Islam, gradually fell into disrepute, or were entirely rejected, because they appeared to dishonour Mahomet or countenance some heretical opinion. The nature of the case renders it impossible to prove this position so fully as the preceding, since there can have survived but little trace of such traditions as were early and entirely dropped. But we discover vestiges of a spirit that would necessarily produce such results, working even in the second and third centuries. We find that the momentary lapse and compromise of Mahomet with the idolatry of Mecca is well supported by the earliest and the best authorities. But theologians began to deem it dangerous or heretical to suppose that Mahomet should have thus degraded himself 'after he had received the truth;' and the occurrence is therefore denied, or entirely omitted, by some of the earliest and by most of the later biographers, though the facts are so patent that the more candid fully admit them.² The principle thus

Traditions unfavourable to Mahomet become obsolete

¹ Take as an illustration the following. On the expedition to Tebuk, Mahomet prayed for rain, which accordingly descended. A perverse doubter, however, said: 'It was but a chance cloud that happened to pass.' Shortly after, the Prophet's camel strayed; again the doubter said: 'Doth not Mahomet deem himself a Prophet? He professeth to bring intelligence from the Heavens; yet is he unable to tell where his own camel is!' 'Ye servants of the Lord!' exclaimed his comrade, 'there is a plague in this place, and I knew it not. Get out from my tent, enemy of the Lord! Wretch, remain not in my presence!' Mahomet had, of course, in due time, *supernatural* intimation conveyed to him not only of the doubter's speech, but of the spot where the camel was; and the doubter afterwards repented, and was confirmed in the faith. Omar's sword was readily unsheathed to punish such sceptical temerity, and Mahomet himself once and again visited it in the early part of his Medina career with condign punishment.

² The author of the *Mawahib Alladoniya* traces the omission of the passage to fear of heresy and injury to Islam. 'It is said that this story is of an heretical character and has no foundation. But it is not so; it is really well founded.' 'Again [another author] rejects it on the ground that if it had really happened, many of those who had believed would have become apostates, which was not the case.'

found in existence in the second and third centuries, may be presumed to have been at work also in the first.

Pious
frauds
allowable
in Islam

L.—The system of *pious frauds* is not abhorrent from the axioms of Islam. Deception, in the current theology, is under certain circumstances allowable. The Prophet himself, by precept as well as by example, encouraged the notion that to tell an untruth is on some occasions allowable; and what occasion would approve itself as more justifiable, nay meritorious, than that of furthering the interests of Islam? Early Moslems would suppose it to be fitting and right that a divine religion should be supported by the evidence of miracles, and they no doubt believed that they were doing God service by building up such testimony in its favour. The case of our own religion, whose purer morality renders such attempt the less excusable, shows that pious fabrications of this description easily commend themselves to the conscience, wherever there is the inclination and the opportunity for their perpetration.

Difficulty
of distin-
guishing
conscien-
tious wit-
nesses

There were indeed conscientious men among the early Moslems, who would have scrupled at such pious fraud; but these are the very individuals from whom we have the fewest traditions. We read of some cautious and scrupulous Companions who, perceiving the difficulty of reciting accounts of their Prophet with perfect accuracy, and perhaps offended at the effrontery of the ordinary propagators of garbled and unfounded traditions, abstained entirely from repeating the sayings of the Prophet.¹

¹ Thus Omar declined to give certain information, saying: 'If it were not that I feared lest I should add to the facts in relating them, or take therefrom, verily I would tell you.' Similar traditions are given regarding Othman. Ibn Mas'ud was so afraid of repeating Mahomet's words wrongly, that he always guarded his relation by the conditional clause—'He spake something like this, or near unto it;' but one day, as he repeated a tradition, the unconditional formula of repetition—'*thus spake the Prophet of the Lord*'—escaped his lips, and he became oppressed with anguish, so that the sweat dropped from his forehead. Then he said: 'If the Lord so will, the Prophet may have said more than that, or less, or near unto it.' Again, Sad was asked a question, and he kept silence, saying: '*I fear that if I tell you one thing, ye will go and add thereto, as from me, a hundred.*' Thus also one inquired of Ibn Zobeir: 'Why do we not hear thee telling anecdotes regarding the Prophet, as such and such persons tell?' He replied: 'It is very true that I kept close by the Prophet from the time I first believed (and therefore am intimately acquainted with his words); but I heard him say, "Whosoever shall repeat a lie concerning me, his resting-place shall be in hell-fire."' So in explaining why several of the principal Companions had left no traditions, Wakidy writes: 'From some there are no remains of tradition regarding the Prophet, although they were more in his company, sitting and hearing him, than others who have left us many traditions; and this we attribute to their fear' (of giving forth erroneous traditions).

But regarding those Companions from whom the great mass of tradition is drawn, and their immediate successors, it does not appear that we are now in possession of any satisfactory means for dividing them into separate classes, of which the trustworthiness would vary to any great extent. With respect, indeed, to some it is known that they were more constantly than others with Mahomet, and had therefore better opportunities for acquiring information ; some, like the garrulous Ayesha, were specially given to gossiping tales and trifling frivolities ; but none of them, so far as we can judge, was free from the tendency to glorify the Prophet at the expense of careful recital, or could be withheld from the marvellous by the most palpable violations of probability or reason. Such at least is the impression derived from their evidence in the shape *in which it has reached us*.

M.—The aberrations from fact hitherto noticed are presumed to have proceeded from some species of bias, the nature of which I have been endeavouring to trace. But the testimony of the Companions, as delivered to us, is so unaccountably fickle and capricious that, even where no motive whatever can be guessed at, and where there were the fullest opportunities of observation, traditions often flatly contradict one another. For instance, a score of persons affirm that Mahomet dyed his hair : they mention the substance used ; some not only maintain that they were eye-witnesses of it during the Prophet's life, but after his death produced relics of hair on which the dye was visible. A score of others, possessing equally good means of information, assert that he never dyed his hair, and that, moreover, he had no need to do so, as his grey hairs were so few that they might be counted.¹ Again, with respect to his *Signet ring*—a matter involving no faction, family interest, or dogma—tradition is most discordant. One party relate that, feeling the want of a seal for his despatches, the Prophet had a signet ring prepared for that purpose of pure silver. Another party assert that Khalid ibn Saïd made for himself an iron ring plated with silver ; and that Mahomet, taking a fancy to it, appropriated it to his own use. A

Examples
of capricious fabrication

¹ Even the exact number of his white hairs is given by different authorities variously, as 17, 18, 20, or 30. Some say that when he oiled his head these appeared ; others that the process of oiling concealed them. As to the colour used, the accounts also differ. One says he employed Henna and Katam which gave a reddish tinge, but that he liked yellow best ; another mentions a jet-black dye, while others say the Prophet forbade this ; *e.g.* Mahomet said : 'Those who dye their hair black like the crops of pigeons, shall never smell the smell of Paradise.' 'In the day of judgment, the Lord will not look upon him who dyes his hair black.'

third tradition states that the ring was brought by Ibn Saïd from Abyssinia ; and a fourth that Muâdh had it engraved for himself in Yemen. One set of traditions hold that Mahomet wore this ring on his right hand, another on his left ; one that he wore the seal inside, others that he wore it outside ; one that the inscription upon it was *The truth of God*, while the rest declare that it was *Muhammad, Prophet of God*. These traditions all refer to one and the same ring ; because it is repeatedly added that, after Mahomet's death, it was worn by Abu Bekr, by Omar, and by Othman, and was lost by the latter in the well Aris. There is yet another tradition that neither the Prophet nor any of his immediate successors ever wore a ring at all. Now these varying narratives are not given doubtfully, as conjectures which might either be right or wrong ; but they are told with the full assurance of certainty, and with such minute circumstantiality as to leave the impression on the simple reader's mind that each of the narrators had the most intimate acquaintance with the subject.

Unsup-
ported tra-
dition is
insufficient
evidence

To what tendency, then, or habit of mind, but sheer love of story-telling, are we to attribute such gratuitous and wholesale inventions ? In fine, we may from all that has been said, conclude that tradition cannot be received with too much caution, or exposed to too rigorous a criticism ; and that no important statement should be accepted as securely proved by tradition alone, unless there be some farther ground of probability, analogy, or collateral evidence in its favour.

III. Con-
siderations
confirming
tradition

III.—We now proceed to the considerations which should be regarded as *confirming* the credit of a tradition.

Agreement
between
independ-
ent tradi-
tions

A.—General agreement between traditions independent one of another, or which, though traceable to a common origin, have descended by different chains of witnesses, may be regarded as a presumption of credibility. The sources of tradition were numerous ; and the stream reaches us through many separate channels. Evidence of this description may therefore afford a cumulative presumption that matter common to many separate traditions was currently reported or believed at the period immediately succeeding the Prophet's death. But, on the other hand, close agreement may be a ground of distrust ; it may argue that, though attributed to different sources, the traditions really belong to one and the same family, perhaps of spurious origin, long subsequent to the time of Mahomet. If the uniformity be so great as to exclude circumstantial variety, it will be strong ground for believing that either the common source of such traditions is not of old date, or that the channels of their conveyance have not been kept distinct. Some degree of incidental dis-

crepancy must be looked for, and will improve rather than injure the character of the evidence. Thus the frequent variations as to the day of the week on which remarkable events occurred are just what we should expect in independent traditions having their origin in hearsay ; and the simplicity with which these are placed in juxtaposition speaks strongly for the honesty of the Collectors as having gathered them *bond fide* from various and independent sources, as well as having refrained from any attempt to blend or harmonise.

A like argument may be applied to the several parts of a tradition. Certain portions of distinct versions of the same subject-matter may agree almost verbally together, while other portions may contain circumstantial variations ; and it is possible that the latter may have a *bond fide* independent origin, which the former could not pretend to. Thus the story of Mahomet's infantile days, which professes to have been derived from his nurse Halima, has been handed down to us in three distinct traditions. 'These three accounts,' says Sprenger, 'agree almost literally in the marvellous, but they differ in the facts.' The *marvellous* was derived from a common source of fabrication, but the *facts* from original authorities. Hence the uniformity of the one, and the variation in the other.

Agreement between portions of independent traditions

Verbal coincidence may sometimes involve a species of evidence peculiar to itself ; it may point to a common *recorded* original of date older probably than that at which most of the other traditions were reduced to writing. There being no reason to believe that any such documents were framed till some considerable time after Mahomet's death, they can assume none of the merit of contemporaneous remains. But they may claim the advantage of a greater antiquity of record than the mass of ordinary tradition, as in the history by Zohri of the Prophet's military conquests, recorded probably before the close of the first century.

Verbal coincidence may point to a common written original

B.—Correspondence at any point with facts mentioned in the Coran will generally impart credit to the traditional narrative. Some of the most important incidents connected with Mahomet's battles and campaigns, as well as a variety of domestic and political matters, are thus attested. Such apparent confirmation may however be deceptive, for the allusion in the Coran may have *given rise* to the tradition. The story may have originated in some illustrative supposition or paraphrastic comment on the text ; and, gradually changing its character, been transmitted to posterity as a recital of fact. Take for example the following verse in the Coran : *Remember the favour of thy Lord unto thee, when certain men designed to stretch forth their hands upon thee,*

Correspondence with the Coran a valuable confirmation

and the Lord held back their hands from thee. By some this passage is supposed to refer to Mahomet's escape from Mecca ; but, the craving after the circumstantial and marvellous not being satisfied with this reasonable interpretation, several different occasions have been given on which the *hand* of the enemy, in the very act of brandishing a sword over Mahomet's head, was miraculously stayed by Gabriel.¹ Again, the discomfiture of the army of Abraha shortly before the birth of Mahomet, is thus poetically celebrated in Sura cv. : *And did not the Lord send against them flocks of little birds, which cast upon them small clay stones, and made them like unto the stubble of which the cattle have eaten ?* This seems only a highly coloured metaphor setting forth the general destruction of the army by the ravages of small-pox or some similar pestilence. But it has afforded a starting-point for the extravagances of tradition, which gives a detailed statement of the species of bird, the size and material of the stones, the mode in which they struck the enemy, the kind of wound inflicted, &c., as if the portent had but just occurred within sight of the narrators ; and yet the whole has evidently no other foundation than the verse above quoted, which the credulous Moslems, interpreting literally, deemed it necessary to clothe with ample illustration. Such are examples of the numberless legends which, though purely imaginary, have been reared upon a Coranic basis.²

Disparagement
of
Mahomet

c.—When a tradition contains statements which, *from the Moslem's point of view*, would reflect unfavourably on the Prophet, that will be held in its favour. Such would be the tradition

¹ In the attack upon the Beni Ghatafán, we learn from Wakidy that whilst Mahomet was resting under a tree, the enemy's leader came stealthily up, and, snatching his sword, exclaimed: 'Who is there to defend thee against me this day?' 'The Lord,' replied the Prophet. Immediately Gabriel struck the foe a blow upon his chest, which caused the sword to fall from his hand ; thereupon Mahomet in his turn seized the sword and retorted the question on his adversary, who forthwith became a convert ; 'and *with reference to this*,' it is added, '*was Sura v. 12 revealed*' (i.e. the verse quoted in the text).

The tale is a second time clumsily repeated by the biographers almost in the same terms, on the occasion of his expedition to Dzát al Rica ; and here Hishami adds : 'With special reference to this event, Sura v. 12 was revealed ; but others attribute the passage to the attempt of Amr ibn Jahsh, one of the Beni Nadhr,' who (as is pretended) tried to roll down a stone upon the Prophet from the roof of the house in which he sat.

Thus we have three or four different incidents to which the text is applied, *some of which are evidently fabricated to suit the passage itself*.

² As illustrative of similarly fabricated stories in the early history of the Church, the legend of St. Paul's battle with the wild beasts may be referred to as growing out of 1 Cor. xv. 32. See Stanley *in loco*.

of an indignity shown to him by his followers, or an insult from his enemies after his emigration (for then the period of humiliation had passed); his failure in any enterprise or laudable endeavour; anything, in fine, at variance either in fact or doctrine with the principles and tendencies of Islam, then there will be strong reason for admitting it as authentic; because, otherwise, it seems hardly possible that a tradition of the kind could be fabricated, or, having been fabricated, that it could obtain currency among the followers of Mahomet. At the same time we must be careful not to apply the rule to all that is considered *by ourselves* discreditable or opposed to morality. Cruelty and revenge, however ruthless, *when practised against infidels*, were regarded by the first followers of Islam as highly meritorious; and the rude civilisation of Arabia admitted with complacency a coarseness of language and behaviour, which we should look upon as reprehensible indecency. These and similar exceptions must be made from this canon of otherwise universal application.

D.—There is embodied in tradition a source of information far more authentic than any yet alluded to, though unfortunately of very limited extent,—I mean the transcripts of treaties purporting to have been dictated by Mahomet, and engrossed in his presence. It has been already shown that ordinary traditions were not recorded in his lifetime; and that, even were we to admit an occasional resort to early notes or memoranda, there is no evidence regarding their subsequent fate, nor any criteria for distinguishing traditions so derived from those that originated and were long sustained by purely oral means. To a very different category belong the treaties of Mahomet. They consist of compacts entered into with surrounding tribes, which were at the time reduced to writing, and attested by one or more of his followers. They are of course confined to the period succeeding the Prophet's acquisition of political influence, and from their nature limited to the recital of a few simple facts. But these facts again form valuable points of support to the traditional outline; and, especially where they detail the relations of Islam with the neighbouring Jewish and Christian tribes, are of the highest interest.

In Wakidy's biography is a section expressly devoted to the transcription of such treaties, and it contains two or three scores of them. Over and again, the author (at the end of the second or beginning of the third century) states that he had copied these from the *original* documents, or recorded their purport from the testimony of those who had seen them. 'They were still in force,' writes Sprenger, 'in the time of Harun al

Treaties
contempo-
raneously
recorded

Their au-
thority far
superior to
that of
ordinary
tradition;

Especially
in regard to
Jewish and
Christian
tribes

Rashid (A.H. 170-193), and were then collected.' This is quite conceivable, for they were often recorded upon leather, and would invariably be preserved with care as charters of privilege by those in whose favour they were concluded. Some of the most interesting, as the terms allowed to the Jews of Kheibar and to the Christians of Najran, formed the bases of political events in the Caliphates of Abu Bekr and Omar; the concessions made in others to Jewish and Christian tribes are satisfactory proof that they were not fabricated by Moslems; while it is equally clear that they would never have been acknowledged if counterfeited by a Jewish or a Christian hand. Whenever, then, there is fair evidence in favour of such treaties, they may be placed, as to historical authority, almost on a par with the Coran itself.

Written details of embassies preserved in several tribes

The narrative of official deputations to Mahomet is sometimes stated to have been derived from the family or tribe which sent the embassy, and which had preserved a written memorial of the circumstances. Accounts so obtained may undoubtedly be viewed as founded on fact, for the family or clan would naturally treasure up in the most careful way any memorials of the manner in which the Prophet had received and honoured them, although there would, no doubt, be a tendency in such statements to self-aggrandisement.¹

Poetical remains have special authority. 1. Those ascribed to a period before the rise of Mahomet

E.—Another traditional source, supported by authority peculiar to itself, consists of the verses and poetical fragments attributed to the time of Mahomet. Some of these profess to be the composition of persons who died before the Prophet, as Abu Tâlib, his uncle; others, of those who survived him, as Hassân the poet of Medina. There can be no question as to the great antiquity of these remains, though we may not always be able to fix with exactness the period of their composition. With respect to those which purport to be of date preceding the Prophet's rise to power, when we consider the poetical habits of the nation, their faculty of preserving poetry by memory,² the

¹ Thus Wakidy: 'My informant, Muhammad ibn Yahya, relates, *that he found it in the writings* of his father, that,' &c.; and again, 'Amr the Odzrite says, he *found it written in the papers* of his father, that,' &c.; proceeding with the narrative of a deputation from the tribe to Mahomet.

² Burckhardt's testimony shows that the faculty still remains. 'Through-out every part of the Arabian desert, poetry is equally esteemed. Many persons are found who make verses of true measure, although they cannot either read or write; yet as they employ on such occasions chosen terms only, and as the purity of their vernacular language is such as to preclude any grammatical errors, these verses, after passing from mouth to mouth, may at last be committed to paper, and will most commonly be found regular and correct. I presume that the greater part of the regular poetry of the Arabs, which has descended to us, is derived from similar compositions.

ancient style and language of the pieces themselves, and the likelihood that carefully composed verses were from the first committed for greater security to writing, it cannot certainly be deemed improbable that such poems or fragments should in reality have been composed by the parties to whom they are ascribed. It is, on the other hand, quite possible that poetry of date long after the death of Mahomet, but descriptive of some passage in his life, may gradually have come to be regarded as composed by a contemporary poet upon the occasion, or as the actual effusion of the actors in the scene to whom, by poetical fiction, the modern author attributes it. As a general rule, it may be laid down that wherever there is betrayed an anticipation of Mahomet's prophetic dignity or victories, the poetry may at once be concluded as an after-thought, triumphant Islam having reflected some rays of its refulgence upon the bare points of its early career. Tried by this rule, there are fragments which may be ascribed, as more or less genuine, to the men whose names they bear; but there is also much which, from patent anachronism either in fact or spirit, is evidently the composition of a later age.¹

Pieces said to have been recited by poets who survived Mahomet, there is every reason for believing to be the composition of the persons to whom they are ascribed. But whether they were composed before the Prophet's death, even when so

Poets who
survived
Mahomet

¹ The following glaring anachronism shows with what caution poetry of this class must be received. When Mahomet with his followers performed the pilgrimage to Mecca under the treaty of Hodeibia, the leader of his camel, as he encircled the Kaaba, shouted verses of hostile defiance against the Coreish, who had retired by compact to the overhanging rocks and thence viewed the Prophet and his people. Among these verses was the couplet: 'We shall slay you on the score of the interpretation of 'it (the Coran), as we slew you on the score of its revelation' (*i.e.* for rejecting it). Now this evidently belongs to a period long subsequent, when, Islam having been broken up into parties, men fought against each other for their several 'interpretations' of the Coran, and looked back to the struggle with the idolaters of Mecca as to a bygone era. Yet the verses are ascribed both by Wakidy and Hishami to the Hodeibia armistice, *i.e.* a period anterior even to the conquest of Mecca.

As a further example, I may refer to the rhetorical contest held before Mahomet between his own followers and the embassy of the Beni Temim. Anticipations of universal conquest are developed in the orations of the Mahometan party. Thus the threat is used by Thâbit ibn Cays that the Moelems '*would fight against all the world till they were converted.*' This was language appropriate only to the time when the Arabs had issued from Arabia. The speeches and poems were, no doubt, composed afterwards as suitable to the occasion, and, like the orations of classical history, attributed to the speakers of the original scene.

represented, is a more difficult question ; and their authority will in some measure depend on the answer. Under any circumstances they must be of great value, as the work of Mahomet's contemporaries. Wherever they bear upon historical events, they are of much use as adding confirmation to the corresponding traditions ; for, whether handed down by writing, or by memory alone, their poetical form is a material safeguard against change or interpolation. As examples, may be specified the odes of Hassân ibn Thâbit on the 'Battle of the Ditch,' and on 'the taking of Mecca ;' and the poem of Kab ibn Mâlik, descriptive of the oath of fealty by the Medina converts at the 'Second pledge of Acaba,' in which are mentioned the names of the twelve leaders chosen by the Prophet. Besides illustrating specific facts, this early poetry is often instructive, from its exhibition of the *spirit* of the first Moslems towards their unconverted brethren, and the biting satire employed against the enemies of Islam.

Their poetry useful as confirmatory of tradition

But while these poetical pieces attest many facts we are already acquainted with, they reveal none which, without them, we should not otherwise have known. They are valuable because *confirmatory* of tradition, and, as the earliest literary remains of a period which contained the germ of such mighty events, they deserve our best attention ; but they give us little fresh insight into the history or character of the Prophet.

Conclusion

Such, then, are the criteria which should be applied to Mahometan tradition. It is obvious that the technical rule of 'respectable names,' used by the Collectors as the connecting chain of evidence, can carry no authority with us ; that every tradition, separately subjected to close examination, must stand or fall upon its own merits ; and that, even after its reception as *generally* credible, the component parts are still severally liable, upon a close scrutiny of internal evidence, to suspicion and rejection. The sure light of the Coran will be the pole-star of the historian ; and by it he will judge tradition. Where in its absence tradition stands alone, he will maintain a jealous guard against the misleading tendencies which I have endeavoured to explain, and will reject whatever bears their traces. In the remainder he will find ample and trustworthy materials for the biography of the Prophet.

EARLY BIOGRAPHERS, Zohri, and other compilers of

I will now notice briefly the EARLY HISTORIANS OF MAHOMET. We have seen that towards the end of the first century the general practice of recording tradition was first systematically set on foot. One of the persons known to have been employed

in the task was *Zohri*, who died A.H. 124, aged 72. It has been even stated that both he and his master Orwa (who died as early as A.H. 94) composed regular biographies of Mahomet; but the grounds are uncertain. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that *Zohri* at least made separate collections of the traditions bearing on various episodes of the Prophet's life, certainly on that relating to his military career. It is conjectured by Sprenger, that such compilations gave rise to the uniformity of narrative and coincidence of expression observable in many parts of the various biographies of Mahomet, and especially in the history of his expeditions and battles. The supposition is probable; at all events the work of *Zohri* was one of such sources. He lived at the court of the Omeyyad Caliphs, and there is every reason to believe that his accounts are as unbiassed as could be expected from any Mussulman author. There is nothing of *Zohri* extant in independent form, but he is largely quoted by subsequent biographers; and their account of Mahomet's military operations is probably in great part the reproduction of materials collated by him.

biographical
collections

Two other authors are mentioned as having written biographies of Mahomet early in the second century, MUSA IBN OCKBA and ABU MASHAR. Neither of their works is extant; but the latter is extensively referred to by *Tabari*. To these may be added, as no longer available, the histories of ABU ISHAC, who died A.H. 188, and MADAINI, who survived to the beginning of the third century. Though the latter published many works on the Prophet, not one of them is now known to exist.

Biographies
compiled in
second century
A.H.

The earliest biographical writers whose treatises are extant more or less in their original state are:—I. Ibn Ishac; II. Ibn Hisham; III. *Wakidy*, and his Secretary; IV. *Tabari*. These works, though professing, like the traditional collections, to be composed exclusively of trustworthy traditions, differ from them in the following particulars.¹

Extant bio-
graphies
Difference
from ordi-
nary col-
lections

First.—The traditional matter is confined to biographical subjects, and is arranged in chronological order. Commencing with anticipatory and genealogical notices, the work advances to the birth of Mahomet, and traces with some degree of method the various periods of his life. To each stage a separate chapter is devoted; and all traditions, which have any bearing whatever on the subject, are thrown together in that chapter, and arranged with more or less of intelligible sequence. The practice of the Collectors as to the quotation of their authorities is generally

First.—
Confined to
biographi-
cal matter
chronologi-
cally ar-
ranged

¹ Biographical works are called *Siyar* (or *Sirat*), while the general Collections of tradition are termed *Hadeeth* (or *Hadees*).

observed ; namely, that each separate tradition must be supported by its original witness, and the chain of witnesses specified by name which connects the biographer with that authority. This induces the same motley and fragmentary appearance which marks the traditional *Collections*. The biography of Mahomet, in fact, resembles a collection of 'table talk.' It is a compilation rather than an original composition.

Second.—Traditions sometimes formed into connected narrative

Second.—Traditions are sometimes fused together, or reduced into a uniform story. Such is more particularly the case in descriptions of Mahomet's military life, where the expeditions are often detailed in an unbroken narrative, the authorities for which are generally thrown together at the beginning.

Third.—A measure of critical collation

Third.—This process at times induces some degree of critical examination of the several traditions so collected. Where the authorities differ, we find the biographer occasionally stating his opinion as to which is the correct exposition of fact. Verbal differences are sometimes mentioned, and various readings noted. Satisfactory evidence is thus afforded of the labour bestowed by the biographers in bringing together all authentic tradition which could illustrate their subject, and of the accuracy with which they recorded it.

The following account of the four authors whose works are more or less extant will enable the reader to form an estimate of their value as biographical authorities.

MUHAMMAD IBN ISHAC ;

I. MUHAMMAD IBN ISHAC is the earliest biographer of whom any extensive remains, the authorship of which can certainly be distinguished, have reached us. He died A.H. 151, that is, some twenty years after the overthrow of the Omeyyad dynasty. His work was published under the auspices and influence of the Abbasside Princes, and was in fact composed 'for the use' of the Caliph Mansur, the second of that line. Its accuracy has been impugned. But from the portions which have come down to us there seems no ground for believing that Ibn Ishac was less careful than other traditionists ; while the high character generally ascribed to him, and the confidence with which he is quoted by later authors, leave little doubt that the aspersions cast upon him have no good foundation.

Testimonies to his authority

In the biographical dictionary of Ibn Khallican we find the following testimonies in his favour : ' Muhammad ibn Ishac is held by the majority of the learned as a sure authority in traditions, and none can be ignorant of the high character borne by his work, *the Maghazi* (military expeditions). *Whoever wishes to know the early Moslem conquests*, says Zohri, *let him refer to Ibn Ishac ;*' and Bokhary himself cites him in his history. Shafi said : *Whoever wishes to obtain a complete acquaintance with the early*

Moslem conquests, must borrow his information from Ibn Ishac. Safyan ibn Oyeina declared that he never met any one who cast suspicions on Ibn Ishac's recitals ; and Shoba ibn al Hajjaj was heard to say : *Muhammad ibn Ishac is the Commander of the Faithful*, meaning that he held that rank as a traditionist. . . . Al Saji mentions that Zohri's pupils had recourse to Muhammad ibn Ishac, whenever they had doubts respecting the exactness of any of the traditions delivered by their master ; such was the confidence they placed in his excellent memory. It is stated that Yahya ibn Main, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, and Yahya Saïd al Kattan, considered Muhammad ibn Ishac as a trustworthy authority, and quoted his traditions in proof of their legal doctrines. . . . It was from Ibn Ishac's works that Ibn Hisham extracted the materials of his biography of the Prophet, and every person who has treated on this subject has been obliged to take Ibn Ishac for his authority and guide.'

These testimonies are conclusive of the popularity of Ibn Ishac in the Moslem world, and of his general fidelity as a writer. But the surest proof of his character and authority is that his statements have been embodied in all subsequent biographies of the Prophet, excepting that of Wakidy, who in comparison with others quotes sparingly from him ; and that in fact the two works of Ibn Ishac and Wakidy contain between them the chief materials on which later writers have drawn for authentic details of the Prophet's life.

No copy of Ibn Ishac's biography, in its original form, is now available. But the materials have been so extensively adopted by Ibn Hisham, and wrought into his history in so complete and unaltered a form, that we have probably not lost much by the absence of the work itself.

II. IBN HISHAM, who died A.H. 213 (or 218), made the labours of Ibn Ishac the basis of his biography of Mahomet. Copies of this work are extant, and are known to the European historians of the Prophet. The following extract from Ibn Khallican will place before the reader all that it is necessary to know regarding the life of this author : ' Ibn Hisham, the author of the *Sîrat al Rasul*, or *Biography of the Prophet*, is spoken of in these terms by Abul Casim al Suhaili, in his work entitled *Al Raud al Unuf*, which is a commentary on the *Sîrat*. He was celebrated for his learning, and possessed superior information in genealogy and grammar. His native place was Old Cairo, but his family were of Bussorah. He composed a genealogical work on the tribe of Himyar and its princes ; and I have been told that he wrote another work, in which he explained the obscure passages of poetry cited in [Ibn Ishac's] biography of the Prophet. His

Ibn Ishac one of the two chief sources of subsequent biographies

Not extant, but largely available in Ibn Hisham

IBN HISHAM : His character

death occurred at Old Cairo A.H. 213. This Ibn Hisham is the person who extracted and drew up the "History of the Prophet" from Ibn Ishac's work, entitled "The Wars and Life of Mahomet." Al Suhaili explained its difficulties in a commentary, and it is now found in the hands of the public under the title of *Strat ibn Hisham*, i.e. "The Biography of Mahomet, by Ibn Hisham."

Suspicious
of his can-
dour and
fidelity

There is reason to suspect that Ibn Hisham was not quite so trustworthy as his great authority Ibn Ishac. Certainly there is one instance which throws suspicion upon him as a witness, disinclined at least to tell the *whole* truth. We find in Tabari a quotation from *Ibn Ishac*, in which is described the temporary lapse of Mahomet into idolatry; and the same incidents are also given by Wakidy from other original sources. But no notice whatever of the fact appears in the biography of Ibn Hisham, though it is professedly based upon the work of Ibn Ishac. His having thus studiously omitted all reference to so important an incident, for no other reason apparently than because he fancied it to be discreditable to the Prophet, cannot but lessen our confidence generally in his book. Still, it is evident from a comparison of his text with the quotations made by Tabari from the same passages of Ibn Ishac (the two ordinarily tallying word for word with each other) that whatever he did excerpt from his author was faithfully and accurately quoted.

Arrange-
ment and
composition

The arrangement and composition of Ibn Hisham are careful, if not elaborate. The traditions are well classified, and the narrative proceeds with much of the regularity of an ordinary biography. The frequent fusion of traditions, however, renders it sometimes difficult to single out the separate authorities, and to judge of them on their individual merits.¹

WAKIDY :
His cha-
racter and
writings

III. WAKIDY, or as his full name runs *Muhammad ibn Omar al Wakidy*—was born at Medina about A.H. 130, and died A.H. 207. He studied and wrote exclusively under the Abbassides. He enjoyed their patronage, and passed a part of his life at their

¹ 'Even of this work copies are rare.'—*Sprenger*. The fact is that the literary public among Mahometans do not affect the early and original sources of their Prophet's life, and hardly ever use them. They prefer the modern biographies with their marvellous tales.

An abridged edition of Ibn Hisham was made at Damascus A.H. 707 (A.D. 1307) by one Ahmed ibn Ibrahim. The abridgment consists chiefly in the omission in each case of the long series of witnesses leading up to the Companion who first gave forth the tradition. A beautiful manuscript, in the handwriting of the abbreviator himself, was met with by Dr. Sprenger in Delhi, and has been used both by Dr. Sprenger and myself. I have placed a portion of this valuable MS., with an English abstract of its contents, in the India Office Library.

court, having in his later days been appointed a Cazeer of Baghdad. In judging therefore of his learning and prejudices, we must always bear in mind that the influence of the Abbasside dynasty bore strongly and continuously upon him. His traditional researches were vast, and his works voluminous. The following is from Ibn Khallican : 'Wakidy was a man eminent for learning, and the author of some well-known works on the conquests of the Moslems, and other subjects. His *Kitab al Redda*, a work of no inferior merit, contains an account of the apostasy of the Arabs on the death of the Prophet, and of the wars between his followers and Tuleiha, Aswad, and Moseilama, the false prophets. . . . His Secretary, Muhammad ibn Sad, and a number of other distinguished men, delivered traditional information on his authority. He held the post of Cazeer in the eastern quarter of Baghdad, and was appointed by the Caliph Mamun to fill the same office at Askar al Mahdi. The traditions received from him are considered of feeble authority, and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity. Mamun testified a high respect for him, and treated him with marked honour.'

Notwithstanding the extraordinary fertility of his pen, none of the works of Wakidy have reached us in their original form, with the exception of the *Maghâzi*, or 'History of the Wars of the Prophet,' a copy of which was recently discovered in Syria, and has now been published in the *Bibliotheca Indica*.

The 'Maghâzi' his only work extant in original form

Happily, his Secretary, IBN SAD, profited by the labours of his master, and through him we enjoy largely the results. The Secretary is thus described by Ibn Khallican : 'Muhammad ibn Sad was a man of the highest talents, merit, and eminence. He lived for some time with Wakidy in the character of a Secretary, and for this reason became known by the appellation "The Secretary of Wakidy." . . . He composed an excellent work in fifteen volumes on the different classes of Mahomet's Companions and the Successors ; it contains also a history of the Caliphs, brought down to his own time. He left also a smaller edition. His character as a veracious and trustworthy historian is universally admitted. It is said that the complete collection of Wakidy's works remained in the possession of four persons, the first of whom was his Secretary, Ibn Sad. This distinguished writer displayed great acquirements in the sciences, the traditions, and traditional literature ; most of his books treat of the traditions and law. The Khatib Abu Bekr, author of the 'History of Baghdad,' speaks of him in these terms : 'We consider Muhammad ibn Sad as a man of unimpeached integrity, and the traditions which he delivered are a proof of his veracity, for, in the greater part of the information handed down by him, we find him discussing it passage by

But results of his labours preserved by his Secretary Muhammad ibn Sad

The Secretary of Wakidy

passage.' At the age of sixty-two he died at Baghdad, A.H. 230, and was interred in the cemetery outside the Damascus gate.

His works

In the fifteen volumes here noticed, the Secretary is supposed to have embodied the researches of his master, together with the fruits of his own independent labour. The first volume has, fortunately for the interests of literature and truth, been preserved to us in an undoubtedly genuine form. It contains the *Strat* or 'Biography of Mahomet,' with detailed accounts of the learned men of Medina, and of all the Companions of the Prophet who were present at Bedr. This treatise (if we except some special narratives, as portions of the military expeditions) is composed entirely of detached traditions, which are arranged in chapters according to subject, and in fair chronological order. The chain of authority is generally traced in detail to the fountain head for each tradition, separately; and so carefully is every fragment of a tradition bearing on each subject treasured up and gathered together, that we often find a dozen or more traditions reiterated in detail one after another, though they are all couched perhaps in precisely the same words, or in expressions closely resembling one another. We likewise meet continually with the most contradictory authorities placed side by side without any remark; and sometimes (but the occasion is comparatively rare) the author gives his opinion as to their relative credibility.¹

Composed
mainly of
detached
traditions

Authority
of Wakidy
and his
Secretary

Wakidy is said to have been a follower of the Alyite sect. Like others, he probably yielded to the prevailing influences of the day, which tended to exalt the Prophet's son-in-law as well as all the progenitors of the Abbasside race. But there is not the slightest ground for doubting that his character is equal, if not superior, to that of any other historian of his time. Of the biography, at all events, compiled by his Secretary, Sprenger has well vindicated the authority and faithfulness. 'There is no trace,' says he, 'of a sacrifice of truth to design, or of pious fraud, in his work. It contains few miracles; and even those

¹ For a copy of this invaluable volume we are indebted to the indefatigable research of Sprenger, who discovered it in a library at Cawnpore. This manuscript is written in an ancient but very distinct character, and is in excellent preservation. It was transcribed at Damascus, A.H. 718 (A.D. 1318), by a scholar named Hakkari, who traces up, link by link, from the pupil to the master (by whom it was successively taught, or by whom copied) the guarantee of the authenticity of the volume, till the chain reaches to the Secretary, Muhammad ibn Sad himself. This rare MS. having come into my possession was presented (with a careful digest of its contents in English) to the India Office Library. A beautiful transcript, made for my own use at Delhi, I purpose depositing in the Library of the University of Edinburgh, where it may readily be consulted. There is but one other copy believed to be extant, which is in the library of Gotha.

which are recorded in it admit of an easy explanation.' Concurring generally in this praise, I do not hesitate to designate the compilation as the fruit of an honest endeavour to bring together the most credible authorities current at the end of the second century, and to depict the life of Mahomet with as much truth as from such sources was possible ; it is marked by at least as great sincerity as we may expect to find in any extant Mahometan author. But Sprenger's admiration carries him too far, when he affirms that the miracles it contains are either few in number or of easy explanation. They are, on the contrary, nearly as numerous as those we find in Ibn Hisham. It is very evident that the criticism of Wakidy and his Secretary extended little, if at all, beyond that of their contemporaries. They were mere compilers of current traditions ; and these, if attested by reputable names, were received, however fabulous or extravagant, with a blind and implicit credulity.

IV. TABARI, or *Abu Jafar ibn Jarir al Tabari*, flourished in the latter part of the third century of the Moslem era. The following is from Ibn Khallican : 'Tabari was an Imam (or leader) in many various branches of knowledge, such as Coranic interpretation, traditions, jurisprudence, history, &c. He composed some fine works on various subjects, and these productions are a testimony of his extensive information and great abilities. He was one of the *Mujtahid Imams* (Defenders of the Faith) as he judged for himself and adopted the opinions of no particular doctor. . . . He is held to merit the highest confidence as a transmitter of traditional information, and his history is the most authentic and the most exact of any. . . . He was born A.H. 224 at Amul in Tabaristan, and he died at Baghdad A.H. 310.'

Tabari, happily styled by Gibbon 'the Livy of the Arabians,' composed annals not only of Mahomet's life, but of the progress of Islam. The Arabic original of the latter has long been known, but it commences only with the Prophet's death. Of the previous chapters, hitherto available only through an untrustworthy Persian translation, no trace, until a very few years ago, could anywhere be found.

Volume
with bio-
graphy of
Mahomet

Here again the literary world is indebted to Dr. Sprenger, who, having been before the Mutiny deputed by the Indian Government to examine the libraries of Lucknow, succeeded in tracing, from amongst a heap of neglected manuscripts, a portion of the long-lost volume.¹ It begins with the birth of Mahomet :

discovered
by Sprenger

¹ The fortunate discovery is thus described by Sprenger : 'One of the most important books which it was my good luck to find during my late mission to Lucknow is the fourth volume of the history of Tabari (who died in A.H. 310), of which I believe no other copy is known

but it terminates with the siege of Medina, that is, five years before the Prophet's death. The discovery of this portion of Tabari in its original language is, after that of Wakidy and his Secretary, the most important event affecting the biography of Mahomet which has occurred for many years. It has a marked bearing on the sufficiency and completeness of Ibn Ishac (as known to us through Ibn Hisham) and of Wakidy. The estimate given by Sprenger (not an exaggerated one), that two-thirds of the work of Tabari are composed of extracts quoted formally from Ibn Ishac and Wakidy, proves not only that these two biographers were in his day held as trustworthy, but likewise that they were the *standard writers* and the *chief authorities* on the subject, up to at least the close of the third century. The remaining materials of Tabari, derived from a variety of sources, possess, as observed by Sprenger, a peculiar interest, because accessible in no other quarter. Yet these sources in no case bear the character of a complete and authoritative biography, but only of occasional or miscellaneous fragments, nor do they bring to light any new or important features in Mahomet's life. Quoted by Tabari, they are sometimes valuable as supplementary to the accounts given by Ibn Ishac and Wakidy, or confirmatory of them; but they are oftener symptomatic of the growth of a less honest and scrupulous selection than that of the earlier Collectors. Now, as Tabari was an intelligent and diligent historian, and evidently neglected no useful and trustworthy sources within his reach, we are entitled to conclude that, beside Ibn Ishac and Wakidy, there were available in Tabari's time no other authoritative works, or sources of essential importance, relating to the biography of Mahomet. Had any existed, they must have been within reach, and if so would unquestionably have been made use of in his Annals.

To the three biographies, then, of **IBN HISHAM**, of **WAKIDY** as rendered by his Secretary, and of **TABARI**, the judicious historian of Mahomet will, as his original authorities, confine himself. He will also receive with a similar respect such traditions in the general Collections of the earliest traditionists, Bokhary, Mualim,

to exist. It is a volume in a small quarto of 451 pages, fifteen lines in a page. Ten pages are wanting. The writing is ancient and bold, and, though not without errors, generally very correct. I should say, from the appearance, the copy is 500 years old. The intrinsic merits of the work are not so great as might be expected. Two-thirds of the book consist of extracts from Ibn Ishac and Wakidy, and only one third or thereabouts contains original traditions. Some of these are very valuable, inasmuch as they contain information not to be found anywhere else.' I have been fortunate enough to secure this MS. also, and have placed it with that of Wakidy and Ibn Hisham in the India Office Library. It has been used in editing the complete works of Tabari now being printed at Leyden.

Especially as proving completeness of our other authorities, Ibn Ishac and Wakidy

Historical sources recounted

Tirmidzi, and others, as may bear upon his subject. But he will reject as evidence all later authors, to whose so-called traditions he will not allow any historical weight whatever.

No subsequent works carry historical weight

In the absence of any History or Collection of traditions, compiled *before* the accession of the Abbassides, the works above specified present us with all the credible information regarding the Arabian prophet which mankind are ever likely to obtain. It is clear that our authorities compiled with zeal and assiduity all traditions which could illustrate their subject. They were contemporary with those tradition-gatherers who compassed sea and land in the enthusiastic search after any trace of Mahomet yet lingering in the memories, or in the family archives, of his followers. Whatever authentic information really existed must already have become public and available. It cannot be imagined that, in the unwearied search of the second century, any trustworthy tradition could have escaped the Collectors ; or, supposing this possible, that it could have survived that age in an unrecorded shape. Every day diminished the chance that any stray traditions should still be floating downward on the swift and troubled current of time. Later historians could not by any possibility add a single source of information to what these authors have given us. What they did add, and that abundantly, consisted of worthless and fictitious matter, gathered from the spurious traditions and romances of later times. After the era of our three biographers the springs of fresh authority absolutely fail.

The verdict of Sprenger is therefore just, and of the deepest importance : 'To consider late historians like Abulfeda as *authorities*, and to suppose that an account gains in certainty because it is mentioned by several of them, is highly uncritical ; and if such a mistake is committed by an Orientalist, we must accuse him of culpable ignorance in the history of Arabic literature.'

Opinion of Sprenger

Our early authors were, besides, in an incomparably better position than men in later days, for judging of the character and authenticity of each tradition. However blind their reception of the supposed authorities that lay far back close to the fountain-head, they must have possessed the ability, as we are bound to concede to them the intention and desire, to test the credit and honesty of the tradition-mongers of their own age, and of that immediately preceding. An intimate acquaintance with the character and circumstances of these would often afford grounds for distinguishing recently fabricated or mistaken narratives from ancient and *bonâ fide* tradition ; and for rejecting many infirm and worthless stories, which later historians, with an indiscriminate appetite, have greedily devoured.

Early writers alone authoritative

Review

I have thus, as proposed, endeavoured to sketch the original sources for the biography of Mahomet. I have examined the Coran, and have admitted its authority as an authentic and contemporary record. I have inquired into the origin and history of Mahometan tradition, and shown that it contains the elements of truth ; and I have endeavoured to indicate some canons, by which fact may be distinguished from the legend and fiction commingled with it. I have enumerated those early biographical compilations which can alone be regarded as worthy of attention, and have shown that no later authors are possessed of an original and independent authority. The principles thus laid down, if followed with sagacity, perseverance, and impartiality, will enable the inquirer to arrive at a fair approximation to historical fact. Many Gordian knots regarding the Prophet of Arabia will remain unsolved, many paradoxes still vainly excite curiosity and baffle explanation. But the groundwork of his career will be laid down with confidence ; the details will be substantially filled in with all reasonable amplitude ; and the student will be able to determine with certainty the leading features of his life and character.

CHAPTER II

ARABIA BEFORE THE TIME OF MAHOMET

ARABIA is usually described as a triangle, having a right angle at the Strait of Bab al Mandeb. It may be more correct to regard it as of an oblong shape. The sides bounded by the Red Sea on one hand, and by the Persian Gulf and Euphrates on the other, are the longest; while the southern side protracted towards the Strait of Ormuz, and washed by the Indian Ocean, is broader than the northern, of which the Syrian confine is narrowed by the westerly bend of the Euphrates.

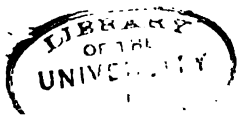
Geographical outline of Arabia

Along the western side of the peninsula a chain of lofty mountains follows closely the line of the coast, from whence the mariner sees its dismal and repulsive rocks of reddish sandstone and porphyry, at times pressing near enough to be laved by the waves of the sea, at times receding so as to form a broad margin of low land, called the Tehama. Between the sea and the crest of this range is the mountainous region of the Hejaz, within which lie Mecca and Medina. The hills, as you recede from the coast, rise one above another, with vales or *Wadies* between them, till the granite peaks of the chief range overtop the whole. The traveller who has toiled up the weary ascent finds to his surprise that, instead of a similar declivity on the eastern side, he has reached the level of a grand plateau, the Nejd or elevated central steppe of Arabia, stretching away towards the Persian Gulf.

Western Coast

In this great peninsula, 1,400 miles in length, and half as many in breadth, there is not a single river deserving the name. The south-west quarter, indeed, abounds in perennial streams which, watering its fields and groves, have given to it the name of Yemen, 'Araby the Blest.' But elsewhere the leading feature is a weary waste of sand and rock. The floods lose themselves in the thirsty land, and seldom or never reach the sea. But underneath the dried-up channels a stratum of water is often found which supports a rich vegetation, and breaks out here

Arid and inhospitable character of the soil



and there in springs. Such are the wadies or oases of the desert, which, contrasting with the wild bleak wilderness around, charm the traveller by an indescribable freshness and verdure.

Early historical notices of Arabia

Until the 7th century, when Mussulman conquest drew aside the veil, Central Arabia was an unknown land. Only on the extreme northern and southern confines did it touch the outer world. In ancient times notices of Arabia are few and meagre. In the days of Jacob we find Arab traders carrying the spiceries of Gilead on their camels down to Egypt. During the reign of Solomon a naval station was formed at Elath, the modern Acaba; the 'kings of Arabia' and its merchantmen supplied Judæa with the rarities of the East; and so widely throughout the peninsula was the fame of the Jewish monarch noised abroad, that the queen of Sheba came from the far south to visit him. In the reign of Augustus, Ælius Gallus, starting with a Roman army from the northern shores of the Red Sea, penetrated to the south probably as far as Mareb and Saba; but after some months was forced, by treachery and scarcity of water, to retrace his steps. Comparatively modern as is this expedition in the annals of Arabia, not a vestige of it is traceable in the national traditions and poetry of Arabia; and (stranger still) with very few exceptions it has been found impossible to identify the many names recorded by Pliny and Strabo in their account of the invasion with any known localities or tribes.

Caravan trade

But though thus hidden for long ages from external view, we know that a great stream of trade was all the time passing through the peninsula, which made the Arabs in fact the carriers of the world between the east and west. In those days the sea was dreaded, and commerce confined almost exclusively to the land. A continent, now the greatest obstacle to traffic, was then its chief facility. The steppes of Central Asia and Arabia were the ocean of the ancients, and companies of camels their fleets. But the way was long and perilous; and hence the necessity for caravans travelling at fixed periods and by determined routes. 'The course of the caravan,' says Heeren, 'was not a matter of free choice, but of established custom. In the vast steppes of sandy deserts, which they had to traverse, nature had sparingly allotted to the traveller a few scattered places of rest, where under the shade of palm trees, and beside the cool fountains at their feet, the merchant and his beast of burden might enjoy the refreshment rendered necessary by so much suffering. Such places of repose became *entrepôts* of commerce, and not unfrequently the sites of temples and sanctuaries, under the protection

of which the merchant prosecuted his trade, and to which the pilgrim resorted.¹

Through Arabia there were two main routes between Syria and the Indian Ocean. One struck north from Hadhramaut to Gerra on the Persian Gulf, and thence by Palmyra to Palestine and Tyre. The western (with which we are more immediately concerned) started from the same quarter, and ran parallel with the Red Sea, avoiding on the one hand the parched deserts of Nejd, and the impracticable cliffs of the coast upon the other. Mecca, the ancient Macoraba, was probably the half-way station between Arabia Felix and Petraea. The traffic afforded a wide field of employment to the Arab tribes. Some settled in the various emporia, and became traders on their own account. Others, without abandoning their nomad habits, were carriers of the trade.

Two routes through Arabia

The commerce assumed great dimensions, and enriched the nation. About 600 B.C. Ezekiel's denunciation of haughty Tyre marks the busy intercourse which then replenished the Phœnician markets with the products of Arabia and the East.² Several centuries later, we learn from Roman writers that the Arabs of Hejaz still carried on the same traffic; and, which is remarkable, the number of stages from Hadhramaut to Ayla, given by them as seventy, corresponds exactly with the number at the present day. From the stately ruins which in the Syrian desert still denote the sites of ancient emporia, some conception may be formed of the prosperity and wealth of the merchant princes inhabiting them. And, no doubt, at the southern terminus also there were in Yemen and Hadhramaut cities which might vie, though in a ruder and simpler way, with the queenly Palmyra.

Mercantile prosperity of Arabia

It was an evil hour for Arabia when Roman enterprise, early in the Christian era, established a maritime traffic from Egypt

Failure of the trade and disastrous results

¹ *Heeren's Researches: Africa*, vol. i. p. 23. The concluding sentence bears upon the origin and rise of Mecca. But it will still be a question, which had the priority, the temple or the mercantile station?

² Ezek. xxvii. 19-24, which Heeren translates: '*Wadan and Javan brought thee, from Sanaa, sword blades, cassia and cinnamon, in exchange for thy wares. The merchants of Saba and of Raama traded with thee; the best spices, precious stones, and gold brought they to thee for thy wares. Haran, Canna, Aden, Saba, traded with thee.*' He adds: 'Some of these places, as Aden, Canna, and Haran, all celebrated sea-ports on the Indian Sea, as well as Sanaa and Saba (or Mariaba) still the capital of Yemen, have retained their name unchanged to the present day; the site of others, as Wadan, on the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, rest only on probable conjecture. These accurate statements of the prophet at all events prove what a special knowledge the inhabitants of Palestine had of Happy Arabia, and how great and active the intercourse with that country must have been.'—*Heeren's As. Res.*, vol. ii. p. 98.

direct to Yemen and the East, and thus inflicted a fatal blow on the caravan trade of the peninsula. The land commerce melted away, and the mercantile stations were deserted. Such, after the lapse of sixteen centuries, is the tale which the ruins of Petra, Jerash, and Philadelphia, still attest. The drying up of the tide of merchandise which from time immemorial had fertilised Arabia, and the abandonment of many populous cities dependent on it, cannot fail to have caused widespread disorganisation and distress. The Bedouin carriers might betake themselves to their desert wastes again; but the settled population, with no such resource, were forced to emigrate in quest of sustenance elsewhere. To this cause may most probably be traced those great emigrations from the south of Codháite and Azdite tribes, which tradition tells us took place in the second century. These all tended northwards, some to Mecca and Syria, some to Central Arabia, and others to the Persian Gulf and Hira.

Emigration
northwards

Kingdoms
of the
Ghassan-
ides and
of Hira

There were but a few points at which, in ancient times, Arabia touched the outer world. The northern region, stretching from Syria to the Euphrates, was occupied in the 2nd century by some of those tribes which had, according to native tradition, about that time immigrated from the south; and of whom we frequently hear in the later annals of the Roman empire. To the west, in the Syrian desert, with their capital at Palmyra, was the dynasty of the Ghassanides; and to the east, on the banks of the Euphrates, the kingdom of Hira; the former, as a rule, adhered to the Roman, the latter to the Persian, empire. At some points we can even identify the heroes of Arab story with those of western history. Thus, Odzeina and Zebba of Tadmor are, without doubt, the Odenathus and Zenobia of Palmyra. In the marvellous tales of Zebba, her beauty, wealth, and knowledge of many languages, and her capture at the tunnel which she had constructed under the Euphrates, we can dimly read the story of Zenobia, her splendid reign, her rebellion and defence of Palmyra, and her seizure by the Romans as she endeavoured to escape across the river. The princes of Hira, again, are often mentioned by the Greek and Roman historians, in the wars of the 5th and 6th centuries, as adherents of the Persian cause. Suddenly as a thunder-cloud their troops would darken some fated spot on the Roman border, and sweeping in their train devastation, captivity, and death, as suddenly disappear, scorning pursuit, and leaving no trace, but in their ravages, behind.

Their de-
cadence in
the seventh
century

The dynasty of Palmyra, with the western tribes, had embraced Christianity in the time of Constantine; to the east our Faith was later of gaining ground, and indeed was not adopted

by the court of Hira till near the end of the 6th century. Early in the 7th, that kingdom fell from its dignity as an independent power, and became a satrapy of Persia. The Ghassanide rule also broke up into various petty sections, and eventually merged into the Roman empire. The Persian inroads in the reign of Phocas and early years of Heraclius, gave the Syrian tribes a shock from which they never recovered. Thus the decadence of kingdoms on both sides of the desert was destined to smooth the victorious path of the Arabian conqueror.

Turning now to the south, we find Hadhramaut and Yemen ruled by the Himyarites, a dynasty of which tradition carries the origin back into the obscurity of ages. In the 4th century an embassy from Constantius visited this court, headed by a Christian bishop. In 523 A.D. the throne was seized by a bigoted and dissolute usurper. A proselyte to Judaism, he perpetrated frightful cruelties on the Christians of the neighbouring province of Najran who refused to embrace his faith. Trenches filled with combustible materials were lighted, and the martyrs cast into the flames. Tradition gives the number thus miserably burned, or slain by the sword, at twenty thousand. However exaggerated, there can be no doubt of the bloody character of the tyrant's reign. An intended victim escaped to the court of Justinian, and, holding up a half-burned Gospel, invoked retribution. At the Emperor's desire the Negus crossed from Ethiopia and defeated the usurper; and thus the Himyarites were supplanted by a Christian government under an Abyssinian viceroy. But African rule was distasteful to the people; an appeal was made to Persia, and before the end of the 6th century the Abyssinians were expelled, and Yemen sank into a simple dependency of Persia.

Kingdom
of Hadhra-
maut and
Yemen

Thus, whether we look to the north or the south, it was but the farther outskirts of the Peninsula which came into even casual contact with the civilised world. The rest of Arabia was absolutely unknown; and excepting through the medium of countrymen engaged in merchandise, or settled on the confines of Syria, the Arabs themselves had but little knowledge of anything beyond their own deserts. For any community of interest with nations beyond, they might have been at the very antipodes of the Roman empire. It is not till the 5th century that native tradition, as preserved by Mahometan writers, begins to shed a fitful and shadowy light upon the political and religious condition of the country. Before, therefore, turning to Mecca, we shall take a rapid survey of Arabia at the period of Mahomet's appearance.

Arabia be-
fore Ma-
homet, un-
known to
the outer
world

The habits of the nomad tribes roaming over the Peninsula

Political
condition
of the
Peninsula

are singularly changeless ; and Arabia, as we find it in the 6th century, differs little from the Arabia of Abraham and of Job. The leading feature has ever been impatience of restraint, and the consequent independence of the clan, the family, and the individual. The affairs of each tribe, or combination of tribes, are guided by a Sheikh, their popular representative ; but there is no bond that of necessity holds them permanently together, and dissentients may secede at pleasure. With a code of honour bordering on jealousy, personal hostility and tribal warfare are ever liable to occur ; new combinations arise, and old ones disappear ; some cling to their ancestral haunts, and some, with characteristic restlessness, roam abroad, or even migrate to distant parts. On the other hand, a strong cohesive power, counteracting these disintegrating tendencies, conserves the tribal constitution, binds together the members of each body, and interests them in its safety and honour. So strong, indeed, is this conservatism, that after the lapse of twelve centuries we find at the present day some tribes, as the Beni Adwan and Hawāzin, the same in name and lineage, and inhabiting the same localities, as in the days of Mahomet.

Political
and re-
ligious
state of
Arabia

Sub-divi-
sion and in-
dependence
of Arab
tribes a for-
midable
obstacle to
union

The first peculiarity, then, which attracts our attention is the subdivision of the Arabs into innumerable bodies, governed by the same code of honour and morals, exhibiting the same manners, speaking for the most part the same language, but each independent of the others ; restless and often at war amongst themselves ; and even where united by blood or by interest, ever ready on some insignificant cause to separate and give way to an implacable hostility. Thus at the era of Islam the retrospect of Arabian history exhibits, as in the kaleidoscope, an ever-varying state of combination and repulsion, such as had hitherto rendered abortive any attempt at a general union. The freedom of Arabia from foreign conquest was owing not so much to the difficulties of its parched and pathless wilds, as to the endless array of isolated clans, and the absence of any head or chief power which might be made the object of subjugation. The problem had yet to be solved, by what force these tribes could be subdued, or drawn to one common centre ; and it was solved by Mahomet, who struck out a political system of his own, universally acceptable because derived from elements common to all Arabia ; vigorous, because based upon the energy of a new religious life ; rapidly and irrepressibly expansive, because borne forward by inducements, irresistible to an Arab, of war and plunder.

Small pro-
spect of re-
ligious re-
forma

The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mahomet were as unfavourable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration. The foundation of Arab faith was a

deep-rooted idolatry, which for centuries had stood proof, with no palpable symptom of decay, against every attempt at evangelisation from Egypt and Syria. Several causes increased the insensibility of Arabia to the Gospel. A broad margin of hostile Judaism on the northern frontier neutralised the effects of Christian teaching, and afforded shelter to the paganism beyond. Thus Jewish influence spread far towards the south, and was there supported by the powerful Jewish settlement in Yemen, which at times even sought to proselytise the neighbouring tribes.

Christianity neutralised by Judaism

But more than this, the idolatry of Mecca had formed a compromise with Judaism, and had admitted enough of its legends, and perhaps of its tenets also, to steel the national mind against the appeal of Christianity. Idolatry, simple and naked, may be comparatively powerless against the attacks of reason and the Gospel ; but, aided by some measure of truth, it can maintain its ground against the most urgent persuasion. To advance the authority of Abraham for the worship of the Kaaba, and vaunt his legacy of divinely inculcated rites, would be a triumphant reply to the invitations either of Judaism or of Christianity. Moreover, the Christianity of the 7th century was itself decrepit and corrupt. It was disabled by contending schisms, and had substituted the puerilities of superstition for the pure and expansive faith of the early ages.

Combination with Judaical legends

Northern Arabia, long the battle-field of Persia and the Empire, was peculiarly unfavourable to Christian effort. Alternately swept by the armies of the Chosroes and of Constantinople, of Hira and the Ghassanides, the Syrian frontier presented little opportunity for the advance of peaceful Christianity.

Unsettled frontier to the North

The vagrant habits of the Nomads themselves eluded the opportunity of missionary endeavour ; while their haughty temper and vindictive code equally resented the peaceful and forgiving precepts of the Gospel. A nominal adhesion to Christianity, as to any other religion, may indeed be obtained without participation in its spirit or subjection to its moral requirements ; but such formal submission could have resulted alone from the political supremacy of a Christian power, not from the persuasion of a religious agency. Let us inquire, then, what political inducements at this time bore upon Arabia from without.

Habits of the Arabs opposed to Christianity

To the North, we find that Egypt and Syria, representing the Roman empire, exercised at the best but a remote influence upon Arabian affairs ; and even that was neutralised by the victories of Persia. The weight of Constantinople, if ever brought to bear directly upon Arabia, was but lightly and transiently felt. The kingdom of Ghassân, on the borders of Syria, was indeed at

Political influence of Christianity from without. 1. From the North

once Arabian and Christian, but it yielded to Hira the palm of supremacy, and never exercised any important bearing on the affairs and policy of central Arabia.

2. From
the *North-
east*

Turning to the *North-east*, we observe that the prospects of Christianity had improved by the conversion of the court of Hira and many of its subject tribes. But Hira itself was only a vassal ; for its native dynasty had lately been replaced by the direct government of Persia, a strong opponent of Christianity. Thus the authority of pagan Persia over the northern and eastern Arabs more than counterbalanced the influence of Christianity in the west.

3. From
the *South*

4. From
the *West*

To the *South*, the Faith had suffered an important loss. The prestige of a Christian monarchy, though but an Ethiopian, was gone ; and in its room had arisen a Persian satrapy, under the shadow of which the ancient Himyarite idolatry, and once royal Judaism, flourished apace.¹ On the *West* there lay the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, but it was divided from Arabia by the Red Sea ; and the Negro race, even if brought into closer contact, could never have exercised much influence upon the Arab mind.

The penin-
sula pre-
sented no
prospect of
hopeful
change

Thus the star of Christianity was not in the ascendant : in some respects it was declining. There was no hope from external aid ; and, apart from such aid, the strong influence of Judaism, and almost universal submission to national idolatry, rendered the conversion of Arabia a doubtful and a distant prospect. During the youth of Mahomet, the aspect of the Peninsula was strongly conservative ; perhaps never at any previous time was reform more hopeless.

Causes are sometimes conjured up to account for results produced by an agent apparently inadequate to effect them. Mahomet arose, and forthwith the Arabs were aroused to a new and a spiritual faith ; hence the conclusion that Arabia was fermenting for the change, and prepared to adopt it. To us, calmly reviewing the past, pre-Islamite history belies the assumption. After five centuries of Christian evangelisation, we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christian converts ;—the Beni Hârith of Najran ; the Beni Hanîfa of Yemama ; some of the Beni Tay at Tayma ; and hardly any more. Judaism, vastly more powerful, had exhibited spasmodic efforts at prose-

¹ Gibbon attaches, perhaps, too much importance to the change : ' This narrative,' he says, ' of obscure and remote events is not foreign to the decline and fall of the Roman empire. If a Christian power had been maintained in Arabia, Mahomet must have been crushed in his cradle, and Abyssinia would have prevented a revolution, which has changed the civil and religious state of the world.'—*Decline and Fall*, chap. xliii.

lytism ; but, as an active and converting agent, the Jewish faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity ; the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current ; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and Ishmaelite superstition, setting strongly from every quarter towards the Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a rigorous and undisputed thralldom.

Arabia
obstinately
fixed in the
profession
of idolatry

Yet, even amongst a people thus enthralled, there existed elements which a master mind, seeking the regeneration of Arabia, might work upon. Christianity was well known ; living examples there were amongst the native tribes ; the New Testament was respected, if not revered, as a book that claimed to be divine ; in most quarters it was easily accessible, and some of its facts and doctrines admitted without dispute. The tenets of Judaism were even more familiar, and its legends, if not its sacred writings, known throughout the peninsula. The worship of Mecca was founded upon patriarchal traditions common at once to Christianity and Judaism. Here, then, was ground on which the spiritual fulcrum might be planted ; a wide field in close connection with the truth, inviting scrutiny and upward movement. No doubt, many an Arab heart, before Mahomet, had responded to the voice, casually heard it may be, of Christianity and of Judaism : many an honest Bedouin spirit confessed of the law that it was just and good : many an aspiring intellect, as the eye travelled over the spangled expanse of heaven, concluded that the universe was supported by ONE great Being ; and in time of need, many an earnest soul had accepted with joy the Christian sacrifice. Coss, bishop of Najran, was not the first, nor perhaps the most eloquent and earnest, of Arab preachers who sought to turn their fellows from the error of their ways, and reasoned with them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Still ma-
terial pre-
pared by
Judaism
and Chris-
tianity

The material for a great change was here. But it required to be wrought ; and Mahomet was the workman. The fabric of Islam no more necessarily grew out of the state of Arabia, than a gorgeous texture grows from the slender meshes of silken filament ; or the stately ship from unhewn timber of the forest ; or the splendid palace from rude masses of rock. Had Mahomet, stern to his early convictions, followed the leading of Jewish and Christian truth, and inculcated upon his fellows their simple doctrine, there might have been a 'SAINT MAHOMET'—more likely a 'MAHOMET THE MARTYR'—laying the foundation stone of the

It was Ma-
homet who
worked the
material
into shape

Arabian Church. But then (so far as human probabilities and analogy indicate) Arabia would not have been convulsed by his preaching to its centre, or even any considerable portions of it converted. Instead of all this, he, with consummate skill, devised a machinery, by the adaptive energy of which he gradually shaped the broken and disconnected masses of the Arab race into an harmonious whole, a body politic endowed with life and vigour. To the Christian, he was as a Christian ; to the Jew he became as a Jew ; to the idolater of Mecca, as a reformed worshipper of the Kaaba. And thus, by unparalleled art and a rare supremacy of mind, he persuaded the whole of Arabia, Pagan, Jew, and Christian, to follow his steps with docile submission.

Such a process is that of *the workman shaping his material*. It is not that of the material shaping its own form, much less (as some would hold) moulding the workman himself. It was Mahomet that formed Islam ; it was not Islam, or any pre-existing Moslem spirit, that moulded Mahomet.

CHAPTER III

PRE-HISTORICAL NOTICES OF MECCA

WE shall in this chapter consider such mythical and traditional notices of Mecca as may throw light on the origin of the Kaaba and its worship, and on the ancestry of Mahomet.

Native legend ascribes the building of the Kaaba to Abraham. Hagar (so the story runs) wandering in the desert with her boy, reaches at length the valley of Mecca. In the agony of thirst she paces hurriedly to and fro between the little hills of Safa and Marwa, seeking for water. Ishmael, whom she had left crying on the ground, kicks around him in childish passion, when behold the spot bubbles forth beneath his feet in a clear stream of sweet water. It is the well Zemzem. Amalekites and Arab tribes from Yemen, attracted by the fountain, settle there; Ishmael grows up amongst them, and marries the daughter of their chief. In fulfilment of the divine command received in a vision, Abraham is about to offer up his son upon an eminence in the neighbourhood, when his arm is stayed and a vicarious sacrifice accepted. On a subsequent visit, the patriarch, assisted by his son, erected the temple where it now stands, and reconstituted the primeval rites of pilgrimage.

Legendary
founding
of Mecca
by Ishmael

Descending from this myth, we find little more than bare genealogical tables (borrowed palpably from the Jews) in which it is sought to trace up generation by generation the Coreishite stock to Abraham. It is not till we reach the Christian era that tradition commences, and soon begins to teem with tales and legends in which, mingled with a mass of fiction, there may be grains of fact. The guardianship of the Kaaba (belonging to the Coreishite ancestry in virtue of descent from Ishmael) was usurped by the tribe of Jorhom, which remained long in possession of the temple and supremacy of Mecca. In the 2nd century some of the numerous tribes migrating (as we have seen) from Yemen northwards, settled in the vicinity. Most of these passed on eventually to Medina, Syria, and Hira; but a remnant, called Khozâa, remained behind, and in their turn seized upon the

Traditional
history to
4th century

government of Mecca. The Jorhom dynasty was thus ousted in the 3rd century, and their last king, on retiring from Mecca, buried in the well Zemzem his treasures ; among these were two gazelles of gold, and swords and suits of armour, of which we shall hear more hereafter.

Cossai assumes government ; middle of 5th century

For 200 years the Khozâa remained masters of Mecca, certain inferior offices of the Kaaba being alone retained by families of the original stock. It was reserved for Cossai, a bold adventurer of the Coreish, to supplant the usurpers, and by force of arms resume for its rightful owners the supreme control of Mecca. Gathering his kindred around him, he settled them in the sacred valley, enlarged the city, and assigned to each family a separate quarter. Near the Kaaba he built a council-house in which, under his presidency, was transacted all important business. From thence caravans set out ; there the returning traveller first alighted ; and there, when war was waged, the banner was mounted and consigned to the standard-bearer by Cossai or his sons. Cossai also assumed the chief offices connected with the local worship. The keys of the Kaaba were in his hands ; the giving of drink to the pilgrims and providing them with food were his sole prerogative, which, administered with princely hospitality, invested his name in the eyes of all Arabia with a peculiar lustre. The assumption of these functions consolidated the power of Cossai as the Sheikh of Mecca and chief of the surrounding territory ; and tradition adds that 'his ordinances were obeyed and venerated, as people obey and venerate the observances of religion, both before and after his death.' This same Cossai was ancestor, at the fifth remove, of the Arabian Prophet.

Rites of the Kaaba

The ceremonies of pilgrimage thus handed down by Cossai were substantially the same as we find them in the time of Mahomet ; and, with some modifications introduced by Mahomet himself, the same as practised at the present day. The centre of them all is the Kaaba, to visit which, to kiss the Black stone imbedded in the eastern corner, and to make seven circuits round the sacred edifice, is at all times and seasons, meritorious. The 'Lesser pilgrimage' (otherwise called *Omra*), in addition to these acts, includes the passing to and fro with hasty steps seven times between the eminences of Safa and Marwa. This may be performed with merit at any season of the year, but especially in the sacred month of Rajab. Before entering the holy territory, the votary assumes the pilgrim garb, and at the conclusion of the ceremonies shaves his head and pares his nails.

Lesser pilgrimage

Greater pilgrimage

The 'Greater pilgrimage' can be performed only in the holy month Dzul Hijj. In addition to the ceremonies of the Lesser,

it embraces the tour of Arafat, a small granite hill in the mountains, ten or twelve miles east of Mecca. The pilgrims, starting from Mecca on the 8th of the month, stay the following day at Arafât, and having ascended the hill, hasten back the same evening three or four miles to Mozdalifa. Next day, returning half way to Mecca, they stay at Mina, where they spend the two or three succeeding days. Small stones are cast by the pilgrims at certain objects in the Mina valley, and the pilgrimage is concluded by the sacrifice of victims there.

The *Haram* or sacred tract several miles round Mecca was hallowed and inviolable, and had from time immemorial been so regarded. Four months of the year were held sacred; three consecutive, and one separate.¹ During this period war was by unanimous consent suspended, hostile feeling was suppressed, and amnesty reigned throughout Arabia. Pilgrims from every quarter could then safely repair to Mecca, and fairs in various parts were thronged by those whom merchandise, or the contests of poetry or social rivalry, brought together.

Sacred environs of Mecca and four holy months

There is reason to suppose that the year was originally lunar, and so continued till the beginning of the fifth century, when in imitation of the Jews it was turned, by the interjection of a month at the close of every third year, into a luni-solar period. If by this change it was intended to make the season of pilgrimage correspond invariably with the autumn, when a supply of food for the vast multitude would be easily procurable, that object was defeated by the remaining imperfection of the cycle; for the year being still shorter by one day and a fraction than the real year, each recurring season accelerated the time of pilgrimage; so that when, after two centuries, intercalation was altogether prohibited by Mahomet, the days of pilgrimage had moved from October gradually backward to March.

The luni-solar year of Mecca

In reviewing the history of Mecca, the origin of the temple and of the local worship demands further scrutiny. Moslem belief attributes both to Abraham, and connects part of the ceremonial with Biblical legend; but the story is plainly a fable. The following considerations strengthen the conviction that Mecca and its rites cannot possibly claim any such origin. *First.*

Origin of the Kaaba and its worship

¹ The consecutive months were the last two of the Old year, and the first of the New; the other was the seventh, *Rajab*.

An innovation was introduced (as is said, by Cossai) by which the first month of the year might be commuted into the second, *i.e.* Moharram into Safar. Cossai may have wished, by abridging the long three months' recess of peace, to humour the warlike Arabs, as well as to obtain for himself the power of holding a month either sacred or secular as might best suit his purpose. The office of intercalation and commutation was called *Nasâ*; and the person holding it, *Nâst*.

No Abra-
hamic ele-
ment in its
chief cere-
monies

There is no trace of anything Abrahamitic in the essential elements of the superstition. To kiss the Black stone ; to make the circuit of the Kaaba, and perform other observances at Mecca, Arafât, and the vale of Mina ; to keep the sacred months and to hallow the sacred territory—have no conceivable connection with Abraham, or with the ideas which his descendants would be likely to inherit from him. Such rites originated in causes foreign to the country chiefly occupied by the children of Abraham ; they were either strictly local ; or, in so far as based on the idolatry prevailing in the south, were imported by immigrants from Yemen.

Remote an-
tiquity of
the Kaaba

Second. A very high antiquity must be assigned to the main features of the religion of Mecca. Although Herodotus does not refer to the Kaaba, yet he names as one of the chief Arab divinities, ALLAT ; and this is strong evidence of the worship at that early period of *Allat*, the great idol of Mecca. He likewise alludes to the veneration of the Arabs for stones. Diodorus Siculus, writing about half a century before our era, says of Arabia washed by the Red Sea, 'there is, in this country, a temple greatly revered by the Arabs.' These words must refer to the Holy house of Mecca, for we know of no other which ever commanded such universal homage. Early *historical* tradition gives no trace of its first construction. Some authorities assert that the Amalekites rebuilt the edifice which they found in ruins, and retained it for a time under their charge. All agree that it was in existence under the Jorhom tribe (about the time of the Christian era), and, being injured by a flood of rain, was then repaired. Tradition represents the Kaaba as from time immemorial the scene of pilgrimage from *all* quarters of Arabia :—from Yemen and Hadhramaut, from the shores of the Persian Gulf, the deserts of Syria, and the distant environs of Hira and Mesopotamia, men yearly flocked to Mecca. So extensive a homage must have had its beginnings in an extremely remote age ; and a similar antiquity must be ascribed to the essential concomitants of the local worship—the Kaaba with its Black stone, the sacred territory, and the holy months. The origin of a superstition so ancient and so universal must be looked for within the peninsula itself, and not in any foreign country.

Wide ex-
tent of the
worship

Connection
with sys-
tems native
to Arabia

Third. The native systems of Arabia were Sabeanism, Idolatry, and Stone-worship—all closely connected with the religion of Mecca. There is reason for believing that *Sabeanism*, or the worship of the heavenly bodies, existed from an early period in Arabia. The book of Job contains historical notices of the system, and certain early names in the Himyar dynasty

imply its prevalence. As late as the fourth century, we find sacrifices offered in Yemen to the sun, moon, and stars. The seven circuits of the Kaaba were probably emblematical of the revolutions of the planetary bodies ; and we are told that a similar rite was observed in other Arabian fanes. Again the practice of idolatry overspread the whole peninsula. We have authentic records of ancient idol shrines scattered in various quarters from Yemen to Dumah and even as far as Hira, some of them subordinate to the Kaaba and having similar rites. A system thus widely diffused and thoroughly organised, may well be regarded as of indigenous growth. The most singular feature in this worship was the adoration paid to unshapen stones. Mussulmans hold that this practice arose out of the Kaaba rites. 'The adoration of stones among the Ishmaelites,' says Ibn Ishac, 'originated in the custom of men carrying a stone from the sacred enclosure of Mecca when they went upon a journey, out of reverence for the Kaaba ; and whithersoever they went they set it up and made circuits round about it as about the Kaaba, till at the last they adored every goodly stone they saw, forgot their religion, and changed the faith of Abraham and Ishmael into the worship of images.' The tendency to stone-worship was undoubtedly prevalent throughout Arabia ; but it is more probable that it gave rise to the superstition of the Kaaba with its Black stone, than took its rise therefrom.

1. Sabeanism

2. Idolatry

3. Stone-worship

Thus the religion of Mecca is, in all essential points, connected strictly with forms of superstition native to Arabia, and we may naturally conclude that it grew out of them. The process may be thus imagined. Mecca owed its origin to the convenient position which it held between Yemen and Petra. We have seen that, from ancient times, the merchandise of the East passed through Arabia ; and the vale of Mecca lay midway upon the great western route. A plentiful supply of water attracted the caravans ; it became a halting place, and then the *entrepôt* of commerce ; a mercantile population grew up in the vicinity, and change of carriage took place there. The carrier's hire, the frontier customs, the dues of protection, and the profits of direct traffic, added capital to the city which may have rivalled, though in a primitive and simple style, the emporia of Petra, Jerash, and Philadelphia. The earliest inhabitants were natives of Yemen, and the ever-flowing traffic maintained a permanent intercourse between them and their original home. From Yemen, no doubt, they brought with them, or subsequently received, Sabeanism, Stone-worship, and Idolatry. These were connected with the well Zemzem, the source of their prosperity ; and near to it they erected their fane, with its symbolical Sabeanism and mysterious Black stone. Local rites were

Supposed history of Mecca and its religion

superadded ; but it was Yemen, the cradle of the Arabs, which furnished the essential elements of the system. The mercantile eminence of Mecca, while it attracted the Bedouins from all parts of Arabia by the profits of the carrying trade, by degrees imparted a national character to the local superstition, till at last it became the religion of all Arabia. When the southern trade deserted this channel, the mercantile prestige of Mecca vanished and its opulence decayed, but the Kaaba continued the national temple of the Peninsula. The floating population betook themselves to the desert ; and the native tribes (the ancestry of the Coreish) were overpowered by such southern immigrants as the Jorhom and Khozáa dynasties ; till at last Cossai arose to vindicate the honour, and re-establish the influence, of the house of Mecca.

How reconciled with the legend of Abrahamic origin

But, according to this theory, how shall we account for the tradition current among the Arabs, that the temple owed its origin to Abraham ? This was no Moslem fiction, but the popular belief long before the time of Mahomet. Otherwise, it could not have been referred to in the Coran as an acknowledged fact ; nor would certain spots around the Kaaba have been connected, as we know them to have been, with the names of Abraham and Ishmael. It seems probable that Abrahamic tribes were early commingled with the Arabs coming from the South, and that a branch descended from Abraham and Ishmael, may have settled at Mecca and there become allied with the Yemenite race. Abrahamic legends still surviving in the land would be resuscitated and strengthened by intercourse with the Jews. The mingled stock from Syria and from Yemen required such a modification of the local religion as would correspond with their double descent. Hence Jewish legends would naturally be grafted upon the indigenous worship, and rites of sacrifice would now for the first time be introduced, or at any rate now first associated with the memory of Abraham.

Supposed origin of this legend

Abrahamic legend combined with the local superstition

The Jews were also largely settled in northern Arabia, where they acquired a considerable influence. There were extensive colonies about Medina and Kheibar, in Wadi al Cora, and on the shores of the Ælanitic gulf. These maintained a constant and friendly intercourse with Mecca and the Arab tribes, who looked with respect and veneration upon their religion and their holy books. When once the loose conception of Abraham and Ishmael as great forefathers of the race was superimposed upon the superstition of Mecca, and had received the stamp of native currency, it will easily be conceived that Jewish tradition and legend would be eagerly welcomed and readily assimilated with native legend and tradition. By a summary adjustment, the story of Palestine

became the story of the Hejaz. The precincts of the Kaaba were hallowed as the scene of Hagar's distress, and the sacred well Zemzem as the source of her relief. The pilgrims hastened to and fro between Safa and Marwa in memory of her hurried steps in search of water. It was Abraham and Ishmael who built the temple, imbedded in it the Black stone, and established for all Arabia the pilgrimage to Arafât. In imitation of him it was that stones were flung by the pilgrims as if at Satan, and sacrifices offered at Mina in remembrance of the vicarious sacrifice by Abraham. And so, although the indigenous rites may have been little if at all altered by the adoption of Israelitish legends, they came to be viewed in a totally different light, and to be connected in Arab imagination with something of the sanctity of Abraham the Friend of God.¹ The gulf between the gross idolatry of Arabia and the pure theism of the Jews thus bridged over, it was upon this common ground Mahomet took his stand, and proclaimed to his people a new and a spiritual system, in accents to which the whole Peninsula could respond. The rites of the Kaaba were retained, but stripped of all idolatrous tendency, they still hang, a strange unmeaning shroud, around the living theism of Islam.

Vantage
ground
thus gained
by Ma-
homet

¹ To the same source may be traced the doctrine of a Supreme Being, to whom gods and idols were alike subordinate. The title *Allah Taala*, THE MOST HIGH GOD, was used long before Mahomet to designate this conception. But in some tribes, the idea had become so materialised that a portion of the votive offerings was assigned to the great God, just as a portion was allotted to their idols. The notion of a supreme Divinity represented by no sensible symbol is clearly not cognate with any of the indigenous forms of Arab superstition. It was borrowed directly from the Jews, or from some other Abrahamic race among whom contact with the Jews had preserved or revived the knowledge of the 'God of Abraham.'

Familiarity with the Abrahamic races also introduced the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection from the dead; but these were held with many fantastic ideas of Arabian growth. Revenge pictured the murdered soul as a bird chirping for retribution against the murderer; and a camel was sometimes left to starve at the grave of his master, that he might be ready at the resurrection again to carry him. A vast variety of Biblical language was also in common use, or at least sufficiently in use to be commonly understood. Faith, Repentance, Heaven and Hell, the Devil and his angels, the heavenly Angels, Gabriel the messenger of God, are specimens acquired from some Jewish source, either current or ready for adoption. Similarly familiar were the stories of the Fall of man, the Flood, the destruction of the cities of the plain, &c.—so that there was an extensive substratum of crude ideas bordering upon the spiritual, ready to the hand of Mahomet.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOREFATHERS OF MAHOMET

Civil polity
based on
the habits
of the
Bedouins

THE social institutions of Mecca did not essentially differ from those of the wandering Bedouins. They were to some extent modified by their settled habitation and by the pilgrimage and surroundings of the Kaaba. But the ultimate sanctions of society, and the springs of political movement, were in reality the same at Mecca then as exist in Arabia at the present day.

General
principles
of Bedouin
government

It must be borne in mind that at Mecca there was not, before the establishment of Islam, any *government* in the common sense of the term. No supreme authority existed whose mandate was law. Every separate tribe was a republic governed by public opinion; and the opinion of the aggregate tribes, who chanced for the time to act together, the sovereign law. There was no recognised exponent of the popular will; each tribe was free to hold back from the decree of the remainder; and no individual was more bound than his collective tribe to a compulsory conformity with even the unanimous resolve of his fellow-citizens. Honour and revenge supplied the place of a more elaborate system. The former prompted the individual, by the desire of upholding the name and influence of his clan, to a compliance with the general wish; the latter provided for the respect of private right, by the unrelenting pursuit of the injurer. In effect, the will of the majority did form the general rule of action, although there was continual risk that the minority might separate and assume an independent, if not a hostile, attitude. The law of revenge, too, though in such a society perhaps unavoidable, was then, even as now, the curse of Arabia. The stain of blood once shed was not easily effaced: its price might be rejected by the heir, and life demanded for life. Retaliation followed retribution: the nearest of kin, the family, the clan, the confederate tribes, one by one in a widening circle, identified themselves with the sufferer, and adopted his claim as their own; and thus a petty affront or unpremeditated blow not unfrequently involved whole tribes and tracts of country in protracted and bloody

strife. Still, in a system which provided no legal power to interfere in personal disputes, it cannot be doubted that the law of retaliation afforded an important check upon the passions of the stronger ; and that acts of violence and injustice were repressed by fear of retribution from the relatives or adherents of the injured party. The benefit of the custom was further increased by the practice of *patronage* or guardianship. The weak resorted to the strong for protection ; and when the word of a chief or powerful man had once been pledged to grant it, the pledge was fulfilled with chivalrous scrupulosity.

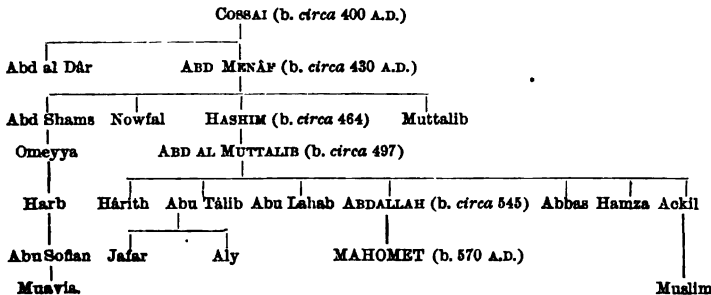
At first sight it might appear that, under this system, a Chief possessed no shadow of authority to execute either his own wish or that of the people. But in reality his powers, though vague and undefined, were large and effective. The position of Chief always secured an important share in forming and giving expression to public opinion ; so that, excepting rare and unusual cases, he swayed the councils and movements of his tribe. It was mainly by the influence derived from the offices attaching to the Kaaba and the Pilgrimage, that the Chiefs of Mecca differed from the Sheikhs of the nomad tribes, and exercised a more regular and permanent rule.

Offices conferring authority on Chiefs of Mecca

We have seen that about the middle of the 5th century Cossai had concentrated the chief of these offices in his own person. When he became old and infirm, he resigned them into the hands of his eldest son, Abd al Dâr. From him they descended to his sons and grandsons ; but the latter, who succeeded to the inheritance in the beginning of the 6th century, were too young effectually to maintain their rights. Abd Menâf, another son of Cossai, had been the powerful rival of his brother ; and the sons of Abd Menâf inherited their father's influence. The chief were, Muttalib, Hashim, Abd Shams, and Nowfal.¹ These con-

Cossai, A.D. 440, and his descendants

¹ This was the branch from which Mahomet descended. The following table illustrates the family influences which affected not only the position of the Prophet, but the destinies of the Caliphate long ages after :—



Discord
among Cos-
sai's de-
scendants

spired to wrest from the descendants of Abd al Dâr the hereditary offices bequeathed by Cossai. Hashim took the lead, and grounded his claim on the superior dignity of the family of Abd Menâf. But the descendants of Abd al Dâr refused to cede their rights, and an open rupture ensued. The Coreish were equally divided, one portion siding with the claimants, and the other with the actual possessors of the offices. The respective factions, having bound themselves by the most stringent oaths, were already marshalled in hostile array, when unexpectedly truce was called. The conditions were to give Hashim and his party the offices of providing food and water for the pilgrims, while the descendants of Abd al Dâr retained custody of the Kaaba and Council-hall, and the right of mounting the banner on its staff in war. Peace was restored upon these terms.

The offices
amicably
divided

Hashim
born
A. D. 464

HASHIM, thus installed in the office of entertaining the pilgrims, fulfilled it with princely magnificence. He was himself rich, and many of the Coreish had also by trading acquired much wealth. He appealed to them as his grandfather Cossai had done: *'Ye are the neighbours of God, and the keepers of His house. Pilgrims to the temple are His guests; and it is meet that ye entertain them above all other guests. Ye are especially chosen unto this high dignity; wherefore honour His guests and refresh them. For, from distant cities, on their lean and jaded camels, they come unto you fatigued and harassed, with hair dishevelled and bodies covered with the dust and squalor of the way. Then invite them hospitably, and furnish them with water in abundance.'* Hashim set the example by a munificent provision, and the Coreish were forward to contribute, every man according to his ability. Water sufficient for the great assemblage was collected in cisterns close by the Kaaba, and at the stations on the route to Arafât. The distribution of food commenced upon the day on which the pilgrims set out for Mina and Arafât, and continued until they dispersed. During this period, that is for five or six days, they were entertained with pottage of meat and bread, butter and barley, and with the favourite national repast of dates.

Feeds the
people of
Mecca in
a famine

Thus Hashim supported the credit of Mecca. But his name is even more renowned for the splendid charity by which in a time of famine he relieved the necessities of his fellow-citizens. Journeying to Syria, he purchased an immense stock of bread, and conveyed it upon camels to Mecca. The provisions were cooked, the camels slaughtered and roasted, and the whole divided among the citizens. Destitution and mourning were turned into mirth and plenty; and it was (the historian adds) 'as it were the beginning of new life after the year of scarcity.'

The foreign relations of the Coreish were conducted by the sons of Abd Menâf. With the Roman authorities, and the Ghassanide prince, Hashim himself concluded a treaty ; and he is said to have received from the Emperor a rescript authorising the Coreish to travel through Syria in security. Abd Shams made a treaty with the Negus, in pursuance of which the Coreish traded with Abyssinia ; Nowfal and Muttalib entered into an alliance with the king of Persia who allowed the merchants of Mecca to traffic in Irac and Fars, and with the kings of Himyar who encouraged their commercial operations in Yemen. Thus the affairs of the Coreish prospered in every direction. To Hashim is also ascribed the credit of establishing upon a uniform footing the mercantile expeditions of his people, so that every winter a caravan set out for Yemen and Abyssinia, while in the summer a second visited Gaza, Ancyra, and other Syrian marts.

Commercial treaties of Hashim and his brothers

The success and glory of Hashim exposed him to the envy of Omeyya, the son of his brother Abd Shams. Omeyya was opulent, and he expended his riches in a vain attempt to rival the splendour of his kinsman's munificence. The Coreish perceived the endeavour, and turned it into ridicule. Omeyya was enraged. *Who, said he, is Hashim?* and he defied him to a trial of superiority.¹ Hashim would willingly have avoided a contest with one so much his inferior both in years and dignity ; but the Coreish, who loved such exhibitions, would not excuse him ; he consented, therefore, but with the stipulation that the vanquished party should lose fifty black-eyed camels, and be ten years exiled from Mecca. A Khozâaite soothsayer was appointed umpire ; and, having heard the pretensions of both, pronounced Hashim to be the victor. Hashim took the fifty camels, slaughtered them in the vale of Mecca, and fed with them all the people present. Omeyya set out for Syria, and remained there the period of his exile. The circumstance is carefully noted by Mahometan writers as the first trace of that rivalry between the *Hashimite* and *Omeyyad* factions, which in after ages shook the Caliphate.

Hashim challenged by Omeyya, who is vanquished and exiled

Hashim was now advanced in years when, on a mercantile journey to the north, he visited Medina with a party of the Coreish. As he traded there, he was attracted by the graceful figure of a female, who from an elevated position was directing her people beneath to buy and sell for her. She was discreet and comely, and made a tender impression upon the heart of

Hashim marries Salma at Medina, who bears him a son A.D. 497

¹ It is difficult to express the idea implied by such a contest. It was a vainglorious practice, which consisted in one person challenging another, and claiming to be more noble and renowned, brave or generous, than he. Each disputant adduced facts and witnesses to prove his ambitious pretensions, and the arbiter adjudged the palm at his discretion.

Hashim. He inquired of the citizens whether she was single, and they answered that she had been married, but was now divorced. The dignity of the lady, they added, was so great amongst her people that she would not marry, unless it were stipulated that she should remain mistress of her own concerns, and have at pleasure the power of divorce. This was SALMA, daughter of Amr, of the Khazraj tribe. Hashim thereupon demanded her in marriage; and she consented, for she was well aware of his renown and noble birth. She accompanied him to Mecca, but returned to Medina where she gave birth to a son, who remained with his mother at Medina.

Muttalib
fetches his
nephew
Abd al
Muttalib
from
Medina,

Hashim, dying a few years after on a mercantile expedition to Gaza, left his dignities to his brother Muttalib, who, when Hashim's son had grown into boyhood, set out for Medina to fetch him thence. On his return, as the inhabitants of Mecca saw him pass with a lad by his side, they concluded that he had purchased a slave, and exclaimed *Abd al Muttalib!*—'lo, the servant of Muttalib!' 'Out upon you!' said he; 'it is my nephew, the son of Hashim.' And as each scrutinised the features of the boy, they swore—'By my life, it is the very same.' In this incident is said to have originated the name of ABD AL MUTTALIB, by which the son of Hashim was thereafter called.

who main-
tains pos-
session of
paternal
estate,

In due time Abd al Muttalib was installed by his uncle in possession of his father's property; but Nowfal, another uncle, interposed, and violently deprived him of it. Abd al Muttalib, on reaching years of discretion, appealed to his tribe for aid to resist this usurpation of his rights; but they declined to interfere. He then wrote to his maternal relatives at Medina, who no sooner received the intelligence than eighty mounted men of his mother's clan started for Mecca. Abd al Muttalib went forth to meet them, and invited them to his house; but their chief refused to alight until he had called Nowfal to account. Proceeding straightway to the Holy house, he found him seated there among the chiefs of the Coreish. Nowfal arose to offer welcome; but the stranger refused his welcome, and drawing his sword declared that he would plunge it into him unless he forthwith reinstated the orphan in his rights. The oppressor was daunted, and agreed to the concession, which was then ratified by oath before the assembled Coreish.

eventually
succeeds to
the office of
entertain-
ing pil-
grims,

Some years after, on the death of Muttalib, Abd al Muttalib succeeded to the office of entertaining the pilgrims. But for a long time he was destitute of power and influence; and, having at the time but one son to assist him in the assertion of his claims, he found it difficult to cope with the opposing faction of the Coreish. It was during this period that he discovered the

ancient well Zemzem. Finding it laborious to procure water for the pilgrims from the scattered wells of Mecca and store it in cisterns by the Kaaba, and perhaps aware by tradition of the existence of a well in the vicinity, he made diligent search, and at last chanced upon the venerable masonry. It was a remnant of the palmy days when a rich and incessant stream of commerce flowed through Mecca. Centuries had elapsed since the trade had ceased, and with it had followed the decline of Mecca, and neglect of the well. In course of time choked up, the remembrance of it had become so indistinct that even the site was now unknown.

and discovers the well Zemzem

As Abd al Muttalib, aided by his son Hârith, continued digging deeper, he came upon the two golden gazelles, with the swords and suits of armour buried there by the Jorhomite king more than three centuries before. The Coreish, envying him these treasures, demanded a share ; and they even asserted their right to the well itself, as the possession of their common ancestor Ishmael. Abd al Muttalib was not powerful enough to resist the claim ; but he agreed to refer it to the decision of the arrows of HOBAL, the god whose image was set up within the Kaaba. Lots were cast, one for the Kaaba and two for the respective claimants. The gazelles fell to the share of the Kaaba, and the swords and suits of armour to Abd al Muttalib, while the arrows of the Coreish were blank. Acquiescing in the divine decree, they relinquished their pretensions to the well. Abd al Muttalib beat out the gazelles into plates of gold, and fixed them by way of ornament to the door of the Kaaba. He hung up the swords before the door as a protection to the treasures within ; but at the same time added a more effectual guard in the shape of a golden lock and key. The plentiful flow of fresh water, soon apparent in the well Zemzem, was a great triumph to Abd al Muttalib. All other wells in Mecca were deserted, and this alone resorted to. From it Abd al Muttalib supplied the pilgrims ; and the water itself soon shared the sacredness of the Kaaba and its rites. The fame and influence of Abd al Muttalib now waxed greater and greater ; a large family of powerful sons added to his dignity ; he became, and continued to his death, the virtual chief of Mecca.

Claim of Coreish negatived by oracle

Zemzem gives forth abundant spring

But a strange calamity now threatened to embitter Abd al Muttalib's prosperity. During his early troubles, while supported by an only son, he had felt so bitterly his weakness in contending with the large and influential families of his opponents, as to vow that, if Providence should ever grant him ten sons, he would devote one of them to the Deity. Years rolled on, and the rash father at last found himself surrounded by the longed-for number, the sight of whom daily reminded him of his vow. He bade his

Abd al Muttalib's son, Abdallah, ransomed from sacrifice by one hundred camels

sons accompany him to the Kaaba ; each was made to write his name upon a lot, and the lots were made over to the intendant of the temple, who cast them in the usual mode. The fatal arrow fell upon ABDALLAH, the youngest and the best beloved. The vow devoting him to the Deity must needs be fulfilled, but how else than by the sacrificial knife ? His daughters wept and clung around him, and he was willingly persuaded to cast lots between Abdallah and ten camels, the current fine for bloodshed. If the Deity should accept the ransom, the father need not scruple to spare his son. But the lot a second time fell upon Abdallah. Again, and with equal fortune, it was cast between him and twenty camels. At each successive trial the anxious father added ten camels to the stake, but the Deity appeared inexorably to refuse the vicarious offering, and to require the blood of his youngest son. It was now the tenth throw, and the ransom had reached a hundred camels, when the lot at last fell upon them. The father joyfully released Abdallah from his impending fate, and slaughtered the hundred camels between Safa and Marwa. The inhabitants of Mecca feasted upon them, and Abd al Muttalib's family refusing to partake, the residue was left to the beasts and to the birds. This Abdallah was the father of Mahomet.

Abd al
Muttalib
challenged
by Harb
son of
Omeyya

The prosperity and fame of Abd al Muttalib excited the envy of the house of Omeyya, whose son Harb challenged his rival to a trial of their respective merits. The Abyssinian king declined to be the umpire, and the judgment was committed to a Coreishite, who declared that Abd al Muttalib was in every respect superior. Harb was deeply mortified, and abandoned the society of his opponent whose companion he had previously been. Thus the ill feeling between the families of Hashim and Omeyya was perpetuated and increased.

His league
with the
Beni
Khozâa

Abd al Muttalib gained an important accession of stability to his party by concluding a defensive league with the Khozâaite tribe, still inhabitants of Mecca. They came to him and represented that, as their quarters adjoined, such a treaty would be advantageous for both. Abd al Muttalib was not slow in perceiving this. With ten of his adherents he met the Beni Khozâa at the Kaaba, and there they mutually pledged their faith. The league was reduced to writing, and hung up in the Holy house. No one from the family of Omeyya was present, or indeed knew of the transaction until thus published. The combination was permanent, and in after times proved of essential service to Mahomet.

The
viceroy of
Yemen
invades

In the year 570 A.D., or about eight years before the death of Abd al Muttalib, occurred the memorable invasion of Mecca by Abraha, Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen. This potentate had built

at Sana a magnificent cathedral whither he sought to attract the worship of Arabia ; and, thwarted in the attempt, vented his displeasure in an attack on Mecca and its temple. Upon this enterprise he set out with a considerable army. In its train was an elephant ;—a circumstance for Arabia so singular that the commander, his host, the invasion, and the year, are still called by the epithet of ‘the Elephant.’ Notwithstanding opposition from various Arab tribes, Abraha victoriously reached Tayif, three days east of Mecca. The men of Tayif, ever jealous of Mecca, protested that they had no concern with the Kaaba, and furnished the Abyssinians with a guide, who died on the way to Mecca. Centuries afterwards, wayfarers marked their abhorrence of the traitor by casting stones at his tomb as they passed. Abraha then sent forward a body of troops to scour the Tehama and carry off what cattle they could find. They were successful in the raid, and among the plunder secured two hundred camels belonging to Abd al Muttalib. An embassy was despatched to the inhabitants of Mecca : ‘Abraha,’ the message ran, ‘had no desire to do them injury. His only object was to demolish the Kaaba ; that performed, he would retire without shedding the blood of any man.’ The citizens had already resolved that it would be vain to oppose the invader by force of arms ; but the destruction of the Kaaba they refused on any terms to allow. At last the embassy prevailed on Abd al Muttalib and the other chiefs of Mecca to repair to the Viceroy’s camp, and there plead their cause. Abd al Muttalib was treated with distinguished honour. To gain him over, Abraha restored his plundered camels ; but he could obtain no satisfactory answer regarding the Kaaba. The chiefs offered a third of the wealth of the Tehama if he would desist from his designs against their temple, but he refused. The negotiation was broken off, and the deputation returned to Mecca. The people, by the advice of Abd al Muttalib, made preparations for retiring in a body to the hills and desiles about the city on the day before the expected attack. As Abd al Muttalib leaned upon the ring of the door of the Kaaba (so the tradition runs), he prayed to the Deity thus aloud : ‘Defend, O Lord, thine own House, and suffer not the Cross to triumph over the Kaaba !’ This done, he relaxed his hold, and, betaking himself with the rest to the neighbouring heights, watched what the end might be. Meanwhile a pestilential distemper had shown itself in the camp of the Viceroy. It broke out with deadly pustules and blains, and was probably an aggravated form of small-pox. In confusion and dismay the army commenced retreat. Abandoned by their guides, they perished among the valleys, and a flood (such is the pious legend) sent by the

Mecca
A.D. 570

And
threatens
the Kaaba

Is discom-
fited by the
pestilence

wrath of Heaven swept multitudes into the sea. Scarcely any recovered who had once been smitten by it ; and Abraha himself, a mass of malignant and putrid sores, died miserably on his return to Sana.¹

Coreish
establish
the *Homs*
or excep-
tions in
their own
favour

The unexpected and seemingly miraculous disappointment of the magnificent preparations of Abraha increased the reverence with which throughout Arabia the Coreish were looked upon. They became vainglorious, and sought to mark their superiority by the assumption of special immunities. 'Let us,' they said, 'release ourselves from some of the observances imposed upon the multitude ; and forbid ourselves some of the things which to them are lawful.' Thus they gave up the yearly pilgrimage to Arafât, and the ceremonial return therefrom, although they still acknowledged these acts to be, as an essential part of the 'religion of Abraham,' binding upon others ; they also refused the use of cheese and butter while in the pilgrim garb ; and, abandoning tents of camels' hair, restricted themselves to tents of leather. Upon pilgrims who came from beyond the Sacred limits, they imposed new rules for their own aggrandisement. Such visitors, whether for the Greater or the Lesser pilgrimage, were forbidden to eat food brought from without the holy boundary ; and were compelled to make the circuit of the Kaaba either naked, or clothed in vestments provided only by the citizens who formed the league. This association, called the *Homs*, included the Coreish, the Beni Kinâna a collateral branch, and the Khozâa. To them the privileges of the league were restricted. All others were subjected to the humiliation of soliciting from them food and raiment. There is some doubt whether these innovations were only now begun or existed from an earlier period. But, however introduced, they give proof that the worship of the Kaaba was active and vigorous, and that its directors exercised a wonderful influence over the whole of Arabia. The practices then enforced were superseded only by Islam ; and (assuming the latest date assigned for their introduction) they were maintained

Strength
and univer-
sality of
the Kaaba
worship

¹ Wakidy, after describing the calamity in the fanciful style of the Coran, adds : '*And that was the first beginning of the small-pox.*' The word signifies likewise 'small stones,' and the name as applied to the small-pox is probably derived from the gravelly appearance and feeling of the pustules. The name, coupled with its derivation, probably gave rise to the poetical description of the event in the Coran : *Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the army of the Elephant ? Did he not cause their stratagem to miscarry ? And he sent against them flocks of little birds which cast upon them small clay stones, and made them like unto the stubble of which the cattle have eaten.*—Sura cv. Gibbon says of this passage that it is 'the seed' of the marvellous details of Abraha's defeat. But it must have been partially at least the other way.

for more than half a century. The reverence for the Kaaba, which permitted the imposition of customs so unreasonable and oppressive, must necessarily have been grossly superstitious as well as widely prevalent.

Before proceeding with our history, let us for a moment review the state of parties in Mecca towards the latter days of Abd al Muttalib. There arose, as we have seen, upon the death of Cossai, two leading factions, the descendants respectively of his sons, Abd al Dâr and Abd Menâf.

The house of Abd al Dâr originally possessed all the public offices ; but in the struggle with Hashim they were stripped of several important dignities ; their influence had departed, and they were now fallen into a subordinate and insignificant position. The offices retained by them were still undoubtedly valuable ; but, divided among separate members of the family, the benefit of combination was lost ; and there was no steady and united effort to improve their advantages towards the acquisition of social influence and political power. The virtual chiefship of Mecca, on the other hand, was now with the descendants of Abd Menâf. Among these, again, two parties had arisen,—the families, namely, of his sons Hashim and Abd Shams. The grand offices of giving food and water to the pilgrims secured to the house of Hashim a commanding and permanent influence under the able management of Muttalib, and now of Abd al Muttalib who, like his father Hashim, was regarded as the chief of the Sheikhs of Mecca. But the branch of Omeyya, son of Abd Shams, with its numerous and influential connections, were jealous of the power of the Hashimites, and repeatedly endeavoured to humble them, and bring discredit on their high position. One office, the Leadership in war, indeed, was secured by the Omeyyad family, and contributed much to its splendour. The Omeyyads were, moreover, rich and successful in commerce, and by some are thought to have exceeded in influence and power even the stock of Hashim.

But the 'Year of the Elephant' had already given birth to a personage destined, within half a century, to eclipse the distinctions both of the Hashimite and the Omeyyad race, and to the narration of this momentous event we shall now proceed.

Position of parties

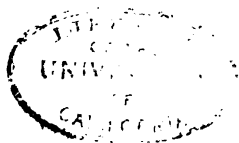
Low state of the descendants of Abd al Dâr

Prosperity of the descendants of Abd Menâf

The Hashimites

The Omeyyads

The birth of Mahomet



THE
LIFE OF MAHOMET

PART FIRST

MAHOMET TILL THE HEGIRA

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF MAHOMET

A.D. 570

WITHIN the great mountain range which skirts the Red Sea, and midway between Yemen and the Syrian border, lies Mecca with its holy Temple. The traveller from the seashore approaches the sacred valley by an almost imperceptible rise of about fifty miles, chiefly through sandy plains and defiles hemmed in by low hills of gneiss and quartz, which reach in some places the height of four or five hundred feet. Passing Mecca, and pursuing still an eastward course, he proceeds with the same gentle rise between hills of granite through the valley of Mina, and in five or six hours arrives at the Mount of Arafât. Onwards the hills ascend to a great height, till about eighty miles from the sea the granite peaks of Jebel Kora crown the range, and Tayif comes in sight thirty miles farther east. Between Jebel Kora and Tayif the country is fertile and lovely. Rivulets every here and there descend from the hills; the plains are clothed with verdure, and adorned by large shady trees. Tayif is famous for its fruits. The grapes are large and of a delicious flavour; and there is no want of variety to tempt the appetite, for peaches and

Description
of Mecca

Fertility of
Tayif

Sterility of
Mecca

pomegranates, apples and almonds, figs, apricots and quinces, grow in abundance and perfection. Far different is it with the frowning hills and barren valleys for many a mile round Mecca. Stunted brushwood and thorny acacias occasionally relieve the eye, and furnish a scanty repast to the camel ; but the general features are rugged rocks without a trace of foliage, and sandy stony glens from which the peasant looks in vain for the grateful returns of tillage. Even at the present day, after the riches of Asia have for twelve centuries been poured into the city, and a regular supply of water is secured by a conduit from the springs of Arafât, Mecca can hardly boast a garden or cultivated field, and only here and there a tree.

Valley of
Mecca

In its immediate vicinity the hills are formed of quartz and gneiss ; but a little to the east, grey strata of granite appear, and within one or two miles of the city, lofty and rugged peaks shoot upwards in grand masses. The valley is about two miles in length. The general direction and slope are from north to south ; but the upper or northern extremity on the way to Arafât bends eastward ; while at the lower end, where the three roads from Yemen, Jedda, and Syria meet, there is a still more decided curve to the west. Here the valley opens out to the breadth of half a mile ; and in this spacious amphitheatre, shut in by rugged hills, lies the city with the Kaaba in its centre. Rocks rise precipitously all around, reaching on the eastern side a height of five hundred feet. It is here that the craggy defiles of Abu Cobeis, the most lofty of the hills encircling the valley, overhang the quarter of the town in which Abd al Muttalib and his family lived. Within three furlongs to the north-east of the Kaaba, there is still pointed out to the pious pilgrim the spot of Mahomet's birth ; and hard by, the quarter in which Aly resided ; both built upon the rocky slope.

Climate

Though within the tropics, Mecca has not the advantage of tropical showers. The rainy season begins about December, but the clouds do not at any time discharge their precious freight continuously or with regularity. Sometimes the rain descends with excessive violence and inundates the little valley with floods from Arafât. Even in summer, rain is not unfrequent. The seasons being thus uncertain, the calamities of drought occasionally arise. The heat, especially

in autumn, is oppressive. Surrounding ridges make the valley close and sultry; and the sun, beating with violence on bare gravelly soil, reflects an intense and distressing glare. The native of Mecca, acclimated to the narrow vale, may regard with complacency its inhospitable atmosphere; but the traveller even in winter complains of stifling warmth and suffocating closeness.¹

Such is the spot, barren and unpromising, on which the Arabs look with fondest reverence as the cradle of their destiny and arena of the remote events which gave birth to their faith. Here Hagar alighted with Ishmael, and in search of water hurried to and fro between the little hill of Safa a spur of Abu Cobeis, and the eminence of Marwa an offshoot from the opposite range. Here the Beni Jorhom established themselves upon the failing fortunes of the ancestors of the Coreish; and from hence they were expelled by the Khozâite invaders from the south. It was in this pent-up vale that Cossai nourished his ambitious plans, and, in the neighbouring defiles of Mina, asserted them in a mortal struggle with his rivals; and here he established the Coreish in their supremacy. It was hard by the Kaaba that his descendants, the children of Abd al Dâr and of Abd Menâf, were drawn up in battle array to fight for the sovereign prerogative. Here it was that Hashim exhibited his princely liberality; and on this spot that Abd al Muttalib toiled with his solitary son till he discovered the ancient well of Zemzem. Thousands of such associations crowd upon the mind of the weary pilgrim, as the minarets of the Kaaba rise before his longing eyes; and, in the long vista of ages reaching even to Adam, his imagination pictures multitudes of pious devotees in every age and from all quarters of the globe, flocking to the little valley, making their seven circuits of the holy house, kissing the mysterious stone, and drinking of the sacred water. Well then may the Arab regard the fane, and its surrounding rocks, with awe and admiration.

Fond veneration with which it is regarded by the Arabs

At the period of Abraha's retreat from Mecca (as narrated in the Introduction), Abd al Muttalib, now above 70 years of age, enjoyed rank and consideration as the foremost

Abdallah (born A.D. 545) marries Amina

¹ Sprenger thinks the population may have been at this time 12,000. The number seems large; but materials for even the loosest estimate are wanting.

chief of Mecca. Some months previous to that event, he had taken his youngest son ABDALLAH,¹ then about four-and-twenty years of age, to the house of Woheib, a distant kinsman descended from Zohra brother of the famous Cossai; and there affianced him to AMINA² the niece of Woheib, under whose guardianship she lived. At the same time Abd al Muttalib, notwithstanding his advanced age, bethought him of a matrimonial alliance on his own account, and married Hâlah, the cousin of Amina and daughter of Woheib; of this late marriage, the famous Hamza was the firstfruits.

Death of
Abdallah

As was customary in a marriage at the home of the bride, Abdallah remained there with her for three days. Not long after, he left his wife with child, and set out on a mercantile expedition to Gaza in the south of Syria. On his way back he sickened at Medina, and was left behind by the caravan with his father's maternal relatives. Abd al Muttalib, on learning of Abdallah's sickness, despatched his son Hârith to take care of him. Reaching Medina, Hârith found that his brother had died about a month after the departure of the caravan. He returned with these tidings, and his father and brethren mourned for Abdallah. He was but five-and-twenty years of age, and Amina had not yet been delivered. He left behind him five camels fed on wild shrubs,³ a flock of goats, and *Omm Ayman*, a slave-girl (called also *Baraka*), who tended the infant borne by his widow. This little property, and the house in which he dwelt, were all the inheritance Mahomet received from his father; but, little as it was, the simple habits of the Arab required no more; and, instead of being evidence of poverty, the possession of a female slave was rather an indication of prosperity and comfort.

Amina delivered of a son, August, A.D. 570

Passing over, as fabulous and unworthy of credit, the marvellous incidents related of the gestation of the infant, it may suffice to state that the widowed Amina gave birth to a son in the autumn of the year 570 A.D. The materials are too vague and discrepant for any close calculation. But we

¹ Abdallah, or *Servant of God* (corresponding with the Hebrew *Abdiel*), was a name common among the ante-Mahometan Arabs.

² The first syllable of Amina is long, the second short.

³ That is to say, not reared at home, and therefore of an inferior kind.

are told that the event occurred about fifty-five days after the attack of Abraha; and we may accept, as an approximation, the date carefully computed by Caussin de Perceval, namely, the 20th of August.

No sooner was the infant born, than Amina sent to tell Abd al Muttalib. The messenger carrying the good tidings reached the chief as he sat in the sacred enclosure of the Kaaba, in the midst of his sons and the principal men of his tribe; and he was glad (so the simple tradition runs), and arose and those that were with him, and visited Amina, who told him all that had taken place. Then he took the young child in his arms, and went to the Kaaba; and as he stood beside the Holy house, he gave thanks to God. The child was called MOHAMMAD.

Joy of Abd-
al Muttalib

The child
is called
Moham-
mad

This name was rare among the Arabs, but not unknown. It is derived from the root *Hamd*, and signifies 'The Praised.' Another form is AHMED, which having been erroneously employed as a translation of '*The Paraclete*' in some Arabic version of the New Testament, became a favourite term with Moslems, especially in addressing Jews and Christians; for it was (they said) the title under which the Prophet had been in their books predicted. Following the established usage of Christendom, I will style Mohammad MAHOMET.

Derivation
of the name

It was not the custom for the better class of women at Mecca to suckle their children. They procured nurses for them, or gave them out to nurse among the neighbouring Bedouin tribes, where was gained the double advantage of a robust frame, and the pure speech and free manners of the desert.¹ Thus the infant Mahomet, shortly after his birth, was made over to Thueiba, the slave of his uncle, Abu Lahab, who had lately suckled Hamza. Though nursed by her for a very few days, the Prophet retained in after life a lively sense of the connection thus formed. Both he and Khadija were wont to express in grateful terms their respect for her. Mahomet used to send her periodically clothes and other

The infant
was not
nursed by
his mother,

but for a
few days by
Thueiba

¹ The practice is still common among the Shereefs of Mecca. At eight days old the infant is sent away and, excepting a visit at the sixth month, does not return to his parents till eight or ten years of age. Burckhard names several tribes to which the infants are thus sent; and among them the *Beni Sad*, the very tribe to which the infant Mahomet was made over. See *Journal Asiatique* for Jan. 1822, p. 18; where there is notice of an Arabic inscription in Hauran, five centuries before Mahomet.

presents until the 7th year of the Hegira, when tidings were brought of her death. Then he inquired after her son, his foster-brother; but he, too, was dead, and she had left no relatives.

Entrusted
to Halima,
a woman of
the Beni
Sad

When Thneiba had nursed the child for several days, a party of the Beni Sad (a tribe of the Hawâzin) arrived at Mecca with ten women who offered themselves as nurses. They were soon provided with children, excepting Halima who was at last with difficulty persuaded to take the infant Mahomet; for it was to the father that the nurses chiefly looked for reward, and the charge of the orphan child had been already declined. Tradition encircles Halima's journey home with a halo of auspicious fortune, but such legend it is not here our province to relate.

Remains
among the
Beni Sad
till five
years old

The infancy and part of the childhood of Mahomet were spent with Halima among the Beni Sad. At two years of age she weaned and took him to his home. Amina was delighted with the healthy and robust appearance of her infant, who looked like a child of double the age, and said: 'Take him with thee back again to the desert; for I fear the unhealthy air of Mecca.' So Halima returned with him to her tribe. When another two years were ended, some strange event occurred which greatly alarmed his nurse. It was probably a fit of epilepsy; but Moslem legend has invested it with so many marvellous features as makes it difficult to discover the real facts. It is certain that the apprehensions of Halima and her husband were aroused; for Arab superstition is wont to regard the subject of such ailments as under the influence of an evil spirit. They resolved to rid themselves of the charge, and Halima carried the child back to its mother. With some difficulty, Amina obtained from her an account of what had happened, calmed her fears, and entreated her to resume the care of her boy. Halima loved her foster-child, and was not unwillingly persuaded to take him back once more to her encampment. There she kept him for about a year longer, and with such care that she would not suffer him to move out of her sight. But uneasiness was again excited by fresh symptoms of a suspicious kind; and she set out finally to restore the boy to his mother when he was about five years of age. As she reached the outskirts of Mecca, he strayed from her, and she

Is seized
with a fit

could not find him. In her perplexity she repaired to Abd al Muttalib, and he sent one of his sons to aid her in the search; the little boy was discovered wandering in Upper Mecca, and restored to his mother.

If we are right in regarding the attacks which alarmed Halima as fits of a nervous nature, they exhibit in the constitution of Mahomet the normal marks of those excited states and ecstatic swoons which perhaps suggested to his own mind the idea of 'inspiration, as by his followers they were undoubtedly taken to be evidence of it. It is probable that, in other respects, the constitution of Mahomet was rendered robust, and his character free and independent, by these five years among the Beni Sad. At any rate his speech was thus formed upon one of the purest models of the beautiful language of the Peninsula; and it was his pride in after days to say: 'Verily, I am the most perfect Arab amongst you; my descent is from the Coreish, and my tongue is the tongue of the Beni Sad.' When eloquence began to form an important element of success, a pure language and standard dialect were advantages to him of essential moment.

Advantages to Mahomet from residence among the Bedouins

Mahomet ever retained a grateful impression of the kindness he had experienced as a child among the Beni Sad. Halima visited him at Mecca after his marriage with Khadija. 'It was (the tradition runs) a year of drought, in which much cattle perished; and Mahomet spoke to Khadija and she gave to Halima a camel used to carry a litter, and forty sheep; so she returned to her people.' Upon another occasion he spread out his mantle for her to sit upon,—a token of especial respect,—and placed his hand upon her bosom in an affectionate and familiar way. Many years after, when, on the expedition against Tayif, he attacked the Beni Hawâzin and took a multitude of them captive, they found ready access to his heart by reminding him of the days when he was nursed among them. About the same time a woman called Shima was brought in with some other prisoners to the camp. When they threatened her with their swords, she declared that she was the Prophet's foster-sister. Mahomet inquired how he should know the truth of this, and she replied: 'Thou gavest me this bite upon my back, once upon a time when I carried thee on my hip.' The Prophet recognised the mark, spread his mantle over her, and made her to sit down by him. He gave her

Grateful remembrance of Halima's nursing

the option of remaining in honour and comfort with him, but she preferred to return with a present to her people.

In his sixth year his mother takes him to Medina A.D. 575-576

Reminiscences of the visit

The sixth year of his life Mahomet spent at Mecca under the care of his mother. She then planned a visit to Medina, where she longed to show her boy to the maternal relatives of his father. So she departed with her slave-girl Omm Ayman who tended the child; and they rode upon two camels. Arrived in Medina, she alighted at the house where her husband had died and was buried. The visit was of sufficient duration to imprint the scene and the society, notwithstanding his tender age, upon the memory of Mahomet. He used in later days to call to recollection things that happened on this occasion. Seven-and-forty years afterwards, when he entered Medina as a refugee, he recognised the place, and said: 'In this house I sported with Aynasa, a little girl of Medina; and with my cousins, I used to put to flight the birds that alighted upon the roof.' As he gazed upon the mansion, he added: 'Here it was my mother lodged with me; in this place is the tomb of my father; and it was there, in that very pond, that I learnt to swim.'

Death of Amina, and return to Mecca

After sojourning at Medina about a month, Amina be-
thought her of returning to Mecca, and set out in the same manner as she had come. But when about half way they had reached a spot called Abwa, she fell sick and died; and she was buried there. The little orphan was carried back to Mecca by Omm Ayman, who although then quite a girl was a faithful nurse to the child, and continued to be his constant attendant.

Inpression produced by his mother's death

The early loss of his mother no doubt imparted to the youthful Mahomet something of that pensive and meditative character by which he was afterwards distinguished. In his seventh year he could appreciate the bereavement and feel the desolation of his orphan state. In the Coran he has alluded touchingly to the subject. While reassuring his heart of the divine favour, he recounts the mercies of the Almighty; and amongst them the first is this: '*Did He not find thee an orphan, and furnished thee with a refuge?*'

Grief on visiting her tomb in after life

On his pilgrimage from Medina to Hodeibia he visited by the way his mother's tomb, and lifted up his voice and wept, and his followers likewise wept around him. When they asked him concerning it, he said: 'This is the grave of my mother:

the Lord hath permitted me to visit it. And I sought leave to pray for her salvation, but it was not granted. So I called my mother to remembrance, and the tender memory of her overcame me, and I wept.'

The charge of the orphan was now undertaken by Abd al Muttalib, who had by this time reached the patriarchal age of fourscore years. The child was treated by him with singular fondness. A rug used to be spread under the Kaaba, and on it the aged chief reclined in shelter from the heat of the sun. Around the carpet, but at a respectful distance, sat his sons. The little Mahomet was wont to run up close to the patriarch, and unceremoniously take possession of his rug; his sons seeking to drive him off, Abd al Muttalib would interpose, saying 'Let my little son alone,' stroke him on the back, and delight to listen to his childish prattle. The boy was still under the care of his nurse; but he would ever and anon quit her, and run into the apartment of his grandfather even when he was alone or asleep.

Abd al Muttalib undertakes charge of the orphan A.D. 576

The guardianship of Abd al Muttalib lasted but two years, for he died eight years after the attack of Abraha. The orphan child felt bitterly the loss of his indulgent grandfather; as he followed the bier he was seen to weep, and when he grew up, he retained a distinct remembrance of his death. The heart of Mahomet in his tender years was thus again rudely wounded, and the fresh bereavement was rendered more poignant by the dependent position in which it left him.† The nobility of his grandfather's descent, the deference paid to him throughout the vale of Mecca, and his splendid hospitality towards the pilgrims, in furnishing them with food and drink, were witnessed with satisfaction by the thoughtful child. These things no doubt left behind them a proud remembrance, and formed the seed perhaps of many an ambitious thought and day-dream of power and domination.

Abd al Muttalib dies, A.D. 578

The death of Abd al Muttalib left the children of Hashim without any powerful head; while it enabled the other branch, descended from Omeyya, to gain ascendancy. Of the latter family the chief at this time was Harb, who held the *Leadership* in war, and was followed by a numerous and powerful body of relations.

Effect of death of Abd al Muttalib

Of Abd al Muttalib's sons, Hârith, the eldest, was now

The sons
Abd al
Muttalib

dead; the chief of those who survived were Zobeir and Abu Tâlib (both by the same mother as Abdallah), Abu Lahab, Abbas, and Hamza. The last two were still very young. Zobeir was the oldest, and to him Abd al Muttalib bequeathed his dignity and offices. Zobeir, again, left them to Abu Tâlib, who, finding himself too poor to discharge the expensive and onerous task of providing for the pilgrims, waived the honour in favour of his younger brother Abbas. But the family of Hashim had fallen from its high estate, and Abbas was able to retain only the giving of drink, while the furnishing of food passed into the hands of another branch. Abbas was rich, and his influential post, involving charge of the well Zemzem, was retained by him till the introduction of Islam, and then confirmed to his family by the Prophet; but he was not a man of strong character, and never attained to a commanding position at Mecca. Abu Tâlib, on the other hand, possessed many noble qualities, and won greater respect; but, probably from poverty, he too remained in the background. It was thus that in the oscillations of phylarchical government, the prestige of the house of Hashim had begun to wane, and nearly disappear; while the rival Omeyyad branch was rising to importance. This phase of the political state of Mecca began with the death of Abd al Muttalib, and continued until the conquest of the city by Mahomet himself.

Abu Tâlib
becomes
guardian of
his orphan
nephew

To Abu Tâlib, the dying Abd al Muttalib consigned the guardianship of his orphan grandchild; and faithfully and kindly he discharged the trust. His fondness for the lad equalled that of Abd al Muttalib. He made him sleep by his bed, eat by his side, and go with him wherever he walked abroad. And this tender treatment was continued until his nephew emerged from the helplessness of childhood.

Mahomet
at twelve
years of age
accompan-
ies Abu
Tâlib to
Syria, A.D.
582

It was during this period that Abu Tâlib, accompanied by Mahomet, undertook a mercantile journey to Syria. He intended to leave the lad behind; for now twelve years of age he was able to take care of himself. But when the caravan was ready to depart, and Abu Tâlib about to mount, the child, overcome by the prospect of so long a separation, clung to his protector. Abu Tâlib was moved, and carried him along with the party. The expedition extended to Bostra, perhaps farther. It lasted for several months, and afforded to

the youthful Mahomet opportunities of observation, which were not lost upon him. He passed near to Petra, Jerash, Ammon, and other remains of former mercantile grandeur; and the sight must have deeply imprinted upon his reflective mind the instability of earthly greatness. The wild story of the valley of Hejer, with its lonely deserted habitations hewn out of the rock, and the tale of divine vengeance descending on the cities of the plain over which now rolled the waves of the Dead Sea, would excite apprehension and awe; while such strange histories, rendered more startling and tragical by Jewish tradition and local legend, would win and charm the childish heart ever yearning after the marvellous. On this journey too, he passed through several Jewish settlements, and came in contact with the Christians of Syria. Hitherto he had witnessed, if at all, only an isolated and imperfect exhibition of their faith: now he saw its rites in full and regular performance by a whole community. The national and social customs founded upon Christianity; the churches with their crosses and images, their pictures and other symbols of the faith; the ringing of bells; the frequent assemblages for worship, were all forced on his attention. The reports, and possibly an actual glimpse, of the continually recurring ceremonial, effected (we may suppose) a deep impression upon him; and this impression would be rendered all the more practical and lasting by the sight of whole tribes, Arabs like himself, belonging to the same faith and practising the same observances. However fallen and materialised, the Christianity of Syria must have struck the thoughtful observer in strange contrast with the gross idolatry of Mecca. Once again, in mature life, Mahomet visited Syria, and whatever reflections of this nature were then awakened would, no doubt, receive an augmented force and deeper colouring, from the vivid pictures and bright imagery which, upon the same ground, had been impressed on the imagination of his childhood.

Impression
probably
excited by
this journey

No further incident of a special nature is related of Mahomet, until he had advanced from childhood to youth.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE YOUTH OF MAHOMET TO HIS FORTIETH YEAR

A.D. 570-609.

'Sacrilegious war'
580 to 590
A.D.

THE next passage in the life of Mahomet brings us to events of a wider and more stirring interest.

Between the years 580 and 590 A.D. the vale of Mecca and surrounding country were disturbed by one of those bloody feuds so frequently excited by the fiery pride, and prolonged by the revengeful temper, of the nation.

A Fair held
annually at
Ocatz

In Dzul Cada, the sacred month preceding the annual pilgrimage, a fair was held at Ocatz, where, within three days' journey east of Mecca, the shady palm and cool fountain offered a grateful resting-place to the merchant and traveller after their toilsome journey.

Chivalrous
and poetical
contests

Goods were bartered, vainglorious contests (those characteristic exhibitions of Bedouin chivalry) were held, and verses recited by bards of the various tribes. The successful poems produced at this national gathering were treated with distinguished honour. They were transcribed in illuminated characters, and thus styled *Golden*; or they were attached to the Kaaba and honoured with the title *Suspended*. The 'Seven suspended poems'¹ still survive from a period anterior to Mahomet, a wondrous specimen of artless eloquence. The beauty of their language and wild richness of their imagery are acknowledged by the European reader; but the subject is limited, and the beaten track seldom deviated from. The charms of his mistress, the envied spot marked by the still fresh traces of her encampment, the solitude of her deserted haunts, his own generosity and prowess, the unrivalled glory of his tribe, the noble qualities of his camel;—these are the

¹ Sabaa Moallacât.

themes which, with little variation of treatment, and with no contrivance whatever of plot or story, occupied the Arab muse;—and some of them only added fuel to the besetting vices of the people, vainglory, envy, vindictiveness, and pride.

At the fair of Ocatz, a rivalrous spirit had been about this period engendered between the Coreish and the Beni Hawâzin, a numerous tribe of kindred descent, which dwelt (and still dwells) in the country between Mecca and Tayif. An arrogant poet, vaunting the superiority of his tribe, was struck by an indignant Hawâzinite; a maid of Hawâzin descent rudely treated by some Coreishite youths; an importunate creditor insolently repulsed.¹ On each occasion the sword was unsheathed, blood flowed, and the conflict would have become general unless the leaders had interfered to calm the excited people. Such was the origin of the 'Sacriligious war,' so called because it occurred within the sacred term, and was eventually carried within the sacred territory.

Origin of
'Sacriligious war'

These incidents suggested the expediency of requiring all who frequented the fair to surrender, while it lasted, their arms, and to deposit them with Ibn Jodaân, a chief of Mecca. By this precaution peace was preserved for several years, when a wanton murder supplied more serious cause of offence. The prince of Hira had despatched to the fair a caravan richly laden with perfumes and musk. It proceeded under the escort of an Hawâzin chieftain. Another chief, friend of the Coreish, jealous at being supplanted in charge of the convoy, watched his opportunity, and, falling upon the caravan, slew its leader, and fled with the booty. On his flight he met a man of the Coreish whom he charged to proceed with expedition to the fair then being held at Ocatz, and communicate the intelligence to his confederate Harb² and other

Precautions
for peace

Hostilities
precipitated by a
murder

¹ The incident affords a curious illustration of Arab manners. The dissatisfied creditor seated himself in a conspicuous place with a monkey by his side, and said: '*Who will give me another such ape, and I will give him in exchange my claim on such a one?*'—naming his creditor with his full pedigree from Kinâna, an ancestor of the Coreish. This he kept vociferating to the intense annoyance of the Kinâna tribe, one of whom drew his sword and cut off the monkey's head. In an instant the Hawâzin and Kinâna tribes were embroiled in bitter strife.

² Harb was the son of Omeyya and father of Mahomet's opponent Abu Sofian. As confederate of the murderer he was bound to take up his cause.

Coreishite chiefs. The message was promptly conveyed, and Abdallah, thus privately informed of the murder, forthwith gave back to all their arms, and, feigning urgent business at Mecca, departed with his whole tribe. The news of the murder began rapidly to spread at Ocatz, and as the sun went down it reached the ears of the Hawâzin chief, who at once, perceiving the cause of the precipitate departure of the Coreish, rallied his people and proceeded in hot pursuit. The Coreish had already entered the sacred limits, and so their enemy contented themselves with challenging them to a rencounter at the same period of the following year. The challenge was accepted, and both parties prepared for the struggle. Several battles were fought with various success, and hostilities, more or less formal, prolonged for four years, when a truce was called. The dead were numbered up, and as twenty had been killed of the Hawâzin more than of the Coreish, the latter consented to pay the price of their blood, and for this purpose delivered hostages. One of these was Abu Sofian, the famous antagonist in after days of Mahomet. In some of these conflicts, the whole of the Coreish and their allies were engaged. Each tribe was commanded by a chief of its own; and Ibn Jodaân guided the general movements. The descendants of Abd Shams were headed by Harb son of Omeyya, and took a distinguished part in the warfare. The children of Hashim were present also, under command of Zobeir eldest surviving son of Abd al Muttalib; but they occupied a less prominent position. In one of the battles Mahomet attended upon his uncles; but, though now near twenty years of age, he had not acquired the love of arms. According to some, his efforts were confined to gathering up the arrows of the enemy as they fell, and handing them to his uncles. Others assign him a somewhat more active share; but the sentence in which even this is preserved does not imply much enthusiasm in the warfare; 'I remember,' said the Prophet, 'being present with my uncles in the Sacrilegious war; I discharged arrows at the enemy, and I do not regret it.' Physical courage, indeed, and martial daring, are characteristics which did not distinguish the Prophet at any period of his career.¹

A truce
after four
years' fight-
ing

Omeyyad
and Hash-
imites both
engaged in
the struggle

Part taken
by Maho-
met

¹ Among the chieftains in command of tribes, it is interesting to notice Khuweild, father of Khadija; Khattâb, father of Omar; Othman and Zeid,

The struggles for pre-eminence, indeed, and the contests of eloquence, at the annual fair, must have possessed for the youthful Mahomet a more engrossing interest than the combat of arms. At these spectacles, while his patriotism was no doubt aroused and desire after personal distinction stimulated by the whole atmosphere of rivalry, he had rare opportunities of cultivating his genius, and learning from the greatest masters and most perfect models the art of poetry and power of rhetoric. But another and a nobler lesson might also be learned in the concourse at Ocatz. The Christianity, as well as the chivalry, of Arabia had representatives there; and, if we may believe tradition, Mahomet while a boy heard Coss, bishop of Najran, preach a purer creed than that of Mecca, in accents which agitated and aroused his soul. And many at that fair, besides the venerable Coss, though influenced it may be by a less catholic spirit, yet professed to believe in the same revelation from above, and preach the same good tidings. There too were Jews, serious and earnest men, surpassing the Christians in number, and equally with them appealing to an inspired Book. The scene thus annually witnessed by Mahomet as he advanced into mature years, had, we cannot doubt, a deep influence upon him. May there not have been here too the germ of his great catholic design; of that Faith round which the tribes of Arabia were all to rally? At the fair, religion clashed against religion in hopeless discord; and yet amid it all he might discern some common elements, a book, a name, to which all would reverently bow. With the Jews he was more familiar than the Christians, for as a child he had seen them at Medina, heard of their synagogue and worship, and learned to respect them as men that feared God. Yet these glanced bitterly at the Christians, and, even when Coss addressed them in language which approved itself to the heart of Mahomet, they scorned his words, and railed at the meek and lowly Jesus of whom he spoke. Not less disdainfully did the Christians regard the Jews. And both Jews and Christians spurned the Arab tribes as heathens devoted to the wrath of an offended Deity. Yet if the inquirer sought to fathom the causes of this opposition, he would find that, notwithstanding the two of the four 'Inquirers' who will be noticed below; besides other well-known names.

Probable influence upon Mahomet of the fair at Ocatz

Lesson in poetry and rhetoric

Acquaintance with Christians and Jews

Possible germ of great catholic system

mutual enmity of Jews and Christians, there was a Revelation equally acknowledged by both to be divine; that both denounced idolatry as an unpardonable sin, and professed to worship One only true God; and (what would stir his inmost soul) that both repeated with profound veneration a common name,—the name of Abraham, the builder of the Kaaba and author of the rites observed there by every Arab tribe. What, if there were truth in all these systems;—divine TRUTH, dimly glimmering through human prejudice, malevolence, and superstition? Would not that be a glorious mission to act the part of the Christian bishop, but on a still wider and more catholic stage; and, by removing the miserable partitions which hid and severed each sect and nation from its neighbour, to make way for the illumination of truth and love emanating from the great Father of all! Visions and speculations such as these were no doubt raised in the mind of Mahomet by association with the Jews and Christians frequenting this great fair. Certain it is that, late in life, he referred with satisfaction to the memory of Coss, the son of Saida, and spoke of him as having preached there the ‘true catholic faith.’

League
amongst
the Coreish
for protect-
ing the
oppressed

A confederacy formed at Mecca shortly after the restoration of peace, for the suppression of violence and injustice, aroused an enthusiasm in the mind of Mahomet which the martial exploits of the Sacrilegious war failed to kindle. The offices of State, and with them the powers of government, had (as we have seen) become divided among the various Coreishite families. There was no one now to exercise an authority such as had been enjoyed by Cossai and Hashim, or even by Abd al Muttalib. When any of the separate tribes neglected to punish its members for oppression and wrong-doing, no chief at Mecca was strong enough to stand up as champion of the injured. Right was not enforced: wrong remained unpunished. Certain glaring acts of tyranny suggested to the principal Coreishite families the expedience of binding themselves by an oath to secure justice to the helpless. The honour of originating the movement is ascribed to Zobeir, eldest surviving son of Abd al Muttalib. The descendants of Hashim and kindred families assembled in the house of Ibn Jodaân, who prepared for them a feast; and they swore ‘by the avenging Deity, that they

would take the part of the oppressed, and see his claim fulfilled, so long as a drop of water remained in the ocean, or would satisfy it from their own resources.' The league was useful, both as a restraint against injustice, and on some occasions as a means of enforcing restitution. 'I would not,' Mahomet used in after years to say, 'exchange for the choicest camel in all Arabia the remembrance of being present at the oath which we took in the house of Abdallah, when the Beni Hashim Zohra and Taym swore that they would stand by the oppressed.'¹

The youth of Mahomet passed away without any other incidents of interest. At one period he was employed, like other lads, in tending the sheep and goats of Mecca upon the neighbouring hills and valleys. He used when at Medina to refer to this employment and to say that it comported with his prophetic office, even as it did with that of Moses and David. On one occasion, as some people passed him carrying a load of *Arak* berries, the Prophet said to his companions: 'Pick me out the blackest of them, for they are sweet;—even such was I wont to gather when I fed the flocks of Mecca at Ajjad. Verily there hath been no prophet raised up, who performed not the work of a Shepherd.' The hire received for this duty would contribute towards the support of his needy uncle Abu Tâlib, and the occupation itself was congenial with his thoughtful and meditative character. While he watched the flocks, his attention would be riveted by the signs of an unseen Power spread all around him: the twinkling stars and bright constellations gliding through the dark blue sky silently along, would be charged to him with a special message; the loneliness of the desert would arm with a deeper conviction that speech which day everywhere utters unto day; while the still small voice, never unheard by the attentive listener, would swell into grander and more imperious

Mahomet's
occupation
as a shep-
herd

Probable
effect of
shepherd
life

¹ Zohra was brother, and Taym the uncle, of Cossai. It is remarkable that only these three tribes joined the league. To the Beni Zohra belonged Mahomet's mother; and his friend Abu Bekr to the Beni Taym. That the league was only a partial one is probable from its name, the Oath of *Fid-huh*, i.e. 'that which is unnecessary or supererogatory.' It seems to have been so called by the rest of the Coreish who did not join it. An instance is given in which after the death of Mahomet the league was appealed to by Hosein son of Ali, against Muavia or his nephew.

tones when the tempest swept with its forked lightning and far rolling thunder along the vast solitudes of the mountains about Mecca. Thus, we may presume, was cherished a deep and earnest faith in the Deity as an ever-present, all-directing Agent;—a faith which in after days the Prophet was wont to enforce from the memories, no doubt, of these early days, by eloquent and heart-stirring appeals to the sublime operations of Nature and the beneficent adaptations of an ever-present Providence.

Reserved
and temperate
youth of Mahomet

Our authorities all agree in ascribing to the youth of Mahomet a modesty of deportment and purity of manners rare among the people of Mecca. His virtue is said to have been miraculously preserved. 'I was engaged one night' (so he himself relates) 'feeding the flocks in company with a lad of the Coreish. And I said to him, If thou wilt look after my flock, I will go into Mecca and divert myself there, even as youths are wont by night to divert themselves.' But no sooner had he reached the precincts of the city, than a marriage feast engaged his attention, and he fell asleep. On another night, entering the town with the same intentions, he was arrested by heavenly strains of music, and sitting down slept till morning. Thus he escaped temptation. 'And after this,' said Mahomet, 'I no more sought after vice; even until I had attained unto the prophetic office.' Making every allowance for the fond reverence which favoured the currency of such stories, it is quite in keeping with the character of Mahomet that he should have shrunk from the coarse and licentious practices of his youthful friends. Endowed with a refined mind and delicate taste, reserved and meditative, he lived much within himself, and the ponderings of his heart no doubt supplied occupation for leisure hours spent by others of a lower stamp in rude sports and profligacy. The fair character and honourable bearing of the unobtrusive youth won the approbation of his fellow-citizens; and he received the title, by common consent, of AL AMIN, 'the Faithful.'

Abu Tâlib
suggests
mercantile
expedition.
Ætat. 25

Thus respected and honoured, Mahomet lived a quiet and retired life in the family of Abu Tâlib, who (as we have seen) was prevented by limited means from occupying any prominent position in the society of Mecca. At last, finding his family increase faster than the ability to provide for them, Abu Tâlib bethought him of setting his nephew, now of mature

age, to earn a livelihood for himself. Mahomet was never covetous of wealth, or at any period of his career energetic in the pursuit of riches for their own sake. If left to himself, he would probably have preferred the quiet and repose of his present life to the bustle and cares of a mercantile journey. He would not spontaneously have contemplated such an expedition. But when the proposal was made, his generous soul at once felt the necessity of doing all that was possible to relieve his uncle, and he cheerfully responded to the call. The story is as follows :—When his nephew was now five-and-twenty years of age, Abu Tâlib addressed him in these words : ‘ I am, as thou knowest, a man of small substance ; and truly the times deal hardly with me. Now here is a caravan of thine own tribe about to start for Syria, and Khadija,¹ daughter of Khuweilid, needeth men of our tribe to send forth with her merchandise. If thou wert to offer thyself, she would readily accept thy services.’ Mahomet replied : ‘ Be it so as thou hast said.’ Then Abu Tâlib went to Khadija, and inquired whether she wished to hire his nephew, but he added : ‘ We hear that thou hast engaged such an one for two camels, and we should not be content that my nephew’s hire were less than four.’ The matron discreetly answered : ‘ Hadst thou askedst this thing for one of a distant or alien tribe, I would have granted it ; how much rather now that thou askest it for a near relative and friend !’ So the matter was settled, and Mahomet prepared for the journey. When the caravan was about to set out, his uncle commended him to the men of the company. Meisara, servant of Khadija, likewise travelled along with Mahomet in charge of her property. The caravan took the usual route to Syria, the same which Mahomet had traversed with his uncle thirteen years before. In due time they reached Bostra, on the road to Damascus, about sixty miles to the east of the Jordan. The transactions of that busy mart, where the practised merchants of Syria sought to overreach the simple Arabs, were ill suited to the tastes and habits of Mahomet ; yet his natural sagacity and shrewdness carried him prosperously through the undertaking. He returned from the barter with a balance more than usually in his favour.

Mahomet accompanies a Syrian caravan in charge of Khadija’s venture

Reaches Bostra, and barter to advantage

The reflective mind of Mahomet, now arrived at the

¹ Pronounced *Khadeeja*.

Impres-
sions re-
garding
Christian-
ity

mature but still inquisitive period of early manhood, must have received deep and abiding impressions from all that he saw and heard upon the journey, and during his stay at Bostra. Though the story of his interview with Nestorius (a monk who they say embraced him as 'the coming prophet'¹) may be rejected as puerile, yet we may be certain that Mahomet lost no opportunity of inquiring into the practices and tenets of the Syrian Christians or of conversing with the monks and clergy who fell in his way.² He probably experienced kindness, and perhaps hospitality, from them; for in his book he ever speaks of them with respect, and sometimes with praise.³ But for their doctrines he had no sympathy. The picture of Christianity in the Coran must have been, in some considerable degree, painted from the conceptions now formed. Had he witnessed a purer exhibition of its rites and doctrines, and seen more of its reforming and regenerating influences, we cannot doubt that, in the sincerity of his early search after truth, he might readily have embraced and faithfully adhered to the faith of Jesus. Lamentable, indeed, is the reflection that so small a portion of the fair form of Christianity was disclosed by the ecclesiastics and monks of Syria to the earnest inquirer; and that little, how altered and distorted! Instead of the simple majesty of the gospel,—as a revelation of God reconciling mankind to himself through his Son,—the sacred dogma of the Trinity was forced upon the traveller with the misleading and offensive zeal of Eutybian and Jacobite partisanship, and the worship of Mary exhibited in so gross a form as to leave the impression upon the mind of Mahomet that she was held to be a goddess, if not the third Person and consort of the Deity.⁴ It must surely have been by such

Distorted
view pre-
sented by
Syrian
worship

¹ Thus Nestor, seeing Mahomet as he sat under a tree below which none ever sat but a Prophet, immediately embraced him as such; he recognised him also by the redness of his eyes, &c.

² Arabic was spoken by the subjects of the Ghassanide dynasty, and Mahomet would find little difficulty in effecting an interchange of ideas with those about him. Poets, merchants, and travellers from Medina used to be guests at the Ghassanide court.

³ Thus Sura v. 91.—*Thou shalt surely find those amongst the people who profess Christianity to be the most inclined to the believers. This cometh to pass because there are priests and monks among them, and because they are not elated with pride.*

⁴ Sura v. 125.—*And when GOD shall say: O Jesus son of Mary! Didst*

blasphemous extravagances that Mahomet was repelled from the true doctrine of Jesus as 'the SON OF GOD,' and led to regard him only as 'Jesus son of Mary,' the sole title by which he is spoken of in the Coran. We may well mourn that the misnamed Catholicism of the Empire thus grievously misled the master mind of the age, and through him eventually so great a part of the eastern world.

But to return. When Mahomet had disposed of the merchandise and, according to her command, purchased for his mistress such things as she had need of, he retraced his steps in company with the caravan to his native valley.¹ The mildness of his manners and kind attention had won the heart of Meisara, and, as they drew near to Mecca, the grateful servant persuaded Mahomet to go in advance of the rest, and bear to his mistress first tidings of the successful traffic. Khadija, surrounded by her maidens, was sitting upon the upper storey of her house,² on the watch for the earliest glimpse of the caravan, when a camel was seen rapidly to advance from the expected quarter, and as it approached she perceived that Mahomet was the rider. He entered, recounted the prosperous issue of the adventure, *thou speak unto mankind, saying, 'Take me and my mother for two gods besides the Lord?'* He shall answer, 'Praise be to thee! It is not for me to say that which I ought not,' &c.

MAHOMET
reports to
Khadija
the success-
ful result

Mahomet's knowledge of Christianity was unfortunately derived from the Orthodox party, who styled Mary 'Mother of God.' He may have heard of the Nestorians, and they are possibly referred to among the 'Sects' into which Jews and Christians are said in the Coran to be divided. But, had he ever obtained a closer acquaintance with the Nestorian doctrine, at least in the earlier part of his career, it would (according to the analogy of his practice in other respects) have been more definitely mentioned in his revelation. The truth, however (as will be shown hereafter), is that Mahomet's acquaintance with Christianity was at the best singularly dim and meagre.

¹ Though the *direct* route from Mecca to Bostra would run a great way east of the Mediterranean, it seems possible that, either now or on the former journey, Mahomet may have seen the Mediterranean Sea. Perhaps, the caravan visited Gaza, the favourite *entrepôt* of the Meccan merchants. His references in the Coran to ships gliding majestically on the waters, *like mountains*, point to a larger class of vessels than he was likely to see on the Red Sea. The vivid pictures of sea-storms are among the finest sketches in the Coran, and evidently drawn from nature: the waves and tempests may have been witnessed from the Arabian shore, but the 'mountain ships' more likely from the Syrian.

² Her house is still shown, a little to the north-east of the Kaaba. It is called the birthplace of Fatima.

She is charmed

and enumerated the various goods which agreeably to her commission he had purchased for her. She was delighted at all she heard; but there was a charm in the dark and pensive eye, in the noble features, and the graceful form of her assiduous agent as he stood before her, which pleased her even more than her good fortune. The comely widow was now forty years of age, she had been twice married, and had borne two sons and a daughter.¹ Yet she cast a fond eye upon the thoughtful youth of five-and-twenty; nor, when he departed, could she dismiss him from her thoughts.

Description of Khadija,

Khadija was a Coreishite lady, distinguished by fortune as well as by birth. Her father Khuweilid was the grandson of Asad, and Asad was the grandson of Cossai. Khuweilid commanded in the Sacrilegious war a considerable section of the Coreish, and so did his nephew Othman. Her substance, whether inherited, or acquired through her former marriages, was very considerable; and by means of hired agents she had increased it largely in mercantile speculation. To the blessing of affluence, she added the more important endowments of discretion, virtue, and an affectionate heart; and, though now mellowed by a more than middle age, she retained a fair and attractive countenance. The chief men of the Coreish were not insensible to these charms, and many sought her in marriage; but choosing rather to live on in dignified and independent widowhood, she had rejected all their offers. The tender emotions, however, excited by the visit of Mahomet overpowered her resolution. Meisara continued to sound in her not unwilling ears the praises of his fellow-traveller. At last her love became irresistible, and she resolved in a discreet and cautious way to make known her passion to its object. A sister (according to other accounts, a servant) was the agent deputed to sound his views. 'What is it, O Mahomet,' said she, adroitly referring to the unusual circumstance of his being unmarried at so mature an age,—'what is it that hindereth thee from

who sends to negotiate marriage with Mahomet

¹ There is no mention of these, as we should have expected from their relation to Mahomet: they had probably already grown out of childhood. The only notice I find is that one of them, Hind, son of Abu Hala al Oseyyad, was killed fighting on Aly's side, in the battle of the Camel; *Ibn al Athir*, vol. iii. p. 217.

Khadija's age is probably according to the intercalary year; in which case she might have been a year older by the lunar year.

marriage?' 'I have nothing,' replied he, 'in my hands wherewithal I might marry.' 'But if haply that difficulty were removed, and thou wert invited to espouse a beautiful and wealthy lady of noble birth, who would place thee in affluence, wouldest thou not desire to have her?' 'And who,' said Mahomet, startled at the novel thought, 'might that be?' 'It is Khadija.' 'But how can I attain unto her?' 'Let that be my care,' returned the female. The mind of Mahomet was at once made up, and he answered, 'I am ready.' The female departed and told Khadija.

No sooner was she apprised of his willingness to marry her, than Khadija despatched a messenger to Mahomet or his uncle, appointing a time when they should meet. Meanwhile, as she dreaded the refusal of her father, she provided for him a feast; and when he had well drunk and was merry, she slaughtered for the company a cow, and casting over her father perfume of saffron or ambergris, dressed him in marriage raiment. While thus under the effects of wine, the old man united his daughter to Mahomet in the presence of his uncle Hamza. But having recovered his senses, he began to look around with wonder, and inquire what meant these symptoms of a nuptial feast, the slaughtered cow, the perfumes and the marriage garment. So soon as he was made aware of what had happened—for they told him 'The nuptial dress was put upon thee by Mahomet thy son-in-law'—he fell into a violent passion, and declared that he would never consent to give away to that poor youth a daughter courted by the great men of the Coreish. The friends of Mahomet replied indignantly that the alliance had not originated in their wish, but was the act of no other than his own daughter. Weapons were drawn, and blood might have been shed, when the old man became pacified, and at last was reconciled.

Notwithstanding its stormy and inauspicious opening, the connubial state proved, both to Mahomet and Khadija, one of unusual tranquillity and happiness. Upon him the marriage conferred a faithful and affectionate companion, and, in spite of her age, a not unfruitful wife. Khadija, on her part, fully appreciated the noble genius and commanding mind of Mahomet, which his reserved and contemplative habit, while it veiled from others, could not conceal from her.

Mahomet
is married
to Khadija

The union
fortunate
and happy

She conducted as before the duties of her establishment, and left him to enjoy his leisure hours, undisturbed and free from care. Her house was thenceforward his home, and her bosom the safe receptacle of those doubts and longings after spiritual light which now began to agitate his soul.

Children of
Mahomet
by Khadija

Within the next ten or twelve years, Khadija bore to Mahomet two sons and four daughters. The firstborn was named Casim; and after him, according to Arabian custom, Mahomet received the title of ABUL CASIM, 'Father of Casim.' This son died at the age of two years. Meanwhile, his eldest daughter Zeinab was born; and after her, at intervals of one or two years, three other daughters, Rockeya, Fatima, and Omm Kolthum. Last of all was born his second son, who died in infancy. Salma, maid of Safia Mahomet's aunt, officiated as midwife on these occasions. Khadija sacrificed at the birth of each boy two kids, and one at the birth of every girl. Her children she nursed herself. Many years after, Mahomet used to look back to this period of his life with fond remembrance. Indeed so much did he dwell upon the mutual love of Khadija and himself, that the envious Ayesha declared herself more jealous of this rival whom she had never seen, than of all the other wives who contested with her the affection of the Prophet.

Mutual
love of Ma-
homet and
Khadija

Person of
Mahomet
described

No description of Mahomet at this period has been attempted by traditionists. But from the copious accounts of his person in later life, an approximate outline may be traced of his appearance in prime of manhood. Slightly above the middle size, his figure though spare was handsome and commanding; the chest broad and open; the bones and framework large, and the joints well knit together. His neck was long and finely moulded. His head, unusually large, gave space for a broad and noble brow. The hair, thick, jet black, and slightly curling, fell down over his ears. The eyebrows were arched and joined. The countenance thin, but ruddy. His large eyes, intensely black and piercing, received additional lustre from eyelashes long and dark. The nose was high and slightly aquiline, but fine, and at the end attenuated. The teeth were far apart. A long black bushy beard, reaching to the breast, added manliness and presence. His expression was pensive and contemplative. The face beamed with intelligence, though something of the sensuous might

also be discerned. The skin was clear and soft; the only hair that met the eye was a fine thin line which ran down from the neck towards the navel. His broad back leaned slightly forward as he walked; and his step was hasty, yet sharp and decided, like that of one rapidly descending a declivity.¹

There was something unsettled in his bloodshot eye, which refused to rest upon its object. When he turned towards you, it was never partially but with the whole body. Taciturn and reserved,² he was yet in company distinguished by a graceful urbanity. His words were pregnant and laconic; but when it pleased him to unbend, his speech was often humorous and sometimes pungent. At such seasons he entered with zest into the diversion of the moment, and now and then would laugh immoderately.³ But in general he listened to the conversation rather than joined in it.

His manner
and conver-
sation

He was the subject of strong passions, but they were so controlled by reason and discretion, that they rarely appeared upon the surface. When much excited, the vein between his eyebrows would mantle, and violently swell across his ample forehead; yet he was cautious and circumspect, and in action kept ever aloof from danger. Generous and considerate towards his friends, he knew, by well-timed favour and attention, how to gain over even the disaffected and rivet them to his service. His enemies, so long as they continued their opposition, were regarded by him with a vindictive and unrelenting hatred; yet he rarely pursued a foe after he had tendered timely submission. His commanding mien inspired the stranger with an undefined and indescribable awe; but on closer intimacy, apprehension and fear gave place to confidence and love.

His emo-
tions under
control

Treatment
of friends
and ene-
mies

Behind his quiet retiring exterior lay hid a high resolve,

¹ This at Medina degenerated into a stoop. Some say he walked like a man *ascending* a hill; others as if he were wrenching his foot from a stone. These descriptions imply *decision* of step. The hollows of his hands and feet were more than usually filled and level: a feature regarded by Orientals with interest.

² 'Mahomet was sorrowful in temperament; continually meditating; he had no rest; he never spoke except from necessity; he used to be long silent; he expressed himself in pregnant sentences, using neither too few nor too many words.'—*Wakidy*.

³ When laughing immoderately, he showed his teeth and gums, and was at times so convulsed that he held his sides.—*Ibid.*

Latent
force of
will

a singleness of purpose, a strength and fixedness of will, a sublime determination, destined to achieve the marvellous work of bowing towards himself the heart of all Arabia as the heart of one man. Khadija was the first to perceive the noble and commanding qualities of her husband, and with a childlike confidence surrendered to him her soul, her will, and faith.

Rebuilding
of the
Kaaba,
A.D. 605.
Ætat 35

The first incident which interrupted the even tenor of his married life was the rebuilding of the Kaaba, when he was about five-and-thirty years of age. One of those violent floods which at times sweep down the valley, had shattered the Holy house; its walls showed ominous rents, and they feared lest it should fall. The treasury was also insecure, owing to the absence of a roof; and thieves had lately clambered over and stolen some of the precious relics. These were recovered, but it was resolved that similar danger should for the future be avoided by raising the walls and covering in the roof. While the Coreish deliberated how this might best be done, a Grecian ship was driven by stress of weather not far off upon the Red Sea shore. The news reaching Mecca, the aged chief Walid, accompanied by a body of the Coreish, proceeded to the wreck, purchased the timber of the broken ship, and engaged her captain, a Greek by name Bacum, skilled in architecture, to assist in the reconstruction of the Kaaba. The several tribes of the Coreish were divided into four bodies, and to each was assigned the charge of one side. With such mysterious reverence was the Kaaba regarded, that apprehensions were entertained lest the apparent sacrilege of dismantling the holy walls should expose even the pious restorers to divine wrath. At last Walid seized a pickaxe, and invoking the Deity in a deprecatory prayer, detached and threw down a portion of the wall. They then retired and waited till the morning, when, finding that no mischief had befallen the adventurous chief, all joined in the demolition. They continued to dig till they reached a hard foundation of green stones which resisted the pickaxe stroke. From thence they began to build the wall. Stones of grey granite from the neighbouring hills were carried by the citizens upon their heads to the sacred enclosure. The whole body of the Coreish assisted in the work, and all proceeded harmoniously until

the structure rose four or five feet above the surface. At that stage it became necessary to build the Black stone into the eastern corner, with its surface so exposed as readily to be kissed by pilgrims upon foot. This stone, which is semi-

The Black stone



Front View of the Black stone Half actual size.

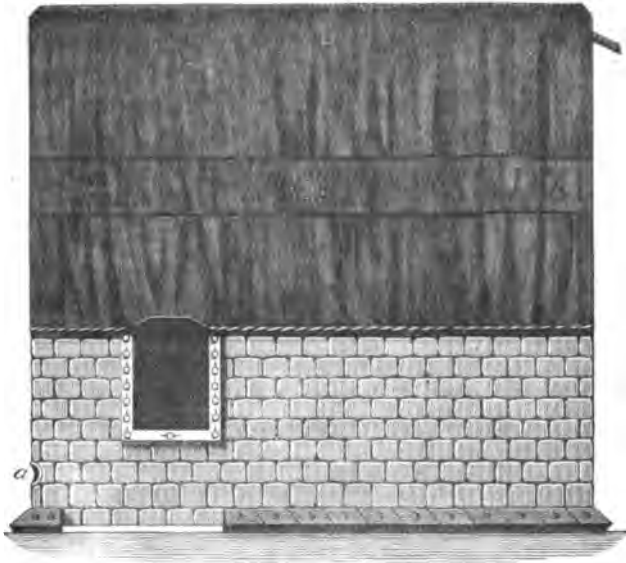


Side View.

circular, measures some six inches in height and eight in breadth ; it is of a reddish-black colour, and notwithstanding the polish imparted by myriads of kisses, bears to the present day in its undulating surface marks of a volcanic origin.

Rivalry for
depositing
the stone

The virtue of the edifice depending on this mysterious stone, each family of the Coreish advanced pretensions to the exclusive right of placing it in its future receptacle. The contention became hot, and it was feared that bloodshed would ensue. For four or five days the building was suspended. At last the Coreish again assembled on the spot amicably to decide the difficulty. Then the oldest citizen arose and said: 'O Coreish, hearken unto me! My advice is that the man who chanceth first to enter the court of the Kaaba by yonder gate, he shall be chosen either to decide the difference amongst you, or himself to place the stone.' The proposal was con-



The Kaaba, as at present, showing the curtain cut and adjusted; a. Black stone.

firmed by acclamation, and they awaited the issue. Mahomet, who was at the moment observed approaching, was the first to enter. Seeing him they all exclaimed: 'Here comes the faithful Arbitrer (*al Amin*); we are content to abide by his decision.' Calm and self-possessed, Mahomet received the commission, and at once resolved upon an expedient which should conciliate them all. Taking off his mantle and spreading it upon the ground, he placed the stone thereon, and said: 'Now let one from each of your four divisions come forward, and raise a corner of this mantle.' Four chiefs

Mahomet
is chosen
arbitrer.
His de-
cision

approached, and holding each a corner lifted thus the stone. When it had reached the proper height, Mahomet, with his own hand, guided it to its place. The decision raised the character of Mahomet for wisdom and judgment; while the singular and apparently providential call could hardly pass unnoticed by Mahomet himself. His mind was given to auguries; and there was here a mysterious singling out of himself to be judge among his fellows in a sacred question, which might well have wrought upon a spirit less imaginative and enthusiastic than that of Mahomet, and prompted the



The Kaaba, as it now stands, showing the curtain festooned at pilgrimage. *a*, The Black stone; *b*, Emblazoned curtain of the door hung for display from the roof; *c*, Door; *d*, Spout.

idea of his being chosen of God to be the prophet of his people.

The stone thus deposited in its proper place, the Coreish built on without interruption; and when the walls had risen to a considerable height they roofed them over with fifteen rafters resting upon six central pillars. A covering of cloth, thrown across the temple according to ancient custom, hung like a curtain round on every side.¹ The Kaaba thus rebuilt

The Kaaba
finished

¹ The custom of veiling the Kaaba is of extremely remote date. Originally the cloth covered the whole building, including the top. Before a roof

was surrounded by a small enclosure probably of not more than fifty yards in diameter. To the west stood the Hall of council, with its door towards the Kaaba. On the east was the gateway of the Beni Sheyba, close by the sacred well Zemzem. At a respectful distance were built all round the houses of the Coreish. The great idol Hobal was placed in the centre of the Holy house; and outside were ranged various other images. The door for entering the Kaaba was then, as now, near the Black stone on the eastern side, and several feet above the ground,—a fact attributed by Mahomet to the pride of the Coreish, and desire to retain in their own hands the power of admission. The building, though now substantial and secure, occupied somewhat less space than its dilapidated and roofless predecessor. The excluded area lay to the north-west, and is still without the sacred walls.¹

was built by the Coreish it must have constituted the only protection from the weather. The curtain is now attached only to the walls.

The covering in those days was of Yemen cloth. Omar renewed it yearly of Egyptian linen. Various materials, as striped Yemen stuff, red brocade, or black silk, have been at different times used; and it has been changed as often as six times a year. To supply the curtain came to be regarded as a sign of sovereignty.

It is now worked at Cairo, and renewed yearly at the season of pilgrimage. It 'is a coarse tissue of silk and cotton mixed.' A band of two feet, embroidered with texts, is inserted about a third from the top. 'It was of a brilliant black (says Burton), and the Hizam—the zone or golden band running round the upper portion of the building—as well as the Boorka (face veil) were of dazzling brightness.' The Boorka is 'the gold embroidered curtain covering the Kaaba door.'

¹ The sill of the door is now about seven feet above the level of the ground, and a moveable wooden staircase is used for ascending. It is distant six feet from the corner of the Black stone. After the conquest of Mecca, Mahomet is related to have said: 'Verily they have drawn back the foundations of the Kaaba from their original limit; and if it were not that the inhabitants are fresh from idolatry, I would have restored to the building that which was excluded from the area thereof. But in case the people may again after my time need to renew the structure, come, and I will show thee what was left out.' So he showed a space in the *Hijr* (or excluded area) of about seven yards.

This space at present lies to the north-west of the Kaaba, about the distance pointed out by Mahomet as the limit of the old building. It is now marked by a semicircular parapet of white marble, five feet high, facing the Kaaba, and is still regarded as equally holy with the temple itself.

Othman, A.H. 26, and Ibn Zobeir, A.H. 64, enlarged the square by purchasing and removing the adjoining houses of the Coreish, and enclosed it by a wall. Various similar changes and improvements were made by suc-

The circumstances which gave occasion for the decision of Mahomet strikingly illustrate the absence of any paramount authority in Mecca, and the number of persons among whom the power of government was at this time divided. Each main branch of the Coreishite stock was independent of the other; and the Offices of state and religion created by Cossai with the view of securing undisputed command had, from their distribution among several independent families, lost their potency. It was a period in which the genius of a Cossai might have again dispensed with the prestige of place and birth, and asserted dominion by strength of will and inflexibility of purpose. But no such leader appeared, and the divided aristocracy moved on with feeble and distracted step. A curious story is related of an attempt made about this period to gain the rule at Mecca. The aspirant was Othman, nephew of Khadija's father. He was dissatisfied with the idolatrous system of Mecca, and travelled to the court of the Roman emperor, where he was honourably entertained, and admitted to Christian baptism. Returning to Mecca, he laid claim, on the strength of an imperial grant, to the government of the city. But his claim was rejected, and he fled to Syria, where he found a refuge with the Ghassanide prince. He there revenged himself by using his influence for the imprisonment of the Coreishite merchants who chanced to be at the Syrian court. But emissaries from Mecca, by offering gifts, counteracted his authority with the prince, and at last procured his death.

Absence of any paramount authority

Othman ibn Huweirith attempts to seize the government

Notwithstanding the absence of a strong government, Mecca continued to flourish under the generally harmonious combination of the several independent phylarchies. Commerce was prosecuted towards Syria and Irac with greater vigour than ever. About the year 606 A.D. we read of a mercantile expedition under Abu Sofian, which for the first

Commerce flourishes at Mecca

cessive Caliphs till, in the third century of the Hegira, the quadrangle with its imposing colonnade assumed its present dimensions.

The Kaaba, as it now stands, is an irregular cube, the sides of which vary from forty to fifty feet in length. The quadrangle, or court, corresponds loosely with the direction of its walls. 'Kaaba' is probably the ancient idolatrous name; while 'Beit-ullah,' *The house of God* (used indifferently with the other in the time of Mahomet), is the more modern title harmonising with Jewish phraseology.

time penetrated to the capital of Persia, and reached even the presence of the Chosroes.

Domestic
life of Ma-
homet.
Marriage
of three
eldest
daughters

I proceed to notice some particulars of the domestic life of Mahomet. The sister of Khadija was married to Rabi, a descendant of Abd Shams, and had borne him a son called Abul Aas, who in course of time had grown up, and was respected for his uprightness and mercantile success. Khadija loved her nephew, and looked upon him as her own son. She prevailed upon Mahomet to join him in marriage with their eldest daughter Zeinab, who had but just reached the age of womanhood. The union proved to be one of real affection, though during the troubled rise of Islam it was chequered, as we shall see, by temporary severance, and by several romantic incidents. Somewhat later the two younger daughters, Rockeya and Omm Kolthum, were given in marriage to Otba and Oteiba, sons of Abu Lahab, uncle of Mahomet. Fatima, the youngest, was yet a child.

Adopts his
cousin Aly

Shortly after the rebuilding of the Kaaba, Mahomet comforted himself for the loss of his infant son Casim by adopting Aly, the child of his friend and former guardian Abu Tâlib. It fell out thus: a season of severe scarcity visited Mecca; and Abu Tâlib, still poor, was put to shifts for the support of his numerous family. His difficulties were perceived by Mahomet, who, prompted by his usual kindness and consideration, repaired to his rich uncle Abbas, and said: 'O Abbas! thy brother Abu Tâlib hath a burdensome family, and thou seest what straits men are brought to. Let us go to him, and relieve him somewhat of the care of his children. I will take one son, if thou wilt take another. And we shall support them.' Abbas consenting, they proposed the thing to Abu Tâlib; and he replied: 'Leave me Ackil and Tâlib; and do ye with the others as it pleaseth you.' So Mahomet took Aly, and Abbas took Jafar. Aly, at this time not above five or six years of age, remained ever after with Mahomet, and they exhibited towards each other the mutual attachment of parent and child.

Zeid son of
Haritha, a
Christian
slave

The heart of Mahomet was inclined to ardent and lasting friendships. About the period of Aly's adoption he admitted to his closest intimacy another person unconnected with him by family ties, but of more equal age. This was Zeid son of

Hârith. As he will be frequently alluded to, and his society must have had an important influence on the Prophet himself, it is important to trace his previous life. His father and mother belonged to Christian tribes in the south of Syria. Zeid was still a child when, journeying with his mother, the company was waylaid by a band of Arab marauders, who carried him away captive, and sold him into slavery. While yet a youth he fell into the hands of Hakim, grandson of Khuweilid, who presented him to his aunt Khadija shortly after her marriage with Mahomet. He was then about twenty years of age; and is described as small of stature, and dark in complexion, with a short and depressed nose. He was an active and useful servant; and Mahomet soon conceiving a strong affection for him, Khadija to gratify her husband made him a present of the slave. His father searched long in vain for Zeid; and his grief found vent in touching verses, some of which have been preserved to us by tradition. At last a party of the tribe when on a pilgrimage to Mecca recognised the youth, and communicated tidings of him to the disconsolate father, who immediately set out to fetch him home. Arrived at Mecca, Hârith offered a large payment for his ransom. Mahomet summoned Zeid, and left it in his option to go or stay. He chose to stay. 'I will not leave thee,' he said; 'thou art in the place to me of father and of mother.' Delighted by his faithfulness, Mahomet took him straightway to the Black stone of the Kaaba and said: 'Bear testimony, all ye that are present. Zeid is my son; I will be his heir, and he shall be mine.' His father contented with the declaration returned home glad at heart; and his son, now a freedman, was thenceforward called 'Zeid ibn Mohammad,' *Zeid the son of Mahomet*. By Mahomet's desire he married his old attendant, Omm Ayman. Though nearly double his age, she bore him a son called Osâma, who was the leader in the expedition to Syria at the time of Mahomet's fatal illness.¹

Is also
adopted by
Mahomet

Christianity prevailed in the tribes from which, both on the father's and mother's side, Zeid sprang;² and though

Christian
influence of
Zeid;

¹ Zeid was probably about six years younger than Mahomet. The difference of age between him and his bride was so great, that tradition tells us Mahomet promised him *paradise* for marrying her.

² The Beni Odzra and Beni Tay.

severed from his home at too early an age to have acquired any extensive or thorough knowledge of its doctrines, he yet no doubt carried with him some impression of the teaching, and some fragments of the facts or legends, of the faith. These would form subjects of conversation between the youth and his adoptive father, whose mind was now feeling in all directions after religious truth. Among the relatives of Khadija, too, there were persons who possessed a knowledge of Christianity, and observed perhaps something of its practice. Her cousin Othman has been already noticed as having embraced Christianity at Constantinople, and made an unsuccessful attempt to gain the rule at Mecca. Waraca, another cousin, is said also to have become a convert to Christianity, to have been acquainted with the religious tenets and sacred Scriptures both of Jews and Christians, and to have even copied or translated some portion of the Gospels into Hebrew or Arabic. In the following chapter it will be seen that this person had an acknowledged share in satisfying the mind of Mahomet that his mission was divine.

Othman
ibn Hu-
weirith ;
and Wa-
raca

The Four
Inquirers

It is a fancy of tradition that, shortly before the appearance of Mahomet, several inquirers were not only seeking after the true faith (or as they style it *the Religion of Abraham*), but, warned by prophecy and by the unguarded admissions of Jews and Christians, were in immediate expectation of the coming prophet. Of such inquirers among the Coreish, Moslem biographies specify *four*. Two of these were *Othman* and *Waraca*, already mentioned. The third, *Obeidallah* (by his mother a grandson of Abd al Muttalib) embraced Islam, emigrated with his brethren in the faith to Abyssinia, and there went over to Christianity.¹ The fourth was *Zeid*, cousin of Omar. Of him tradition says that he condemned the idolatrous sacrifices of the Kaaba, reprobated the burying alive of infant daughters, and 'followed the religion of Abraham.' But not content with such assertions, the traditionists add that Zeid possessed distinct knowledge of the coming prophet and left his salutation to be delivered to him when he should appear. Nay, he described his person, stated that he would be of the family of Abd

Obaidallah
bin Jahsh

Zeid ibn
Amr

¹ He died in Abyssinia, and Mahomet when in Medina married his widow, Omm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sofian.

al Muttalib, and foretold that he would emigrate to Medina! He died while the Kaaba was rebuilding, and was buried at the foot of mount Hira. Although such expectations of the coming Prophet must be rejected as mere fond imaginations, and the manifest tendency to invent anticipatory legends of this description makes it difficult to sever the real from the fictitious in the matter of these four Inquirers, yet it may be admitted as highly probable that a spirit of religious inquiry, the disposition to reject idolatry, and a perception of the superiority of Judaism and Christianity, did in some quarters about this time exist. With such inquirers Mahomet would no doubt deeply sympathise, and hold converse on the gross idolatry of the Arabs, and need of a true and spiritual faith for their regeneration.

A spirit of inquiry probably abroad

Mahomet was now approaching his fortieth year. Always pensive, he had of late become even more thoughtful and retiring. Contemplation and reflection engaged his mind. The debasement of his people pressed heavily on him; the dim and imperfect shadows of Judaism and Christianity excited doubts without satisfying them; and his soul was perplexed with uncertainty as to what was the true religion. Thus burdened, he frequently retired to seek relief in meditation amongst the solitary valleys and rocks near Mecca. His favourite spot was a cave in the declivities at the foot of mount Hira,¹ a lofty conical hill two or three miles north of Mecca. Thither he would retire for days at a time; and his faithful wife sometimes accompanied him. The continued solitude, instead of stilling his anxiety, magnified into sterner and more impressive shapes the solemn realities which agitated his soul. Close by was the grave of the aged Zeid who, after spending a lifetime in the same inquiries, had now passed into the state of certainty;—might he himself

Mahomet seeks solitude

¹ Or Hara, since called Jebel Nûr, or Mountain of light, because Mahomet is said to have received his first revelation there. The hill is so lofty as to be seen a long distance off. Burckhardt says: 'Passing the Sheriff's garden house on the road to Arafât, a little further on, we enter a valley, which extends in a direction N.E. by N., and is terminated by the mountain, which is conical. . . . In the rocky floor of a small building ruined by the Wahabees, a cleft is shown about the size of a man in length and breadth. . . . A little below this place is a small cavern in the red granitic rock, which forms the upper stratum of this mountain.' This valley was often trodden by Mahomet on his way to and from the cleft and the cavern.

not reach the same assurance without crossing the gate of death ?

Spiritual
anxiety
and grop-
ing after
light

All around was bleak and rugged. To the east and south, the vision from the cave of Hira is bounded by lofty mountain ranges, but to the north and west the weary prospect is thus described by Burckhardt ;—‘The country before us had a dreary aspect, not a single green spot being visible ; barren, black ; and grey hills, and white sandy valleys, were the only objects in sight.’ There was harmony here between external nature, and the troubled world within. By degrees the impulsive and susceptible mind of Mahomet was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement ; and he would give vent to his agitation in wild rhapsodical language, enforced often with incoherent oaths, the counterpart of inward struggling after truth. The following fragments belong probably to this period.

Poetical
fragments
of this
period.

Sura ciii

By the declining day I swear !
Verily, man is in the way of ruin ;
Excepting such as possess faith,
And do the things which are right,
And stir up one another unto truth and steadfastness.

And again—

Sura c

By the rushing panting steeds !
Striking fire with flashing hoof,
That scour the land at early morn !
And, darkening it with dust,
Cleave thereby the Enemy !
Verily Man is to his Lord ungrateful,
And he himself is witness of it.
Verily he is keen after this world’s good.
Ah ! witteth he not that when what is in the graves shall be
brought forth,
And that which is in men’s breasts laid bare ;—
Verily in that day shall the Lord be well informed of them.

Prayer for
guidance

Nor was he wanting in prayer for guidance to the great Being who, he felt, alone could give it. The following petitions (though probably adapted subsequently to public worship) contain perhaps the germ of frequent prayer at this early period.

Sura i

Praise be to God, the Lord of creation,
The most merciful, the most compassionate !



MOUNT HIRA (THE MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT).

Ruler of the day of Reckoning !

Thee we worship, and invoke for help.

Lead us in the straight path ;—

The path of those towards whom Thou hast been gracious ;

Not of those against whom Thy wrath is kindled, or that walk
in error.¹

How such aspirations developed into the belief that the subject of them was divinely inspired, is a theme obscure and difficult, which I reserve for another chapter.

¹ The Fâteha, or opening Sura of the Coran, so often recited in public and private worship.

CHAPTER III

FIRST DREAMS OF INSPIRATION: ENDING IN THE CONVICTION
THAT HE WAS THE PROPHET OF HIS PEOPLE

ÆTAT. 40-43. A.D. 609-612.

Poetical
fragments
and rhapsodies

LIGHT struggled with the darkness in the soul of Mahomet. Gradually certain grand verities took clear and definite shape before him:—God, the sole Creator, Ruler and Judge of men and angels; the hopeless wretchedness of his people sunk in heathenism and idolatry; heaven and hell; the resurrection, judgment, and recompense of good and evil in the world to come. The conflict waging within found vent in fragments of wild, impassioned poetry. These sometimes assume the character of soliloquies, full of melancholy reflection upon the state and prospects of mankind; sometimes fraught with burning words and imagery of terror, they seem intended for the warning or admonition of his fellow-citizens; sometimes they exhibit a mind intent upon itself, oppressed by perplexity and distress, and seeking for comfort and assurance by fleeing to its Maker. To aid in tracing the development of spiritual thought and religious belief in the mind of Mahomet, extracts from these will now be laid before the reader.¹ Of the soliloquies, the following is a specimen:—

Specimens
of these
fragments

Sura ci

That which striketh ! What is it which striketh ?
And what shall certify thee what THE STRIKING is ?

¹ The earlier chapters of the Coran are mostly composed each of a short piece delivered all at once; and the period of their appearance is thus more easily assigned than that of the later Suras made up of fragments delivered on various occasions. The later Suras also are much longer than the earlier; but in the Coran, as finally arranged, the chapters are placed in an order precisely the opposite, the longest being first and the shortest last. The chronological sequence, in short, is reversed. Hence the casual reader of the Coran forms no correct conception of the origin and development of Mahomet's system.

The day on which mankind shall be like moths scattered abroad,
And the mountains like wool of divers colours carded.

Then as for him whose balances are heavy, he shall enter into
Bliss ;

And as for him whose balances are light, the Pit shall be his
dwelling place.

And what shall certify thee what is the PIT ? A raging FIRE !

These wild and incoherent rhapsodies are couched in words of rare force and beauty, with such flow and rhythm as the Arab loves, and which his noble tongue gives freest scope to. The Oracle sometimes begins now to come direct from the Deity, speaking as ' We,' and to Mahomet as ' Thou.' The conviction, however, of being inspired, was not reached, as we shall see, till after a protracted time of mental throes. This fragment, for example, purports to come direct from heaven :—

I swear by the Fig tree and the Olive, Sura xcv
By mount Sinai, and by this land inviolate !
Verily WE made Man of the choicest creation,
Then WE rendered him the lowest of the low ;—
Excepting such as believe and work righteousness ;
Unto them shall be given a reward that fadeth not away.
Then, after this, what shall make thee deny the Day of reckon-
ing ?
What ! is not God the justest of all Judges ?

The voice of expostulation and alarm was raised in accents such as these :— Warning and expostulation

Woe unto the backbiter and the slanderer ;— Sura civ
Who heapeth up riches, and counteth them over !
He thinketh that his wealth shall remain with him for ever.
Nay ! verily he shall be cast into the crushing fire ;
And what shall cause thee to know what is the CRUSHING FIRE ?
The fire of God kindled,
Which shall mount above the hearts ;
Verily it shall rise above them as a curtain,
Stretched over lofty columns.

Allusion is sometimes made, though in a form as yet Arab and Jewish legend
brief and vague, both to Arab and Jewish legend. Thus in the 89th Sura :—

What ! hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the children of Ad,—

Sura
lxxxix

The Iremites possessed of pillars,
 The like whereof have not been builded in any city?—
 And with the THAMUDITES which hewed out the rock in the
 Valley ;
 And with PHARAOH that used the stakes ?¹
 These all behaved insolently in the earth,
 And multiplied wickedness therein ;
 Wherefore thy Lord poured upon them the mingled cup of His
 wrath,
 Verily thy Lord is upon His watch-tower, &c.

Sura cv

Nor was there wanting special appeal to national mercies.
 The 105th Sura, which recounts God's goodness in the over-
 throw of Abraha, ' Lord of the Elephant,' and preservation of
 the Holy city, belongs probably to this period.² And also
 the following :—

Sura cvi

For the stirring up of the COREISH ;—
 The stirring of them up unto the Winter and Summer caravans
 of merchandise ;
 Let them worship the Lord of this House,
 Who hath provided them food against Hunger,
 And granted them immunity from Danger.³

¹ 'The stakes' to which the tyrant bound his victims. The Thamudites are also mentioned in the 91st Sura, which is quoted below as an early example of the rhyming style so frequent in the Coran. Each verse ends with the syllable *ha* (pronoun, third person), as indicated by italics.

By the Sun and *his* rising splendour !
 By the Moon when she followeth *him* !
 By the Day when it showeth forth *his* glory !
 By the Night when it covereth *him* in darkness !
 By the Heavens and Him that made *them* !
 By the Earth and Him that spread *it* forth !
 By the Soul and Him that framed *it*,
 Inspiring in *it* wickedness and piety !
 Verily he that purifieth *the same* is blessed ;
 And he is wretched that corrupteth *it*.
 The Thamudites in *their* impiety, accused their prophet (Sálih) of im-
 posture
 When the most abandoned among *them* arose (to slay the camel).
 (Now the prophet of God had said unto them, ' It is the she-camel of the
 Lord ; Give ye *her* to drink ;)
 But they rejected him, and slaughtered *her* ;
 Wherefore the Lord overthrew them for their crime and rendered unto
 them a recompense equal with *their Sin* ;
 And he feareth not the issue *thereof*.

² See *Introduction*, p. c.

³ *I.e.* inviolability of the sacred territory.

In elucidation of Mahomet's honest striving after Truth another passage may be quoted, in which are set forth the two paths of Virtue and Vice, and the difficulties of the Straight way :—

'The two Paths'

Verily I swear by this Territory, Sura xc
 (And thou art a resident thereof ;)

By the begetter, and by that which is begotten !

Surely WE have created man in trouble.

Ah ! doth he think indeed that no one shall prevail over him ?

He saith,—'I have wasted much wealth.'

Ah ! doth he think that no one seeth him ?

Have WE not made him two eyes, a tongue, and two lips ;

And shown unto him the TWO HIGHWAYS.¹

Yet he applieth himself not unto the ascent ;—

And what shall teach thee what the ASCENT is ?—

Freeing the captive,

Giving food in the day of want

To the orphan that is near of kin,

Or to the poor that lieth in the dust ;—

Further, the Righteous are of those that believe, and stir up one another unto steadfastness and mercy.

These shall be the Companions of the Right hand ;

But they that deny OUR signs, shall be Companions of the Left ;

Around them the Fire shall close.

It seems probable that Mahomet gave vent to his reveries in poetry of this kind for several years before he assumed the office of a divine teacher. The early Suras, and no doubt other reflective and didactic pieces not preserved because not purporting to be inspired, would be recorded (as Mahomet did not himself write) by the aged Waraca, by Aly who was still a boy, possibly by Khadija herself or by some of her relatives, who were inquirers more or less acquainted with Judaism and Christianity. The friends of Mahomet no doubt listened with reverence to his admonitions, and sought to follow his injunctions as those of a faithful teacher guided haply by the spirit of God. Amongst these were certainly Khadija herself, Zeid and Aly his adopted sons, and perhaps Abu Bekr his bosom friend, with Waraca who saw in his teaching the counterpart of his own ideas. But without this

Mahomet's early religious poetry

His early followers

¹ I.e. Good and Evil.

Makes no impression on his fellow-citizens

little circle, superstition and the world held undisputed sway. Warning and exhortation were met by gross ignorance and repellent darkness. The kind and generous Abu Tâlib smiled at the enthusiasm of his nephew. Abu Lahab, another uncle, mocked and insulted him. Abu Jahl and his party sneered. The great body of the Coreish were careless and indifferent. As Mahomet passed by the knots that clustered about the Kaaba discussing the events of the day, they would point disdainfully at him as at a half-witted creature.

Necessity and likelihood of a divine commission

The more susceptible amongst the citizens listened, perhaps with attention at the first. But when pressed to throw in their lot with the Inquirers, they would answer: 'It is well enough for Jews and Christians to follow the purer faith thou speakest of. They, we know, had prophets with a message from heaven. If to us also, a prophet had been sent, we should doubtless have followed his directions, and been as devout and spiritual in our worship as the Jews and Christians. Let us therefore be content with the light given us, and remain as we are.'¹ Mahomet felt the force of the reply, for it was in unison with thoughts hidden and undeveloped yet ever present in his heart. Would the Almighty be unmindful of the appeal thus made to Him for guidance? The appeal might itself be a divine intimation to furnish the direction so urgently needed and desired. And, again, whence the rush of inspiration regarding the unity of God, His power and providence, and a future recompense in heaven and hell? Whence the ecstatic moments, the flow of burning thoughts, the spontaneous burst of eloquence and heavenly

¹ There are many such passages in the Coran, and the pretext thus explicitly put in Sura xxxv. 42, was probably the earliest of the kind he had to answer. It is as follows:—'The men of Mecca swore by the Lord with the most solemn oath that if a Prophet had come to them they would have followed his directions better than any of the other peoples; but now that a preacher (*i.e.* Mahomet) is come unto them, it hath only increased their aversion from the truth, their arrogance in the earth, and their pursuit of evil.' See also Sura vi. 155–157: 'And this book WE have sent down,—blessed; wherefore follow it and fear God that ye may find mercy. Lest ye should say: "Verily the Scripture hath been revealed to two Peoples before us, but we are unable to read in their language." Or lest ye should say: "If the Scripture had been revealed to us, we surely would have followed the direction better than they." And now verily hath a clear exposition come unto you from your Lord,—a direction and mercy,' &c.

speech, which gave form and substance to the long conceived yearnings of his heart, and transformed them as it were into the words of God himself? Could the prophets of old have had a more convincing test of inspiration? What if all this formed a supernatural call, a divine Mission? Why should he hesitate to take the name of God upon his lips, go forth boldly as his Legate, and trust that the same spirit which had guided Jewish and Christian prophets would put words into his mouth?

While absorbed by such reflections, sometimes doubting, sometimes believing, Mahomet at seasons suffered grievous mental distraction. To this period may be attributed such passages as the following, in which, after deep depression, he seeks to reassure his soul by remembering the past favours of the Almighty.

Mental depression and grounds of reassurance

By the rising sunshine !

Sura xciii

By the night when it darkeneth !

Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither hath He been displeased.

The Future shall surely be better unto thee than the Past.

Thy Lord shall shortly dispense unto thee a gift ; and thou shalt be satisfied.

What ? Did He not find thee an Orphan, and give thee a home ?

Found thee astray, and guided thee aright ?

Now, therefore, as touching the Orphan, oppress him not ;

And as touching him that asketh of thee, repulse him not ;

And as touching the Favours of thy Lord, rehearse them.

And again :—

What ! Have WE not opened for thee thy breast ?

Sura xciv

And eased thee of the burden,—

Which galled thy back ;

And exalted the mention of thee ?

Then truly with the difficulty, there shall be ease.

Verily with the difficulty there shall be ease.

And when thou hast finished,¹ then labour,

And towards thy Lord raise thy desire.

¹ *I.e.* finished *preaching* or *praying* (Beidhawi). Another early Sura, of only three verses (cviii.), refers probably to the taunts of those who reproached him with the death of his sons as a mark of God's displeasure :—

Surely WE have given unto thee an abundance ;

Wherefore pray unto thy Lord, and offer sacrifice.

Verily, he that hateth thee shall be childless.

Seeks to
commit
suicide

Notwithstanding such consolations, his distress was sometimes insupportable; over and again he meditated suicide. What if all this were but the simulation of divine impulse, the stirrings of the Evil one and his emissaries? Indeed, throughout the Coran, no crime against the high majesty of Heaven is more fearful than to speak falsely in the name of God. Rather than expose himself to a risk so terrible, he would anticipate the possibility by casting himself headlong from one of these wild cliffs. An invisible influence appeared to hold him back. Was it an influence divine; or might not this too be diabolical?

Belief in
divine mis-
sion re-
vives, min-
gled with
ambition

At such seasons he found solace in the bosom of Khadija, who, as tradition tells us, *tried* the Spirits, and assured him that his Visitants were not wicked, but innocent and virtuous. When thus comforted and re-established, the old hopes and aspirations would again revive in his heart stronger than ever. Bright visions of a united people abjuring their idolatry, would rise before him. Faith and piety should yet reign throughout Arabia;—

Sura cx

When the help of the Lord shall come and victory,
And thou shalt see men entering into the faith of God in multi-
tudes,
Then celebrate His praise, and ask pardon of Him, for He is
forgiving.

‘Moses led forth his people (he would say to himself), and so did other Jewish chieftains, to do battle for the Lord against the heathen. And why should not I, as the vicegerent of God, bring all Arabia in godly submission prostrate at His feet? Then, what vain superstition have I not seen in Syria; they have set up the Queen of Heaven, and burned incense to her! They have a Revelation, and profess to obey it. I will show to them from their own Book that they have corrupted and obscured the Truth. And Egypt, Persia, Abyssinia, Hira,—all around, why should I not dash to the ground the idols, and every thing that exalts itself against the true God;—if only my people will be convinced and rally around me to fight the battles of the Lord. The whole world, Jew and Christian, weary of strife and discord, yearns for a Prophet who shall restore unity and peace. Will not all, then, flock to my standard

when I proclaim myself that which I surely feel myself to be,—the Prophet of the Lord?’ Such conceptions were at this time, it may be, vague and undeveloped, but, looking to the earliest fragments of his Revelation, there is little doubt that the germ of them existed in the mind of Mahomet.

X

At this crisis, the future of Mahomet and of Islam trembled in the balance. On the one hand, he was surrounded by a little knot of faithful and believing followers. Truth seemed to shine, clear and radiant as a sunbeam, into his heart; ecstatic trances impressed a seal, apparently divine, upon his convictions; he was conscious of a sincere desire, and fancied that he perceived a mission, to call forth his people from darkness into light. On the other hand, the ungodly laughed him to scorn; while solemn expostulation and warning were treated, even by the wise and sober, as the effusion of a fond enthusiast. Before the DIVINE COMMISSION all difficulties would vanish. He would wait, then, for the inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit to lead him, as it had oftentimes led the prophets before him, in the right way. Gabriel,¹ perhaps, would visit him, as he visited Zacharias and Mary, to announce to him the advent of a new Dispensation.

Mahomet in expectation of a divine commission

He was seated or wandering amidst the peaks of Hira buried no doubt in reveries such as these, when suddenly an apparition rose before him. The heavenly Visitant stood clear and close beside him in a vision. It was no other than Gabriel, the Messenger of God, who now appeared in the sky, and, approaching within ‘two bows’ length,’ brought from his Master this memorable behest:—

Vision of Gabriel with commission to ‘Recite in the name of God’

RECITE in the name of the Lord who created,—
Created Man from nought but congealed blood;—
RECITE! For thy Lord is beneficent.

Sura xcvi

It is He who hath taught (to write) with the pen;—
Hath taught man that which he knoweth not. . . .
Hast thou not seen him that holdeth back
The Servant of God when he prayeth?
What thinkest thou? had he listened to right direction,
And commanded unto piety?

¹ It is clear that at a later period at least, if not from the first, Mahomet confounded *Gabriel* with the *Holy Ghost*.

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

What ! Doth he not know that God seeth ?

Nay, verily, if he forbear not, WE shall drag him by the forelock,—

The lying, sinful forelock !

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

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

Mahomet assumes authority of God for his Revelations ;

Thus was Mahomet led,—by such process as we can only conjecture, but seemingly after a protracted period of doubt and hesitancy,—to give forth his message as proceeding direct from the Almighty. Henceforth he spoke literally *in the name of the Lord*. And so scrupulous was he lest, in his words, there should be even the appearance of human influence, that every sentence of the Coran is prefaced by the divine command, 'SPEAK' or 'SAY ;' which, if not expressed, is always to be understood.¹

and becomes his commissioned prophet

This commission pervaded now his whole career, and mingled with his every action. He was the servant, the prophet, the vicegerent of God ; and however much the sphere of his mission might expand in ever widening circles, the principle on which it rested was the same. How far the two ideas, on the one hand of a resolution in his own mind involving spontaneous action, and on the other a supernatural inspiration objective and independent of his will, were at first consciously and simultaneously present, and in what respective degrees, it is difficult to conjecture. But it is certain that the conception of the Almighty as the immediate source of his inspiration and Author of his commission, soon took entire and undivided possession of his soul ; and, however coloured by the events and inducements of the day, or mingled with apparently incongruous motives and desires, retained a paramount influence until the hour of his death. The above Sura was, in fact, the starting point of Islam. Theologians and biographers generally hold it to be the first revealed Sura ; and Mahomet

¹ Thus Sura cxii. :—

SAY :—He is GOD alone : GOD the Eternal !

He begetteth not, and He is not begotten ;

And there is not any like unto Him.

himself used to refer to it as the commencement of his inspiration.¹

But the divine commission was unheeded at Mecca. Scorn and abuse gathered thicker than ever around him. He was taunted as a poet carried away by wild fancy ; as a sorcerer given to magic, oaths and rhapsodies ; or as one possessed by the Genii and demons. Grieved and dispirited, he fell back upon his commission. Was it a command to preach and call his stiff-necked and rebellious people to repentance ; or not rather a simple message of the truth, for himself and his disciples ? Wearing and perplexed, the Prophet stretched himself on his carpet, and wrapping his garments about him, fell into a trance. The Angel was at hand, and Mahomet was aroused from despondency to energy and action by this reanimating message :—

The commission slighted by the people of Mecca

The vision, and command to preach

Oh thou that art covered ! Arise and preach ?² And magnify thy Lord. Sura lxxiv

Purify thy garments, and depart from all uncleanness.

* * * * *

Leave ME and him whom I have created alone ;
On whom I have bestowed abundant riches,
And sons dwelling before him ;
And disposed his affairs prosperously ;—
Yet he desireth that I should add thereto.
Nay ! Because he is to OUR Signs an adversary,
I will afflict him with fierce calamity ;
For he imagined and devised mischief in his heart,
May he be damned ! how he devised !
Again may he be damned ! how he devised !

¹ Several years after he thus describes the same vision :—

‘By the Star when it riseth !
Your fellow erreth not, neither hath he gone astray.
Nor doth he speak of his own fancy.
Verily it is no other than a Revelation that hath been inspired :
One mighty and strong taught it him,—
One endued with wisdom. He stood
In the highest part of the horizon,
Then he drew near and approached,
Until he was at the distance of two bows’ length, or yet nearer :
And he revealed unto his servant that which he revealed.
The heart did not belie that which he saw.

What ! Will ye then dispute with him concerning that which he saw ?’—Sura liii.

Then he alludes to a *second* vision of Gabriel, which will be referred to hereafter.

² Preach in the sense of *warn*, or call to repentance.

Then he looked, and frowned and scowled ;
 Then he turned his back and looked contemptuously :—
 And he said, ‘ *Verily, this is nought but Magic to be wrought ;¹*
Verily, this is nothing but the speech of a mere mortal.’

Now, will I cast him into Hell-fire.
 And what shall cause thee to know what HELL-FIRE is ?
 It leaveth not, neither doth it suffer to escape,
 Candescant on the skin. . . .

Then, after an appeal to the former Scriptures :—

Nay, by the Moon !
 By the night when it retireth !
 By the morn when it reddeneeth !
 Verily this is one of the most weighty matters,—
 A warning to mankind . . .
 . . . The Companions of the Right hand, dwelling
 In Gardens, shall inquire of the wicked ;—
 ‘ *What hath cast you into Hell ?*’ And they shall reply,—
 ‘ *We were not of those that prayed ; neither did we feed the*
poor ;
And we babbled vainly with the vain babblers ;
And we were rejecters of the Day of reckoning ;
Until the conviction thereof overtook us.’ . . .

Then what aileth them that they turn aside from this admoni-
 tion ;—

As though they were affrighted asses fleeing from a lion ?
 Every man among them desireth that expanded Scrolls be given
 unto him.²

Nay ! they dread not the Life to come.
 Nay ! this is a sufficient Warning ;
 Whoso chooseth he shall be warned thereby.
 But none shall be warned excepting as the Lord pleaseth.
 He is to be feared, and He is the Forgiver.

Traditional
 account

The steps by which Mahomet was led to assume the office
 not only of an inspired Prophet, but also of a Leader com-
 missioned to preach and summon his people to the faith of
 Islam, have now been traced from the various intimations
 gathered from the Coran itself. To complete the view, I will
 farther give the corresponding narrative from the pen of the

¹ Alluding to the doctrine of the Resurrection ; the revivification of dry
 bones and dust being laughed to scorn as mere magic.

² *I.e.* that the divine message recorded upon pages should be miracu-
 lously brought from heaven and placed in the objector’s hands, in proof
 of Mahomet’s mission.

Biographers, premising only that on so mysterious a subject the imagination must, in the process of oral transmission, have had the fullest play.¹ The following is from Wakidy :—

The first beginnings of Mahomet's inspiration were *real visions*. Every vision that he saw was clear as the morning dawn. These again provoked the love of solitude. He would repair to a cave on mount Hira, and there pass whole days and nights. Then, drawn by affection for Khadija, he would return to his home. This went on till the truth burst upon him in the cave. It happened on this wise. Wandering in the hills around, an angel from the sky cried to him, '*O Mahomet, I am Gabriel!*' He was terrified, for as often as he raised his head, there was the apparition of the angel. He hurried home to tell his wife. 'Oh, Khadija,' he said, 'I have never abhorred anything as I do these idols and soothsayers; and now verily I fear lest I should become a soothsayer myself.' 'Never,' replied his faithful wife; 'the Lord will never suffer it thus to be,'—and she went on to speak of his many virtues, upon which she founded the assurance. Then she repaired to her cousin Waraca, and told him all. 'By the Lord,' cried the aged man, 'he speaketh truth! Doubtless it is the beginning of prophecy, and there shall come upon him the *Great Nomos*, like as it came upon Moses. Wherefore charge him that he think not aught but hopeful thoughts within his breast. If he be raised up a prophet while I am yet alive, surely I will stand by him.'

'First beginnings of inspiration,' as handed down by tradition

Now the first Surra revealed to Mahomet was the 94th, *Recite in the name of the Lord, &c.*; and that descended on him in the cave of Hira. After this he waited some time without seeing Gabriel. And he became greatly downcast, so that he went out now to one mountain, and then to another, seeking to cast himself headlong thence. While thus intent on self-destruction, he was suddenly arrested by a voice from heaven. He looked up, and behold it was Gabriel upon a throne between the heavens and the earth, who said: '*O Mahomet! thou art the Prophet of the Lord, in truth, and I am Gabriel.*' Then Mahomet turned to go to his own house; and the Lord comforted him, and strengthened his heart. And thereafter revelations began to follow one upon another with frequency.²

Mahomet meditates suicide

Gabriel again appears and comforts him

¹ It must not be forgotten that Mahomet at this period could not have been the object of much observation from without. Khadija was almost the only witness of his earliest mental throes. Aly was but a boy; and it is doubtful how far Zeid and Abu Bekr were yet on sufficiently close and intimate terms with him to be made the confidants of his most secret thoughts.

² Wakidy is here more succinct and natural than Ibn Hisham. Tabari

Various
accounts of
stoppage
of inspira-
tion

The period succeeding the revelation of the 96th Sura, during which inspiration was suspended, and Mahomet in dependency contemplated suicide, is generally represented as of longer duration than in the above statement. The interval is variously held to have lasted from six months to three years. At its close, the 74th and 93rd Suras, containing assurance of mercy and command to preach, were delivered. The accounts, however, are throughout confused, and sometimes contradictory; and we can only gather with certainty that there was a time (corresponding with the deductions already drawn from the Coran itself) during which the mind

again surpasses Ibn Hisham in miraculous statements, the number and variety of which illustrate the rapid fabrication and indiscriminate reception of such stories in the third century. Omitting such, the following is a brief outline from Ibn Hisham and Tabari of the first stirrings of inspiration:—

On the night whereon the Lord was minded to deal graciously with him, Gabriel came to Mahomet as he slept with his family in the cave of Hira. He held in his hand a piece of silk with writing thereon, and he said *Read!* Mahomet replied, *I cannot read.* Whereupon the angel did so tightly gripe him that he thought death had come upon him. Then said Gabriel a second time *Read!* And Mahomet, but only to escape the agony, replied, *What shall I read?* Gabriel proceeded:—*Read (recite) in the name of thy Lord, &c.*;—repeating the 96th Sura to the end of v. 5. When he had ended, the angel departed; and ‘the words,’ said Mahomet, ‘were as though they had been graven on my heart.’ Suddenly the thought occurred to him that he was possessed of evil spirits, and he meditated suicide; but as he rushed forth with the intention of casting himself down a precipice, he was arrested by the appearance again of Gabriel, and stood for a long time transfixed by the sight. At last, the vision disappearing, he returned to Khadija who, alarmed at his absence, had sent messengers to Mecca in quest of him. In consternation he threw himself into her lap, and told her what had occurred. She reassured him, saying that he would surely be a prophet, and Waraca confirmed her in the belief.

Another story is that Khadija tested the character of the spirit by making Mahomet sit first on her right knee, then on her left, in both of which positions the apparition continued before him. Then she took him in her lap, and removed her veil, or uncovered her garments, when the spirit disappeared,—thus proving that it was at any rate a modest and virtuous being. Whereupon Khadija exclaimed: *Rejoice my cousin, for by the Lord! it is an angel, and no devil.*

On another occasion, being terrified, he entreated Khadija to cover him up, on which was revealed the 74th Sura beginning, *Oh thou covered!* Again, the Prophet receiving no visit from Gabriel for some time, Khadija said to him: *Verily I fear that God is displeased with thee;* whereupon was revealed Sura xciii.;—*Thy Lord hath not removed from thee, neither is He displeased, &c.* But such traditions appear simply to be attempts to explain or illustrate the several passages to which they relate.

of Mahomet hung in suspense, and doubted the reality of a heavenly mission.

It is not easy to say what was the outward manifestation of Mahomet's ecstatic periods,—whether simply reveries of profound meditation, or swoons connected with a morbid excitability of mental or physical constitution, no doubt varied at different periods and under different circumstances. On a subject so closely allied to the supernatural, we must be on our guard against the tendency of a credulous and excited imagination to conjure up marvellous tales which would find ready currency and be eagerly handed down by tradition. With this caution the following particulars may be read:—

Character
of Maho-
met's
ecstatic
periods

At the moment of inspiration, anxiety pressed upon the Prophet, and his countenance was troubled. He fell to the ground like an inebriate, or one overcome by sleep; and in the coldest day his forehead would be bedewed with large drops of perspiration. Even his she-camel, if he chanced to become inspired while mounted on her, would be affected by a wild excitement, sitting down and rising up, now planting her legs rigidly, then throwing them about as if they would be parted from her. To outward appearance inspiration descended unexpectedly, and without any previous warning to the Prophet.¹ When questioned on the subject he replied: 'Inspiration cometh in one of two ways; sometimes Gabriel communicateth the Revelation to me, as one man to another, and this is easy; at other times, it is like the ringing of a bell, penetrating my very heart, and rending me; and this it is which afflicteth me the most.' In the later period of life Mahomet referred his grey hairs to the withering effect produced upon him by the '*terrific Suras*.'²

Traditional
account

Mahomet's
own ac-
count

¹ Abd al Rahmán relates that on the return from Hodeibia (A.H. 6), he suddenly saw the people urging on their camels; and every one was inquiring of his neighbour the cause. They replied, *Inspiration hath descended on the Prophet*. So he too urged on his camel, and reached Mahomet who, seeing that a sufficient number of people had gathered around him, began to recite the 40th Sura. I remember no tradition which represents Mahomet as beforehand aware that inspiration was about to come upon him.

² The '*terrific*' Suras, as specified in the numerous traditions on this subject, are, 'Sura Hud, and its Sisters;—the '*Sisters*' are variously given as Suras xi., xxi., lvi., lxix., lxxvii., lxxviii., lxxxii., or ci.;—all revealed at Mecca, and some of them very early. We are told that while Abu Bekr and Omar sat in the Mosque at Medina, Mahomet suddenly came upon them from the door of one of his wives' houses (which opened into the mosque), stroking and lifting up his beard, and looking at it. Now his beard had in it many more white hairs than his head. And Abu Bekr

Mahometan notions regarding devils and Genii .

Before quitting the subject, it may be interesting to note what tradition says of the class of spirits called *Jinn* or *Genii*. Prior to the mission of the Prophet, the *Genii*, and devils or other spirits of the air, had access to the outskirts of heaven, and by assiduous eaves-dropping secured some of the secrets of the upper world, which they communicated to soothsayers and diviners upon the earth. But on the advent of Mahomet they were driven from the skies, and, whenever they dared to approach, flaming bolts were hurled at them, appearing to mankind like falling stars. Hence at this epoch the show of falling stars is said to have been brilliant and uninterrupted; and the Arabs were much alarmed at the portentous phenomenon.¹ Such a belief in the existence and history of the *Genii*, strange as it may appear, is clearly developed in the *Coran*; and throws a mysterious light upon the inner recesses of the Prophet's mind.²

Conclusion as to Mahomet's belief in his inspiration

The considerations bearing on the first conception by Mahomet of a revelation from heaven, have now been given at length, both from tradition and from the *Coran* itself; and, reaching us with such mysterious and strange surroundings, they leave on the mind no doubt of his sincere and earnest searching after truth at this period of his life. Revelations of the same nature, all shaped as messages or commands direct from God, continued to 'descend' upon the Prophet throughout his life, and as such are termed the *Coran*, or Word of

said: 'Ah, thou, for whom I would sacrifice father and mother, white hairs are hastening upon thee!' The Prophet, raising his beard with his hand, gazed at it; and Abu Bekr's eyes filled with tears. 'Yes,' said Mahomet, 'Hud' (*Sura xi.*) 'and its Sisters have hastened my white hairs.'—'And what,' asked Abu Bekr, 'are its Sisters?' 'The *Inevitable* (*Sura lvi.*), and the *Striking* (*Sura ci.*)'

¹ It is possible that at this period there may really have been an unusual display of falling stars, which at certain points of the earth's course are known to be specially abundant.

² In the *Coran* the *Genii* are represented as conversing thus one with another:—'Verily we used to pry into the heavens, but we found them to be filled with a strong guard and with flaming darts. And we used to sit in some of the seats thereof to listen; but whoever listeneth now, findeth a flaming bolt in ambush. And we know not whether evil be hereby intended against those upon earth, or whether the Lord be minded to guide them into the right way.'—*Sura lxxii.* 8–10. As we shall see below, many of the *Genii*, when they heard Mahomet reciting his Revelation, are said to have been converted. The *Coran* professes to have been revealed for the benefit and salvation *both of Men and Genii*. Cf. *Suras xv.* 17; *lxxvii.* 5; *xxxvii.* 6–10; *xxvi.* 210; *lxxxii.* 24.

God.¹ As years advanced these began to lose the glow and fervour of the earlier rhapsodies. Ever and anon, indeed, even to the end, we meet with passages—those especially on the Being and Providence of God—grand, impassioned, and kindling with the early fire; but the ordinary style becomes tame and vapid. Moreover, when Mahomet attained to temporal power, the Revelation was used as the means of reaching secular ends, and even, as we shall see, of ministering to lower objects. What could the source have been of ‘Inspiration’ ending thus? The answer can, at the best, be but conjecture. It will be for the reader, as he proceeds, himself to judge when and to what extent, consciously or unconsciously, material objects obscured for Mahomet the spiritual vista;—whether, in fact, the eye being no longer single, the light that was in him, from whatever source, lost its ethereal virtue, and became dimmed by the turbid atmosphere of the world.

¹ *Coran*; that is, ‘Scripture’ or what is *read* or *revised*.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE ASSUMPTION BY MAHOMET OF THE PROPHETICAL
OFFICE TO THE FIRST EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

ÆTAT. 44-45. A.D. 613-614

Mahomet
in his
forty-
fourth
year

THE weary region of uncertainty and speculation may now be left behind. Towards the forty-fourth year of his age we find Mahomet, now emerged from doubt and obscurity, clearly and unequivocally asserting that he was ordained a prophet with a commission to the people of Arabia; reciting his warnings and exhortations as messages that emanated direct from God; and himself implicitly believing (to all outward appearance) his call and mission to be divine. We see him already surrounded by a little band of followers, all animated by ardent devotion to his person, and the belief that his guide and inspirer was God himself.

Earliest
converts

It is strongly corroborative of Mahomet's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were not only of upright character, but his own bosom friends and people of his household; who, intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which ever more or less exist between the professions of the hypocritical deceiver abroad and his actions at home. The faithful

Khadija

KHADIJA is already known to the reader, as sharer in her husband's searchings of heart, and probably the first convert to his creed. 'So Khadija believed' (runs the simple tradition), 'and attested the truth of that which came to him from God. Thus was the Lord minded to lighten the burden of his Prophet; for he heard nothing that grieved him touching his rejection by the people, but he had recourse unto her, and she comforted, reassured, and supported him.' ZEID, the adopted son and intimate friend of Mahomet, who lived no doubt in

Zeid

close connection with the family, if not actually a member of it, was also one of the earliest believers.

ALY, the Prophet's cousin, now thirteen or fourteen years Aly of age, already gave tokens of the wisdom and judgment which distinguished him in after life. Though possessed of indomitable courage, he was meditative and reserved, and lacked the stirring energy which would have rendered him an effective propagator of Islam. He grew up from a child in the faith of Mahomet, and his earliest associations strengthened the convictions of maturer years. It is said that as Mahomet was once engaged with him in prayer, in a glen near Mecca whither they had retired to avoid the jeers of their neighbours, Abu Tâlib his father chanced to pass by, and said to Mahomet, 'My nephew! what is this new faith I see thee following?' 'O my Uncle!' he replied, 'this is the religion of God, and of his angels, and of his prophets; the religion of Abraham. The Lord hath sent me an Apostle unto his servants; and thou, my Uncle, art the most worthy of all that I should address my invitation unto, and the most worthy to assist the Prophet of the Lord.' Abu Tâlib answered: 'I am not able, my nephew, to separate from the religion and the customs of my forefathers, but I swear that so long as I live no one shall dare to trouble thee.' Then, turning to his son, who professed a similar faith and the resolution to follow Mahomet, he said: 'Well, my son, he will not call thee to aught but that which is good; wherefore thou art free to cleave unto him.' To the family group it is hardly necessary to add WARACA the aged cousin of Khadija, whose profession of Christianity and support of Mahomet have been already mentioned, because he had already died before Mahomet had entered upon his public ministry.

In the little circle there was one belonging to another Abu Bekr branch of the Coreish, who, after Khadija, may claim precedence in the profession of Islam. ABU BEKR had long been the familiar friend of Mahomet, and with him no doubt had lamented the gross darkness of Mecca, and sought after a better faith. He lived in the same quarter of the city as Khadija. When Mahomet removed thither the intimacy became closer, and the attachment of Abu Bekr was soon riveted by implicit faith in his friend as the apostle of God. Ayesha his daughter (born about this period, and destined

His appearance and character

His generosity and popularity

Abu Bekr gains five converts ;

while yet a girl to be the Prophet's bride) 'could not remember the time when both her parents were not true believers, and when Mahomet did not daily visit her father's house morning and evening.' Of her father, the Prophet said : 'I never invited any one to the faith who displayed not hesitation and perplexity, excepting only Abu Bekr ; who, when I had propounded unto him Islam, tarried not, neither was perplexed.' Abu Bekr was about two years younger than the Prophet ; short in stature, and of small spare frame ; the eyes deeply seated under a high projecting forehead. His complexion was fair, and face comely, but thin so that you could see the veins upon it. Shrewd and intelligent, he yet wanted the originality of genius ; his nature was mild and sympathetic, but not incapable of firm purpose when important interests required. Impulse and passion rarely prompted his actions ; he was guided by reason and calm conviction. Faithful and unvarying in his attachment to the Prophet, he was known (and is to the present day familiar in the Moslem world) as AL SIDDIK, '*the True*.'¹ He was also styled 'the Sighing,' from his tender and compassionate heart. Abu Bekr was a diligent and successful merchant, and, being frugal and simple in his habits, possessed at his conversion about 40,000 silver pieces. His generosity was rare and his charity unwearying. The greater part of his fortune was now devoted to the purchase of such unfortunate slaves as were persecuted for their attachment to the new faith ; so that but 5,000 pieces were left when, ten or twelve years after, he emigrated with the Prophet to Medina. Abu Bekr was unusually familiar with the history of the Coreish, who often referred to him for genealogical information. His judgment was sound and impartial, his conversation agreeable, and his demeanour affable and engaging. His society and advice were therefore much sought after by the Coreish, and he was popular throughout the city.²

To have such a man a staunch adherent of his claims was for Mahomet a most important step. Abu Bekr's influence

¹ His proper name was Abdallah son of Othman Abu Cahafa. It is not clear when he obtained the name of *Abu Bekr*, which means Father of the young Camel. See *The Caliphate*, p. 21.

² I agree with Sprenger in considering 'the faith of Abu Bekr the greatest guarantee of the sincerity of Mohammed in the beginning of his career'—and, indeed, in a modified sense, throughout his life.

was freely surrendered to the cause of Islam, and five of the earliest converts are attributed to his exertions and example. Three were but striplings. *Sad*, the son of Abu Wakkas, converted in his sixteenth or seventeenth year, was the nephew of Amina, mother of the Prophet.¹ *Zobeir*, probably still younger, was at once the nephew of Khadija, and the son of Mahomet's aunt Safia.² About the same age was *Talha*, a relative of Abu Bekr and a renowned warrior in after days. The fourth was *Othman* son of Affân (successor of Omar in the Caliphate) who, though of the Omeyyad stock, was also on his mother's side grandson of Abd al Muttalib. Mahomet's daughter Rokeya, being now, or shortly after, free from her connection with Otba (son of the hostile Abu Lahab), the Prophet gave her in marriage to Othman, whose wife she continued until her death some ten or twelve years afterwards. Othman was at this period between thirty and forty years of age. The fifth was *Abd al Rahmân*, ten years younger than the Prophet, a man of wealth and character. Abd al Rahmân, Othman, and Talha were, like Abu Bekr, merchants.

Sad

Zobeir ibn
al Awwam

Talha

Othman
son of
Affân, andAbd al
Rahmân

Abd al Rahmân was accompanied on his first visit to the house of Mahomet by four companions, who at the same time embraced Islam: *Obeida* son of Mahomet's uncle Hârith; *Abu Salma*;³ *Abu Obeida*, subsequently a warrior of note; and *Othman* son of Matzun. The latter had already abandoned wine before his conversion, and was with difficulty persuaded by Mahomet to renounce the asperities of an ascetic life. His family appears to have been well inclined to Islam, for we find two brothers, a son, and other relatives, in the list of early believers.⁴

Four con-
verts
accompany
Abd al
Rahmân

¹ Sad pursued the trade of manufacturing arrows, and is renowned as 'the first who shot an arrow' on the side of Islam.

² Zobeir was the grandson of Khuweilid, Khadija's father; and also the grandson of Abd al Muttalib by his daughter Safia. He was a butcher; and his father a grain merchant, or, as others have it, a tailor. He became a distinguished warrior, and bore a prominent part in the subsequent history.

³ Abu Salma was ten years older than Mahomet, and was killed at Bedr. He emigrated twice to Abyssinia with his wife *Omm Salma*. He died of wounds received at Ohod, when Mahomet married his widow.

⁴ He wished to renounce the privileges of conjugal life; but Mahomet forbade this, and recommended him to imitate his own practice in this respect, saying that the Lord had not sent his prophet with a monkish

Converted
slaves
Bilāl and
others

Of the slaves ransomed by Abu Bekr from persecution, the foremost is BILĀL, son of an Abyssinian slave-girl. He was tall, dark, and gaunt, with negro features and bushy hair. Mahomet distinguished him as '*the first fruits of Abyssinia*;' and to this day he is known throughout the Moslem world as the Prophet's Muāzzin, or crier to prayer. *Amr ibn Foheira*, after being released from severe trial, was employed by Abu Bekr in tending his flocks.¹ *Abdallah ibn Masūl*, 'small in body, but weighty in faith,' the constant attendant who waited upon Mahomet at Medina;² and *Klobāb*, a blacksmith, were also converted at this period. The slaves of Mecca were peculiarly accessible to the solicitations of the Prophet. As foreigners they were generally familiar either with Judaism or Christianity. Isolated from the influences of hostile partisanship, persecution had alienated them from the Coreish and misfortune made their hearts susceptible of spiritual impressions.

Meccan
slaves sus-
ceptible of
religious
impression

Thirteen
other early
believers

In addition to the twenty persons now noticed as among the first confessors of the faith, tradition enumerates at least thirteen others as having believed '*before the entry of the Prophet into the house of Arcam*;'—by which expression (explained hereafter) the biographers mark the few earliest years of Islam. Among these thirteen we observe the youthful son *Said* and several relatives of the aged inquirer *Zeid* already some time dead, whose remarkable life has been already alluded to as possibly paving the way for Mahomet. *Said's* wife of the same family, and her brother, were likewise among the early converts. There were also among the number *Obeidallah*, himself one of the 'Four inquirers,' and two of his brothers. On the persecution becoming hot, *Obeidallah* emigrated with his wife and others of his family, to Abyssinia, where he was converted to Christianity, and died in that faith.³ It is interesting to note among the converts

faith. The expressions attributed to Mahomet on this occasion are strongly illustrative of his character; but the passage does not admit of further detail.

¹ *Amr ibn Foheira* was a son (by a former owner) of *Omm Kumān*, *Abu Bekr's* wife, and mother of *Ayesha*.

² *Abdallah* at Medina was climbing up a date tree, and his companions were indulging in pleasantries at the expense of his spare legs, when Mahomet used the expression here quoted.

³ Mahomet (as we shall see) married his widow. *Obeidallah* was

Abu Hodzeifu,¹ son of Otba (father-in-law of Abu Sofian), a family inveterately opposed to Mahomet. We find also the name of *Arcam*, whose house will shortly be mentioned as memorable in the annals of Islam.

Besides this little group of three-and-thirty individuals, the wives and daughters of some of the converts are mentioned as also faithful and earnest professors of Islam. Religious movements in every age have found women to take a forward part, if not in direct and public assistance, yet in the encouragement and exhortation which are of even greater value; and Islam was no exception. On the other hand, as priority in the faith became in after years a ground of social distinction, we must not forget that, in estimating the number of early converts, their ranks have been unduly swelled by the traditions of those whose piety or ambition have imagined or invented such priority for their own ancestors or patrons. Weighing both considerations, we shall not greatly err if we conclude that, in the first three or four years after the assumption by Mahomet of his prophetic office, the converts to his faith amounted to nearly forty souls.

Several female converts

Converts in first four years about forty

By what degrees, under the influence of what motives or arguments, and at what precise periods, these individuals, one by one, gave in their adhesion to Mahomet, we can scarcely determine further than in the general outline already before the reader. It is usual in tradition to assign to the Prophet three years of secret preaching and private solicitation, after which an open call was made to the Coreish at large. But we hardly find grounds for this theory in the Coran. It is probable that the preliminary term of doubt

Steps by which this success was attained

Mahomet's cousin by his mother, a daughter of Abd al Muttalib. He was also brother of the famous Zeinab, who was married to Zeid (Mahomet's freedman) and was afterwards divorced by him that the Prophet might take her to wife. The whole of his tribe, the Beni Dudán, resident at Mecca, were very favourable to Islam; at the Hegira they all emigrated to Medina, men, women, and children, locking up their houses. It is remarkable that this tribe were *confederates* of Harb and Abu Sofian, leading opponents of Mahomet;—the influence of Islam thus frequently overleaping and baffling the political combinations of Mecca.

¹ He challenged his father at the battle of Bedr to single combat. His sister Hind (wife of Abu Sofian) retorted in satirical verses, taunting him with being squint-eyed, and with the barbarity of offering to fight his father. He was an ill-favoured man, with projecting teeth.

and hesitancy (which we sought to trace in the preceding chapter) has been confounded by tradition with the actual assumption of the prophetic office. The facts we may conjecture to have been as follows: An interval of pious musing, and probably of expostulation with near relatives and friends, preceded the fortieth year of Mahomet's life. About that time the resolution to 'recite in the name of the Lord' (in other words the *conviction of inspiration*) was fully formed. For some succeeding period his efforts would be naturally directed to individual persuasion and entreaty; but there is nothing to warrant the belief that the prophetic claim, once assumed, was ever confined as an esoteric creed within the limits of a narrow circle. It was after this that the Prophet received (as he imagined) the command to 'arise and preach;' and forthwith his appeal was made to the whole community of Mecca. Gradually his followers increased, and the faith of each (though only the reflection of his own convictions) was accepted by Mahomet as new and independent evidence of his mission, emanating from Him who alone can turn the heart of man. Success made the sphere of Islam to expand before him; and that which was primarily intended for Mecca only, embraced at last in the ever-widening circle of its call, the whole Peninsula.

Persecution caused by attachment to national idolatry

An important change now occurred in the relations of Mahomet with the citizens of Mecca. Hitherto they had treated his teaching as that of a harmless enthusiast. But

¹ That is Sura lxxiv. The biographers ordinarily quote another passage as the first command to preach:—

'And preach to (or warn) thy nearer kinsfolk.
And lower thy wing to the believers that follow thee.
And if they rebel against thee, &c.'—Sura xxvi.

But the tradition that this passage was the first call to preach, appears erroneous. It is not only contained in a much later Sura, but itself bears evidence of persecution, and of considerable progress. It was probably revealed while the Prophet with his relatives was shut up in the Quarter of Abu Tâlib, as will be related in the next chapter, and while his preaching was necessarily confined to them. The stories also of the Prophet taking his stand upon mount Safa, summoning his relatives, family by family, and addressing to them the divine message; of the contemptuous reply of Abu Lahab (see p. 104); of the miraculous dinner at which Mahomet propounded his claim to his relatives, Aly alone standing forth as his champion and 'Vizier,' &c., are all apocryphal. At this dinner, food was prepared hardly sufficient for one person, but was so multiplied as to suffice for forty; and so forth.

now their hostility was aroused, and believers were subjected to indignity and molestation. The main ground of opposition was the deep-seated attachment of the Coreish to the worship of the Kaaba. The same spirit was aroused in them as caused the multitude of old to shout 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' Their shrine, the glory of Mecca and the centre of pilgrimage from all Arabia, was in danger to be set at naught. The new doctrine must be crushed, and its followers forced to abandon it. By degrees the persecution grew hot. Those who were citizens for the most part escaped serious injury, being protected as a point of honour by their families; but the slaves, who had no such support, were exposed to much suffering.

Persecution, though it may sometimes have deterred the timid from joining his ranks, was eventually of unquestionable service to Mahomet. It furnished in after years a plausible excuse for casting aside the garb of toleration; for opposing force to force against those who 'obstructed the ways of the Lord;' and last of all for the compulsory conversion of the unbelievers. Even before the Hegira it drove the adherents of the Prophet in self-defence into a closer union, and made them stand forth with a more resolute aim and bolder front. The severity and injustice of the Coreish, overshooting the mark, aroused at once personal and family sympathies; unbelievers sought to avert or to mitigate the sufferings of the followers of the Prophet; and in so doing they were themselves sometimes gained over to his side.

It was not, however, till three or four years of his ministry had elapsed, that any general opposition to Mahomet was organised. Even after he had begun publicly to summon his fellow-citizens to the faith, and his followers had multiplied, the people did not gainsay his doctrine. They would only point at him slightly as he passed, and say: *There goeth the Fellow from among the children of Abd al Muttakib, to speak unto the people about the Heavens.* But (adds tradition) when the Prophet began to abuse their idols, and to assert the perdition of their ancestors who died in unbelief, then they became displeased and began to treat him with contumely. Hostility, once excited, soon showed itself in acts of violence. Sad, it is related, having retired for prayer with a group of believers to a valley near Mecca, some

Advantages of opposition to Mahomet

Period at which it commenced

Once formed it grew rapidly

of his neighbours passed unexpectedly by. A sharp contention arose between them, followed by blows. Sad struck one of his opponents with a camel goad; and this was 'the first blood shed in Islam.'

The house
of Arcam,
A.D. 613.
Ætat. 44

It was probably about this time that, in order to prosecute his mission peaceably and without interruption, Mahomet took possession of the house of Arcam (a convert already noticed), situated a short distance from his own dwelling, upon the gentle rise of Safa. Fronting the Kaaba to the east, it was in a frequented position; and pilgrims, in the prescribed course, must needs pass often by it. Thither were conducted any who showed a leaning towards Islam, and there Mahomet expounded to them his way more perfectly. Thus of one and another of the believers, it is recorded that 'he was converted after the entry into the house of Arcam, and the preaching there;'—or, that 'he was brought to Mahomet in the house of Arcam, and the Prophet recited the Coran unto him, and explained the doctrines of Islam, and he was converted and embraced the faith.' So famous was it as the birthplace of believers, that it was in after times styled *the House of Islam*.¹ Four brothers, confederates of Khattâb, were the first to believe and '*swear allegiance to Mahomet*'² in this house. Hence we may conclude that, although Omar, Khattâb's son, was not yet converted, the leaven of the new doctrine was already spreading rapidly among his connections.

Conver-
sions there

Converts
connected
with Omar

Story of
Musab

The story of *Musab*, great-grandson of Hashim, will illustrate the obstacles at this time opposed to the progress of Islam. His wife was sister of Obeidallah (the Inquirer), and it was probably through the influence of her family that he visited the house of Arcam, listened to the exhortations

¹ There is nothing to show on what footing Mahomet occupied this building; whether with his family, or only as a meeting-house and place of safe retreat. From several incidental notices of converts remaining there concealed during the day, and slipping away in the evening, the latter appears to be the more probable view. Omar, converted at the close of the sixth year of the mission, was the last brought to this house; for his influence enabled Mahomet then to dispense with secrecy.

² This remarkable expression is the same as that used for doing homage, or swearing fealty, to a leader or chief. The 'swearing allegiance to Mahomet' was probably at this time only a general declaration of faith and submission to his teaching. Possibly it may be simply the loose anticipation of a phrase used at a later period.

of Mahomet, and embraced his doctrine. But he feared publicly to confess the change; for his mother (who doted upon him and through whose fond attention he was known as the most handsomely dressed youth in Mecca), and the whole family, were inveterately opposed to Mahomet. The conversion being at last noised abroad, his relatives seized and kept him in durance; but he escaped, and fled to Abyssinia with the first Moslem emigrants. When he returned, he looked so altered and wretched that his mother had not the heart to abuse him. At a later period, having been deputed by Mahomet to teach the converts at Medina, he revisited Mecca in company with them. His mother, apprised of it, sent to him saying: 'Ah, disobedient son! wilt thou enter a city in which thy mother dwelleth, and not first visit her?' 'Nay, verily,' he replied, 'I shall never visit the house of any one before the Prophet of God.' So, after he had greeted Mahomet, he went to his mother, who thus accosted him: 'Well! I suppose thou art still a renegade?' He answered: 'I follow the Prophet of the Lord, and the true faith of Islam.' 'Art thou then well satisfied with the miserable way thou hast fared in the land of Abyssinia, and now again at Medina?' Perceiving a design to seize him, he exclaimed: 'What! wilt thou *force* a man from his religion? If ye seek to confine me, I will assuredly slay the first person that layeth hands upon me.' His mother said: 'Then depart from my presence,' and she began to weep. Musab was moved, and said: 'Oh, my mother! I give thee affectionate counsel. Testify that there is no God but the Lord, and that Mahomet is his servant and messenger.' She replied: 'By the sparkling stars! I shall never make of myself a fool by entering into thy religion. Begone! I wash my hands of thee and thy concerns, and cleave steadfastly unto mine own faith.'¹

There were social causes on the other hand to aid the spread of the new doctrine. These may be exemplified by the conversion of Tuleib, a cousin of Mahomet. This young man, having been gained over in the house of Arcam, went to his mother, a daughter of Abd al Muttalib, and told her that he now believed in the true God, and followed his Prophet. She replied that he did very right in assisting his

Story of
Tuleib

¹ Musab distinguished himself at Bedr, and was killed at Chod.

cousin ; ‘ And, by the Lord ! ’ she added, ‘ if I had strength to do that which men do, I would myself defend and protect him.’ ‘ But, my mother ! what hindereth thee from believing and following him ? And truly thy brother Hamza hath believed.’ She replied : ‘ I wait to see what my sisters do, and will follow them.’ ‘ But, I beseech thee, mother ; wilt thou not go unto him and salute him, and testify thy faith ? ’ And she did so ; and thenceforward she assisted the cause of Mahomet by word of mouth, and by stirring up her sons to aid him and fulfil his commands.

Story of
the blind
Abdallah
ibn Omm
Maktum

The following tradition will illustrate at once the anxiety of Mahomet to gain over the principal men of the Coreish, and the readiness with which he turned to the poor and un-influential citizens of Mecca. The Prophet was engaged in deep converse with the chief, Walid ; for he greatly coveted his conversion. Just then the blind man Abdallah ibn Omm Maktum chanced to pass that way, and asked to hear the Coran. Mahomet, displeased at the interruption, spoke roughly to him. Others coming up still further occupied his attention ; so he turned from the blind man frowningly and left him. But the heart of Mahomet smote him, because he had thus slighted one whom God haply had chosen, and paid court to those whom God had reprobated. As usual, the vivid conception of the moment was framed into a divine revelation, which at once afforded relief to his own mind, and ample amends to the neglected inquirer.

Sura lxxx

The Prophet frowned and turned aside,
Because the blind man came to him.
And what shall cause thee to know whether haply he may not be
purified ?
Or whether he might not be admonished, and the admonition
profit him ?
As for the Man that is rich,
Him thou receivest graciously ;
And it is not thy concern that he is not purified.
But he that cometh unto thee earnestly inquiring,
And trembling anxiously,
Him dost thou neglect.

This incident shows the tender and ready perception by Mahomet of the slight he had offered, and the magnanimity with which he could confess his fault. Abdallah, though

related to Khadija, was at present but of little consideration. Yet he was not an ordinary man. He became remarkable for his knowledge of the Coran, and at Medina was repeatedly placed in positions of command.¹

Shortly after Mahomet entered the house of Arcam, a further number of slaves professed themselves his converts. Of these, *Yasâr* and *Jabr* are mentioned as among the persons accused by the Coreish of giving instruction to the Prophet. The latter was the Christian servant of a family from Hadhramaut, and the Prophet is said to have much frequented his cell. The former, better known under the name of Abu Fokeiha, was subjected to great persecution. His daughter Fokeiha was married to Hattab, a convert, whom we find with others of his family among the subsequent emigrants to Abyssinia. Both these slaves died probably before Mahomet left Mecca.

Further
slave con-
verts

Yasâr, or
Abu Fo-
keiha

A more important convert, styled by Mahomet 'the first fruits of Greece,' was *Suheib* son of Sinan. His home was at Mosul or some neighbouring village in Mesopotamia. His father, or his uncle, had been the Persian governor of Obolla. A Grecian band having made a raid into Mesopotamia, carried him off while yet a boy to Syria, perhaps to Constantinople. Bought afterwards by a party of Bedouins, he was sold at Mecca to the chief, Ibn Jodaân, who gave him freedom and protection. A fair skin and ruddy complexion marked his northern birth, and broken Arabic betrayed a foreign education. By traffic he acquired considerable wealth at Mecca; but having embraced Islam, and being left by the death of his former master without a patron, he suffered much at the hands of the unbelieving Coreish. It is probable that Mahomet gained some acquaintance with Christianity from him, and he may indeed be the person mentioned in the following verse as the source of his scriptural information;—*And indeed WE know that the Unbelievers say, VERILY A CERTAIN MAN TEACHETH HIM. But the tongue of him whom they intend is foreign, whereas this Revelation is in pure Arabic.*² At the general emigration to Medina, the people of Mecca endeavoured to prevent Suheib's departure; but he bargained to relinquish his whole property that they might let him go

Suheib

¹ He was left in charge of the city at the battle of Ohod.

² Sura xvi. 103. See also Suras xxv. 4; and xlv. 14.

Ammâr

free. Mahomet, when he heard of it, exclaimed: '*Suheib, verily, hath trafficked to profit.*' Another freed slave, *Ammâr*, used to resort to the house of Arcam, and, simultaneously with *Suheib*, embraced Islam. His father, a stranger from Yemen, his mother, and his brother, were also believers.

Persecution of converted slaves

As time went on, the jealousy and enmity of the Coreish were aggravated by the continued success of the new sect, which now numbered more than fifty followers. The brunt of their wrath fell upon the converted slaves and strangers, and the weak and poor of the lower classes who had no patron or protector. These were seized and imprisoned; or they were exposed on the scorching gravel of the valley to the intense glare of the mid-day sun. The torment was enhanced by intolerable thirst, until the wretched sufferers hardly knew what they said. If under this torture they reviled Mahomet and acknowledged the idols of Mecca, they were refreshed by draughts of water, and then taken to their homes. *Bilâl* alone escaped the shame of recantation. In the depth of his anguish, the persecutors could force from him but one expression, AHAD! AHAD! 'ONE, ONE (only God)!' On such an occasion, *Abu Bekr* passed by, and secured liberty of conscience to the faithful slave by purchasing his freedom. Some of these confessors retained the scars of sores and wounds now inflicted to the end of their lives. *Khobâb* and *Ammâr* used in after days to exhibit such marks of suffering and constancy to a wondering generation, in which fortune and glory had well-nigh effaced the very thought of persecution as a possible condition of Islam.

Converts permitted to dissemble

Towards such as under these trying circumstances renounced their faith, Mahomet showed much commiseration. He even permitted them to dissemble, in order that they might escape the torment. Happening to pass by *Ammâr*, as he sobbed and wiped his eyes, Mahomet inquired of him what was the matter. 'Evil; O Prophet! They would not let me go until I had abused thee, and spoken well of their gods.' '*But how dost thou find thine own heart?*' 'Secure and steadfast in the faith.' '*Then,*' replied Mahomet, '*if they repeat their cruelty, repeat thou also thy words.*' A special exemption for such unwilling deniers of Islam is even provided in the *Coran*.¹

¹ *Whoever denieth God after that he hath believed (excepting him who is*

Mahomet himself was safe under the shadow of the respected and now venerable Abu Tâlib, who, although unconvinced by the Prophet, scrupulously acknowledged the claims of the kinsman, and withstood resolutely every approach of the Coreish to detach him from his guardianship. Abu Bekr, too, and those who could claim affinity with any powerful family of Mecca, though exposed perhaps to contumely and reproach, were generally secure from personal injury. The chivalry which makes common cause among the members and connections of an Arab family, and arouses fierce impetuosity against the injurers of a single member, deterred the enemies of Islam from open and violent persecution. Such immunity, however, depended in part on the goodwill of the convert's friends. Where the entire family or tribe was inimical to the new religion, there would always be the risk of insult and injury. Thus, when the Beni Makhzum were minded to chastise the converts of their tribe, and among them Walid son of their aged chief, they repaired to his brother Hisham, a violent opposer of the Prophet, and demanded his permission; this he readily gave, but added: '*Beware of killing him; for if ye do, verily I shall slay in his stead the chiefest among you.*'

Mahomet safe with Abu Tâlib;

and converts connected with influential families

To escape these indignities, and the danger of perversion, Mahomet now recommended such of his followers as were without protection, to seek an asylum in a foreign land. '*Yonder,*' pointing to the west, '*lieth a country wherein no one is wronged:—a land of righteousness. Depart thither; and remain until it pleaseth the Lord to open your way before you.*' Abyssinia was well known at Mecca as a market for the goods of Arabia; and the Court of the Negus or *Najâshy* was the ordinary destination of a yearly caravan. In the seventh month of the 5th year of Mahomet's mission, eleven men, some mounted, some on foot, and four of them accompanied by their wives, set out for the port of Shueiba; ¹ where, finding two vessels about to sail, they embarked in haste, and were conveyed to Abyssinia for half a dinar a-piece. The Coreish pursued them, but they had already left the port. Among the emigrants were Othman son of Affân,

First emigration to Abyssinia, A.D. 615

forcibly compelled thereto, his heart remaining steadfast in the faith) on such resteth the wrath of God.—Sura xvi. 106.

¹ The ancient port of Mecca, not far from Jedda.

followed by his wife Rokeya the Prophet's daughter, and Abd al Rahmán, both perhaps as merchants already acquainted with the country. The youths Zobeir and Musab were also of the number. The party was headed by Othman son of Matzun, as its leader. They met with a kind reception from the Najáshy and his people, and the period of exile was passed in peace and in comfort.

Bearing
and advan-
tages of
this emi-
gration

This is termed the *first* 'Hegira' or flight to Abyssinia, as distinguished from the later and more extensive emigration to the same quarter. On this occasion the emigrants were few, but the part they acted was of deep importance in the history of Islam. It convinced the Coreish of the sincerity and resolution of the converts, and proved their readiness to undergo any loss and any hardship rather than abjure the faith of Mahomet. A bright example of self-denial was exhibited to the whole body of believers, who were led to regard peril and exile in 'the cause of God' as a privilege and distinction. It may also have suggested the idea that the hostile attitude of their fellow-citizens, combined with the merits of their creed, might secure for them within the limits of Arabia itself a sympathy and hospitality as cordial as that afforded by the Abyssinian king; and thus given birth to the idea of a greater 'Hegira,'—the emigration to Medina. Finally, it turned the attention of Mahomet more closely and more favourably to the Christian religion. If an Arab asylum had not at last offered itself at Medina, the Prophet might haply himself have emigrated to Abyssinia, and Mahometanism have dwindled, like Montanism, into an ephemeral Christian heresy.

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER IV

THE CORAN AS REVEALED DURING THE PERIOD OF THIS CHAPTER

To complete the view of the period just described, it is needful to examine the portions of the Revelation belonging to it; for their purport, and even their style, will throw an important light upon the inner, as well as the external, struggles of Mahomet.

Suras of
this period

To the two or three years intervening between the commission to preach and the first emigration to Abyssinia, may be assigned about twenty of the Suras as they now stand in the Coran. During even this short time a marked change may be traced, in form as well as sentiment. At first, like a mountain stream, the current dashes headlong, pure, wild, impetuous. Advancing, the language becomes calmer and more uniform; yet ever and anon, mingled with oaths and wild ejaculations, we come upon a tumultuous rhapsody, like the unexpected cataract, charged with thrilling words of conviction and fervid aspiration. Onward still, though the dancing stream sometimes sparkles and foam deceives the eye, we trace a rapid decline in the vivid energy of natural inspiration, and even the mingling with it of earth-born elements. There is yet, indeed, a wide difference from the prosaic, tame, and sluggish flow of later days; but the tendency cannot be mistaken. Decay of life is met by artificial expedient. Elaborate periods, and the measured cadence of rhyming prose, convey too often little more than simple truisms and antiquated fable. Although we still meet with powerful reasoning against idolatry and the burning words of a living faith, yet the chief substance begins to be of native legend expanded by the Prophet's imagination; pictures of heaven and hell, the resurrection and the judgment day; dramatic scenes in which the righteous and the wicked, angels, Genii and infernal spirits, converse in language framed adroitly as arguments in the cause of Mahomet.

Change
observable

Gradual
decline of
life and
spirit

The Suras gradually extend in length. In the preceding stage a whole Sura seldom exceeds the quarter of a page. Now it occupies one, and sometimes two pages.¹ The theory of inspira-

The Suras
become
longer, and
theory of

¹ It is interesting to watch the gradual lengthening of which Flügel's

inspiration
further
developed

tion becomes more fully developed. The Almighty, from whom revelation alone proceeds, is the sole authority also for its recitation and interpretation. On these points Mahomet must wait for heavenly guidance. He must not be hasty in its repetition, for '*the Coran is revealed by a gradual revelation*;' and it is the prerogative of the Lord to prescribe what passages shall be remembered and what forgotten.¹ How much soever the Prophet may have sincerely believed that this regulating influence was exercised by the Deity, the doctrine offered the temptation to suit his revelations to the varying necessities of the hour. It led eventually to the teaching that where two passages are opposed to one another, the earlier is *abrogated* by the later. Notwithstanding, we begin to trace the claim not only of divine inspiration, but of a heavenly original. So in Sura lxxxv. : '*Truly, it is the glorious Coran, IN THE PRESERVED TABLET*;' ² and the following :—

A heavenly
original
assigned to
the Coran

Sura lxxx

It is an admonition, in revered pages ; exalted, pure ;
Written by scribes (angels) honourable and just.

Sura xcvi

Verily WE caused it to descend on the Night of power ;
And what shall make thee know what the Night of power is ?
The Night of power excelleth a thousand months :

beautiful edition, each page having 22 lines, forms an excellent standard. The 22 Suras first revealed contain an average of only five lines each. The next 20 (those of the present chapter) 16 lines. From this period to the Hegira, the average length of the 50 Suras is about three and a half pages; one being nearly twelve pages long. The average length of the twenty-one Medina Suras is five pages,—Sura *Bacr* having as many as 22 pages. As before noticed, the arrangement is directly the reverse of chronological; the longest and latest Suras coming first, the shortest and earliest last. At first, the Suras being shorter appear to have been produced at once, as we now find them. Subsequently it became the practice to throw together, according to their subject-matter, passages given forth at various times,—one reason why the later Suras are of such great length.

¹ 'We shall cause thee to rehearse (the Revelation), and thou shalt not forget excepting that which the Lord shall please ; for He knoweth both that which is public and that which is hid ; and We shall facilitate unto thee that which is easy.'—Sura lxxxvii. 6. Again : 'And move not thy tongue in the repetition of the Coran so that thou shouldest be hasty therewith. Verily upon Us devolveth the collection thereof, and the recitation thereof ; and when We shall have recited it unto thee, then follow the recitation thereof. Further, upon Us devolveth the explanation thereof.'—Sura lxxv. 17. So in a later Sura : 'And be not hasty in reciting the Coran, before that the revelation thereof hath been completed.'—Sura xx. 112.

² *I.e.* 'The original of which is written on a tablet kept in heaven ;'—namely the Table of the divine decrees. See Sale *in loco* ; also Prelim. Discourse, Sect. iii.

On that night, the Angels and the Spirit descend by their Lord's command upon every errand.

It is peace until the breaking of the morn.¹

It is not clear what ideas Mahomet at first attached to 'the Spirit' here spoken of. They were perhaps indefinite. It was a phrase he had doubtless heard used, but with different meanings, both by Jews and Christians. That the 'Holy Ghost' (however understood) was intended by the term, appears probable from the recurrence in the Coran of the expression—'*God strengthened Him (Jesus) by the holy Spirit.*' But eventually there can be no doubt that the 'holy Spirit,' in the acceptation of Mahomet, came to signify the angel Gabriel. He had learned that Jesus was 'born of the Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost;' and either knowingly rejecting the divinity of that blessed Person, or imperfectly informed as to His nature, confounded Gabriel announcing the conception, with the Holy Spirit that overshadowed Mary. And so the two expressions became, in the language of the Coran, synonymous.

The 'holy Spirit' came to signify Gabriel

Gabriel, the 'Spirit,' was the messenger who communicated to Mahomet the words of God, and appeared sometimes to him in a material form. The traditional account of the first vision of Gabriel has been already noticed; and it is perhaps to the same apparition that the Prophet alludes in an early Sura of the present period:—

Visions of Gabriel

I swear by the Star that is retrograde;
 By that which goeth forward, and that which disappeareth;
 By the Night when it closeth; by the Morn when it breaketh!
 I swear that this verily is the word of an honoured Messenger;
 Powerful; and, in the presence of the Lord of the Throne, of great
 dignity; obeyed by all; and faithful.
 And your Companion is not mad;
 Truly he hath seen him in the clear Horizon;
 And he entertaineth not any suspicion regarding the Unseen;
 Neither is this the word of a rejected² Devil.
 Whither then are ye going?
 Verily this is no other than an Admonition to all creatures,—
 To him amongst you that willeth to walk uprightly.
 But ye shall not will unless the Lord willeth—the Lord of
 Creation!

Sura lxxxii

¹ Thus abruptly does the 97th Sura, a fragment of five verses, open and close. What God is said to have sent down on this night may either signify (with Sale and the Commentators) the Coran; or more probably the clear view of divine truth which on that night burst upon Mahomet's mind. The 'Night of power' is the famous *Lailat al Cadr*, of which so much has been made in after days.

² 'Driven away,' and so unable to overhear the secrets of Heaven.

Doctrines of predestination The concluding verses show that Mahomet already contemplated his Revelation as a lesson for all mankind. But the vivid conviction of his heavenly commission contrasted strangely with the apathy and unbelief around him ; and hence is springing up the idea of election and reprobation, which alone could account for these spiritual phenomena ;—*Ye shall not will unless the Lord willeth.* Again in the very strength of the asseveration that he was not deceived, and that his inspiration was not that of a 'rejected devil,' may we not trace symptoms of the old doubts and questionings ?

Teaching and precepts The teaching of the Coran is, up to this stage, very simple. The Unity of God, Mahomet his messenger, the Resurrection of the dead, and Retribution of good and evil, are perhaps the sole doctrines insisted upon ; and the only duties, prayer,¹ and charity, honesty in weights and measures, truthfulness, chastity,² and the faithful observance of covenants.

Renunciation of idolatry It is doubtful whether, at this period, Mahomet inculcated the rites of pilgrimage as of divine obligation. The absence of allusion to them inclines to the opinion that, though observed by himself and his followers, they formed no part of his positive teaching. There was at any rate a clear and conclusive renunciation of idolatry :—

Sura six SAY, O ye unbelievers ! I worship not that which ye worship,—
Nor do ye worship that which I worship.

¹ The *times* of prayer are, up to this time, mentioned only generally as morning, evening, and night.

² Among other features of the Believer, his chastity is thus described :—

'And they are continent,

Except as regardeth their Wives, and that which their right hands possess :—

For in respect of these they shall be blameless.

But he that lusteth after more than that, verily they are transgressors.'

Note that even at this early period Mahomet admitted slave-girls to be lawful concubines, besides ordinary wives. Bond-women with whom cohabitation is thus permitted are here specified by the same phrase as was afterwards used for female slaves taken captive in war, or obtained by purchase, viz. '*that which your right hands possess.*' The license, however, was not at this time used by Mahomet himself, for he was now living continentally with a single wife. Though, therefore, it was in after days taken advantage of both for his own indulgence, and as an inducement to fight in the hope of capturing females who would then be lawful concubines as 'that which their right hand possessed,' yet these were not the original motives for the rule. It was in fact the natural compromise by which Mahomet fitted his system to the usages around him.

Never shall I worship that which ye worship,
 Neither will ye worship that which I worship.
 To you be your Religion; to me mine.

This Sura is said to have been revealed when the aged Walid pressed Mahomet to consent to a compromise by which his God should be worshipped in conjunction with their deities, or alternately every other year. Whatever the occasion, it breathes a spirit of uncompromising hostility to idolatry.

The vivid pictures of Heaven and Hell, placed in close juxtaposition, are now painted in colours of material joy and torment; which, however strange to our conceptions, were well calculated to effect the wished-for impression on the simple Arab mind. Rest and passive enjoyment; verdant gardens watered by murmuring rivulets, wherein the believers, clothed in green silk brocades and silver ornaments, repose beneath the wide-spreading shade on couches well furnished with cushions and carpets, drink the sweet waters of the fountain, and quaff aromatic wine such as the Arab loved from goblets placed before them or handed round in silver cups resplendent as glass by beautiful youths; ¹ while clusters of fruit hang close by inviting the hand to gather them;—such is the Paradise framed to captivate the inhabitant of the thirsty and sterile Mecca.

The Paradise of Mahomet

Another element is soon added to complete the Paradise of the pleasure-loving Arab:—

The Houries of Paradise

Verily for the Pious is a blissful abode;
 Gardens and Vineyards,
 And damsels with swelling bosoms, of an equal age,
 And a full cup.

Sura
 lxxviii

In the oft-described shady garden 'with fruits and meats, and beakers of wine causing not the head to ache, neither disturbing the reason,' these damsels of Paradise are introduced as '*lovely large-eyed girls resembling pearls hidden in their shells, a reward for that which the faithful have wrought. . . . Verily We have created them of a rare creation; We have made them virgins, fascinating, of an equal age.*' ²

The following passages will illustrate the artificial style into which the fire of early inspiration was now rapidly degenerating. The first is taken from a psalm with a fixed alternating versicle throughout, quaintly addressed in the dual number to men and

Further description of Paradise

¹ In one passage the wine is spoken of as sealed with musk and spiced with ginger.

² Suras lii. 20; lvi. 24. These 'Houries' come now first upon the stage.

Genii. To suit the rhyme the objects are introduced in pairs, excepting the damsels, whose number may not thus be limited.

Sura Iv

* * * This is the Hell which the wicked deny;

They shall pass to and fro between the same and scalding water.

Which then of the Signs of your Lord will ye deny?

But to him that dreads the appearing of his Lord, there shall be two gardens,

Which then of the Signs of your Lord will ye deny?

Planted with shady trees, *Which then, &c.*

Through each of them shall two fountains flow, *Which then, &c.*

And in each shall there be of every fruit two kinds, *Which then, &c.*

They shall repose on brocaded carpets, the fruits of the two gardens hanging close by, *Which then, &c.*

In them shall be modest damsels, refraining their looks, whom before them no man shall have deflowered, neither any genius,

Which then of the Signs of your Lord will ye deny?

Like as if they were rubies or pearls.¹

Houries revealed when Mahomet had but one wife

It is remarkable that the notices in the Coran of this voluptuous Paradise are *almost entirely confined* to a time when, whatever the tendency of his desires, Mahomet was living a chaste and temperate life with a wife threescore years of age.² Gibbon

¹ The above is the reward of the *highest* class of believers. Another set of gardens and females follows for the *common* faithful.

⁴ And besides these, there shall be two other gardens,

Which then of the Signs of your Lord will ye deny?

Of a dark green, *Which then, &c.*

In each, two fountains of welling water. *Which then, &c.*

In each, fruits and the palm and the pomegranate. *Which then, &c.*

In them shall be women, amiable, lovely; *Which then, &c.*

Black-eyed Houries kept within pavilions; *Which then, &c.*

Whom no man shall have deflowered before them, nor any genius.

Which then, &c.

The Believers shall recline upon green rugs, and lovely carpets,

Which then of the Signs of your Lord will ye deny?

So at a somewhat later date: 'And close unto the believers shall be modest damsels refraining their looks, like unto ostrich eggs delicately covered over.' In a passage of the same period, the faithful are said to be 'married' to these 'black-eyed Houries.' In other places of a later date, probably after Khadija's death, the *Wives* of believers (their *proper* wives of this world apparently) are spoken of as entering into Paradise with their husbands. Did Mahomet deem it possible that the earthly wives might still remain united to their husbands in Paradise, in spite of their black-eyed rivals?

² Note that in all the voluminous revelations of the ten years following the Hegira—women are only twice referred to as one of the rewards in Paradise; and on both occasions in these simple words,—*and to them there shall be therein pure wives*. Was it that satiety had then left no longings

characteristically observes that 'Mahomet has not specified the male companions of the female elect, lest he should either alarm the jealousy of the former husbands, or disturb their felicity by the suspicion of an everlasting marriage.' The remark, made in raillery, is pregnant with meaning, and forms a sensible indictment against the paradise of Islam. Faithful women will renew their youth in heaven as well as faithful men; why should not their good works merit an equal and analogous reward? But Mahomet shrank from the legitimate conclusion.

The Hell of the Coran is no less material than its Heaven. The drink of the lost is described as boiling water and filthy corruption. When cast into the pit, they hear it roar wildly like the braying of an ass. 'Hell boileth over, it almost bursteth with fury: the smoke, rising in three columns, affordeth neither shade nor protection, but casteth forth great sparks like castles, or as it were yellow camels.'

The Hell
of the
Coran

* * * And the companions of the Left hand, how miserable they!
In scorching blasts and scalding water,
And the shade of smoke,
That is neither cold nor is it grateful.
Verily before that, they lived in pleasure;
And they were bent upon great wickedness;
And used to say,
*What! after we have died and become dust and bones, shall we be raised?
Or our Fathers that preceded us?*
SAY, Yea, verily, both the former and the latter
Shall be gathered at the time of an appointed Day.
Then shall you, oh ye that err and reject the Truth,
Eat assuredly of the tree of ZACKKUM,
Filling your bellies therewith,
And drinking with it boiling water,
As a thirsty camel drinketh.
This shall be your entertainment on the Day of reckoning!

Sura lvi

The menace also of a nearer vengeance in this life begins to loom darkly forth, but as yet mingled mysteriously with the threats of the Judgment-day and Hell, thus:—

Threats of
temporal
judgment

* * * The Day of separation!
And what shall teach thee what the *Day of separation* is?
Woe on that day unto the deniers of the Truth!
What! Have We not destroyed the former Nations?
Wherefore We shall cause the latter also to follow them.
Thus shall We deal with the wicked People!
Woe on that day unto the deniers of the Truth!

Sura
lxxvii

unfulfilled; or that closer contact with Judaism had repressed the picture of a sensual Paradise such as had been drawn at Mecca?

- Sura
lxxviii Verily, We warn you of a Punishment close at hand,—
The day whereon a man shall see that which his hands have wrought;
And the unbelievers shall say, *O would that I were dust!*
- Sura lxxvii What! are ye secure that He who dwelleth in the Heavens will
not cause the Earth to swallow you up, and she shall quake?
Or that He will not send upon you an overwhelming blast, then ye
shall know my warning?
And verily the Nations that preceded thee, denied the Truth; and how
awful was my vengeance!
- Defiance
of the
Meccans But the men of Mecca scoffed at the menace, and defied its
execution;—
- Sura lxxvii They say, *When shall this threatened vengeance be, if ye speak the truth?*
SAY, 'Nay, verily, the knowledge thereof is with God alone; as for
me I am but a plain Warner.'
But when they see it, the countenance of those who disbelieved shall
fall;
And it shall be said, *This is that which ye have been calling for.*
SAY, 'What think ye? whether the Lord destroy me and those that
be with me, or have mercy upon us, who shall deliver the un-
believers from a dreadful punishment?'
- Objections
of the un-
believers We begin also to find in the Coran arguments used against
the Prophet, and the mode in which he replied to them. The pro-
gress of incredulity can thus be followed, and some of the very
expressions employed by either party traced. The Resurrection
of the body was derided by his fellow-citizens as an idle imagina-
tion. When Mahomet sought to illustrate the raising of the
dead by the analogies of Nature, and the power of God in crea-
tion, he was scouted as a sorcerer or magician, who would pretend
that a living body could be reproduced from dust and dead men's
bones.
- The Coran
impugned The Coran was denounced at times, as a bare-faced imposture,
—as *Fables of the Ancients* borrowed from foreigners, and dressed
up to suit the occasion; at others, as the effusion of a frenzied
poet, or the incoherent drivelling of an insane madman.
- Derision Jeers and jests were the ordinary weapons by which the
believers were assailed:—
- Sura
lxxxiii Verily, the Sinners laugh the Faithful to scorn.
When they pass them by, they wink at one another.
And when they turn aside unto their own people, they turn aside
jesting scurrilously.
And when they see them, they say, *Verily, THESE are the erring ones.*
But they are not sent to be keepers over them.
Wherefore one day the Faithful shall laugh the Unbelievers to scorn,
Lying upon couches, they shall behold them in Hell.

Amid the derision and the plots of the Coreish, patience is inculcated on the Prophet. His followers are exhorted to steadfastness and resignation, and in one passage reminded of the constancy of the Christian martyrs in Najran.

Patience and steadfastness inculcated

By the Heavens with their Zodiacal signs ;

Sura
LXXXV

By the threatened Day !

By the Witness and the Witnessed !

Cursed be the *Diggers of the pits* filled with burning fuel, when they sat around the same.

They were witnesses of that which they did unto the Believers.

And they tormented them no otherwise than because they believed in God the Mighty and the Glorious.

Verily, they who persecute the Believers, male and female, and repent them not,

For such the torment of Hell is prepared, and a burning anguish, &c.¹

There is at this period hardly any allusion to Jewish and Christian Scripture or legend. The Coran did not as yet rest its claim on the evidence of previous revelation and its close correspondence therewith. But the peculiar phraseology of the new faith was already becoming fixed. The dispensation of Mahomet was distinguished as ISLAM, that is, Surrender of the soul to God ; his followers as MUSALMANS (those who *surrender themselves*), or as Believers ; his opponents as KAFIRS, that is, *those who reject the divine message*, or as MUSHRIKÎN, such as *associate companions* with the Deity. Faith, Repentance, Heaven, Hell, Prayer, Almsgiving, and many other terms of the religion, soon acquired their stereotyped meaning. The naturalisation in Arabia of Judaism and Christianity (chiefly of the former) provided a large and ready fund of theological speech, which, if not already in current use, was at least widely known in a sense approaching that in which Mahomet desired to use it.²

Former Scriptures not referred to
Language becoming fixed

¹ The 'diggers of the pits' were the Jewish persecutors of the Christians of Najran. See Introduction, Chap. II.

² See remarks on the prevalence of Jewish legends and expressions, in Introduction, Chapters II., III. It is difficult to overestimate the advantages which Mahomet thus possessed in the tacit acquiescence of the Coreish in the truth of former Revelations, and in being able to appropriate apt and ready terms already current as expressive of the spiritual ideas he wished to attach to them, or at least of ideas closely allied.

Thus the phrase, 'the Merciful, the Compassionate,' affixed by Mahomet to the name of God, though not actually in use, was known among the idolatrous tribes, as we shall see by the treaty of Hodeibia

CHAPTER V

FROM THE FIFTH TO THE TENTH YEAR OF THE MISSION OF
MAHOMET

ÆTAT. 45-50. A.D. 614-620

Return of
the Abyssinian
refugees,
615 A.D.

THREE months had hardly elapsed from the departure of the little band to Abyssinia, when, notwithstanding their secure retreat and hospitable reception at the Najâshy's Court, the refugees again appeared in Mecca. Their return is linked with one of the strangest episodes in the life of the Prophet. Ibn Hisham contents himself with saying that they came back because tidings reached them of the conversion of the Coreish. But Wakidy and Tabari narrate a story, of which the following is an outline.

Lapse of
Mahomet
Narrative
by Wakidy
and Tabari

The aim of Mahomet had been the regeneration of his people. But he had fallen miserably short of it. The conversion of forty or fifty souls ill compensated the bitter alienation of the whole community. His heart was vexed, and his spirit chafed, by the violent opposition of the most respected and influential chiefs. The prospect was dark; to the human eye, hopeless. Sad and dispirited, the Prophet longed for a reconciliation, and cast about how it could be effected. On a certain day the chief men of Mecca, gathered in a group beside the Kaaba, discussed, as was their wont, the affairs of the city. Mahomet appeared and seating himself near them in a friendly manner, began to recite in their hearing Sura liii. The chapter opens with a description of Gabriel's first visit to Mahomet (already known to the reader);¹ it then proceeds to unfold a second vision of that angel, at which certain heavenly mysteries were revealed. The passage is as follows:—

¹ See *ante*, p. 45; also p. 71.

* * He also saw him (Gabriel) another time,
By the Lote-tree¹ at the furthest boundary,
Near to which is the Paradise of rest.

When the Lote-tree covered that which it covered,
His sight turned not aside, neither did it wander.
And verily he beheld some of the greatest Signs of his Lord.

What think ye of LÂT and OZZA,
And MANÂT the third beside ?—

When he had reached this verse, the devil suggested to Mahomet (so we are told) thoughts which had long possessed his soul ; and put into his mouth words of reconciliation and compromise such as he had been yearning that God might send unto his people, namely :—

Satan suggests an idolatrous concession

These are exalted Females,
Whose intercession verily is to be sought after.

The Coreish were astonished and delighted at this acknowledgment of their deities ; and as Mahomet wound up the Sura with the closing words, *Wherefore bow down before God, and serve Him*, the whole assembly prostrated themselves with one accord on the ground and worshipped. Walid alone, unable from the infirmities of age to bow down, took a handful of earth and worshipped, pressing it to his forehead.

The Coreish worship with him

Thus all the people were pleased at that which Mahomet had spoken, and they began to say : *Now we know that it is the Lord alone that giveth life and taketh it away, that createth and supporteth. And as for these our goddesses, they make intercession with Him for us ; wherefore, as thou hast conceded unto them a portion, we are content to follow thee.* But their words disquieted Mahomet, and he retired to his house. In the evening Gabriel visited him ; and the Prophet (as was his wont) recited the Sura to him ; on which Gabriel said : *What is this that thou hast done ? thou hast repeated before the people words that I never gave unto thee.* So Mahomet grieved sore, and feared the Lord greatly ; and he said, *I have spoken of God that which He hath not said.* But the Lord comforted his Prophet, and restored his confidence,² and cancelled the

The people pleased

Mahomet disowns the whole proceeding

¹ The Lote is the wild plum tree, called in India the *Bêr*.

² Tradition tells us that Mahomet was consoled by the following passage in Sura xxii., which, however (from the reference to former apostles and prophets), must have been revealed at a somewhat later period : *And*

verse, and revealed the true reading thereof (as it now stands), namely—

What think ye of LÂT and OZZA,
And MANÂT the third beside ?

What ! shall there be male progeny unto you, and female unto
Him ?

That were indeed an unjust partition !

They are naught but names, which ye and your fathers have
invented, &c.

The
Coreish
more
embittered

Now when the Coreish heard it, they spoke among themselves, saying : *Mahomet hath repented his favourable mention of the rank of our goddesses with the Lord. He hath changed the same, and brought other words instead.* So the two Satanic verses were in the mouth of every one of the unbelievers, and they increased their malice, and stirred them up to persecute the faithful with still greater severity.

The nar-
rative
founded
on fact

Pious Mussulmans of after days, scandalised at the lapse of their Prophet into so flagrant a concession, would reject the whole story. But the authorities are too strong to be thus summarily dismissed. It is hardly possible to conceive how the tale, if not in some shape or other founded in truth, could ever have been invented. The stubborn fact remains, and is by all admitted, that the first refugees did return about this time from Abyssinia ; and that they returned in consequence of a rumour that Mecca was converted. To this fact the narrative affords the only intelligible clue. At the same time it is by no means necessary to adopt in its entirety the exculpatory version of tradition ; or seek, in a supernatural interposition, the explanation of actions to be equally accounted for by the natural workings of the Prophet's mind.

The con-
cession not
unpremedi-
tated, nor
immediate-
ly with-
drawn

It may be assumed that the lapse was no sudden event. It was not a concession won by surprise, or an error of the tongue committed unawares, and immediately withdrawn. The hostility of his people had long pressed upon the spirit of Mahomet ; and, in his inward musings, it is admitted even

We have not sent before thee any Apostle, nor any Prophet, but when he longed, Satan cast suggestions into his longing. But God shall cancel that which Satan suggesteth. Then shall God establish His revelations (and God is knowing and wise) ;—that He may make what Satan hath suggested a trial unto those whose hearts are diseased and hardened, &c.

by orthodox tradition, that he had been meditating the very expression which, as is alleged, the Evil one prompted him to utter. Neither can we believe that the condition lasted but a day. To outward appearance the reconciliation must have been complete; and it must have continued at the least for some days, probably indeed longer, to allow of the report going forth and reaching the exiles in a shape sufficient to inspire them with confidence. We are warranted therefore in assuming a wider basis for the event than is admitted by tradition.

The circumstances may be thus conceived. Up to this point Mahomet's was a spiritual religion, of which faith, and prayer, and the inculcation of virtue, formed the prominent features. Though the Kaaba and its ancient rites were held to have been founded by the patriarch Abraham, yet the worship of idols engrafted on it, and heretofore consistently rejected by Mahomet, was an integral part of the existing system. To this superstition, with all its practices, the people were obstinately wedded; and, unless permission were given to join more or less the time-honoured institutions of Mecca with the true faith, there was little hope of a general conversion. How far would a strong expediency justify compromise with the prevailing system; and was it the will of God to approve it?

Mahomet tempted by the hope of gaining over his people

Was not the worship of the Kaaba, after all, a *divine* institution? The temple was built at the command of God; the compassing of it symbolised the circling course of the heavenly bodies, and the obedience of all creation to the Deity. Pious devotion was nurtured by kissing the sacred corner-stone; the slaying of sacrifices, in commemoration of Abraham's readiness to offer up his son, signified a like submission; the pilgrimage to Arafât, the shaving of the head, and other popular observances, were innocent, if not directly religious, in their tendency. But how shall he treat the idols, and the worship rendered to them? In their present mind the Coreish would never abandon these. If, however (as they now professed their readiness), they would acknowledge the one true God as the supreme Lord, and look to the idols only as symbolical of the angels, what harm would result from their bare continuance? Incredible as the concession may appear, and irreconcilable with his first princi-

Considerations by which he may have been influenced

ples of action, Mahomet would seem to have acceded to it, and consented to maintain the heathen deities as representatives of heavenly beings 'whose intercession was to be hoped for with the Deity.' The imperfect and garbled notices of tradition give no further insight into the compromise. If Mahomet stipulated for any safeguards against the abuses of idolatry, no trace of them can be now discovered. We are only told that the arrangements, of whatever nature, gave satisfaction to the chiefs and people, and produced a temporary union.

Error soon discovered;

and remedied by a complete disavowal

But Mahomet was not long in perceiving the inconsistency into which he had been betrayed. The people still worshipped images, and not God. No reasoning on his part, no assurance from them, could dissemble the galling fact that idolatry was as gross and prevalent as ever. His only safety now lay in disowning the concession. Satan had deceived him. The words of compromise were no part of the divine faith received from God through his heavenly messenger. The lapse was thus atoned for. The heretical verses spoken under delusion were cancelled, and others revealed in their stead, denying the existence of female angels such as Lât and Ozza, and denouncing idolatry with a sentence of irrevocable condemnation. Henceforward the Prophet wages mortal strife with images in every shape. His system gathers itself up into a pure and stern theism; and the Coran begins to breathe (though as yet only in the persons of Moses and Abraham) intimations of iconoclastic revenge.

Idols reprobated

Ever after, the intercession of idols is scouted as futile and absurd. Angels dare not intercede with the Almighty; how much less idols, who

Sura xxxv

Have no power over even the husk of a date stone;
 Upon whom if ye call, they hear not your calling,
 And if they heard they would not answer you;
 And in the Day of judgment, they shall themselves disclaim your deification of them.

And the government asserted to be God's only

The following passage, produced shortly after his lapse, shows how Mahomet refuted his adversaries, and adroitly turned against them the concession of the supreme divinity of God:—

Sura xxxix

And if thou askest them who created the Heavens and the

Earth, they will surely answer God. SAY, What think ye then ? If the Lord be pleased to visit me with affliction, can those upon whom ye call besides God,—what ! could *they* remove the visitation ? Or if He visit me with mercy, could *they* withhold His mercy ? SAY, God sufficeth for me ; in Him alone let those that put their trust confide.

However short his fall, Mahomet retained a keen sense of its dishonour, and of the danger which lay in parleying with his adversaries ;—

The danger of compromise keenly felt

And truly they had well-nigh tempted thee to swerve from what WE had revealed unto thee, that thou shouldest devise concerning Us a different thing ; and then would they have taken thee for their friend.

Sura xvii

And if it had not been that WE stablished thee, verily thou hadst nearly inclined unto them a little ;

Then verily WE had caused thee to taste both the punishment of Life and the punishment of Death ;

Then thou shouldest not have found against Us any helper.

And now, ever and anon, the Prophet is cautioned in the Coran to beware lest he should be induced to change the words of inspiration out of a desire to deal gently with his people ; or be deluded, by the pomp and numbers of the idolaters, into following after them and deserting the straight and narrow path pointed out to him by God.

But although Mahomet may have completely re-established his own convictions, and regained the confidence of his adherents, there is little doubt that the concession, followed by a recantation so sudden and peremptory, seriously weakened his position with the people at large. *They* would not readily credit the excuse, that words of error had been 'cast by Satan into his mouth.' Even supposing it to have been so, what faith could be placed in the revelations of a Prophet liable to such influences ? The divine Author of a revelation must know beforehand all that he will at any subsequent period reveal. If the Coran were in truth *His* oracle, Mahomet would never be reduced to the petty shift of retracting as a mistake what had once been given forth as a message from heaven. And thus the Coreish laughed to scorn his futile endeavour to effect a compromise which should draw them away from idolatry. They addressed him ironically in such terms as these :—

Mahomet's position injured by the lapse

Sura xvi

And when they see thee, they receive thee no otherwise than scoffingly,—*Ah! is this he whom God hath sent as an Apostle? Verily he had nearly seduced us from our gods, unless we had patiently persevered therein.* But they shall know hereafter, when they see the torment, who hath erred most from the right way.

He reiterates his own conviction

Sura xvi

To the accusations thus cast upon him, Mahomet could but oppose the reiteration of his own assurance:—

And when WE change one verse in place of another (and God best knoweth that which He revealeth) they say, *Verily thou plainly art a fabricator.* Nay! but the most of them understand not. SAY, The Holy Spirit hath brought it down from thy Lord in truth, to stablish them that believe.

Return of Abyssinian emigrants, A.D. 615

We have seen that the tidings of reconciliation with the Coreish induced the little band of emigrants, after residing but two months in Abyssinia, to set out on their return to Mecca. Approaching the city, they met a party of travellers who told them that Mahomet had withdrawn his concessions, and that the Coreish had resumed their oppression. After consulting what should now be done, they resolved to go forward and visit their homes. If things came to the worst, they could but again escape to Abyssinia. So they entered Mecca, each under the protection of a relative or friend.

Second emigration to Abyssinia, A.D. 615-616

The report brought by the emigrants of their kind reception by the Najâshy, following upon the late events, annoyed the Coreish, and the persecution became hotter than ever. Mahomet, therefore, again recommended his followers to take refuge in Abyssinia. The first party of the new expedition set out about the 6th year of the mission; and thereafter at intervals small bodies of converts, accompanied sometimes by their wives and children, joined the exiles, until they reached (without calculating their little ones) the number of 101. Of these, 83 were men. Amongst the women, 11 were of the Coreish, and 7 belonged to other tribes. Thirty-three of the men and 8 women (including Othman and his wife Rockeya the daughter of Mahomet) again returned to Mecca, and eventually emigrated to Medina. The rest of the refugees remained in Abyssinia for several years, and did not rejoin Mahomet until his expedition to Kheibar, in the 7th year of the Hegira.

Although Mahomet himself was not yet forced to quit

his native city, he was nevertheless exposed to indignity and insult, while the threatening attitude of his adversaries gave ground for apprehension and anxiety. If, indeed, it had not been for the influence and steadfast protection of Abu Tâlib, it is clear that the hostile intentions of the Coreish would have imperilled the liberty, perhaps the life, of Mahomet. A body of Elders, we are told, repaired to the aged chief, and said: *This nephew of thine hath spoken opprobriously of our gods and our religion, and hath upbraided us as fools, and given out that our forefathers were all astray. Now, avenge us of our adversary; or (seeing that thou art in the same case with ourselves) leave him to us that we may take our satisfaction.* But Abu Tâlib answered them softly and in courteous words; so they turned and went away. In process of time, as Mahomet would not change his attitude, they went again to Abu Tâlib in great exasperation; and, reminding him of their former demand that he would restrain his nephew from such offensive conduct, added: *And now verily we cannot have patience any longer with his abuse of us, our ancestors, and our gods; wherefore either do thou hold him back from us, or thyself take part with him that the matter may be decided between us.* Having thus spoken, they departed. While it appeared grievous to Abu Tâlib to break with his people, and be at enmity with them, neither did it please him to desert and surrender his nephew. Thus being in straits, he sent for Mahomet, and having communicated the saying of the Coreish, proceeded earnestly: *Therefore, save thyself and me also; and cast not upon me a burden heavier than I can bear.* Mahomet was startled and alarmed. He imagined that his Uncle, finding himself unequal to the task, had resolved to abandon him. His high resolve did not fail him at this critical moment. *If they brought the sun on my right hand, he said, and the moon on my left, to force me from my undertaking, verily I would not desist therefrom until the Lord made manifest my cause, or I should perish in the attempt.* But the thought of desertion by his kind protector overcame him. He burst into tears, and turned to depart. The aged Chief was moved too. 'Son of my brother!' he cried, 'come back. And now depart in peace! and say whatsoever thou wilt. For, by the Lord of the Kaaba, I will not, in any wise, give thee up for ever.'

Endeavour
to make
Abu Tâlib
abandon
Mahomet

Abu Tâlib
persists in
his protec-
tion

Some add the following incident. The same day Mahome

Abu Tâlib
awes the
Coreish at
the Kaaba

disappeared, and was nowhere to be found. Abu Tâlib, apprehensive of foul play, forthwith made ready a band of Hashimite youths each armed with a dirk, and set out for the Kaaba. On the way he was stopped by the intelligence that Mahomet was safe in a house at Safa; so he returned with his people home. On the morrow the aged chief again made ready his party, and, taking Mahomet with them, repaired to the Kaaba. There, standing before the assembly of the Coreish, he desired his young men to uncover that which they had with them; and each drew forth a sharp weapon. Then, turning to the Coreish, he exclaimed: *By the Lord! Had ye killed him, there had not remained one alive amongst you. Ye should have perished, or we had every one of us been slain.* The bold front of Abu Tâlib awed the Coreish, and repressed their insolence.

Personal
indignities
sustained
by Maho-
met

Though the tendency of tradition is to magnify the insults of the Coreish, yet, apart from invective and abuse, we hardly read of any personal injury or suffering sustained by the Prophet himself. A few of the inveterate enemies of Islam (Abu Lahab among the number) who lived close by his house, used spitefully to throw unclean and offensive things at the Prophet, or upon his hearth as he cooked his food. Once they flung in the entrails of a goat, which Mahomet, putting upon a stick, carried to the door, and called aloud: 'Ye children of Abd Menâf! What sort of good neighbourhood is this?' Then he cast forth the offensive stuff into the street. Two or three centuries afterwards, a little closet, a few feet square, was still shown at the entrance of Khadija's house, within which, under the ledge of a projecting stone, the Prophet used to crouch when he retired for prayer, and shelter himself from the missiles of his neighbours. There is also a tradition (but ill sustained) of actual violence once offered to Mahomet in public. As he passed through the court of the Kaaba, he was suddenly surrounded by the Coreish, who 'leaped upon him as one man,' and seized his mantle. But Abu Bekr stood manfully by him, and called out: 'Woe's me! Will ye slay a man because he saith that *God is my Lord?*' So they departed from him.

Conversion
of Hamza,
A.D. 615

In the sixth year of his mission, the cause of Mahomet was strengthened by the accession of two powerful citizens, HAMZA, son of Abd al Muttalib's old age, and OMAR. The

details of their conversion will be interesting to the reader. The Prophet was one day seated on the rising ground of Safa. Abu Jahl, coming up, accosted him with a shower of taunts and reproaches; while Mahomet answered not a word. Both left the place, but a slave-girl had observed the scene. It chanced that, shortly after, Hamza returned that way from the chase, his bow hanging from his shoulder (for he was a hunter of renown); and the maid related to him with indignation the gross abuse of Abu Jahl. Hamza, though not much older than Mahomet, was at once his uncle and his foster-brother. His pride was offended, his rage kindled. He hurried with rapid steps to the Kaaba; and there, in the court of the Holy house, found Abu Jahl sitting with a company of the Coreish. Hamza rushed upon him, saying: *Ah! hast thou been abusing him, and I too follow his religion; there (raising his bow and striking him violently) return that if thou darest!* The kinsmen of Abu Jahl started to his succour; but Abu Jahl motioned them away, saying: 'Let him alone, for indeed I did revile his nephew shamefully.'¹ The profession of Islam, suddenly asserted by Hamza in the passion of the moment, was followed up by the deliberate pledging of himself to Mahomet in the house of Arcam, and by a steady adherence ever after to his faith.

The conversion of Omar took place shortly after.² He was notorious for his enmity to Islam, and the harshness and violence with which he treated its professors. His sister Fatima, and her husband Saïd, were both converts, but secretly, for fear of the Coreish. While Omar was threatening certain believers, a friend suggested to him that he had better begin at home, and hinted the conversion of his sister and her husband. His wrath was aroused, and he proceeded forthwith to their house. They were listening to the 20th Sura, which the slave Khobâb recited to them from a manuscript. The persecutor drew near, and overheard the low murmur of the reading. At the noise of his steps, Khobâb retired into a closet. *What sound was that I heard just now?*

Conversion
of Omar,
A.D. 615-
616

¹ Abu Jahl (so called by the Moslems as the 'father of ignorance' or folly) is the butt of tradition as the witless and obstinate opponent of Islam. He was a nephew of Walid son of Moghira.

² It occurred in Dzul Hijj, the last month in the year. The Believers are said now to have amounted in all to 40 men and 10 women; or, by other accounts, to 45 men and 11 women. See *ante*, p. 62, *note*.

exclaimed Omar, entering angrily. 'There was nothing,' they replied. *Nay*, said he, swearing fiercely, *I hear that ye are renegades!* 'But what, O Omar!' interposed his brother-in-law, 'may there not be truth in another religion than thine?' The question confirmed the suspicions of Omar, and he sprang exasperated upon Saïd and kicked him. His sister flew to the rescue. In the struggle her face was wounded, and began to bleed. Stung by the insult, she could no longer contain herself, and cried aloud: 'Yes, we are converted; we believe in God and in his Prophet; now do thy worst upon us.' When Omar saw her face covered with blood he was softened; and he asked to see the paper they had been reading. But his sister required that he should first cleanse himself, 'for none,' she said, 'but the pure may touch it.' So Omar arose and washed, and took the paper (for he could read), and when he had deciphered a part, he exclaimed: *How excellent is this discourse, and gracious!* Then Khobáb came forth from his hiding-place, and said: 'O Omar! I trust that the Lord hath verily set thee apart for himself, in answer to his Prophet; it was but yesterday I heard him praying thus: *Strengthen Islam, O God, by Abu Jahl, or by Omar!*' Then said Omar: 'Lead me unto Mahomet, that I may make known unto him my conversion.' And he was directed to the house of Arcam. So Omar knocked at the door, and Hamza with others looked through a crevice, and started back, exclaiming that it was Omar. But Mahomet bade them let him in, and, catching hold of his skirt and the sword-belt, said: 'How long, O Omar, wilt thou not refrain from persecuting, even until the Lord send some calamity upon thee?' And Omar replied: '*Verily, I testify that thou art the Prophet of God!*' Filled with delight, Mahomet cried aloud, 'Allah Akbar! Great is the Lord.'

Importance
of these
conversions

The gain of two such men was a real triumph to the cause. Hamza and Omar both possessed, with great bodily strength, an indomitable courage; which, added to their social position, secured an important influence at Mecca. The heroism of Hamza earned for him the title, familiar to the present day, of *the Lion of God*; but he was prematurely cut off on the field of Ohod. Omar, now in the pride of early manhood, was robust in frame, ruddy in countenance, and of such commanding stature that he towered above his fellows as if he

had been mounted. Bold and overbearing, impulsive and precipitate, endowed with a keen glance and steady purpose, he was always ready both in word and deed at the decisive moment. His anger was easily aroused, and the Coreish stood in awe of him, because of his uncertain and impetuous temper. Omar outlived Mahomet and, succeeding Abu Bekr in the Caliphate, left the stamp of his dauntless spirit upon Islam. At the period of his conversion he was but six-and-twenty years of age, yet so great and instant was the effect of his accession upon Islam, that from this era is dated the commencement of its public and fearless profession at Mecca. From a cause of anxiety and alarm to Mahomet, he was suddenly converted into a tower of strength. The house of Arcam was abandoned. The claims of the faith began to override the bonds of kinship, and members of the same family might be seen openly ranged on either side. Believers no longer concealed their worship within their own dwellings, but with conscious strength and defiant attitude assembled in companies about the Kaaba, and there performed their rites of worship openly. Their courage rose. Dread and uneasiness seized the Coreish.

Omar
described

The Coreish, indeed, had cause for alarm. They were disquieted by the hospitable reception of the refugees at the Abyssinian Court. An embassy of two chief men from Mecca, laden with costly presents, had made a fruitless attempt to obtain their surrender.¹ What if the Najáshy should

Position
and fears
of the
Coreish

¹ The Coreish despatched two envoys with presents of precious leather and other rare articles for the Najáshy. They gained over the courtiers, and then presented their gifts to the Christian Prince, saying, that 'certain fools amongst their own people had left their ancestral faith; they had not joined Christianity, but had set up a new religion of their own. They had therefore been deputed by the Coreish to fetch them back.' The courtiers supported their prayer, but the king said he would inquire into the matter in presence of the accused. Now the refugees had agreed that they would not garble their doctrine, but, come what might, say nothing more nor less than the teaching of their Prophet. So on the morrow they were summoned into the royal presence, where also were the bishops with their books open before them. The king inquired of the refugees the cause of their secession. Jafar (Mahomet's cousin) answered, 'that they used to worship images, eat the dead, commit lewdness, disregard family ties and the duties of neighbourhood and hospitality, until Mahomet arose a prophet;' he concluded by describing his system, and the persecutions which had forced them to flee to Abyssinia. On the king asking him to repeat some part of the Prophet's teaching, he recited Sura *Maryam* (regarding

support them with an armed force, and seek to establish a Christian or reformed faith at Mecca, as certain of his predecessors had done in Yemen? Apart even from foreign aid, there was ground for apprehension at home. The Moslem body no longer consisted of oppressed and despised outcasts, struggling for a weak and miserable existence. Rather it was a powerful faction, adding daily to its strength by the accession of influential citizens. It challenged an open hostility. The victory of either party involved the downfall of the other.

Communi-
cations
cut off

Influenced by such fears, the Coreish fell upon a new device to check the dangerous opposition. If Abu Tâlib could not restrain his nephew, they would hold him responsible. Further they saw Mahomet supported not only by his own disciples, but also, excepting Abu Lahab, by all the house of Hashim, who, whether converts or not, held them-

the births of John and Jesus, with notices of Abraham, Moses, &c.); whereupon the king wept, and the bishops also wept so that their tears ran down upon their books, saying: 'Verily, this revelation and that of Moses proceed from one and the same source.' Then the Najâshy said to the refugees: 'Depart in peace, for I will never give you up.' Next day the envoys endeavoured to entrap the refugees into a declaration depreciatory of Jesus, and therefore offensive to the king. But the king fully concurred in their doctrine that Jesus was nothing more than 'a servant of God, and his Apostle; his Spirit and his word, placed in the womb of Mary, the immaculate Virgin.' So the Coreishite embassy departed in bad case.

The above story is, no doubt, a mere amplification of certain passages in the Coran to the effect that the Jews and Christians wept for joy on hearing the Coran because of its correspondence with their own Scriptures. A similar tale has been told of the bishops of Najran; and also regarding an embassy of Christians from Abyssinia, who are said to have visited Mahomet at Mecca, so that not much reliance can be placed on the narrative.

When the Abyssinians rose up against their king on account of the favour he was showing to the Mussulman doctrine, the Najâshy put into his pocket a scrap inscribed with the Mahometan creed, and on his people desiring him to say 'that Jesus was the Son of God,' he responded thus (putting his hand upon his pocket): 'Jesus never went beyond *this*'—apparently agreeing in what they said, but inwardly referring to the scrap!—a childish story. Mahomet is said to have regarded him as a convert to Islam, and to have prayed for him as such at his death. A light is also related to have issued from his tomb.

There is probably a basis of truth for the general outline given in this note; but it would be difficult to draw a probable line between the real and the fictitious parts of it. Had the leaning towards Mahometan doctrine in Abyssinia been as great as is here represented, we should have heard more of its inhabitants in the troublous times immediately following Mahomet's decease.

selves bound to keep their kinsman safe. Accordingly they bound themselves in a new confederacy. Thus the religious struggle merged for a time into a civil feud between the Hashimites and the rest of the Coreish; and (as we have seen) there were not wanting long-rooted associations to add bitterness to the strife. To secure their purpose, the Coreish entered into this league against the Hashimites—that they would not marry their women, nor give their own in marriage to them; that they would sell nothing to them, nor buy aught from them; in short that dealings of every kind should cease. The ban thus framed was committed to writing, and sealed with three seals. When all had thus bound themselves, the record was hung up in the Kaaba, and religious sanction thus given to its provisions.

The Ban

Unable to withstand this hostile demonstration, the Hashimites withdrew into the secluded quarter known as the *Sheb* of Abu Tâlib, a defile of the mountain, where the projecting rocks of Abu Cobeis pressed upon the eastern outskirts of the city. It was entered from the town by a narrow alley closed by a low gateway through which a camel could pass with difficulty. On all other sides it was detached by cliffs and buildings.¹

The Sheb
or Quarter
of Abu
Tâlib

On the first night of the first month of the seventh year of the mission, the Hashimites, including the Prophet and his family, retired into the quarter of Abu Tâlib; and with them followed also the descendants of Muttalib the brother of Hashim. Abu Lahab alone, moved by hatred of the new religion, went forth to the other party. The ban of separation was put rigorously in force. The Hashimites soon found themselves cut off from all supply of corn and other necessaries

Hashimites
with Ma-
homet re-
tire into
the Sheb,
A.D. 616-
617

¹ The several quarters of Mecca skirting the foot of Abu Cobeis are still distinguished by the name *Sheb*: thus we have the *Sheb Maulad* (quarter in which Mahomet was born); and the *Sheb Aly*, which was probably comprised in the *Sheb* of Abu Tâlib. Burckhardt tells us: 'On the east side, towards the mountain, and partly on its declivity, stands the quarter called Shab Aly, adjoining the Shab el Moled; here is shown the venerated place of Aly's nativity. Both these quarters are among the most ancient parts of the town, where the Koreysh formerly lived; they are even now inhabited principally by Sherifs, and do not contain any shops. The houses are spacious and in an airy situation.' It was into one of these quarters of the city, situated in a defile having behind it the steep ascent of the hill, and so built about as to be inaccessible on all sides, except by a narrow entrance from the city, that the Hashimites retired.

of life. They were not strong enough to send forth a caravan of their own ; if foreign merchants came they were made to withhold their commodities except at an exorbitant price ; the Coreish themselves would sell them nothing ; and a great scarcity ensued. No one ventured forth from the *Sheb* except at the season of pilgrimage, when, all enmities being hushed, Mahomet and his party were free to join securely in the ceremonies. For two or three years the attitude of both parties remained unaltered, and the failing stock of the Hashimites, replenished only by occasional and surreptitious ventures, reduced them to want and distress. The citizens could hear the wailing of the famished children within the *Sheb*. Many hearts were softened at the sight of such hardship, and mourned over the hostilities which gave them rise. Among these, and among the relatives of the isolated band, were found some who ventured, in spite of threats, to introduce from time to time provisions by stealth at night. Thus we read of one conducting a camel laden with corn cautiously into the *Sheb*, and making over the burden to the hungry inmates. Hakim grandson of Khuweilid used also, though the attempt was sometimes perilous, to carry supplies to his aunt Khadija.

Their distress

Unfavourable effect on the cause of Mahomet

Though the sympathies of many were thus aroused by the sufferings of the Hashimites, the cause of Islam itself did not advance during the period of this weary seclusion, which had its expected effect in cutting off the city from the personal influence of Mahomet and his converts. The efforts of the Prophet were of necessity confined to the members of his own noble clan, who, though unbelievers in his mission, had resolved to defend his person ; and to strengthening in the faith his previous converts. Accordingly we find in the portions of the Coran delivered at this time directions to retire from the unbelievers, and confine his preaching to his kinsmen and to the faithful :—

Sura li

Verily they are a rebellious people ;
Wherefore turn from them, and thou shalt not be blamed.
And admonish ; for admonition profiteth the believers.

* * * * *

Sura xxvi

Invoke with GOD no other god, lest thou be of those consigned to torment.
And preach unto thy relatives, those that be of nearer kin.

And conduct thyself gently ¹ towards the believers that follow thee.

If they disobey thee, SAY, *I am free from that which ye do.*
And put thy trust in Him that is glorious and merciful.

The exemplary bearing of Mahomet under these trying circumstances, and the spirit of clanship that knit together all who shut themselves up with him, must have secured in some degree the general countenance of the Hashimites, and may perhaps have helped to add some few followers from their ranks. But the weary years of confinement dragged on with no important result. The time of pilgrimage alone afforded Mahomet a wider field. That interval of universal amnesty was turned (as it had been before) to careful account in visiting and exhorting the various tribes that flocked to Mecca and the adjacent fairs. Thus the Prophet used to visit the great assemblages at Okatz and other places, as well as the pilgrim encampments at Mecca and Mina. On these occasions he warned his countrymen against idolatry; invited them to the worship and service of the true God; and promised them not only Paradise hereafter, but prosperity and dominion here on earth, if they would believe.² No one responded to his call. Abu Lahab would dog his steps crying aloud: *Believe him not, he is a lying rene-*

But closer union with the Hashimites

Mahomet visits the fairs and assemblages of pilgrims

¹ Literally, *Lower thy wings.* So in Sura xv. :—

‘Stretch not forth thine eyes unto the provision which We have given unto several of them, neither be covetous thereof.

But behave with gentleness (*lower thy wings*) towards the believers; And say; Verily, I am a plain preacher. . . .

And publish that which thou art commanded, and withdraw from the idolaters.

Verily, We shall suffice for thee against the scoffers, those that set up with GOD other gods; and they shall shortly know;

But do thou praise thy Lord with thanksgiving, and be among the worshippers :—

And serve thy Lord until death overtake thee.’

² Wakidy says that Mahomet frequented the three great fairs in the neighbourhood *every* year. There is some foreshadowing of the victories of Islam in his supposed address, which rather throws doubt upon these traditions. This was the alleged drift: ‘*Ye people! Say, THERE IS NO GOD BUT THE LORD. Ye will be benefited thereby. Ye will gain the rule of all Arabia, and of Ajam (foreign lands), and when ye die ye will reign as kings in Paradise.*’

There would be numerous Christians and Jews *at the fairs*, though they did not, of course, attend the Meccan pilgrimage.

Is repulsed
and dis-
pirited

*gade!*¹ And the strangers, too, would reply to Mahomet in such taunting words as these: *Thine own kindred and people should know thee best; wherefore is it that they have cast thee off?* So the Prophet, dispirited and grieved, would look upwards and make complaint: *O Lord, if Thou willedst, it would not be thus!* But the prayer seemed to pass unheeded.

About this time Mahomet must have found means of communicating with the Jews, or at least with some person acquainted with Jewish lore; for his revelation begins now to abound with narratives taken, often at great length, from their Scriptures and legends, as will be seen from the following Supplement.

¹ 'And behind him there followed a squint-eyed man, fat, having flowing locks on both sides, and clothed in raiment of fine Aden stuff. And when Mahomet had finished his preaching, this man would begin to address them, saying: *This fellow's only object is to draw you away from your gods and Genii, to his fancied revelations; wherefore follow him not, neither listen unto him.* And who should this be but his uncle Abdal Ozza Abu Lahab.—*Ibn Hisham.*

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER V

THE CORAN AS REVEALED DURING THIS PERIOD

ABOUT twenty Suras belong to this period ; they are considerably longer than the early ones, and occupy now each several pages. The style, though often enlivened by tales from native and (now also) from Jewish legend, has become as a rule still more flat and prosaic. The substance is little changed ; but, mingled with instruction for believers, and denunciation of scoffers, we begin to have powerful illustrations from nature of the might and wisdom of the Deity, and of the reasonableness of the Resurrection from the dead. The following may be taken as a specimen :—

Analogies
of God's
power and
of the Resurrection

Of His signs it is one, that He sendeth the winds bearing good tidings, that He may cause you to taste of His mercy, and that the ships may sail by His command, and ye may seek to enrich yourselves of His bounty ; peradventure ye may be thankful. Sura xxx

And verily We have sent before thee, Apostles unto their nations, and they came unto them with clear proofs, and We took vengeance on the transgressors ; and it behoved Us to assist the believers.

It is God that sendeth the winds which raise up the clouds ; then He spreadeth the same in the heavens as He pleaseth, and He disposeth them in layers, and thou mayest see the rain issuing from between them. And when He causeth the same to reach unto such of His servants as He chooseth, behold they are filled with joy ; and before it was sent down unto them, they were already despairing.

Wherefore survey the tokens of God's mercy, how He quickeneth the earth after it hath become dead ; verily, the same will be the Quickener of those who have died ; and He is over all things Mighty.

And if We send a blasting wind, and they should see their fields withered, they would, after that, become ungrateful.

Thou canst not make the dead to hear ; neither canst thou make the deaf to hear thy calling, when they turn their backs upon thee. Nor canst thou guide the blind out of their error. Thou shalt make none to hear excepting such as believe in Our signs ; for these are the true Moslems (*i.e.* those resigned unto God).

In language which though strange is full of meaning, Mahomet repeatedly affirms that the universe was not made by chance or

'*in play*,' but that God had in creation a sovereign purpose and design :—

Sura xxi

WE created not the heavens and the earth and that which is between them, by way of sport.

If WE had pleased to take diversion, verily WE had taken it in such wise as becometh Us, if WE had been bent thereon.

Nay, but WE will oppose the True to the False, and it shall confound the same; and, lo! it shall vanish away.

In another passage, but of later date, the doctrine of the responsibility of the human race and consequent liability to punishment, in contrast with those bodies which obey of necessity, is taught thus mystically:—

Sura xxxiii

Verily WE offered FAITH unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains; but they refused to undertake the same, and were afraid thereof.

But Man undertook it; for verily he is rash and foolish;—

That God should punish the evil-minded men, and the evil-minded women, and the idolaters and the idolatresses;

And that God may be turned graciously unto the believing men and believing women; for God is gracious and merciful.

Connection with Judaism, and appeal to Jewish Scriptures

A close connection is now springing up between Mahomet and the Jews; and frequent reference to their books, and recital of their legends, begin to form a leading feature of the Coran.¹ The Pentateuch is constantly mentioned as a revelation from God to Moses. The grand object of the Coran at this stage is '*to attest*' the divine origin of the Towrât and the succeeding Scriptures. The Jewish books are said to contain '*clear evidence*' of the truth of the Coran, and of the mission of Mahomet. Jewish witnesses are appealed to in proof that the dispensation of Islam is '*foretold*' in their sacred books, and that the Coran is in close conformity therewith.¹

Testimony of the Jews in favour of Mahomet

The confidence with which Mahomet thus refers to the testimony of the Jews and their Scriptures is very remarkable. It leaves no room to doubt that some amongst the Jews, acquainted perhaps but superficially with their own books and traditions, encouraged Mahomet in the idea that he might be, or even affirmed that he was, *that Prophet whom the Lord their God should raise up unto them of their brethren*. His profound veneration for the Jewish Scriptures would lull and draw the Israelites kindly towards him. 'If this man,' they would say, 'hold firmly by the Law and the Prophets, and seek the guidance of the God of our

¹ Sprenger has remarked that about this period the Coran begins to mention a great number of 'prophets,' by the Jewish term *nabi*; the limited references before being to 'apostles,' or 'messengers,' from God (*rasul*).

fathers, he will not go astray. Peradventure, the Lord will, through him, lead the heathen Arabs to the truth. Nay; what if we ourselves have erred in our interpretation as to the lineage of the coming prophet, and this prove the very Messiah sprung from the seed of Abraham? In anywise let us wait, watching the result; and meanwhile encourage him in the love of the Word of God, and the seeking of His face in prayer.' Every Jew must have exulted in the Jewish tendencies which had possessed his mind. We meet with frequent passages like the following: 'Those unto whom We have given the Book rejoice for that which hath been revealed unto thee.' Some going further bore a direct and unequivocal testimony to his mission. Nothing short of such witness could be referred to by Mahomet when he said: *They* Sura vi
unto whom We have given the Scripture recognise the Prophet as they do their own children; and—

Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of Creation; Sura xxvi
The faithful Spirit hath descended with it
Upon thy heart, that thou mightest be a Warner,
In the tongue of simple Arabic.
And verily it is borne witness to in the former Scriptures;
Hath it not been a Sign unto them that the learned among the Children
of Israel recognised it;
And if We had revealed it to a Foreigner,
And he had recited it unto them, they had not believed.

SAY: What think ye, if this Revelation be from God, and ye reject Sura xlii
it, and a Witness from amongst the children of Israel hath witnessed
unto the like thereof (*that is, to its conformity with the Old Testament*),
and hath believed therein, and ye turn away scornfully?—Verily, God
doth not direct the erring folk.

Whether this 'Witness,' and the other Jewish supporters of Conjectures
Mahomet, were among his professed followers, slaves perhaps, as to the
at Mecca; or casual visitors there from the Israelitish tribes; 'Witness'
or belonged to the Jewish residents of Medina (with the inhabit-
ants of which city the Prophet was on the point of establishing
friendly relations), we can but conjecture. Whoever his Jewish
friends may have been, it is evident that they had a knowledge Materials
—rude and imperfect, perhaps, but comprehensive—of the out- for Coran
lines of Jewish history and tradition. These, distorted by rab- supplied by
binical fable, and embellished or travestied by the Prophet's fancy, Jews
supplied the material for the Scriptural stories which at this
period form a chief portion of the Coran. The mixture of truth
and fiction, of graphic imagery and childish fancy, the repetition
over and over of the same tales in stereotyped expression,
and the elaborate effort to draw an analogy between the former
prophets and himself, and between their opponents and the

Illustrations

Coreish, by putting the speech of his own day into their lips, fatigue the patient reader of the Coran. A bare enumeration of some of the topics will illustrate both the remarkable correspondence of the Coran with the Jewish Scriptures, and the many strange and fanciful deviations from them. The fabulous turn of the stories can often be traced to rabbinical legend ; thus to the facts of Abel's history, it is added that God, sending a raven to scratch the ground, thus instructed Cain that the corpse should be buried in the earth. The narrative of the Creation is given by way of specimen below, from Sura vii. For the rest it will suffice if we but allude to the stories of Abraham, who broke in pieces the idols of his people, and miraculously escaped the fire into which the tyrant cast him ; of the angel's visit, when Sarah laughed at the promise of a son, and the patriarch, vainly pleading for Sodom, was told that Lot would be saved but that his wife was predestined to destruction ; of Abraham's hand being stayed from the sacrifice of his son, who was ransomed by 'a noble victim ;' of Joseph, in envy of whose beauty the Egyptian women cut their hands with knives ; of Jacob, who, when the garment of Joseph was cast over him by the messengers from Egypt, recovered his long-lost sight ; of mount Sinai held above the heads of the terrified Israelites to force their acceptance of the law ; of the Seventy who, when struck dead upon the same mount, were quickened to life again ; of David, whom the mountains joined in singing the praises of God ; and of Solomon, on whose gigantic works the Genii and devils were forced to labour at his bidding ; of the Genii, who brought the throne of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon in 'the twinkling of an eye,' and of the lapwing that flew to her with the royal summons ; of the Jews, who broke the sabbath, and were changed into apes ; of Ezekiel, who quickened a great multitude of the dead ; and of Ezra, who with his ass was raised to life after being dead a hundred years. The following passage may be taken as a fair specimen of the half-Scriptural, half-legendary style of these stories :—

Sura vii

And verily WE created you, then fashioned you, and then said unto the Angels, 'Fall down and worship Adam;' and they all worshipped, excepting Eblis who was not one of the worshippers;—
 God said, 'What hindereth thee that thou worshippingest not when I command thee?' He answered, 'I am better than he: Thou createdst me of fire, and thou createdst him of clay.'
 God said, 'Get thee down from Heaven; it shall not be given thee to behave arrogantly therein; get thee hence; verily, thou shalt be amongst the despicable.'
 He said, 'Respite me unto the day of Resurrection.'
 God said, 'Verily, thou art of the number respited.'

The devil said, 'Now, for that Thou hast caused me to fall, I will lie in wait for them in thy straight path;—

Then I will fall upon them from before and from behind, and from their right hand and from their left; and Thou shalt not find the most part of them thankful.'

God said, 'Depart from hence, despised and driven away; verily, whosoever of them shall follow thee, I will surely fill hell with you together.

And thou, Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in Paradise, and eat of its fruit wherever ye will; but approach not this tree, lest ye become of the number of the transgressors!'

And the Devil tempted them both, that he might discover that which was hidden from them of their nakedness.

And he said, 'Your Lord hath only forbidden you this tree, lest ye should become Angels, or become immortal.'

And he swore unto them, 'Verily, I am unto you as one that counselleth good.'

And he caused them to fall through guile; and when they had tasted of the tree, their nakedness appeared unto them, and they began to join the leaves of Paradise, to cover themselves withal.

And their Lord called unto them, 'What! did I not forbid you this tree, and say unto you that Satan was your manifest enemy?'

They said, 'Oh, our Lord! We have injured our own souls, and if Thou forgivest us not, and are not merciful unto us, we shall be numbered with the lost.'

God said, 'Get ye down, the one of you an enemy to the other; and there shall be unto you on the earth an habitation and a provision for a season:—

He said, moreover, 'Therein shall ye live, and therein shall ye die, and from thence shall ye be taken forth.'

Certain favourite passages from the Old Testament are the subject of special amplification and repetition, some as often as a dozen times. Such are the history of Moses, the catastrophe of the Flood, and the overthrow of Sodom, through which the Arabian prophet, with a wearisome reiteration, seeks to deal forth exhortation and warning to the citizens of Mecca. An adequate conception of these curious recitals can be gained only from a perusal of the Coran itself; if the reader have patience and interest let him peruse, for an example, the history of Moses in the 20th and 28th Suras.

To acquire so minute a knowledge of considerable portions of Jewish Scripture and legend, to assimilate these to his former materials, and to work them up into elaborate and rhythmic Suras, was a work that no doubt required much time and patience. The revelation is seldom now the spontaneous eloquence of a warm imagination; it is rather the tame and laboured result of ordinary composition. For this end many a

Time spent
in study
and compo-
sition

midnight hour must have been stolen from sleep. Such employment is probably referred to in passages like the following :—

Sura lxxiii

Oh thou that art wrapped up !
 Arise during the night, excepting a small portion thereof :—
 A half thereof ; or diminish the same a little,
 Or add thereto. And recite the Coran with well measured recitation.
 Verily, We shall inspire thee with weighty words.
 Verily, the hours of night are the best for fervent devotion, and distinct utterance ;
 For truly by day thou hast a protracted labour.
 And commemorate the name of thy Lord, and consecrate thyself wholly unto Him.

Idea of study and inspiration possibly blended together

It is possible that the convictions of Mahomet may have become so blended with his grand object and course of action, that the study and repetition of the Coran were regarded as his best seasons of devotion. But the way in which he now made use of Jewish information and produced the result *as evidence of inspiration*, points to the beginning of an active, though it may have been unconscious, course of unacknowledged appropriation ;¹—a weak point on which his enemies were not slow to seize. They accused him of fabrication, and of being assisted therein by others : ‘They are fables,’ they said, ‘of the ancients which he hath had written down ; they are dictated unto him every morning and evening.’ To these imputations Mahomet could only answer : ‘He hath revealed it who knoweth that which is hidden in heaven and in earth : He is forgiving and merciful.’

Imputations of his enemies

Sura xxv

Christian Scriptures little mentioned

Up to this period there is little mention of the Christian Scriptures, the available sources of information being probably as yet imperfect.

¹ Thus, in the story of Man's creation and the fall of Satan, Mahomet is desired to say : ‘*I had no knowledge regarding the Heavenly Chiefs when they disputed ; verily, it hath been revealed unto me for no other purpose than (to prove) that I am a public Preacher.*’—Sura xxxvii. So regarding Moses at Mount Sinai, Sura xxviii. And again, after relating the history of Joseph, it is added : ‘*This is one of the secret histories, which We have revealed unto thee ; thou wast not present with them,*’ &c. —Sura xii.

CHAPTER VI

VISIT TO TAYIF. ISLAM PLANTED AT MEDINA

A.D. 620-621

IN the tenth year of his ministry, the fiftieth of his life, Mahomet and his kinsmen were still shut up in the isolated quarter of Abu Tâlib; the only interval of freedom and relief being at the annual pilgrimage. Between them and the rest of the Coreish the intercourse of social life was totally suspended. The Hashimites were thus virtually blockaded for the space of two or three years. At last the sympathies of many were aroused. They saw in the persecution of Mahomet something more than a conscientious struggle against an impostor. The justice of extending the ban to the whole Hashimite stock was doubtful, and many, especially those related to the clan, grieved at the rupture.

Mahomet and his party under the ban from 617-619 A.D.

Sympathy of their opponents

It was discovered by some friend of the Prophet that the parchment in the Kaaba, on which the ban was engrossed, had been defaced by ants. The important news was told to Mahomet; and Abu Tâlib resolved to found thereon an effort for the dissolution of the league. The venerable chief, now more than fourscore years of age, issued forth from his defile and proceeded, with a band of followers, to the Kaaba. Addressing the chief men of the Coreish assembled there, he said: 'Intelligence hath reached me that your parchment is eaten up of insects. If my words be true, desist from your evil designs; if false, I will deliver up my brother's son unto you that ye may do with him as ye list.' The company agreed that it should be so, and sent for the document. When they had opened it out, they saw that it was even as Abu Tâlib had said; a great part had been devoured by white ants and was no longer legible. Abu Tâlib, perceiving their confusion, bitterly upbraided their inhumanity and breach of social obligations. He then advanced with his

Abu Tâlib upbraids Coreish; deed eaten up of insects

band to the Kaaba, and, withdrawing behind the curtain that shrouded the Holy house, prayed for deliverance from their machinations. This done, he straightway retired to his secluded abode.

Ban re-
moved,
A.D. 619

The murmurs of the sympathisers now found utterance. The partisans of the Prophet were emboldened. The Coreish had scarce recovered from surprise at the sudden appearance and as sudden departure of Abu Tâlib, when five chief men (possibly on a preconcerted plan) rose up from their midst, and, declaring themselves opposed to the league, put on their armour and proceeded to the defile of Abu Tâlib. Standing by its entrance, they commanded all that had taken refuge there to go forth to their respective homes in security and peace. So they went forth. The Coreish, confounded by the boldness of the stroke, offered no opposition. They perceived that a strong party had grown up who would resent by arms any attempt to lay violent hands upon the Moslems.

Domestic
trials

Repose and liberty followed the breaking up of the hostile league ; but they were not long to be enjoyed without alloy by Mahomet. In a few months he was visited by trials more severe than any that had yet befallen him. The tenth year (third before the Hegira) had not yet passed when Khadija died ; and five weeks later he lost his protector Abu Tâlib. The death of his wife was a grievous affliction. For five and twenty years she had been his counsellor and support ; and now his heart and home were desolate. His family, however, no longer needed maternal care. The daughters had all left him for their husbands' homes, excepting the youngest, Fatima, who was approaching womanhood, and between whom and her cousin Aly an attachment was perhaps already forming. Though Khadija (at her death threescore and five years old) must long ago have lost the charms of youth, and though the custom of the country allowed polygamy, yet Mahomet was during her lifetime restrained from other marriages by affection and gratitude, perhaps also by the wish to secure the influence of her family more entirely for his cause. His grief at her death at first was inconsolable, liable as he was to violent and deep emotion ; but its effects were transient. The place of Khadija could be filled, though her devotion might not be rivalled, by

Death of
Khadija,
December,
A.D. 619

her many successors. The virtues of this noble lady are still held in veneration; and her tomb, in the valley just above the city, is visited to the present day by Moslem pilgrims.¹

The loss of Abu Tālib, who died as he had lived an unbeliever, was, if possible, a still severer bereavement. We may dismiss the legend that on his deathbed he declared, in reply to the Prophet's earnest appeal, that he was prevented from assenting to the creed of Islam only lest the Coreish should set it down to fear at the approach of death. Whatever he may have said to comfort Mahomet, his life belies the accusation that apprehended contempt of the Coreish restrained him from avowing his convictions. The sacrifices to which Abu Tālib exposed himself and his family for the sake of his nephew, while yet incredulous of his mission, stamp his character as singularly noble and unselfish. They afford at the same time strong proof of the sincerity of Mahomet. Abu Tālib would not have acted thus for an interested deceiver; and he had ample means of scrutiny.

When the patriarch felt that life was ebbing, he summoned his brethren, the sons of Abd al Muttalib, around his bed; commended his nephew to their protection; and, relieved of the trust, died in peace, and was buried near Khadija's grave. Mahomet wept as he followed the bier, and not without reason. For forty years Abu Tālib had been his faithful friend,—the prop of his childhood, the guardian of his youth, and in later life a very tower of defence. His unbelief only made his influence the stronger. So long as he survived, Mahomet needed not to fear violence or attack. But there was no strong hand now to protect him from his foes. A second Khadija might be found, but not a second Abu Tālib.

Grieved and dispirited by these bereavements following so closely one upon the other, and dreading the now unchecked insolence of the Coreish, Mahomet seldom went abroad. The dying behest of Abu Tālib had now an unexpected effect; for Abu Lahab, heretofore the avowed enemy of Mahomet, was softened by his despondency and distress, and spontaneously became his guardian. 'Do,' he said, '*as thou hast been*

Death of
Abu Tālib,
January,
A.D. 620

The loss of
Abu Tālib
severely
felt

Abu Lahab
protects
Mahomet
for a little

¹ Sprenger thinks that, but for Khadija, Mahomet would never have been a prophet, and that by her death Islam lost in purity and the Coran in dignity. Mahomet is said occasionally to have slaughtered a sheep and distributed it among the poor in remembrance of her.

in the habit of doing while Abu Tâlib was yet alive. By Lât! no one shall hurt thee while I live. But the pledge was not long observed, for Abu Lahab was soon gained back again by the Coreish, and became his more determined enemy than before. At first, indeed, he was rather praised by the Coreish for his attempt to 'bind up family differences.' But, bid by Abu Jahl to ask where Abd al Muttalib now was, and on the Prophet confessing that he was in the place of the lost, Abu Lahab left him in indignation, saying, 'I will not cease to be thine enemy for ever;' and so he did remain. The embittered relations between Abu Lahab and his nephew, notwithstanding that two of his sons had married daughters of Mahomet, may be gathered from a memorable passage in the Coran. The Prophet, we are told, called his relatives together to hear his message. When he had delivered it, 'Blast the fellow!' cried Abu Lahab; 'is that all that he hath called us for together?' To chide the blasphemer, and also to curse his wife, who had strewn thorns in his path, this drastic Sura, containing a savage play upon the name, was promulgated:—

Blasted be the hands of Abu Lahab! and let himself be blasted!
 His riches shall not profit him, nor that which he hath gained.
 He shall be cast into the broiling *Flame*;
 His wife also, laden with fuel,
 A halter of palm-coir round her neck.¹—Sura cxi.

The indignities he suffered at this time evince the hostile attitude of the city. On one occasion the populace cast dirt upon his head; returning home in this plight, one of his daughters rose to wipe it off, and as she did so, wept. Mahomet, seeing it, comforted her and said: '*My daughter, weep not! for verily the Lord will be thy father's helper.*' It is added that he suffered no such indignity as that while Abu Tâlib lived. His position indeed was now becoming critical. He must either gain the ascendancy at Mecca, abandon his prophetic claims, or else perish in the struggle. Islam must destroy idolatry, or idolatry destroy Islam. Things could not remain as they were. His followers, though devotedly

Bitter re-
 lations re-
 sumed

Critical
 position of
 Mahomet

¹ It is uncertain when this incident occurred. From the short and impulsive style of the Sura, it may probably have belonged to an earlier period; but anyhow it illustrates the Prophet's feelings towards his hostile uncle. The play is on the name *Lahab*, 'flame.'

attached, and numbering some once influential citizens, were but a handful against a host; besides, the greater part of them were now in Abyssinia. Open hostilities, notwithstanding every endeavour to prevent them, might any day precipitate the struggle, and irretrievably ruin his cause. The new faith had not recently been gaining ground at Mecca. There had been no conversions, none at least of any note, since those of Omar and Hamza three or four years before. A few more years of similar discouragement, and his chance of success was gone.

Urged by such reflections, Mahomet began to look around. Mecca knew not the day of its visitation, and its doom was well nigh sealed. It might perchance be the will of the Lord that succour should come from some other quarter. Tayif (sixty or seventy miles east of Mecca) was the nearest city of importance. God might turn the hearts of its inhabitants, the idolatrous Thackif, use them as instruments to chastise the reprobate men of Mecca, and establish the true religion on the earth. To them, accordingly, he would now deliver his message.

X He resolves to make trial of Tayif

Abu Tâlib had been buried hardly a fortnight when the Prophet, followed only by the faithful Zeid, set out, Jonah-like, to summon Tayif to repentance. His road as far as Arafât was the pilgrim route, and then lay over dismal rocks through barren defiles for about forty miles, when it emerged on the crowning heights of Jebel Kora. Thence, descending through fertile valleys, the smiling fruits and flowers of which suggested perhaps the bright picture of the conversion of the Thackifites, he advanced to their city. Though connected by frequent intermarriage, the inhabitants of Tayif were jealous of the Coreish. They had a *Lât*, or chief idol, of their own. It might be possible, by appealing to their tribal pride as well as conscience, to enlist them on the side of Islam against the people of Mecca. Mahomet went first to the three principal men of the city, brothers; and, having explained his mission, invited them to the honour of sustaining the new faith, and supporting him in the face of his hostile tribe. But he failed in producing conviction. They cast in his teeth the common objections of his own people, and advised him to seek protection in some other quarter.

His journey thither, January, A.D. 620

Mahomet remained in Tayif for about ten days; but,

Is ignominiously expelled the city.

though many influential men came at his call, no hopeful impression was made. Thus repulsed, he solicited one only favour; that they would not divulge the object of his visit, for he feared on his return the taunts and aggravated hostility of the Coreish. But this, even if it had been possible, the men of Tayif were little likely to concede. For the first few days, perhaps, the common people regarded with awe the prophet who had turned Mecca upside down, and whose preaching probably most of them had heard at some of the neighbouring fairs or at the yearly pilgrimage. But the neglect manifested by their chiefs, and the disproportion to outward eye between the magnitude of the prophet's claims and his present solitary helpless condition, turned fear into contempt. Stirred up to hasten the departure of the unwelcome visitor, the people hooted him through the streets, pelted him with stones, and at last obliged him to flee the city pursued by a relentless rabble. Blood flowed from both his legs; and Zeid, endeavouring to shield him, was wounded in the head. The mob did not desist until they had chased him two or three miles across the sandy plain to the foot of the surrounding hills. There, wearied and mortified, he took refuge in one of the numerous orchards, and rested under a vine. In this the day of his humiliation, little did even his unwavering faith anticipate that in little more than ten years he should stand upon the same spot at the head of a conquering army; and that the great idol of Tayif, despite the entreaties of its votaries, would be demolished at his command.

Rests at a garden in the outskirts of Tayif

Hard by was a vineyard belonging to two Coreish, Otba and Sheyba; for the wealthy citizens of Mecca had gardens (as they still have) in the vale of Tayif. They watched the flight of Mahomet; and, moved with compassion, sent Addas their servant with a tray of grapes for his refreshment. The servant, a Christian slave from Nineveh, marvelled at the pious invocation with which the fruit was received by the weary traveller 'in the name of the Lord;' and a conversation ensued in which Mahomet, learning from whence he came, made mention of 'the righteous Jonas son of Mattai of Nineveh,—a brother prophet like himself.' Thereupon Addas did homage to Mahomet who, we may believe, was solaced more by the humble devotion of the slave than by the welcome

fruit and grateful shade.¹ After a little, composed and reassured, he betook himself to prayer, and the following touching petitions are still preserved as those in which his burdened soul gave vent to its distress:—

O Lord ! I make my complaint unto thee of my helplessness and frailty, and my insignificance before mankind. But thou art the Lord of the poor and feeble, and thou art my Lord. Into whose hands wilt thou abandon me ? Into the hands of strangers that beset me round about ? or of the enemy thou hast given at home the mastery over me ? If thy wrath be not upon me, I have no concern ; but rather thy favour is the more wide unto me. I seek for refuge in the light of thy countenance. It is thine to chase away the darkness, and to give peace both for this world and the next ; let not thy wrath light upon me, nor thine indignation. It is thine to show anger until thou art pleased ; and there is none other power nor any resource but in thee. And reassured thus he again set out on his return to Mecca.

His prayer

Half-way lay the vale of Nakhla, with an idol fane and shady grove. Dreading the reception at home which, after his sorry mission to the rival city, might await him, he halted there. And, as he arose at night to prayer, or perhaps in a dream or trance, his excited imagination pictured crowds of Genii pressing forward to hear his exhortations, and ardent to embrace Islam. The romantic scene is thus pictured in the Coran :—

Audience of the Genii at Nakhla

And do thou call to mind when WE caused a company of the Genii to turn aside unto thee, listening to the Coran. When they were present at its recitation they said one to the other, *Give ear*. And when it was ended, they returned unto their people, preaching. They said,—Oh our People ! verily we have been listening to a Book which hath been sent down since the days of Moses, and which attesteth the truth of the preceding Scripture. It guideth unto the truth, and into the straight path. Oh our People ! obey the preacher of God, and believe in him, that he may forgive you your sins, and save you from a fearful doom.

Sura xlv

And again :—

Say : It hath been revealed unto me that a company of Genii listened, and they said,—‘ Verily we have heard a marvellous discourse ;

Sura lxxii

It guideth toward the right faith ;

¹ We are told that Addas fell to kissing the head, hands, and feet of Mahomet, to the astonishment of his masters looking on from a distance ; and that he influenced them afterwards in favour of Islam.

Wherefore we believed therein, and we will not henceforth
associate any with our Lord ;

And as to Him (may his Majesty be exalted !)

He hath taken no spouse, neither hath He any offspring.’

And so on, at considerable length, the Genii in this curious
passage speaking the language of true believers.¹

Mahomet
returns to
Mecca

After spending some days at Nakhla, he again went on
towards Mecca. But before entering the city, which he
feared to do (now that the object of his visit to Tayif could
not be kept secret) without a protector, he turned aside by a
northward path to his ancient haunts on mount Hira. From
thence he sent twice to solicit the guardianship of certain
influential chiefs ; but without success. At last he bethought
him of Mutaim (one of those who had helped to procure the
removal of the ban) ; and sent word beseeching that he would
bring him into the city under his protection. The chief
assented ; and, having summoned his sons, bade them buckle
on their armour and take their stand by the Kaaba. Assured
of his guarantee, Mahomet and Zeid re-entered Mecca.
When they had reached the Kaaba, Mutaim stood upright on
his camel and called aloud : ‘ O ye Coreish ! verily I have

¹ The passage is so curious, and the scene so grotesque, that I give the
continuation below :—

‘ But verily the foolish people amongst us have spoken of God that which
is unjust ;

And we verily thought that no one amongst Men or Genii would have
uttered a lie against God.

And truly there are people amongst men who have sought for refuge
amongst the Genii, but they only multiplied their folly.

And they fancied, as ye do, that God would not raise any from the dead.

And we tried the Heavens, but found them filled with a powerful guard,
and with flaming darts ;

And we sat on some of the Stations to listen, but whoever listeneth now
findeth an ambush of flaming darts. * * *

And verily we thought that no one could frustrate God on earth, neither
could we escape from him by flight ;

Wherefore when we heard the right direction, we believed therein’—(and
so on, the Genii speaking as Moslems). * * *

And verily when the servant of God (Mahomet) stood up to call upon Him,
they (the Genii) were near jostling him by their numbers, &c.

Notwithstanding the *crowds* of Genii here spoken of as *jostling* the
Prophet, Ibn Hisham (whose authorities had a wonderful acquaintance with
their habits and haunts) states that there were but *seven* Genii belonging
to Nisibin, who, happening to pass that way, were arrested by hearing
Mahomet reciting the Coran ; others that there were *nine* and that they
came from Yemen, or from Nineveh, and professed the Jewish religion !

given the pledge of protection unto Mahomet; wherefore let not any one amongst you molest him.' Then Mahomet went forward, kissed the corner-stone, and returned to his house guarded by Mutaim and his party. The generosity and faithfulness of this chief have been perpetuated by Hassan the poet of Medina and the Prophet's friend.¹

There is something lofty and heroic in this journey of Mahomet to Tayif; a solitary man, despised and rejected by his own people, going boldly forth in the name of God, like Jonah to Nineveh, and summoning an idolatrous city to repent and support his mission. It sheds a strong light on the intensity of his belief in the divine origin of his calling.

The outlook was dark. If help should not come from elsewhere, there was little hope of success at Mecca. Meanwhile, amid trial and discouragement, Mahomet sought solace in fresh nuptials. Sawda, the lady on whom he now set his affections, was of mature age, widow of Sakrân. Of Coreishite blood (but of a stock remote from Mahomet), they both became early converts to Islam, and emigrated to Abyssinia. Sakrân had recently died on their return to Mecca. Mahomet now made suit to Sawda, and the marriage was celebrated within two or three months from the death of Khadija.² About the same time he betrothed himself to Ayesha, the daughter of Abu Bekr; an alliance mainly designed to cement the attachment of his bosom friend. The yet un-

Mission to Tayif memorable

Marries Sawda and is betrothed to Ayesha; stat. 51

¹ The following are the lines. They show how valuable contemporary poetry may be as an auxiliary to tradition:—

Weep, O my eyes! for the chief of men; let tears gush forth; and when they run dry, then pour forth blood!

If greatness had caused any to survive for ever amongst mankind, then greatness had preserved Mutaim unto this day.

Thou gavest the pledge of protection to the Prophet of God from the Coreish; and they became thy servants so long as a pilgrim shall shout 'Labbeik!' or assume the pilgrim garb.

Mutaim was a chief descended from Abd Shams brother of Hashim (great-grandfather of Mahomet); and, along with Harb, commanded his tribe in the Sacrilegious war, A.D. 586.

² On the conquest of Kheibar, eight years after, Sawda had her portion assigned her from its revenues with the Prophet's other wives. In the following year it is said somewhat obscurely that either on account of her age, or some doubt of her fidelity, Mahomet wished to put her away, but was afterwards reconciled. She is also said to have given up 'her turn' to Ayesha. She survived Mahomet ten years. She had by Sakrân a son who was killed in the wars under Omar.

developed charms of Ayesha could hardly have swayed the Prophet's heart. He was now fifty, she but six or seven, years of age. Still there may have been something more than ordinarily precocious about the child, for the marriage took place about three years afterwards.

His private
means

We are not told of the terms on which Mahomet continued to live with the family of Khadija, and whether he retained any part of the property that belonged to her. During the troublous years he had lately encountered, and especially under the ban, it is probable that her wealth had much diminished. Perhaps he shared it with the poorer brethren. It is certain that during the remaining stay at Mecca he had not much at his disposal; and there are even indications (as we shall see) of straitened means. He still continued to live, at least occasionally, in the quarter, if not in the house, of Abu Tâlib.

Mahomet
meets
pilgrim
party from
Medina,
March,
A.D. 620;

Repulsed from Tayif, and despairing of success at home, the fortunes of Mahomet were enveloped in thick gloom, when a gleam of hope shot across his path from an unexpected quarter. The season of pilgrimage was at hand; and, as his custom was, the Prophet plied the crowds of devotees wherever he saw a likely audience. The rites were nearly over, and the multitudes about to disperse, when, wandering through the busy scene in the narrow valley of Mina, he was attracted by a little group of six or seven men, whom he recognised as strangers from Medina. '*Of what tribe are ye?*' said he, coming up and kindly accosting them. '*Of the tribe of Khazraj,*' they replied. '*Ah! confederates of the Jews?*' '*We are.*' '*Then, why not sit ye down for a little, and I will speak with you?*' The offer was accepted willingly, for the fame of Mahomet had been noised abroad in Medina, and the strangers were curious to see more of the man who had created such turmoil in Mecca. So he expounded to them his doctrine, asserted the warrant of a divine mission, and, after setting forth the difficulties of his position at home, asked whether they would receive and protect him at Medina. '*Thy teaching we commend,*' they said; '*but as for protecting thee, our tribes have been long at deadly feud among ourselves and have fought great battles. If thou comest to us thus, we may be unable to rally round thee. Let us, we pray thee,*

who believe
and spread
his cause in
Medina

return unto our people, if haply the Lord will create peace amongst us; and we will come back again to thee at this set time next year.' So they returned to their homes, and invited their people to the faith; and many believed, so that there remained hardly a family in Medina in which mention was not made of the Prophet.

As the interest of our story will now in great measure centre in Medina, an account must here be given of its inhabitants and the state of parties there. Arab legend peoples northern Arabia in ancient days with Amalekites, probably Abrahamic races of other than Israelitish descent. From time to time, these were supplanted by inroads of the Jews. The sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the attack of Pompey 64 years before the Christian era, with that of Titus 70 years after it, and the bloody retribution inflicted by Hadrian on Judea, A.D. 136, are some of the later causes which dispersed the Jews and drove large numbers into Arabia. Such may have been the three tribes, Nadhîr, Coreitza, and Cainucaa, who finding Medina (the ancient *Yathreb*) weakly peopled, took possession of the city, formed settlements in its neighbourhood, and built for themselves strong castellated houses capable of resisting armed attack.

Settlement
of the Jews
at Medina

In the beginning of the 4th century, a branch of those numerous Arab tribes, which (as we have seen)¹ had been migrating from Yemen northwards and settling on the Syrian border, gained a footing at Medina. They were divided into two clans, the Aus and Khazraj. These soon encroached upon the Jews; and enmity sprang up between them. Aided by their Syrian brethren, and having treacherously massacred the leading Jews assembled at a banquet, they became masters of Medina, and took possession of the richest lands around it. Thus established, it was not long before the Aus and Khazraj fell out among themselves; and in the beginning of the 6th century we find them in a state of chronic enmity, if not actual warfare with each other. Four or five years previous to the period of our history, hostilities had reached a crisis between them. Each was reinforced by allies from other Arab tribes;² the Jews were

Supplanted
by the
Beni Aus
and
Khazraj

Discord
between
the two
clans

¹ See Introduction, p. 80.

² Thus a deputation from the Beni Aus sought aid from the Coreish; but they declined to fight against the Beni Khazraj, with whom some (as

divided, the Coreitza and Nadhîr siding with the Beni Aus, the Cainucaa with the Beni Khazraj. In the year 616 A.D. there was fought the great battle of Boath. At first the Aus were worsted and fled; but their chief in indignation pierced himself and fell; and at the sight, stung by shame, they returned to the charge and fought so bravely that they dispersed the Khazraj with great slaughter. They burned the date groves of their enemy, and were scarce restrained from razing their fortified houses to the ground.

Abdallah
ibn Obey

The Beni Khazraj were humbled but not reconciled. No open engagement after this took place, but numerous assassinations gave token from time to time of hardly suppressed ill-blood. Wearied with the protracted discord, both parties were about to take Abdallah ibn Obey, a distinguished citizen of the Khazraj, as their chief. This man had resented the treacherous murder by his own tribe of certain Jewish hostages; he had taken no part in the field of Boath; and he was respected by both factions. But his bright prospects were destined to be eclipsed by the rising fortunes of the stranger driven from Mecca.

Medina
prepared
for Islam

From this review it will be clear that the success at Medina of Islam, though unexpected, was not without perceptible cause. There was, first, the vague expectation, derived from the Jews, of a coming prophet. When the Jews, dividing their allegiance between the Aus and Khazraj clans, used to fight on either side, they would say: *A prophet is about to arise; his time draweth nigh. Him shall we follow; and then we shall slay you with the slaughter of the ungodly nations of old.* So when Mahomet addressed the pilgrims of Medina at Mina, they spoke one with another: *Know surely that this is the prophet with whom the Jews are ever threatening us; wherefore let us make haste and be the first to join him.* Such is the Moslem tradition, and there is truth, no doubt, though exaggerated and distorted, in it. In their close and constant intercourse with the Arabs of Medina, the expectation of a Messiah must in some form or other have been communicated by the Jews to their heathen neighbours. Nor could the people live in daily contact with a race pro-

Mahomet's own family) were allied by marriage. The Prophet is said to have addressed this embassy, and pressed the claims of his mission upon them, but without success.

fessing the pure theism and stern morality of the Old Testament without realising its practical protest against the errors of heathenism, and its contrast with the worship of the one true God. Moreover, Medina was only half the distance of Mecca from the Christian tribes of Syria; the poet Hassân, and men of his stamp from Medina, used to frequent the Christian court of the Ghassanide king; and thus Christianity as well as Judaism had probably wrought a more powerful effect upon the social condition of Medina than upon any other part of the Peninsula. Again, the city had been long torn by internal war. The recent sanguinary conflict of Boath had weakened and humiliated one of the factions without materially strengthening the other. Assassination succeeded open strife. No one yet appeared bold enough to seize the reins of government; the citizens, both Arab and Jewish, lived in uncertainty and suspense. With such varied distractions, the advent of a stranger would excite but little jealousy and apprehension.

Internal
strife neutralised
fear of
foreign
influence

Such was the position of Medina. Its people addicted to the superstition of Mecca, yet well acquainted with a purer faith, were in the best state of preparation to join one who aimed at reforming the worship of the Kaaba. Impressed with the Jewish anticipation of a Messiah, they might be ready to recognise in Mahomet the coming prophet. A city wearied with faction and strife would cheerfully admit him to their hospitality as a refugee, if not welcome him to their counsels as a chief. And lastly, the politics of Mecca and the ministry of the Prophet were well known at Medina. Syrian caravans of the Coreish not unfrequently halted there. Occasional intermarriages took place between the inhabitants of the two cities. Moreover, through the marriage of Hashim with a lady of Medina, Mahomet himself had the blood of the Beni Khazraj in his veins; and a favourable interest, among that tribe at least, was thus secured. Abu Cays, a famous poet of Medina, had some time before addressed the Coreish in verses intended to dissuade them from interference with Mahomet and the new religion. The Jews were already acquainted with the Prophet as a zealous supporter of their Scriptures. Parties from Medina went up yearly to the solemnities of the Kaaba. Many had thus come under the direct influence of his preaching, and all were familiar with

Medina
prepared to
accept
Mahomet

Its inhabi-
tants fami-
liar with
his claims

the general tenour of his claims. To this was now to be superadded the advocacy of actual converts.¹

A time of
anxiety
and sus-
pense,
A.D. 620

To return to Mecca, the year A.D. 620 was to Mahomet one of expectation and anxiety. Would the handful of Medina converts remain steady to the cause? Would they succeed in winning adherents from amongst their fellow-citizens? If they should prove unfaithful, or fail of success, what then? He might be forced to flee to Syria or Abyssinia; and seek refuge at some Christian court, or with the Ethiopian Negus, or amongst the tribes of the northern desert. Such are the doubts that must have exercised his soul, during this long year of waiting.

First pledge
of Acaba
by men of
Medina,
April,
A.D. 621

The days of pilgrimage at last came round, and Mahomet sought the appointed spot, in a narrow sheltered glen near Mina. His apprehensions were at once dispelled; a band of twelve faithful disciples were there ready to acknowledge him their prophet. Ten were of the Khazraj, and two of the Aus, tribe. They plighted their faith to Mahomet thus: '*We will not worship any but the one God; we will not steal, neither will we commit adultery, nor kill our children; we will not slander in anywise; nor will we disobey the Prophet in anything that is right.*' This was afterwards called the Pledge

¹ We find notices of conversion among the citizens of Medina at an earlier period, but none well substantiated. Thus, before the battle of Boath, when a deputation visited Mecca seeking for auxiliaries, we are told that 'they listened to Mahomet, and a youth of their number declared that this new doctrine was far better than the errand they had come upon; but their chief cast dust upon him, saying that they had another business than to hear such things.' The youth, killed shortly after in the struggles at Medina, died a true Mussulman. Similarly, Suweid, a Medina poet, repeated to the Prophet at Mecca the Persian tale of Locman. Mahomet, saying he had something better than that, recited the Coran to him. The poet was delighted with it; 'he was not far from Islam, and some said that he died a Moslem.'

And again: 'The first that believed at Medina were Asad and Dzakwan, who set out for Mecca to contend in rivalry with Otba son of Rabia. On their arrival, Otba said: *That praying fellow who fancieth himself to be a prophet, hath occupied us to the exclusion of every other business.* Now Asad used to converse with a friend at Medina about the unity of God. When Dzakwan, therefore, heard this saying of Otba, he exclaimed: *Listen, O Asad! this must be thy religion.* So they went straight to Mahomet, who expounded to them Islam, and they both believed. On their return to Medina, Asad related to his friend what had passed, and he said: *I too am a believer with thee.*'

of women, because, as not embracing any stipulation to *defend* the Prophet, it was the only oath required of the female sex. When the twelve had taken this engagement, Mahomet replied: '*If ye fulfil the pledge, Paradise shall be your reward. He that shall fail in any part thereof, to God belongeth his concern either to punish or to forgive.*' The memorable proceeding is known in the annals of Islam as THE FIRST PLEDGE OF ACABA, for that was the name of the little eminence or defile whither Mahomet with the twelve retired. A Mosque still marks the spot hard by the pilgrim road.

The twelve were now committed to the cause of Mahomet. They returned to Medina missionaries of Islam, again to report their success at the following pilgrimage. So prepared was the ground, and so zealous the propagation, that the new faith spread rapidly from house to house and from tribe to tribe. The Jews looked on in amazement. The people whom for generations they had vainly endeavoured to convince of the errors of heathenism were now of their own accord casting their idols to the moles and to the bats, and professing belief in the one true God. The secret lay in the adaptation of the instrument. Judaism, foreign in its birth, touched no Arab sympathies; Islam, engrafted on the faith and superstition, the customs and the nationality of the Peninsula, found ready access to the heart.

Spread of
Islam at
Medina,
A.D. 621

The leaders in the movement soon found themselves unable to keep pace with its rapid spread. So they wrote to Mahomet for a teacher, able to recite the Coran, and instruct inquirers in the faith. The young disciple Musab, who had lately returned from exile in Abyssinia, was deputed for that purpose. He lodged at Medina with Asad ibn Zorara, who had been already in the habit of gathering the converts together for prayer and reading of the Coran.¹ The devotions

Musab
deputed
to instruct
converts at
Medina

¹ Musab will be remembered as the youth whose pathetic interview with his mother has been before described. In course of time others were sent for the same purpose, and among them the blind Abdallah ibn Onm Maktum, see *ante*, p. 64.

The following narrative (though of doubtful authority) will illustrate the manner in which Islam was propagated at Medina: 'Asad and Musab visited the quarter of the Aus, and, entering one of their gardens, sat down by a well, where a company of believers gathered round them. Now Sad ibn Mu'adh and Oseid, chief men of the tribe, heard of the gathering at the well, and Sad unwilling himself to interfere (being related to Asad) bade Oseid go and disperse them. Oseid seized his weapons, and hurrying to

of the Aus and Khazraj tribes were now conducted together by the earnest missionary ; for even in such a matter the rival clans were impatient of a common leader from amongst themselves. So speedily, without let or hindrance, did Islam grow and take firm root at Medina, and thus unexpectedly were the people prepared for a greater demonstration at the next time of pilgrimage.

the spot, abused them. *What brings you two here amongst us, he said, to mislead our youths and silly folk? Begone, if ye have any care for your lives.* Musab disarmed his wrath by courteously inviting him to sit down and listen. Then Oseid stuck his spear into the ground and seated himself; and as he listened, he was charmed with what he heard and forthwith embraced Islam. And he said: "There is another beside me, even Sad ibn Mu'adh, whom I will send to you; if you can gain him over, there will not be one in his tribe left unconverted." So he departed and sent Sad, and Musab persuaded him in like manner. So Sad returned to his tribe and swore that he would not speak to man or woman who did not acknowledge Mahomet. So great was his influence that *by the evening every one of his clan was converted.*

There is a story of an aged chief who, like others at Medina, had an image in his house. This image the young converts used to cast every night into a filthy well, and the old man as regularly cleansed it; till, one day, they tied it to a dead dog and cast it into the well; whereupon he abandoned his image and believed.

CHAPTER VII

SPREAD OF ISLAM AT MEDINA. THE HEGIRA, OR FLIGHT
TO THAT CITY

ÆTAT. 52-53. A.D. 621-622

THE hopes of Mahomet were now fixed upon Medina. Visions of the north flitted before his imagination and carried him onwards to the Holy land. It was thus that the famous romance of the heavenly journey was enacted in this expectant period. Jerusalem had been long regarded by the Prophet with the utmost veneration; and, indeed, until his breach with the Jews at Medina, the Temple remained his *Kibla*, or place towards which at each stated genuflexion he turned to pray. Now, even in his dreams, his thoughts were veering northward. The musings of the day reappeared in the slumbers of the night. He dreamed to have been swiftly carried by Gabriel on a winged steed past Medina to the temple at Jerusalem, where a conclave of the ancient Prophets met to welcome him. His excited spirit conjured up a still more transcendent scene. From Jerusalem he mounted upwards, ascending from one heaven to another, till at last, reaching the seventh, he found himself in the awful presence of his Maker, and was dismissed with the behest that his people were to prostrate themselves in prayer five times in the day. When he awoke next morning in the house of Abu Tâlib, the vision was still before him with all the freshness of reality; and he exclaimed to the daughter of Abu Tâlib that during the night he had performed his devotions in the temple of Jerusalem. He was going forth to make the vision known, when she seized him by the mantle, and conjured him not thus to expose himself to the derision of the unbelievers. But he persisted. As the story spread abroad, unbelievers scoffed, and believers were staggered; some are even said to have gone back. But Abu

The mid-
night jour-
ney to
Jerusalem
and
Heaven

Bekr, who supported the Prophet, declared his implicit belief in the journey as a simple matter of fact ; and in the end the cause suffered no material harm. Tradition decks out the tale in gorgeous drapery ; and, upon the rock on which the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem stands, there is still shown the print of the Prophet's foot as he vaulted from it upon his winged steed. It is, indeed, a congenial theme for which tradition has given loose rein to pious and excited imagination. But the only mention of the journey in the Coran is in the following verse :—

The vision embellished by tradition

Only notice of it in the Coran

Sura xvii

Praise be to Him who by night carried His servant from the sacred Temple at Mecca to the farther Temple the environs of which WE have blessed, that WE might show him some of Our signs. Verily HE it is that heareth and seeth.

Mahomet watches struggle between Persia and Roman empire

The political events in the north had long engaged the attention of Mahomet. The prospect of finding a home in Medina, and moving closer to the Syrian border, quickened his interest in the fortunes of the Byzantine empire. For several years the arms of Persia had been turned successfully against the Grecian frontier. The Bedouin tribes, who used to oscillate between one dominion and the other according to the fortune of war, were the first to fall into the hands of Persia. Syria was ravaged ; Jerusalem sacked ; Egypt and Asia Minor overrun. The enemy advanced upon the Bosphorus, and a Persian camp was pitched above ten years almost within sight of Constantinople. About the time of the first Pledge of Acaba, A.D. 621, when the fortunes of Byzantium were at their lowest ebb, Heraclius was roused from his ignoble slumber, and after several years of arduous conflict, rolled back the invasion, and totally discomfited the Persians.

His sympathies with Heraclius ; foretells victory of Greeks

In this struggle, the sympathies and hopes of Mahomet were on the Kaiser's side. Christianity was a divine faith which might coalesce with Islam ; but the fire-worship and superstitions of Persia were repugnant to his views. It was while the career of Persian conquest was yet unchecked, that Mahomet, in the 30th Sura, uttered this sagacious augury :—

Sura xxx

The GREEKS have been smitten

In the neighbouring coasts ;

But, after their defeat, they shall again be victorious,

In a few years. To GOD belongeth the matter from before,
and after ; and, in that day, the Believers shall rejoice

In the aid of GOD.

He aideth whom He chooseth ; the GLORIOUS, the MERCIFUL.

It is the promise of GOD, who changeth not His promise ;
but the greater part of mankind know it not.¹

And the prophecy, as we have seen, was justified by the event.

About this period, with his increasing interest in the Roman empire, Mahomet must have gained, either from Christian slaves at Mecca,² the neighbouring fairs, or from fragments of the Gospels copied by Waraca or others, some acquaintance with the outlines of our Saviour's life. As will appear in the Supplement to this chapter, he never showed the same interest in the Christian as in the Jewish faith, nor indeed had he the same means of learning its history and doctrines. His treatment of Christianity is mainly confined to the narration, often in the very words of the Evangelist, but in the ordinary legendary style, of a few passages connected with the birth and life of Jesus, whom he acknowledged as the last and greatest of the Jewish prophets, but whose Sonship he strenuously denied. At the same time, his attitude towards Christianity was just as favourable as it was towards Judaism ; nor was his intercourse with its professors at any period embittered by such causes as afterwards led to hostilities with the Jews. But, on the other hand, his relations with the Christian faith never advanced materially beyond the point at which we find them now stated in the Coran ; and, in point of fact, if we except one or two campaigns against distant Christian tribes, and the reception of embassies from them, he came throughout his life into little personal contact with the professors of the faith of Jesus.

Relations
with
Christi-
anity

There was now a lull at Mecca. Mahomet despaired, by the simple influence of preaching and persuasion, of further

A lull at
Mecca

¹ The word 'few,' used here, ordinarily signifies from 3 to 10. The commentators add a very apt story in illustration. Abu Bekr, on this passage appearing, laid a wager of ten camels with Obba ibn Khalf, that the Persians would be beaten within *three* years. Mahomet desired him to extend the period to *nine* years, and to raise the stake. This Abu Bekr did, and in due time won one hundred camels from Obba's heirs.

² As Suhcib ; see above, p. 65.

progress there. His eye was fixed upon Medina, and he waited patiently until succour should come from thence. Meanwhile, Islam was for the present no longer to be aggressive. And the Coreish, congratulating themselves that their enemy had tried his worst and now was harmless, relaxed their vigilance and opposition. For this new course divine authority was at hand :—

- Sura vi** Follow that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord ;—
there is no God but he ;—and retire from the Idolaters.
If God had so desired, they had not followed idolatry ; and We
have not made thee a keeper over them, neither art thou
unto them a guardian.
Revile not those whom they invoke besides God, lest they revile
God in enmity, from lack of knowledge.
Thus have We rendered attractive unto every people their own
doings ; then unto the Lord
Shall be their return, and He shall declare unto them that which
they have wrought.¹

**Mahomet's
continued
assurance
of success**

But with this cessation of aggressive measures there was no wavering of principle, nor any distrust of eventual success. A calm and lofty front was maintained of superiority, and even of defiance. Eventual success, in spite of present discouragement, was clear and assured. The whole tenour of the Revelation at this period is marked by quietness and confidence, and therein for the present lay the Prophet's strength. To all his apostles of old the Lord had given the victory, and he would give the same to Mahomet :—

- Sura xxi** We shall hurl the Truth against that which is false and it shall
shiver it, and lo, the False shall vanish ;—Woe unto
you for that which ye imagine ! * * *
Vengeance shall fall suddenly upon them. It shall confound
them. They shall not be able to oppose it, neither
shall they be respited.
- Sura xiv** Verily, Apostles before thee have been mocked ; but they that
laughed them to scorn were encompassed by the
vengeance which they mocked at. * * *

¹ The Opposition begin to be termed 'the Confederates' (Sura xi.), and they are thus contrasted with the Moslems : 'The likeness of the two Parties is as the blind and the deaf, compared with him that hath both sight and hearing. What! are these equal in resemblance? Ah! do ye not comprehend?'

The unbelieving people said unto their Apostles—*We will surely expel you from our land, or ye shall return to our religion.* Then their Lord spake by revelation unto them, saying ;—*Verily WE shall destroy the unjust. And WE shall cause you to inherit the land after them ;—this shall be for him that feareth My appearing and feareth My threatening.*

So they asked assistance of the Lord, and every tyrant and rebellious one was destroyed. * * *

Verily, they have devised evil devices ; but their devices are in the hands of God, even if their devices could cause the mountains to pass away.

Wherefore think not thou that God will work at variance with his promise which He made unto his Apostles. Verily the Lord is mighty, and a God of vengeance.

A dearth fell upon Mecca ;—it was a punishment from God because the people had rejected his Messenger. Relief at length came ; it was intended to try whether the goodness of God would not lead them to repentance. If they still hardened their hearts, a more fearful fate was denounced.¹

Judgments
threatened
against
Mecca ;

¹ There are no very distinct traditions regarding this visitation ; but the notices of it in the Coran are so clear and distinct as to allow no doubt that some affliction of the kind did occur, and was attributed by Mahomet to the divine vengeance :—

And if WE have mercy upon them and withdraw the affliction that befell them, then they plunge into their wickedness, wandering wildly.

And verily WE visited them with affliction, and they humbled not themselves before their Lord, nor made supplication :—

Until, when WE open unto them a door of severe punishment, lo ! they are in despair thereat.—Sura xxiii.

This punishment the commentators refer to the discomfiture at Bedr, but that would be an anachronism. Again :—

And when WE made the people to taste mercy, after affliction befell them, lo ! they devise deceit against Our Signs. SAY, God is more swift in stratagem than ye ; Verily Our messengers write down that which ye devise.

It is He that maketh you travel by land and by water, so that when ye are in ships and sail in them with a fair breeze, they rejoice thereat.

A fierce storm overtaketh them, and the waves come upon them from every side, and they think that verily they are closed in thereby ; then they call upon God, rendering unto Him pure service, and saying, *If Thou savest us from this, we shall verily be amongst the grateful.*

But when He hath saved them, behold ! they work evil in the earth unrighteously. Oh ye people, verily your evil working is against your own souls, &c.—Sura x.

Which
Mahomet
might or
might not
behold

That tenfold vengeance would overtake the people if they continued to reject the truth, Mahomet believed surely. *He* might not live to see it; but the decree of God was unchangeable:—

Sura xliii

What ! canst thou make the deaf to hear, or guide the blind, or him that is wandering widely ?
Wherefore, whether *We* take thee away, verily *We* will pour our vengeance upon them,—
Or, whether *We* cause thee to see that which *We* have threatened them with, verily *We* are all powerful over them.
Therefore hold fast that which hath been revealed unto thee, for thou art in the straight path.¹

Sublime
spectacle
presented
by Ma-
homet

Mahomet thus holding his people at bay ; waiting in the still expectation of victory ; to outward appearance defenceless, and with his little band as it were in the lion's mouth ; yet trusting in His almighty power whose Messenger he believed himself to be, resolute and unmoved ; presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only by such scenes in the Sacred records as that of the prophet of Israel when he complained to his Master, 'I, even I only, am left.' Nay, the spectacle is in one point of view even more amazing ; for the prophets of old were upheld (as we may suppose) by the prevailing consciousness of a divine inspiration, and strengthened by the palpable demonstrations of miraculous power ; while with the Arabian, his recollection of former doubts, and confessed inability to work any miracle, may at times have cast across him a shadow of uncertainty. It is this which brings if possible into still bolder prominence the marvellous self-possession and enthusiasm which sustained Mahomet on his course. 'Say unto the Unbelievers,' such was the reiterated message from on high, '*Work ye in your place. Wait in expectation ; We too in expectancy are waiting.*' And again : '*Say, Each of us awaiteth the issue ; wait therefore. Hereafter ye shall surely know who they are that have chosen the straight path, and who hath been guided aright.*'

Sura xi

Mahomet's bearing towards his followers, no less than

¹ There are many other passages in the Suras of this period to the same effect ; thus : 'Wherefore persevere patiently, for the promise of God is true, whether *We* cause thee to see some part of that wherewith *We* have threatened them, or cause thee first to die ; and unto *Us* shall they return.' —Sura xi.

towards his opponents, exhibits the assurance of being the vicegerent of God and the exponent of His will. His name is now associated with the Deity in the symbol of faith; ¹ and obedience to *God and his Apostle* becomes the watchword of Islam. 'Whosoever disobeyeth GOD AND HIS PROPHET, for him is prepared the fire of Hell; they shall remain therein for ever!' ²

Authority assumed over followers

The confidence in his inspiration is sometimes expressed with imprecations, which one cannot read without a shudder:—

Oaths that his revelation is not fabricated

Sura lxxix

I swear by that which ye see,
And by that which ye see not,

That this is verily the speech of an honourable Apostle !

It is not the speech of a Poet ; little is it ye believe !

Neither is it the speech of a Soothsayer ; little is it ye reflect !

It is a Revelation from the Lord of creation.

And if he (Mahomet) had said concerning Us any sayings of his own,

Verily WE had caught him by the right hand ;

Then had WE cut asunder the artery of his neck, ³

¹ 'There is no God but the Lord, and Mahomet is His prophet.' There is nothing, however, to show when the creed assumed this precise form.

² Sura lxxii. v. 23. The sequel is singular; God sends a guard to attend his Prophet to see that the message is duly delivered, as if there were reason to doubt his fidelity in this respect:—

When they see the vengeance they were threatened with, then they shall know who were the weaker in succour, and the fewer in number.

SAY I know not whether that which ye are threatened with be near, or whether my Lord shall appoint for it a set term.

He knoweth the secrets of the future, and He unveileth not His secrets unto any,—

Except it be to an Apostle that pleaseth Him; and He maketh a guard to march before him, and behind him;

That He may know that they have delivered the messages of their Lord.

In further illustration of the text, see Sura lxiv. v. 9: 'Wherefore believe in GOD AND HIS APOSTLE, and the light which WE have sent down.' And again: 'And obey *God and obey the Apostle*;—but if ye turn back, verily our Apostle hath only to deliver his message.' Thenceforward the expression becomes common.

³ Commentators observe that the allusion is to the mode of execution still practised in the East; the executioner seizes the victim by the right hand, while with a sharp sword he aims a blow at the back of the neck, and detaches the head at a stroke.

Neither had there been among you any to hinder therefrom.
 But verily it is an Admonition to the pious,
 And truly WE know that there are amongst you those who belie
 the same ;
 But it shall only cause sighing unto the Unbelievers,
 For it is the TRUTH ;—the CERTAIN !
 Therefore praise the name of thy Lord,—the GLORIOUS !

Straitened
means

It would seem as if the difficulties of the Prophet were at this period aggravated by straitened means. Though supported, no doubt, by help from his relatives and followers, there was yet ground for misgiving and anxiety. The divine promise reassures him in such terms as these :—

Sura xx.
v. 180

And cast not thine eyes on the provision WE have made for divers among them, the show of this present life, that WE may prove them thereby ; for the provision of the Lord is better and more lasting.
 And command thy Family to observe prayer, and persevere therein : WE ask thee not to labour for a provision ; WE will provide for thee, and a prosperous issue shall attend on piety.

Prepara-
tions for
Second
Pledge of
Acaba,
March, A.D.
622

Thus another year passed away in comparative tranquillity, and the month of pilgrimage, when the Medina converts were again to rally around the Prophet, drew nigh. Messages and reports of the amazing success of Islam had no doubt reached Mahomet ; but he could hardly have been prepared for the enthusiastic numbers ready to crowd to his standard, and swear allegiance to him as prophet and master. But the occasion was critical, and it was necessary to proceed with caution. The Coreish, if aware of the hostile confederacy—hostile because pledged to support a faction in their community—would have good ground for umbrage ; the sword might prematurely be unsheathed, and the cause of Islam endangered. The movement, therefore, was conducted with the utmost secrecy. Even the great body of Medina pilgrims, in whose company the converts travelled, were unaware of their object. Musab, the teacher sent to Medina, who accompanied the pilgrim party, immediately on his arrival repaired to Mahomet and related all that had happened at his new scene of labour. The Prophet rejoiced greatly when he heard of the numbers of the converts, and their eagerness in the service of Islam.

Musab
reports
success to
Mahomet

To elude the scrutiny of the citizens the meeting between Mahomet and his new adherents was to be by night; and that the strangers, in case suspicion were aroused, might be as soon as possible beyond reach of their enemies, the time was deferred to the close of the pilgrimage when, the ceremonies and sacrifices being finished, the multitude would on the following morning disperse to their homes. The spot was to be the same secluded glen of Acaba, outside Mina, where the men of Medina had met Mahomet before. They were to move thither cautiously, after all had retired to rest;—‘waking not the sleeper, nor tarrying for the absent.’

Arrange-
ments for
meeting by
night at
close of
pilgrim-
age

An hour or two before midnight, Mahomet, attended only by his uncle Abbas, repaired to the rendezvous, the first of the party. To secure the greater secrecy, the intended meeting had been kept profoundly hidden even from his own followers at Mecca.¹ Abbas, the wealthiest of the sons of Abd al Muttalib, was weak in character, and ordinarily sailed with wind and tide. He was not a convert; but near relationship, and the close community of interest created by three years' confinement with Mahomet and his followers in the isolated quarter of Abu Talib, rendered him sufficiently trustworthy on the present occasion.

Mahomet
and Abbas
proceed at
midnight
to the spot

They had not long to wait. Soon the converts from Medina, singly and by twos and threes, were descried through the moonlight moving stealthily along the stony valley and barren rocks towards the spot. They were 73 in all (62 of the Beni Khazraj, 11 of the Beni Aus) with two women, and included the twelve converts who had before met the Prophet there. When all were seated, Abbas, in a low voice, broke silence by a speech something to this effect:—‘Ye men of the BENI KHAZRAJ!² This my kinsman dwelleth amongst us in honour and in safety. His clan will defend him—both those that are converts, and those that still hold to their ancestral faith; defend him to the last. But he preferreth to seek protection from you. Wherefore, ye Khazrajites,

Joined by
the Medina
converts

Speech of
Abbas;

¹ Or if they were admitted to the secret, they were instructed not to be present, the less to excite suspicion. Even Musab appears not to have accompanied the Medina converts; for we are told that ‘there was no one with Mahomet besides Abbas.’

² The people of Medina, both of the Aus and Khazraj tribes, used to be addressed collectively as Khazrajites.

consider the matter well, and count the cost. If ye be resolved, and are able to defend him, then give the pledge. But if ye doubt your ability, at once abandon the design.'

and of Bará

Then spoke Bará, an aged chief: 'We have listened to thy words. Our resolution is unshaken. Our lives are at the Prophet's service. It is now for *him* to speak.'

Address of Mahomet

Mahomet began, as was his wont, by reciting passages from the Coran; he invited all present to the service of God, and dwelt upon the claims and blessings of Islam; then coming to the business of the night, he ended by saying that he should be content if the strangers pledged themselves to defend him as they would defend their wives and children. At once, from every quarter, arose a confused, tumultuous noise; it was the eager voices of the 'Seventy' testifying their readiness to take the pledge, and protesting that they would receive and defend the Prophet even at the cost of life and property. Then Abbas, holding his nephew's hand, called aloud: 'Hush! There may be spies abroad. Let your men of years stand forth, and speak on your behalf. Of a truth, we are fearful for your safety if our people should discover us. Then when ye have plighted your faith depart silently to your camp.' So their chief men stood forth. Then said Bará: 'Stretch out thy hand, O Mahomet!' He stretched it out; and Bará struck his hand thereon, as the manner was in taking oath of fealty. The Seventy came forward one by one, and did the same.¹ Then Mahomet named twelve of the chief men, and said: *Moses chose from amongst his people twelve leaders. Thus shall ye be the leaders and sureties for the rest, even as the apostles of Jesus were; and I am the surety for my people.* They answered, 'Be it so.'²

Second pledge of Acaba

¹ The women repeated only the words of the pledge taken by the Twelve in the former year. Mahomet never took women by the hand on such an occasion; they used to step forward and recite the prescribed words, and then he would say, 'Go: you have pledged yourselves.'

Abu Bará, who bore here so conspicuous a part, died the following month. He was the first over whose grave Mahomet prayed in the formula usual afterwards: *O Lord, pardon him! Be merciful unto him! Be reconciled unto him! and verily thou art reconciled.*

² *Nackib*, 'Leader,' is the term which ever after honourably marked the Twelve. Four were of the number who had met Mahomet here before. Three were of the Aus tribes; the rest, Khazrajites. Several are mentioned as able to *write* Arabic, and as *Kámil* (perfect), *i.e.* expert in writing, archery, and swimming.

At this moment the voice of one crying aloud, a straggler perchance, searching for his company, was heard at hand. Excited fancy conjured up a Coreishite if not an infernal spy.¹ Mahomet gave command, and the assembly dispersing hurried back to their several halting places. And so ended the memorable night of the SECOND PLEDGE OF ACABA.

So large a gathering could not be held close by Mina without rumours reaching the Coreish enough to rouse suspicion. It was notorious that great numbers at Medina had begun to embrace the doctrines of Mahomet. The clandestine meeting must have been on his behalf; and as such, an unwarrantable interference in the domestic affairs of Mecca; it was virtually a hostile movement. Accordingly, next morning the chief men of the Coreish repaired to the Medina encampment, stated their suspicions, and complained of unfriendly conduct at the hand of a tribe with whom, of all tribes in Arabia, it would grieve them most to be at war. The converts glanced at each other, and held their peace.² The rest of the pilgrims from Medina, ignorant of their comrades' proceedings, protested that the people of Mecca had been misinformed, and that the report was without foundation. Their chief, Abdallah ibn Obey, assured the visitors that none of his people would have ventured on such a step without con-

Coreish
challenge
the Medina
chiefs

¹ We are told that when the ceremony was ended, the devil called out with a loud voice: *Ye people of Mecca! Have ye no concern for Mahomet and his renegades? They have counselled war against you.* And again, 'When we had pledged ourselves to the Prophet, Satan called out with a piercing cry, such as I never heard before: *Oh ye that are encamped round about! Have ye no care for MUDZAMMAM*' (the 'blamed,' the antithesis of Mahomet the 'praised') *'and the renegades that are with him? They have resolved on war with you.* Then said Mahomet: "That is the demon of Acaba; the son of the devil. Hearst thou not, enemy of God? Verily I will ease me of thee!"' So also, at the battle of Ohod, the voice which cried 'Mahomet is fallen' was that of 'the demon of Acaba, namely, the devil.'

² A story is told by Kab, one of the Seventy, that at this moment, to divert attention, he pointed to a new pair of shoes which a Coreishite chief had on, and said to one of his friends, 'Why couldst not thou, our chief, wear a pair of new shoes like this Coreishite chief?' The latter, taking off the shoes, threw them at Kab, saying: 'Put them on thyself.' His friend said: 'Tush! give back the shoes.' Kab refused; the Coreishite chief then tried to snatch them from him. A commotion ensued, which was just what Kab desired, as it served to cover the awkward situation of the Medina converts. Such tales of service to the cause of Islam were plentifully fabricated in the earliest times, and, though deserving little credit, are sometimes useful as illustrating the course of events.

sulting him. The Coreish were satisfied, and took their leave.

The
They pursue
the
Medina
caravan,

Shortly after, the vast concourse at Mina broke up. The numerous caravans prepared for their journey, and took each its homeward course. The Medina party had already set out, when the Coreish having inquired into the midnight assembly (which Mahomet hardly cared to keep secret now) found, to their confusion, that not only had it really taken place, but that far larger numbers than they suspected had pledged themselves to the defence of Mahomet. Foiled and exasperated, they pursued the Medina caravan in the hope that they might lay hands on some of the delinquents; but, though they scoured the roads leading to Medina, they fell in with only two. Of these one escaped. The other, Sad ibn Obâda, they seized and, tying his hands behind his back, dragged him by his long hair back to Mecca. There he would, no doubt, have suffered further maltreatment, had he not been able to claim protection from certain of the Coreishite chiefs to whom at Medina he had rendered service. He was released, and rejoined the caravan just as his friends were about to return in search of him.

and mal-
treat one
of the con-
verts

The
Coreish,
enraged,
recom-
mence per-
secution ;

It soon became evident that, in consequence of the Pledge of Acaba, Mahomet and his followers contemplated an early flight. The prospect of such a movement, which would remove their opponents entirely out of reach, and plant them in an asylum where they might securely work out their machinations and as opportunity offered take an ample revenge, at first kindled the wrath of the Coreish. They renewed their persecution; and, wherever they had the power, sought either to force the confessors to recant, or by confinement prevent their escape.¹ Such severities, or the dread of them (for the Moslems were conscious that they had now seriously compromised their loyalty as citizens of Mecca),

and thus
precipi-
tate de-
parture of
converts

¹ The two things would react on one another;—the persecution hastening the departure of the converts, and each fresh departure irritating the Coreish to greater cruelty. Tabari says: 'There were two occasions on which persecution raged the hottest; *first*, the period preceding the emigration to Abyssinia; *second*, that following the second pledge of Acaba.' There is reason, however, to suspect that, had the persecution been as bad as is spoken of, we should have had more frequent notices of it. Yet, excepting the imprisonment or surveillance of a few waverers, we have no detail of any injuries or sufferings inflicted on this occasion by the Coreish.

hastened the crisis. And, indeed, when Mahomet had once resolved upon a general emigration, there was no advantage from a protracted residence among his enemies. It was therefore but a few days after the 'Second pledge of Acaba,' that Mahomet gave command to his followers, saying: *Depart unto Medina; for the Lord hath verily given unto you brethren in that city, and a home in which ye may find refuge.*¹ So they made preparation, chose companions for the journey, and set out in parties secretly. Such as had the means rode two and two upon camels; the rest walked on foot.

Mahomet gives command to emigrate to Medina

Persecution and artifice caused a few to fall away from the faith. An example will suffice. Omar had arranged a rendezvous with his brother Ayash and a friend, at a spot in the environs of Mecca whence they were to set out for Medina. The friend was held back by his family, and relapsed for a time into idolatry. 'Thus I, and my brother,' says Omar, 'started alone, and journeyed to Coba, a suburb of Medina, where we alighted, and were hospitably received at the house of Rifaa. But Abu Jahl, another brother, followed Ayash to Medina, and told him that his mother had vowed she would retire beneath no shade, nor suffer a comb or any oil to touch her hair, until she saw his face again. Then I cautioned him (continues Omar); saying: "By the Lord! they only desire to tempt thee from thy faith. Thy mother will soon relax her vow. Beware, Ayash! return not nigh to Mecca." But he replied: "Nay, I will not recant. But I have property at Mecca. I will go and fetch it, and it will strengthen me. And I will also release my mother from her vow." Seeing that he was not to be diverted from his purpose, I gave him a swift camel and bade him, if he suspected treachery, to save himself thereon. So when the party alighted at a certain place, his companions seized him suddenly, and bound him with cords; and, as they carried him into Mecca, they ex-

Some fall away

Story of Ayash

¹ Mahomet, we are told, saw in a dream the place of emigration, 'a saline plain, with palm trees, between two hills.' He waited some days, uncertain where this might be, and then went forth joyously to his followers, saying: 'Now have I been made acquainted with the place appointed for your emigration. It is *Yathreb*. Whoso desireth let him emigrate thither.' Long before this, however, he had made up his mind where he was going. The story probably grew out of the idea that Mahomet must have had a special and divine command for so important a step as that of emigration to Medina.

claimed: *Even thus, ye men of Mecca, should ye treat your foolish ones!* Then they kept him in durance.¹

The emigration, April, A.D. 622, continues for two months

Two or three weeks after the Pledge of Acaba, that is, about the beginning of Moharram, the emigration commenced. Medina lies some 250 miles north of Mecca, and the journey is accomplished by the pilgrim caravans in eleven days, or if pressed for time, in ten.² Within two months nearly all the followers of Mahomet, excepting the few detained in confinement or unable to escape from slavery, had migrated with their families to their new abode. They numbered between one and two hundred souls.³ They were welcomed with cordial and even eager hospitality by their brethren at Medina, who vied with one another for the honour of receiving them into their homes, and supplying their domestic wants.

Coreish paralysed by the sudden movement

The Coreish were paralysed by a movement so suddenly planned, and put into such speedy execution. They looked on in amazement, as families silently disappeared, and house after house was abandoned. One or two quarters of the city were entirely deserted, and the doors of the dwelling houses left locked.⁴ There was here a determination and self-

¹ Ayash under such treatment relapsed into idolatry. Omar says that until Sura xxxix. v. 53 was revealed, it was thought that no apostate could be saved. When that passage appeared, he copied it out and sent it to Ayash at Mecca; Ayash on this took courage, and forthwith mounted his camel for Medina. The verse is as follows: 'Say;—O my servants who have transgressed against your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God; for God forgiveth sins wholly: verily He is gracious and merciful.'

² *Burckhardt*. The *Tayyara* or 'Flying Caravan' goes in less time. 'It is a dromedary caravan, in which each person carries only his saddle bags. It usually descends (from Medina) by the road called El Khabt, and makes Mecca on the *fifth day*.' The stages by the Nejd, or eastern route, travelled by Burton, are given as eleven, and the distance estimated at 248 miles.

³ We have no exact statement of the numbers of those who emigrated before Mahomet himself left Mecca. Eighteen months later, at the battle of Bedr (when every emigrant but a very few unavoidably detained was present) Mahomet had 314 fighting-men, of whom *eighty-three* were emigrants from Mecca. A few of these may have joined Mahomet after he reached Medina; and we shall probably not err in making the whole number who emigrated *at first*, including women and children, about 150.

⁴ 'The Beni Ghanam emigrated in a body, men, women, and children, and left their houses locked: not a soul was to be seen in the quarters of the Beni Ghanam, Abul Bokeir, and Matzun.'

⁵ Otba, Abbas, and Abu Jahl passed by the dwelling-place of the Beni Jahsh, and the doors were locked, and the houses deserted. Otba sighed heavily, and said: "Every house, even if its peace be lengthened, at the

sacrifice on which the Coreish had hardly calculated. But even if they had foreseen and resolved to oppose the emigration, it would have been difficult to prevent it. The number of independent clans and powerful families stood in the way of combined action. Here and there a slave or helpless dependent might be intimidated or held back; but in no other case was there the right to interfere with private choice or family counsel; and the least show of violence might have roused a host of champions to avenge the insulted honour of their tribe.

At last Mahomet and Abu Bekr with their families, including Aly, now a youth of about twenty years of age, were the only believers left (excepting those unwillingly detained) at Mecca. Abu Bekr was ambitious of being the companion of the Prophet in his flight; and daily urged him to depart. But Mahomet told him that 'his time was not yet come: the Lord had not as yet given him the command to emigrate.' Perhaps he was deferring his departure until he could receive assurance from Medina that the arrangements for his reception were secure, and that his adherents there were not only ready, but able in the face of any opposition, to execute their engagement for his defence.¹ Or, there may have been the more generous desire to see all his followers safely away from Mecca before he himself fled for refuge to Medina. Might he even be waiting with the vague surmise that divine retribution, as already threatened, was about to descend on the unbelieving city, in which peradventure even ten righteous men could not now be found? Meanwhile Abu Bekr made preparations for the journey. In anticipation of the emergency, he had already purchased for 800 pieces two swift camels, which were now tied up and highly fed in the yard of his house. A guide, accustomed to the devious tracks

Mahomet
Abu Bekr,
and Aly
left behind

last a bitter wind will reach it. The quarter of the Beni Jahsh is left without an inhabitant! This is the work of our pestilent Nephew, who hath dispersed our assemblies, ruined our affairs, and made a split amongst us."

Preparations
of
Abu Bekr

¹ During the two months elapsing between the Pledge of Acaba and Mahomet's departure, he was kept informed of what was going on at Medina. During this interval, some of the Medina converts revisited Mecca, with the view, no doubt, of making further arrangements with Mahomet. These Medina converts had thus the merit of being not only 'Ansâr,' *i.e.* *Helpers* at Medina, but also *Refugees*, as having in a sense also emigrated from Mecca when they returned to Medina.

and byways of the Medina route, was hired, and the camels were committed to his custody.¹

Council of
the Coreish

The Coreish were perplexed at the course Mahomet was taking. They had expected him to emigrate with his people; and perhaps half rejoiced at the prospect of being rid of their enemy. By remaining almost solitary behind, he seemed by his very loneliness to challenge and defy attack. What might the motive be for this strange procedure? The chief men assembled to deliberate on what might be their wisest course. Should they imprison him? his followers would come to his rescue. Should they forcibly expel him? he might agitate his cause among the tribes of Arabia, and readily lure adherents by the prospect of supremacy at Mecca. Should they assassinate him? the Beni Hashim would exact an unrelenting penalty for their kinsman's life. But what if representatives from every house, including that of Hashim, were each to plunge his sword into the Prophet—would the Hashimites dare to wage a mortal feud with the whole body of the Coreish thus implicated in the murder? Even then there would remain the followers at Medina, whose revenge on account of their Master's blood would surely be fierce and ruthless. Assassination by an unknown hand on the road to Medina might prove the safest course; but there the chances of escape would preponderate. At last they resolved that a deputation should proceed to the house of Mahomet.

Their deli-
berations

Chiefs de-
puted to
visit
Mahomet

What was the decision as to their future course of action, what the object even of the present deputation, it is impossible amid the marvels of tradition to conclude. There is little reason to believe that it was assassination, although we are told that such was determined upon at the instigation of Abu Jahl, supported by Satan who, in the person of an old man from Nejd shrouded in a mantle, joined the council.²

¹ The guide was Abdallah ibn Arcad. His mother was a Coreishite; his father was from a tribe affiliated to the Coreish. He was still an idolater; and Wakidy (anticipating the era when war was waged against all idolaters) adds, 'but Mahomet and Abu Bekr had given him quarter, or pledge of protection;' as if he had required any protection from the fugitives whom he was guiding! The expression illustrates the proleptic way in which subsequent principles and events were anticipated, insensibly throwing back their light and colour upon the tissue of tradition.

² The following is the narrative: The Coreish, irritated at the warm reception of the converts at Medina, held a council. Satan, in the shape of an old man shrouded in a cloak, stood at the door saying that he was a

Mahomet himself refers in the Coran to the designs of his enemies in these indecisive terms: *And call to mind when the Unbelievers plotted against thee, that they might detain thee, or slay thee, or expel thee. Yea, they plotted; but God plotted likewise. And God is the best of plotters.* Assuredly had assassination been the sentence, and its immediate execution ordered by the council, Mahomet would not have been slow to indicate the fact in clearer language than these alternative expressions. A resolution so fatal would unquestionably have been dwelt upon at length both in the Coran and in tradition, and have been produced in justification of subsequent hostilities. Had such been the decision, it *must* sooner or later have reached the ears of Mahomet, and so have found its way into the Coran.

Whatever the object of the visit, Mahomet received previous notice of it, and anticipated the danger by stealing away from his house. There he left Aly; around whom, that the suspicions of neighbours might not be aroused, he threw his own red mantle, and left him lying thus upon his bed. He himself went straightway to the House of Abu Bekr, and after a short consultation matured the plan for immediate flight. Abu Bekr shed tears of joy; the hour for emigration had at last arrived, and he was to be the companion of the Prophet's journey. After a few hasty prepara-

Mahomet
and Abu
Bekr escaped
to the cave
Thaur

Sheikh from Nejd, who had heard of their weighty consultation, and had come if haply he might help them to a right decision; so they invited him to enter. One proposed to imprison, another to expel, Mahomet. The old man from Nejd warmly opposed both suggestions. Then said Abu Jahl: 'Let us choose one courageous man from every family of the Coreish, and place in the hands of each a sharp sword, then let the whole slay him with the stroke of one man; so his blood will be divided amongst all our families, and the relatives of Mahomet will not know how to avenge it.' The old man of Nejd applauded the scheme, saying: 'May God reward this man; this is the right advice and none other.' So they separated, having agreed upon it. Gabriel forthwith apprised Mahomet of the design, who arose and made Aly lie down upon his bed. The murderous party came at dusk, and lay in wait about the house. Mahomet went forth, and casting a handful of dust at them, recited the first nine verses of Sura xxxvi., ending with the words, *and We have covered them so that they shall not see.* Thus he departed without their knowing what passed; and they continued to watch, some say till morning, thinking that the figure on the bed was Mahomet. As light dawned, they found out their mistake and saw that it was Aly. Others say they watched till some one passed and told them that Mahomet had left, when they arose in confusion and shook from their heads the dust which Mahomet had cast upon them.

tions, among which Abu Bekr did not forget to secure his remaining funds, they crept in the shade of evening through a back window, and escaped unobserved from the southern suburb. Pursuing their way south, and clambering in the dark up the bare and rugged ascent, they reached at last the lofty peak of mount Thaur, distant about an hour and a half from the city, and took refuge in a cavern near its summit.¹ Here they rested in security, for the attention of their adversaries would first be fixed upon the pathways north of Mecca on the Medina route.

The Cave referred to in the Coran

Several years after, Mahomet thus alludes in the Coran to the position of himself and his friend in the cave of mount Thaur :—

Sura ix

If ye will not assist the Prophet, verily God assisted him aforetime when the Unbelievers cast him forth, in the company of a Second only ; when they two were in the cave alone, when the Prophet said unto his companion, *Be not cast down, for verily God is with us.* And God caused to descend tranquillity² upon him, and strengthened him with hosts which ye saw not, and made the word of the Unbelievers to be abased ; and the word of the Lord, that is exalted, for God is mighty and wise.

Abu Bekr 'the Second of the two'

The 'sole companion,' or in Arabic phraseology *the Second of the two*, became one of Abu Bekr's most honoured titles. Hassân, the contemporary poet of Medina, thus sings of him :—

¹ The following is from Burckhardt : 'JEBEL THOR. About an hour and a half south of Mecca, to the left of the road to the village of Hosseynye, is a lofty mountain of this name, higher it is said than Djebel Nur. On the summit of it is a cavern, in which Mohammad and his friend Abu Bekr took refuge from the Mekkawys before he fled to Medina.' But he did not visit the spot, nor did Aly Bey.

In the Begum of Bhopal's *Pilgrimage to Mecca* (1870) the mountain is described. The pathway from Mecca is 'excessively rugged and difficult,' the pilgrim being obliged sometimes to crawl over the great rocks on his hands and knees. The entrance to the cave is still preserved, in what is believed to be its original state ; and the pilgrim acquires merit by forcing himself with difficulty, as the Prophet must have done, through the aperture, which is, 'not more than 1½ span in breadth ;' but a wide passage has been opened out at the other end of the cave. The hills are wild and bare ; huge masses of rock lie scattered about ; and nothing green is in sight, save occasionally wild thorny bushes, such as the Indian 'gookru.'

² *Shkinah*, the 'Shekinah' of the Jews ; repeatedly used in the Coran in this sense.

And the Second of the two in the glorious Cave, while the foes were searching around, and they two had ascended the mountain ;

And the Prophet of the Lord, they well knew, loved him,—more than all the world ; he held no one equal unto him.¹

Legends cluster around the cave. A spider wove its web across the entrance. Branches sprouted, covering it in on every side. Wild pigeons settled on the trees to divert attention, and so forth. Whatever may have been the real peril, Mahomet and his companion felt it, no doubt, to be a time of jeopardy. Glancing upwards at a crevice through which the morning light began to break, Abu Bekr whispered : ‘ What if one were to look through the chink, and see us underneath his very feet.’ ‘ *Think not thus, Abu Bekr !*’ said the Prophet ; ‘ WE ARE TWO, BUT GOD IS IN THE MIDST A THIRD.’²

Legends
regarding
Cave

Mahomet's
trust

Amr ibn Foheira, while in company with other shepherds of Mecca tending his master Abu Bekr's flock, stole away unobserved every evening with a few goats to the cave and furnished its inmates with a plentiful supply of milk. Abdallah, Abu Bekr's son, in the same manner at night brought them food cooked by his sister Asma. It was his

Food and
intelligence
conveyed
to them

¹ On Mahomet asking Hassán whether he had composed any poetry regarding Abu Bekr, the poet answered that he had, and at Mahomet's request repeated the lines in the text. Mahomet was amused, and laughed so heartily as even to show his back teeth. ‘Thou hast spoken truly, O Hassán,’ he said. ‘It is just as thou hast said.’

² The crowd of miracles that cluster about the cave are so well known as hardly to need repetition here. It is interesting, however, to note how far they are related by our early authorities. Wakidy says that after Mahomet and Abu Bekr entered, a spider came and wove her webs over the mouth of the cave. The Coreish hotly searched after Mahomet in all directions, till they came up to the entrance. When they looked, they said : *Spiders' webs are over it from the birth of Mahomet* ; and so they turned back. Again : ‘God commanded a tree and a spider to cover the Prophet, and two wild pigeons to perch at the entrance of the cave. When a company of two men from each clan of the Coreish, armed with swords, pursuing the Prophet, were now close to him, the foremost saw the pigeons, and returned to his companions, saying that he was sure from this that nobody was in the cave. The Prophet, hearing his words, blessed the pigeons, and made them sacred ever after in the Holy territory, where it is sacrilege to harm them.

There are other miraculous stories, but of somewhat later growth, regarding Abu Bekr putting his hand into the crevices of the cave to remove the snakes that might be lurking there, and being unharmed by their venomous bites.

business also to watch by day the progress of events and of opinion at Mecca, and to report the result at night.

Search
after
Mahomet

The city was in a ferment when the disappearance of Mahomet was first noised abroad. The chief men of the Coreish went to his house, and finding Aly there, asked where his cousin was. 'I have no knowledge of him,' replied Aly; 'am I his keeper? Ye bade him go, and he hath gone.' Then they repaired to Abu Bekr's house and questioned his daughter Asma.¹ Failing to elicit from her any information, they sent scouts in all directions, with the view of gaining a clue to the track and destination of the Prophet, if not with less innocent instructions. But the precautions of Mahomet and Abu Bekr rendered it a fruitless search. One by one the emissaries returned with no trace of the fugitives; and at last it was believed that, having gained a fair start, they had outstripped pursuit. The people soon reconciled themselves to the idea. They even breathed more freely now that their troubler was gone. The city again was still.

Mahomet
and Abu
Bekr
resolve to
quit the
cave

On the third night, the report of Abdallah satisfied the refugees that search had ceased, and busy curiosity relaxed. The opportunity was come. They could slip away unobserved now, and the sooner the better. Longer delay might excite suspicion, and the visits of Abdallah and Ibn Foheira attract attention to the cave. The roads were clear; they might leave at once fearless of pursuit, and travel without apprehension of arrow or dagger from the wayside enemy. Abdallah therefore received commission to have all things ready for the following evening. The guide was instructed to wander about with the two camels near the summit of mount Thaur. Asma prepared food for the journey, and in the dusk brought it in a wallet to the cave. In the hurry of the moment, she had forgotten the thong for fastening it. So, tearing her girdle in two, with one strip she closed the wallet, and with the other bound it to the camel's saddle. From this incident Asma is honourably known in Islam as 'She of

Prepara-
tions for
the journey

¹ Asma relates that, after the Prophet had gone, a company of the Coreish, with Abu Jahl, came to her house. As they stood at the door, she went forth to them. 'Where is thy father?' said they. 'Truly I know not where he is,' she replied. Upon which Abu Jahl, who was a bad and impudent man, slapped her on the face with such force that one of her earrings dropped.'

the two shreds.¹ Abu Bekr, not forgetful of his money, had safely secreted among his other property a purse of between five and six thousand pieces.

The camels were now ready. Mahomet mounted the swifter of the two, Al Caswa, thenceforward his favourite, with the guide; and Abu Bekr having taken his servant Ibn Foheira behind him on the other, they started. Descending mount Thaur, and leaving the lower quarter of Mecca a little to the right, they struck off by a track considerably to the left of the common road; and, hurrying westward, soon gained the vicinity of the sea-shore nearly opposite Ofsan. The day of the flight was the 4th Rabi I. of the first year of the Hegira,² or, by the calculations of M. Caussin de Perceval, June 20, A.D. 622; and the 53rd year of the Prophet's life.

They start
for Medina
June 20,
A.D. 622;

By daybreak they reached a Bedouin encampment, where an Arab widow sat at her tent-door with viands spread out for any chance traveller that might pass that way. Fatigued and thirsty, for it was now the hottest season of the year, they refreshed themselves with the food and draughts of milk offered by the lady. During the heat of the day, they rested at Codeid. In the evening, being now as they deemed at a safe enough distance, they fell into the common road. But they had not gone far when they met one of the mounted scouts returning from his search. Suraca (for that was his name), seeing that he had small chance single-handed of success against his four opponents, offered no opposition, but on the contrary pledged his word that, if permitted to depart

And safely
escape
pursuit

¹ There is a curious tradition that Abu Bekr's father, Abu Cuháfa, now so old that he could hardly see, visited his grand-daughters (Asma and Ayesha) after Abu Bekr as he thought had departed, to condole with them on being left without means, and bringing money with him to help them. To comfort the old man, Asma placed pebbles in a recess and, covering them with a cloth, put his hands upon them to make him believe that it was his son's money which he had left for their support; so the old man went away happy.

Asma was the mother of Ibn Zobeir, and lived to be over 100. See the touching scene with her son before he was killed in battle, A.H. 73.—*The Caliphate*, p. 340.

² *Hégira*, 'emigration.' Though referring *par excellence* to the flight of the Prophet, it is also applicable to all his followers who emigrated to Medina prior to the capture of Mecca; and they are hence called *Muhájirin*, i.e. the Emigrants, or Refugees. We have seen that they commenced to emigrate from the beginning of Moharram (the first month of the Era as subsequently settled in Omar's Caliphate) two months before.

in peace, he would not reveal that he had met them. The party proceeded. The Prophet of Arabia was safe.

Tidings reach Mecca of their flight

The first tidings that reached Mecca of the course actually taken by Mahomet, were brought, two or three days after his flight, by a traveller from the Bedouin camp at which he had rested. It was now certain, from his passing there, that he was bound for Medina.

Aly quits for Medina

Aly remained three days at Mecca after the departure of Mahomet, appearing every day in public, for the purpose of restoring the property placed by various persons in the Prophet's trust. He met with no opposition or annoyance, and then leisurely took his departure for Medina. The families of Mahomet and of Abu Bekr were equally unmolested. Zeinab continued for a time to dwell at Mecca with her unconverted husband. Rokeya had already gone with Othman to Medina. The Prophet's other two daughters, Omm Kolthum and Fatima, with his wife Sawda, were for some weeks left behind at Mecca.¹ Ayesha his bride, yet a child, with the rest of Abu Bekr's family and several other women, likewise remained in Mecca for a time.

Families of Mahomet and Abu Bekr unmolested at Mecca

Forbearance of Coreish

Mahomet and Abu Bekr trusted their respective clans to protect their families from insult. But no insult or annoyance was offered by the Coreish, nor was any attempt made to detain them; although it was not unreasonable that they should have been detained as hostages against any offensive movement from Medina. Hence we may, perhaps, be led to doubt the intensity of the hatred and cruelty which the strong colouring of tradition at this period attributes to the Coreish.

Thus ends the first great stage of the Prophet's life. The next scene opens at Medina.

¹ Omm Kolthum had been married to one of the sons of Abu Lahab, but was now living in her father's house. Zeinab's husband, Abul Aas, was still an unbeliever, and is said to have kept her back at Mecca in confinement. But subsequent events show that there was a strong mutual attachment.

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER VII

RELATION OF ISLAM TO CHRISTIANITY. TEACHING OF MAHOMET DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS AT MECCA. EFFECT PRODUCED BY HIS PREACHING

DURING the last three years of Mahomet's residence at Mecca about thirty new Suras appeared. Some of these are very long, extending over as many as fifteen to twenty pages; and, being in part composite, contain many later passages subsequently added to them at Medina. Before proceeding to a brief description of these Suras and the teaching they contain, I propose to pause for a little and describe the relation of Islam to Christianity.

Suras revealed during last three years at Mecca

It has been already said that in the chapters revealed before the tenth year of the Prophet's ministry we find few notices of the Gospels and the Christian faith. In the Suras, however, of the following three years, frequent mention of Christianity begins to appear. Indeed, the approach now made by Mahomet never afterwards became closer, nor did his acquaintance with it enlarge, or his views materially alter. It may, therefore, be not inappropriate here to review, from first to last, the relation of Islam to Christianity.

Relation of Islam to Christianity

Though Christians and the Messiah are frequently referred to throughout the Coran by name, yet there are but few sketches at any length either of the substance or doctrines of their Scriptures; so few, indeed, that it will be possible (and I doubt not to the reader interesting) to enumerate them all and give extracts of their strange and often fabulous details. The following, which is the fullest and earliest account of the Gospel narrative, was given by Mahomet shortly after his return from Tayif. From its subject the Sura is entitled *Maryam* or MARY, and opens thus:—

Notices of Christianity in Coran few and scattered

Earliest account of the Gospel narrative

A Commemoration of the mercy of the Lord to his servant ZACHARIAS;—
When he called upon his Lord with a secret invocation,
He said;—O Lord! as for me, my bones are decrepit, and my head
white with hoar hair.
And I have never prayed unto thee, O Lord! unheard.

Sura xix

Verily, I fear my kinsmen after me; and my wife is barren.

Wherefore grant unto me from thyself a successor;

Who shall be my heir, and an heir of the family of Jacob; and make him, oh Lord! well pleasing.

O ZACHARIAS! We bring thee good tidings of a son, whose name shall be John;

WE have not made any to be called by that name before.

He said;—O Lord! whence shall there be a son unto me, since my wife is barren, and I truly have reached the imbecility of old age?

The Angel said:—So shall it be. Thus saith thy Lord,—It is easy unto me; for verily I created thee heretofore when thou wast nothing.

He said;—Lord! give me a sign. The Angel said;—This is thy sign; thou shalt not speak unto any for three nights, though sound in health.

And he went forth unto his people from the chamber, and he motioned unto them that they should praise God morning and evening.

O John! Take the Book (of the Law) with power; and WE gave him wisdom as a child,

And compassion from us, and purity; and he was virtuous, and dutiful unto his parents; he was not overbearing nor rebellious.

Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he shall die, and the day he shall be raised to life!

And in the Book make mention of Mary, when she withdrew from her people into an eastern place;

And took a curtain withal to hide herself from them.

And WE sent unto her OUR SPIRIT, and he appeared unto her a perfect man,

She said;—I seek refuge in the Merciful from thee, if thou fearest God!

He said;—Nay, verily, I am a messenger of thy Lord sent to give unto thee a virtuous son.

She said;—How shall there be to me a son, and a man hath not touched me, and I am not unchaste.

He said;—So shall it be. Thus saith thy Lord;—It is easy with me; and we shall make him a sign unto mankind, and a mercy from us, for it is a thing decreed.

And she conceived him, and withdrew with him (*in the womb*) unto a distant place.

And the pains of labour came upon her by the trunk of a palm tree;

She said,—Would that I had died before this, and been forgotten out of mind!

And there cried one from below her;—Grieve not!—verily thy Lord hath provided beneath thee a fountain:—

And shake unto thee the root of the palm tree; it will drop upon thee ripe dates, ready plucked.

Wherefore eat and drink, and be comforted; and if thou seest any man, Say,—Verily I have vowed unto the Merciful a fast, and I will not speak to any man this day.

And she came with the child unto her people, carrying him. They said; O MARY! verily thou hast done a strange thing:

O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother unchaste.

And she motioned to the child. They said;—How shall we speak with him that is an infant in the cradle?

He (*the child*) said; Verily I am the servant of God; He hath given me the Book, and made me a Prophet;

And made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath commanded me (*to observe*) prayer and almsgiving while I remain alive;

And made me dutiful to my mother, and not overbearing nor wretched:—Peace be on me the day I was born, and the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised alive!

This is JESUS, the Word of truth, concerning whom they are in doubt.

It is not for God to take unto Him a Son:—glory be to Him!

When He hath decreed a matter, He only saith unto it BE, and it shall be.

The births of John and of Jesus are once again related, as well as the birth of the Virgin Mary, in a passage (Sura iii.) delivered at Medina only a few years before the death of Mahomet, on the occasion of an embassy from the Christian tribe of Najran.

Another detailed account of Christ's birth

Of the *life* of Christ the statements are altogether poor and scant. The object of His mission to the Jews was to confirm their Scriptures, to modify and lighten some of the burdens of the Mosaical law, and to recall them to the service of God. His miracles are thus described:—

Statements regarding the life of Christ

God shall say;—O JESUS! Son of Mary! call to mind my grace given to thee and to thy MOTHER, when I strengthened thee with the HOLY SPIRIT, that thou shouldest speak with men in the cradle, and in after life;—and when I taught thee the Scripture and Wisdom, and the Law and the Gospel;—and when thou formedst of clay like unto the figure of a bird by My permission;—and thou blewest thereupon and it became a bird by My permission; and thou didst heal the blind and the leper by My permission;—and when thou didst raise the dead by My permission;¹ and when I held back the children of Israel from thee at the time thou shewedst unto them evident signs, and the unbelievers among them said, Verily this is nought but manifest sorcery. . . .

Sura v

When the Apostles of JESUS said,—O JESUS, Son of MARY! is thy Lord able to cause a Table to descend upon us from Heaven? He said,—Fear God; if ye be faithful. They said,—We desire that we may eat therefrom, and that our hearts be set at ease, and that we may know that thou verily hast spoken unto us the truth, and that we may be witnesses thereof. Then spake JESUS, Son of MARY,—O God our Lord! send down unto us a Table from Heaven, that it may be unto us a Feast day²

These miracles are repeated in Sura iii., where Jesus is represented as adding: 'And I will tell unto you what ye eat, and that which ye store in your houses,' *i.e.* as a proof of his knowledge of the invisible.

Or '*Eed*,' *i.e.* a religious festival recurring periodically, referring ap-

unto the first of us and unto the last of us, and a sign from Thee; and nourish us, for Thou art the best of nourishers. And God said,—Verily I will send it down unto you; and whoever after that shall disbelieve amongst you; surely I will torment him with a torment, the like of which I shall not torment any other creature with.

And when God shall say,—O JESUS, SON OF MARY! didst thou speak unto mankind saying,—Take me and my mother for two Gods besides the Lord? He shall say,—Glory be to Thee! it is not for me to say that which I know to be not the Truth; if I had said that, verily Thou wouldest have known it. Thou knowest that which is in me, but I know not what is in Thee; verily Thou art the Knower of secrets. I spake not unto them aught but what Thou commandedst me, saying,—Worship God, my Lord and your Lord. . . .

Allusion to the Lord's Supper

This passage is remarkable as affording in the supernatural table which descended from heaven, a possible allusion, the only one traceable in the Coran, to the Lord's Supper. The tale is probably founded on some misapprehended tradition regarding 'the Table of the Lord.'¹ It only remains to add that Jesus escaped the machinations of his enemies, and was taken up alive to heaven. In a passage aimed at his Jewish enemies, Mahomet thus upbraids their rebellious forefathers :—

Jesus not crucified, but ascended to Heaven

Sura iv

. . . For their unbelief; and for that they have spoken against Mary a grievous calumny; and have said,—*Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus, Son of MARY, the Apostle of God.* And they slew him not, neither did they crucify him, but he was simulated (in the person of another) unto them. And verily they that have differed about him, are in doubt concerning this thing. They have no knowledge regarding it, but follow only a conjecture. And they slew him not, certainly. But God raised him up unto Himself; and God is the GLOARIOUS, the WISE! And of the People of the Book shall every one believe in him before his death, and in the day of Judgment he will be a witness against them.²

If Jesus was worshipped why not deities of Mecca?

In addressing the idolaters of Mecca, Mahomet appealed to the ministry and preaching of Jesus and His rejection by His people, as he was wont to appeal to the history of other prophets,

parently to the institution of the Lord's Supper as a feast to be perpetually observed.

¹ The prolific fancy of the Traditionists and Commentators has created a host of miraculous accompaniments to this table :—fruit from the trees of Paradise, bread, meat, with fish which, though broiled, were still alive, and which for the convenience of the guests threw aside their scales and bones! The poor, the lame, and the wretched, were invited to the feast, which lasted forty days. The commentators probably confused the Lord's Supper with the feeding by Jesus of the multitudes.

² 'The People of the Book,' i.e. Jews as well as Christians. There is a passage (Sura iii. 54) which would seem to imply the death of Jesus when on earth, but it is generally explained otherwise by the commentators.

in support of his mission. His adversaries retorted that, if Jesus, who appeared in human form, was worshipped by his followers, there could be nothing absurd in their praying through images, the representatives of heavenly powers, to God. The reply was revealed thus :—

When JESUS, Son of MARY, was proposed as an example, lo, thy people
shouted at thee,

And said, What ! Are our own gods better, or he ?

They have proposed this unto thee only as a cause of dispute ;

Yea, they are a contentious people !

Verily he was no other than a servant, to whom WE were gracious, and
made him an example unto the children of Israel :—

(And if WE pleased WE could make from amongst yourselves Angels to
succeed you upon earth :)

And verily he shall be for a sign of the last hour. Wherefore doubt not
thereof, and follow Me ; this is the right way.

And let not Satan mislead you, for he is your manifest enemy.

This was in fact the only position which Mahomet could consistently fall back upon. Some terms of veneration, in use among Christians, are indeed applied to Jesus, as 'the WORD of God,' and 'His SPIRIT which he breathed into Mary.' But the divine Sonship is steadfastly denied. The worship of Jesus by the Christians is placed in the same category as the supposed worship of Ezra by the Jews ; and, in one place, the doctrine of the Trinity is expressly reprobated. It is a Medina Sura :—

Ye people of the Book ! Commit not extravagancies in your religion ;
and speak not of God aught but the truth. For verily the Messiah,
JESUS, Son of MARY, is an Apostle of God, and His WORD which he placed
in Mary, and a Spirit from him. Wherefore believe in God, and in the
Apostles ; and say not, *There are Three*. Refrain : it will be better for
you. Verily the Lord is one God. Glory be to Him ! far be it from Him,
that there should be to Him a Son. To Him belongeth whatsoever is in
the Heavens and in the earth ; and He is a sufficient patron. The Messiah
disdaineth not to be a servant of God ; neither the Cherubim that draw
nigh unto Him.

It may well be doubted whether Mahomet ever had the means of knowing the real doctrines of Christianity. The few passing observations regarding our faith to be found in the Coran commenced at a period when his system was already, in great part, matured ; and they were founded on information meagre, fabulous, and crude. The whole of his historical knowledge¹

¹ The only trace of acquaintance with the period subsequent to the Ascension and the spread of Christianity is the story (Sura xxxvi.) of the three Apostles (one of whom is supposed to have been Peter) who went to Antioch, and of a convert suffering martyrdom there. The tale of the

Mahomet's
reply that
Jesus was
but a serv-
ant.
Sura xliii

Denies
divine
Sonship of
Jesus ; and
Trinity
denied

Sura iv

Sources of
Christian
information
imperfect
and decep-
tive

(for whatever he knew it was his practice to embody in his Revelation) is contained in the few extracts now before the reader ; and this, apocryphal and scanty in itself—especially so when compared with his familiar knowledge of Jewish Scripture and tradition—shows that the sources from which he derived his Christian information were singularly barren and defective. The rite of baptism is not even alluded to ; and, if there be an allusion to the Eucharist, we have seen it to be disfigured, and well nigh lost in fable. The doctrine of redemption through the death of Christ was apparently unknown (for if it had been known and rejected, it would doubtless, like other alleged errors, have been combated in the Coran), and his very crucifixion denied. We do not find a single ceremony or doctrine of Islam in any degree moulded, or even tinged, by the peculiar tenets of Christianity ; while, on the contrary, Judaism has given its colour to the whole system, and lent to it the shape and type, if not the actual substance, of many ordinances. But although Christianity is thus so remote from Islam as to have had practically no influence in the formation of its creed and ritual, yet in the *theory* of Mahomet's system it occupies a place equal, if not superior, to that of Judaism. To understand this we must take a brief review of the development of the system itself.

Christianity had little real influence on Islam ;

Yet theoretically stood equal if not superior to Judaism

Growth of Mahomet's teaching

At the outset of his ministry Mahomet professed no distinct relation with any previous religion, except perhaps with the purer element of Arabian worship said to have been derived from Abraham, though now grievously overlaid with idolatry and superstition. His mission was to recall the Arabs to the service of the true God and belief in 'the day of reckoning.'

Coran at first held to be simply the auxiliary of previous Scriptures

As time went on, he gained some scant acquaintance with the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians, and the religion founded thereon. The new revelation for Arabia was now announced as concurrent with the previous 'Books.' The Coran was described as being mainly an attestation, in the Arabic tongue and intended for the people of Mecca and its neighbourhood, of the preceding Scriptures. It was strictly auxiliary in its object and local in its action. From the attacks of his opponents, Mahomet took shelter under the authority of the sacred writings of the Jews and Christians—an authority admitted in some measure even by his adversaries. When his own work was condemned as a 'forgery' or 'antiquated tale,' the most common and most

seven Sleepers, who, with their dog, slumbered 309 years, and then awakening found to their astonishment the whole idolatrous world become Christian, can hardly come under this head. It will be found, with abundance of childish romance, in Sura xviii. Both Suras belong to the late Meccan period.

effective retort was :—‘ Nay, but it is a confirmation of the preceding Revelation, and a warning in simple Arabic to the people of the land.’ The number and the solemnity of such asseverations secured the confidence, or at least the neutrality, of both Jews and Christians.

But the teaching of Mahomet could not stop here. Was he not an Apostle, equally inspired with his predecessors? Was he not foretold as the last of the prophets, by Moses in the Pentateuch, and in the Gospel by Jesus? and if so, would not the catholic faith as now moulded by him remain permanent to the end of time? These conclusions were fast ripening in the mind of Mahomet; and their effect was to make the Coran rise superior in authority over both the Old Testament and the New. Not that he ever held it to be superior *in kind* to either. All three—the Coran, the Law, and the Gospel—are spoken of indifferently as ‘the Word of God,’ and the belief in them inculcated equally on pain of everlasting punishment.¹ But the Coran was the *latest* revelation; and, in so far as it pleased the Almighty to modify His preceding commands, it must be paramount.

But gradually acquires a superior and superseding character;

As the latest revelation of God’s will

In this latter phase again there are two stages. Mahomet did not at once substitute his own Revelation for the previous Scriptures. The Jew was still to follow the Law; and in addition he was to believe also in the New Testament and in the mission of Jesus. The Christian was to hold fast by his Gospel. But both Jew and Christian were to admit, as co-ordinate with their own Prophets and Scriptures, the apostleship of Mahomet and the authority of the Coran. The necessity, indeed, of conforming to their respective Revelations is urged upon Jews and Christians in the strongest terms. The Jews of Medina are repeatedly summoned ‘to judge by the Book,’ that is by the Old Testament; and are warned against the danger of accepting a part only of God’s Word, and rejecting a part. The following passages inculcate a similar duty on both Jews and Christians :—

I. Old Testament and Gospel enjoined on Jews and Christians respectively

SAY, Oh, ye people of the Book! ye do not stand upon any sure

Sura v

¹ The New Testament is called in the Coran *Injil* (Evangelium), and described as a revelation *given by God to Jesus*. It is evident that by ‘the Gospel’ Mahomet meant the sacred Scriptures in common use amongst the Christians of the day. He may have supposed that these Scriptures were ‘given’ to Jesus; or intended only that the doctrines of the Gospel were revealed by God to Jesus, and by him taught to the Apostles who afterwards recorded them. However this may be, the fact is in nowise affected, that Mahomet, when he speaks of ‘the Gospel’ and ‘the Book,’ means the canon of Scripture at the time in use among the People of the Book, the perusal and observance of which is strictly and unconditionally enjoined upon the Christians of the day.

ground until ye set up both the Law¹ and the Gospel, as well as that which hath been (now) sent down unto you from your Lord (*i.e.* the Coran).

And how will they (the Jews of Medina) make thee their judge, since they have already by them the Law, wherein is the command of God, and have not obeyed it! They will surely turn their backs after that; and they are not believers.

Verily WE have sent down the Old Testament, wherein are direction and light. The Prophets that professed the true faith judged the Jews thereby: and the Doctors and Priests did likewise, in accordance with the Book of God committed to their charge; and they were witnesses thereof. Wherefore fear not men, but fear Me; and sell not the signs of God for a small price. **AND WHOSEVER DOTH NOT JUDGE BY THAT WHICH GOD HATH REVEALED, VERILY THEY ARE THE UNBELIEVERS (*Kafirs*).** And WE have written therein for them;—Verily life for life, and eye for eye, and nose for nose, and ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and for wounding retaliation: and he that remitteth the same as alms, it is an atonement for him. **AND WHOSEVER JUDGEETH NOT BY THAT WHICH GOD HATH REVEALED, THEY ARE THE TRANSGRESSORS.**

And WE caused JESUS, the Son of MARY, to follow in their footsteps, attesting the Scripture, *viz.*, the Law which preceded him. And We gave him the Gospel wherein are guidance and light, attesting the Law given before it, a direction and an admonition to the pious:—and that the people of the Gospel (Christians) might judge according to that which God hath revealed therein. **AND WHOSEVER DOTH NOT JUDGE ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH GOD HATH REVEALED, THEY ARE THE WICKED ONES.**

And WE have revealed unto thee the Book of the Coran in truth, attesting the Scripture which precedeth it, and a custodian (*or* witness) thereof. Wherefore judge between them in accordance with what God hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires away from that which hath been given unto thee.

To every one have WE given a law and a way. And if God had pleased, He had made you all one People. But (*He hath done otherwise*) that He might try you in that which He hath severally given unto you. Wherefore press forward in good works. Unto God shall ye all return, and He will declare unto you that concerning which ye disagree.

Judge therefore between them according to what God hath revealed, and follow not their desires, and beware of them lest they tempt thee aside from a part of that which God hath revealed unto thee.

Thus the former revelations were to be believed in collectively as the Word of God by all the faithful of whatever sect. The Old and New Testaments were further to be followed implicitly, the former by the Jews, the latter by the Christians, and both were to be observed by Mahomet himself when deter-

¹ 'The Towrát,' which, as used in the Coran, means either the Pentateuch or the entire Scriptures of the Old Testament. According to the context here, the latter is intended.

mining their respective disputes. In contested and doubtful points, the Coran was to be the conclusive oracle.

In conformity with this expansive system, we find that at a period long anterior to the Hegira, Mahomet propounded in the Coran the doctrine that to every people a prophet had been sent, so that a grand catholic faith had pervaded all ages and revelations,—a faith which, in its purest form, had been held by the patriarch Abraham. This primitive religion, varying at each dispensation only in accidental rites, comprised, as its essential features, belief in the one true God, rejection of idolatry and of the worship of mediators as ‘sharers’ in the power and glory of the Deity, and implicit surrender of the will to God. Such surrender is termed ‘Islam ;’ and hence Abraham is called ‘the first of Moslems.’ This grand fact it was now the mission of Mahomet to reaffirm. Each successive dispensation had been abused by its votaries who in the course of time had turned aside from its catholic groundwork. They had magnified or misinterpreted rites intended to be but ancillary and external ; by perverting doctrines, they had turned the gift into a curse. Amidst the contending factions, truth might be discovered by the earnest inquirer, but by steps now difficult and uncertain. The Jew denounced the Christian, and the Christian the Jew. Some worshipped not only Jesus but his mother also ; others held both to be mere creatures. From the labyrinth of confusion and error it pleased the Almighty once again to deliver mankind. Mahomet was the Apostle of this grand and final mission, and, amid the clash of opposing authorities, his judgment was to be heard unquestioned and supreme. Thus in a passage revealed at Mecca :—

Grand catholic faith ;—the faith of Abraham

Perverted in the course of ages

Mahomet the final Restorer

He hath ordained unto you the religion which he commanded unto Noah ; and which WE have revealed unto thee, and which WE commanded Abraham and Moses and Jesus ; saying, Set up the faith and fall not into dissension. . . .

Sura xliii

And they fell not into dissension until after the knowledge (of divine revelation) had come unto them, out of enmity among themselves ; and if the Word from thy Lord had not gone forth (respiting them) unto a set time, the matter had been decided between them. And verily they that have inherited the Scriptures after them are in a perplexing doubt regarding the same.

Wherefore call them thereto (i.e. unto the catholic Faith) and be steadfast as thou hast been commanded, and follow not their desires ; and say,—I believe in all the Scriptures which God hath revealed ; and I am commanded to do justice between you. God is our Lord and your Lord. To us will be reckoned our works, and to you your works. There is no ground of difference or contention between us and you.

Thus in the growth of Mahomet’s opinions there was a pre-

II. Coran entirely supersedes previous Revelation;

Which towards the close of his career is hardly alluded to

Islam eventually diverges from the Bible

Jewish and Christian religions allowed only on sufferance

Knowledge whence derived?

liminary stage in which previous religions were on an equal footing with Islam, if only purged of their perversions. But in the final development of his creed, Mahomet makes the Coran rise triumphant over both the Law and the Gospel, and casts them unheeded into the shade. This, however, was not the result of any express teaching, but rather the necessary though tacit outcome of his system. The impression which would attribute to Mahomet either formal cancelment of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, or imputations against their genuineness and authority, is without foundation. No expression regarding either the Jewish or Christian Scriptures ever escaped the lips of Mahomet other than of implicit reverence.¹ It was the opposition of the Jews, and the martial supremacy of Islam, that imperceptibly led to the exclusive authority of Mahomet and the Coran. The change by which the Prophet dispensed with previous Revelations was made in silence. In the concluding, as in the earliest days of his mission, Mahomet hardly ever refers to the former Scriptures, whether Jewish or Christian. His scheme was now complete, and rested upon other pillars. The steps by which he had ascended were left far beneath, forgotten and uncared for. In his later years Islam diverged rapidly from all sympathy with the Bible. An appeal to previous Revelation would now have proved embarrassing, and silence was natural. Whatever effect the doctrines of Christianity properly understood might have had on Mahomet while yet inquiring and moulding for himself a creed, it is evident that long before the final settlement of Islam his system had become crystallised into a form which it was impossible for any new influences materially to alter. Argument now was out of place. Mahomet was the Prophet of God, and his word was law. Opposing doctrine must vanish before the divine command. The exclusive and intolerant position finally assumed by Islam is sufficiently manifest in the ban issued at the Farewell pilgrimage against Jews and Christians, who were for ever debarred the sacred rites and holy precincts of the Kaaba; and by the divine command to war against them until, in confession of the supremacy of Islam, they should consent to the payment of tribute.

From whence, we may now inquire, did Mahomet gain such a meagre and deceptive view of Christianity?

¹ In a treatise by the Author, entitled *The Testimony borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (published by the S.P.C.K.) it is shown that unequivocal testimony is borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures as current in the time of Mahomet; that the evidence extends equally to their genuineness and authority; and that there is not a hint anywhere throughout the Coran of their cancelment or interpolation.

A significant feature in the teaching of the Coran is that Jesus was not crucified ; but one resembling Jesus, and mistaken by the Jews for him. This is alleged not in contradiction of the Christians, but *in opposition to the Jews*, who gloried in the assertion that Jesus had been put to death by them. Hence it would almost seem that Mahomet believed his teaching on this head to accord with that of the Church ; and that he was ignorant of the fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith, the death of Christ, and redemption through it. The singular correspondence between the allusions to the crucifixion in the Coran and the wild speculations of certain early heretics has led some to conjecture that Mahomet derived his notions from a Gnostic source. But Gnosticism had disappeared from Egypt before the sixth century, and there is no reason for supposing that it had at any time gained a footing in Arabia. Besides, there is no affinity between the supernaturalism of the Gnostics and Docetæ, and the rationalism of the Coran. According to the former, the Deity must be removed far from the gross contact of evil matter : and the æon Christ, which alighted upon Jesus at his baptism, next ascend to its native regions before the crucifixion. With Mahomet (apart from some passages implying a higher origin), Jesus Christ was a mere man, wonderfully born indeed, but still an ordinary man ; a servant of the Almighty, as others had been before him. But although there is no ground for believing that Gnostic doctrines were taught to Mahomet, yet some of the strange fancies of those heretics preserved in Syrian tradition may have come to the ears of his Jewish converts, and have been by them adopted as a likely and convenient mode of reconciling both Jews and Christians to the new religion. The Israelite would have less antipathy to the catholic faith of Islam and the recognition of the mission of Jesus, if allowed to believe that Christians as well as Jews had been in error ; that his people had not, in fact, put Jesus the promised Messiah to a shameful death ; but that, like Enoch and Elijah, he had been received up into heaven. 'Christ crucified' was still, as in the days of Paul, 'a stumbling-block' to the Jews. But thus the stumbling-block might be removed ; and, without offence to his national pride, the Jew might confess his belief in a weak and mutilated Gospel. It was a compromise that might readily approve itself to a Jewish mind already unsettled by the prophetic claims of Mahomet.

Misleading teaching as to crucifixion

Connection of Mahomet's teaching with Gnosticism

Denial of crucifixion a compromise between Jews and Christians

By some again it has been attempted to trace the Christian element in the Coran to certain apocryphal gospels supposed to have been within the reach of Mahomet. But, though some few of its details do coincide with these spurious writings, its state-

Apocryphal gospels not accessible to Mahomet

Christian
tradition in
Arabia in-
sufficient

ments as a rule in no wise correspond.¹ Whereas, had there been a ready access to such books, we cannot doubt that Mahomet would (as in the case of Jewish history and legend) have borrowed largely from them. Others believe that Mahomet acquired his knowledge from no written source, but from Christian tradition in the peninsula. As his sole source of information, however, the indigenious tradition of Arabia was altogether insufficient for the purpose. There is no ground for believing that either at Mecca or Medina there existed anything of the kind from which could have been framed a narrative agreeing, as that of the Coran does in many particulars and even in some of its expressions, with the Gospels both genuine and apocryphal, while in others it follows if not outstrips the popular legend.

Syrian tra-
dition
likeliest
source of
Mahomet's
knowledge

But tradition, quite sufficient for this end, survived in the southern confines of Syria, and from thence no doubt reached Mahomet through some Jewish medium. The general outline of Christian story, as we find it in the Coran, having a few salient points in accordance with the Gospel and the rest filled up with fabulous matter, is just such as we might expect an inquiring Jew to learn from the traditions current amongst the lower classes in the Holy land. Something may have been learned from the Christian slaves of Mecca ; but these had generally been carried off in boyhood, and would remember little more than a few Scriptural histories, with perhaps some fragments of their creed. Either the Jew or the Christian may also have heard the opening of the Gospel of Luke, and communicated to Mahomet the story of the births of John and Jesus, as we find them in the Coran. It is also possible that some one may have repeated to Mahomet from memory, or read to him from a manuscript, the narrative in the Gospel containing these details ;—but this is mere conjecture.²

Trinity
of the
Coran ; and
the Virgin
Mary

It is not very apparent, from the few indistinct notices in the Coran, what Mahomet believed the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to be. In a passage already quoted, Christians are reprobated for ' taking Jesus and his Mother for two Gods besides the Lord.' It is hence concluded that the Trinity of the Coran is that of the Father, Mary, and Jesus. Such may have been the case, but it is not certain. The service of Mary had long been carried to the pitch nearly of divine worship ; the ' Orthodox ' party persecuted those who would not accord her the title ' Mother of God ; ' and Mahomet may have censured the Christians

¹ The ' Gospel of Barnabas ' is of course excepted, because it is the modern work of a Christian convert to Islam.

² It is very doubtful whether an Arabic translation of the Scriptures, or any part of them, was ever within Mahomet's reach, notwithstanding the traditions regarding Waraca having copied from them.

for thus virtually taking 'Jesus and his Mother for two Gods,' possibly without any advertence to the Trinity. On the other hand, the assertion that Mahomet believed Mary to be held by the Christians as divine is supported by the absence of any recognition of the Holy Ghost as a person in the Trinity. The only passage in which the Trinity is specifically mentioned makes no allusion whatever to the Holy Ghost; nor are the expressions 'the Spirit,' and 'the Holy Spirit,' which occur frequently in the Coran, used by Mahomet as if in the Christian creed they signified a divine person; for, as already shown, they usually mean Gabriel, the messenger of God's revelations to Mahomet. A confusion of Gabriel with the Holy Spirit may possibly have arisen in the Prophet's mind from Gabriel having been the medium of the Annunciation, while Christians at the same time hold that Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. The phrase is also repeatedly used in a more general sense as signifying *the Spirit that gives life and inspiration*. It was the divine 'Spirit' breathed into the clay which imparted life to Adam; and Jesus, who like Adam had no earthly father, is also spoken of as 'the SPIRIT FROM GOD' breathed into Mary. So also when it is said that God '*strengthened Jesus with the Holy Spirit,*' we may perhaps trace the use of current Christian speech, not inconsistent with Jewish ideas.¹

Holy Ghost unknown to Mahomet as person in the Trinity

The assurance with which Mahomet appeals to Jews and Christians as both in expectation of a promised prophet whom, if they would put aside their prejudices, they must at once recognise in himself 'even as they recognised their own sons,' is very singular, and must surely have been countenanced by converts from both religions. Two different and indeed incompatible expectations were adroitly combined into a cumulative proof of his own mission. The Jewish anticipation of their Messiah, and the perfectly distinct anticipation by the Christians of the second advent of Christ, were thus fused into a common argument for a coming prophet expected by both Jews and Christians and foretold in all the Scriptures;—which expected personage was the Prophet himself. That the promise of the Paraclete was capable of perversion we see in the heresy of Montanus; and it is probable that a garbled version of the same promise communicated to Mahomet may have given rise to the following passage:—

Jewish and Christian prophecies and expectations

Promise of the Paraclete;

And call to mind when JESUS, Son of MARY, said:—Oh Children of Israel! Verily, I am an apostle of God unto you, attesting the Book of the Law revealed before me, and giving good tidings of a prophet that shall come after me, whose name is AHMED.²

Sura lxi

¹ Compare Psalm li. 12: 'Uphold me with thy free Spirit.'

² *Ahmed* is from the same root as *Muhammed*, signifying 'the Praised.'

And of the
Messiah
perverted

The prophecy of Moses to the Israelites, that 'God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me,' may also plausibly have been adduced by some perverted Jew in favour of the Arabian prophet, and other predictions referring to the Messiah were doubtless forced into a similar service. That he was the Prophet promised to both Jews and Christians lay indeed at the root of the catholic system so strongly inculcated by Mahomet in the middle stage of his course. He persuaded himself that it was so : and the assumption, once admitted, retained possession of his mind.

Mahomet
the Pro-
phet looked
for by both
people

Meccans
taunt him
with being
prompted
by others

From these remarks we may conclude that, while some information regarding Christianity may have been drawn from Christian slaves or Arabs, Mahomet gained his chief knowledge of Christianity from Syria, through the same Jewish medium which, at an earlier period, furnished the more copious details of Jewish history. His adversaries at Mecca did not conceal their suspicion that the prompting from which the Scriptural and legendary tales proceeded was not solely that of a supernatural inspiration. They imputed to him the aid of strangers :—

Sura xlv

From whence shall there be an Admonition for them ; for, verily, there hath come unto them an evident Apostle ;—

Then they turn from him and say,—*One taught by others, a Madman!*
And the Unbelievers say ; *Verily this is a fraud which he hath fabricated, and other people have assisted him therein.* But they say that which is unjust and false. * * *

Sura xxv

They say ; *These are Fables of the ancients which he hath had written down ; which are dictated unto him morning and evening.*

SAÿ: HE hath revealed it who knoweth that which is hidden in Heaven and in Earth. HE is forgiving and merciful. * * *

Sura xvi

And again: Verily WE know that they say,—*Surely a certain man teacheth him.* But the tongue of him whom they hint at is foreign, while this Revelation is in the tongue of simple Arabic.

Prompt-
ings of
ignorant
Jews trans-
formed into
'divine
Coran'

Whatever the rough material, its passage through the alembic of 'simple Arabic' converted it, to the Moslem eye, into a gem of un-earthly water. The recitations of some credulous and ill-informed Jew reappeared as the inspirations of the Almighty dictated by Gabriel, the noblest of his heavenly messengers. The wild legend and the garbled Scripture story of yesterday comes forth on the morrow as a portion of the divine and eternal Coran.

Style of
Coran
during this
period

Teaching of Mahomet during his last three years at Mecca.—
The Coran continues during the last three years of Mahomet's residence at Mecca to be made up, as before, of arguments in

See John xvi. 7, where *παράκλητος* may in some imperfect or garbled translation have been rendered by the equivalent of *περικλυτός*.

refutation of the errors and cavillings of his fellow-citizens ; of the proofs of God's omnipotence, omniscience, and unity ; of vivid picturings of the judgment day and of heaven and hell ; and of legendary and Scriptural stories. The later Suras contain repeated allusions to the approaching emigration. The great verities of a minute and over-ruling providence and final retribution are sometimes illustrated by passages of grand imagery and true poetry. The bold impersonation of THUNDER in the following quotation may be taken as a sample :—

Verily God changeth not his dealings with a People, until they change that which is in their souls. And when God willeth evil unto a People, there is none that can turn it away, nor have they any protector besides Him. Sura xiii

It is He that showeth you the Lightning to inspire fear and hope, and raiseth the heavy clouds. The THUNDER doth celebrate His praise ; and the Angels also, from awe of Him. And He sendeth forth His bolts ; and shivereth therewith whom He pleaseth, while they are wrangling about God :—for He is terrible in might !

He alone is rightly invoked. And those whom they invoke beside Him, they answer them not at all, otherwise than as one stretching forth both hands unto the water that it may reach his mouth, and it reacheth it not. So is the invocation of the unbelievers founded only in error. And to God boweth down in worship whatsoever is in the Heavens, and in the Earth, voluntarily or by force ; and their shadows likewise in the morning and in the evening.¹

SAY :—Who is the Lord of the Heavens and of the earth ? Say—God. Say :—Wherefore, then, do ye take besides Him guardians who have no power to do even their own selves a benefit nor an injury ? Say :—What ! Are the blind and the seeing equal ! What ! is the darkness equal with the light ? Or do they give unto God partners that create like unto His creation, so that the creation (of both) should appear alike in their eyes ? Say :—God is the Creator of all things. He is the ONE ; the AVENGER !

He bringeth down from on high the rain, and the valleys flow, each according to its measure ; and the flood beareth the swelling froth. And from that which men melt in the furnace to make ornaments or vessels withal, there ariseth a scum, the like thereof. Thus doth God compare the truth with falsehood. As for the scum it passeth away like the froth : but that which benefiteth mankind remaineth on the Earth.

Thus doth God put forth similitudes.

The positive precepts of this period are still very limited. Positive precepts
The five times of prayer are said to have been enjoined by God at the period of the Prophet's ascent to heaven one or two years before the Hegira. The flesh of animals was permitted for food

¹ A conceit Mahomet was fond of. The shadows perform obeisance to God, being long and prostrate in the morning, upright during the day, and again elongated in prostration in the evening.

Superstitions denounced

But Meccan pilgrimage and rites maintained

if killed 'in the name of the Lord,'¹ but the blood, and that which dieth of itself, and the flesh of swine, were strictly prohibited.² While some superstitions were denounced, and the practice of compassing the Kaaba naked was proscribed as a device of Satan,³ the rites of pilgrimage were now enjoined as of divine authority and in themselves propitious to piety. It is probable that the Jews strongly objected to this new feature of the reformed faith, and we accordingly find a laboured defence of it :—

Sura xxvii

And call to remembrance when WE gave unto Abraham the site of the Temple (at Mecca) ; saying,—Associate not in worship anything with Me, and purify My house for them that compass it, and for them that stand up and bow down to pray.

And proclaim unto Mankind a pilgrimage, that they may come unto thee on foot, and upon every lean camel,⁴ flocking from every distant road :—that they may testify to the benefits they have received, and commemorate the name of God, on the appointed days, over the brute beasts which WE have given them for a provision :—Wherefore eat thereof and feed the needy and the poor. Then let them stop the neglect of their persons,⁵ fulfil their vows, and compass the ancient House.

This do. And he that honoureth the sacred ordinances of God it is well for him with his Lord. The flesh of cattle is lawful unto you excepting that which hath been read unto you. Wherefore abstain from the pollutions of idols, and abstain from false speech, following the catholic faith respecting God, not associating any with Him ; for he that associateth any with God is like that which falleth from the heavens, and the birds snatch it away, or the wind bloweth it into a distant place.

Hearken :—whosoever honoureth the Sacrifices of God, verily they proceed from piety of the heart. From them (the victims) ye derive benefits until the appointed time : then they are brought for sacrifice unto the ancient House.

And unto every People have WE appointed rites, that they may commemorate the name of GOD over the brute beasts with which He hath provided them. And your GOD is ONE GOD ; wherefore submit thyself unto him and bear good tidings unto the humble :—Unto those whose

¹ The reason was the same as that which led to the Apostolical admonition to abstain from 'pollutions of idols,' and 'meats offered to idols,' and points to the Arab practice of slaying their animals as a sacrifice to, or in the name of, their deities.

² The influence of Jewish habit and precept is here manifest. It is possible that some of the pieces quoted above as Meccan may have been in reality of later date ; they may have been given forth at Medina after the emigration, and relegated to passages of corresponding tenor in Meccan Suras.

³ Sura vii. This was connected with the *Homs* : see Introduction, p. cii

⁴ Lean and famished from the long journey.

⁵ *i.e.* they might now again pare their nails, shave their heads, &c., and resume their ordinary dress. See Introduction, p. lxxxviii.

hearts, when God is mentioned, tremble thereat ;—and unto those that patiently bear what befalleth them and observe prayer, and spend in alms of that W^B have provided them with.

And the Victims have W^B made unto you as ordinances of God. From them ye receive benefit. Commemorate therefore the name of God over them as they stand disposed in a line, and when they fall slain upon their sides, eat thereof, and give unto the poor, both to him that is silent and him that beggeth. Thus have W^B given thee dominion over them that ye may be thankful. Their flesh is not accepted of God, nor yet their blood : but your piety is accepted of Him.

Few and simple as were the precepts of Mahomet up to this time, his teaching had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep and waged mortal combat with heathenism, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life, and faith that suffered sacrifice and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience sake.

Effect produced by teaching by Mahomet

From time beyond memory, Mecca and the whole peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influences of Judaism, Christianity, or philosophical inquiry, upon the Arab mind had been but as the ruffling here and there of the surface of a quiet lake ; all remained still and motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty, and vice. It was a common practice for the eldest son to take to wife his father's widow, whom he inherited with the rest of the estate. Pride and poverty had introduced among them (as they have among the Hindoos) the crime of female infanticide.¹ Their religion was a gross idolatry ; and their faith the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings whose goodwill they sought to propitiate and whose displeasure to avert, rather than the belief in an over-ruling Providence. The Life to come and Retribution of good and evil as motives of action were practically unknown.

Previous dark and torpid state of Mecca and Arabia

Thirteen years before the Hegira, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced ! A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of One God, and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed a Revelation from Him ; praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon through His mercy, and striving to follow after good works, almsgiving, purity, and justice. They now lived under a constant sense of the omnipotent power of God, and of His providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at

Effect produced on converts by Mahomet's ministry at Mecca

¹ It is stringently proscribed in the Coran, and disappeared with the progress of Islam.

each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. And, above all, the new existence in which they exulted was regarded as the mark of His especial grace ; while the unbelief of their blinded fellow-citizens was the hardening stamp of reprobation. Mahomet was the minister of life to them, the source under God of their new-born hopes ; and to him they yielded an implicit submission.

Their sacrifices and abandonment of home

In so short a period Mecca had, from this wonderful movement, been rent into two factions which, unmindful of the old landmarks of tribe and family, arrayed themselves in deadly opposition one against the other. The Believers bore persecution with a patient and tolerant spirit. And though it was their wisdom so to do, the credit of a magnanimous forbearance may be freely accorded. One hundred men and women, rather than abjure their precious faith, had abandoned home and sought refuge, till the storm should be overpast, in Abyssinian exile. And now again a still larger number, with the Prophet himself, were emigrating from their fondly-loved city with its sacred Temple, to them the holiest spot on earth, and fleeing to Medina. There, the same marvellous charm had within two or three years been preparing for them a brotherhood ready to defend the Prophet and his followers with their blood. Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of the men of Medina ; but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian prophet that they too awoke from their slumber, and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life.

Description of his followers by Mahomet Sura xxv

The virtues of his people may be described in the words of Mahomet himself :—

The servants of the Merciful are they that walk upon the earth softly ; and, when the ignorant speak unto them, they reply, PEACE !

They that spend the night worshipping their Lord, prostrate and standing ;—

And who say,—‘O our Lord ! turn away from us the torment of hell ; verily, from the torment thereof there is no release. Surely it is an evil abode and resting place !’

Those that when they spend are neither profuse nor niggardly, but take a middle course ;—

Those that invoke not with God any other god ; and slay not a soul that God hath forbidden, otherwise than by right ; and commit not fornication ;

(For he who doeth this is involved in sin,—his torment shall be doubled unto him in the day of judgment ; therein ignominiously shall he remain for ever,—Excepting him that shall repent and believe and perform righteous works ; as for them God shall change their evil things into good things ; and God is forgiving and merciful. And whoever repenteth and doeth good works, verily, he turneth unto God with a true repentance).—

They who bear not witness to that which is false; and when they pass by vain sport, they pass it by with dignity :—

They who, when admonished by the Revelations of the Lord, fall not down as if deaf and blind ;—

Who say, 'O our Lord. Grant us of our wives and children such as shall be a comfort unto us, and make us examples unto the pious !'

These shall be rewarded hereafter with lofty mansions, for that they persevered ; and they shall be accosted therein with welcome and salutation :—

For ever therein :—a fair abode and resting place!

PART SECOND

MAHOMET AT MEDINA

CHAPTER VIII

ARRIVAL AT MEDINA. BUILDING OF THE MOSQUE

A.H. I.—*June A.D. 622 to January A.D. 623*

AT the close of last Chapter we left Mahomet and Abu Bekr, on the second day of their escape from the cave, already beyond the reach of pursuit, and rapidly wending their way towards Medina. Leaving devious paths, they had now taken the common road to Syria which runs near the shore of the Red Sea. On the morning of the third day a small caravan was observed in the distance. The apprehensions of the fugitives were soon allayed, for Abu Bekr recognised at the head of the caravan his cousin Talha returning from the north. Warm was the greeting, and loud the congratulations. Talha opened his stores, and, producing two changes of fine white Syrian raiment, bestowed them on the Prophet and on his kinsman also. The present was welcome to the soiled and weary travellers; yet more welcome was the assurance that Talha had left the Moslems at Medina in eager expectation of their Prophet. So Mahomet and Abu Bekr proceeded on their journey with lighter hearts and quickened pace; while the merchant resumed his way to Mecca. There Talha disposed of his venture; and so little were the Coreish even now disposed to molest the believers, that, after quietly adjusting his affairs, he set out unopposed some little time afterwards for Medina, with the families of Mahomet and Abu Bekr.

Flight of
Mahomet
and Abu
Bekr

They meet
Talha by
the way

After travelling some way farther by the common road,

Progress
towards
Medina

Mahomet and his companion struck off at Bedr to the right, thus taking the eastern route, which passes through Medina to the north. The valleys which they crossed, the defiles and steeps they ascended, and the spots on which the fugitive Prophet performed his devotions, have all been preserved in tradition by the pious zeal of his followers. When now within two days of Medina, one of the camels, worn out by the rapid travelling, was unable to proceed. A chief of the tribe residing in the neighbourhood supplied a fresh camel in its stead, and also furnished a guide.

They ap-
proach the
city

At length, on the morning of Monday, eight days after quitting Mecca, the little party crossed the valley of Akick in the mountain tract some five miles S.W. of Medina.¹ The heat was intense; for the summer sun, now approaching the meridian, beat fiercely on the bare ridges and stony defiles, the desolation hardly relieved by an occasional clump of wild acacia. Climbing the opposite ascent, they reached the crest of the mountain. Here a scene opened on them which contrasted strangely with the dark frowning peaks and naked rocks, in the midst of which for hours they had been toiling. It was the ancient Yathreb, *Al Medina*—‘the city,’ as by pre-eminence it was now to be called—surrounded by verdant gardens and groves of the graceful palm. What thoughts must have crowded on the mind of the Prophet and his faithful friend as they gazed on the prospect below them!

Medina
and its en-
viron

¹ The Wady al Akick has a north-westerly direction, and discharges its waters into Al Ghâba, the basin in which collects the drainage of the Medina plain. Burton describes the mountains on this side as you approach Medina, as composed of ‘inhospitable rocks, pinnacle-shaped, of granite below, and in the upper parts, fine limestone;’ but about the Wady al Akick the surface is ‘black scoriaceous basalt.’ According to Burckhardt, ‘all the rocky places’ about Medina, ‘as well as the lower ridge of the northern mountainous chain, are covered by a layer of volcanic rock; it is of a bluish-black colour, very porous, yet heavy and hard, not glazed like Schlacken, and contains frequently small white substances in its pores of the size of a pin’s head, which I never found crystallised. The plain has a completely black colour from this rock, and the pieces with which it is overspread. I met with no lava, although the nature of the ground seemed strongly to indicate the neighbourhood of a volcano.’ Burckhardt adds that lava from a volcanic outburst, A.D. 654, passed not far from Medina, on the east; but he attributes the volcanic substances about the town and the valley Akick to some earlier eruption.

Medina is due north of Mecca, but, as the shore bends somewhat to the west, it is by so much further from the sea—about 100 miles.

Widespread is the view from the heights on which they stood, and well fitted to stir the heart of any traveller. The vast plain of Nejd stretches away towards the south-east as far as the eye can reach; while the eastern horizon is bounded by a low line of dark hills. To the north the prospect is arrested, at the distance of a few miles, by the granite masses of Ohod, a spur of the great central chain. A well-defined watercourse, flowing from the south-east under the nearest side of Medina, is lost among the north-eastern hills, the cliffs of which approach and even touch the city on the north. To the right, Jebel Ayr, a range nearly corresponding in distance and height with that of Ohod, projects into the plain and bounds it on the south-west. Closely embracing the city and in contrast with the rugged rocks on which our travellers stand, are the orchards of palm-trees for which from time immemorial Medina has been famous. One sheet of gardens, the loveliest and most verdant spot in all the plain, extends uninterruptedly to Coba, a suburb little more than two miles to the south. Around the city in every direction date-trees and green fields meet the eye, interspersed here and there with the substantial houses and fortified hamlets of the Jewish tribes, and the suburban residences of the Beni Aus and Khazraj. The tender reminiscence of childhood, when he visited Medina with his mother, was perhaps the first thought to cross the mind of Mahomet. But more pressing considerations were now at hand. How would he be received? Were his adherents powerful enough to secure for him an harmonious welcome? Or would either of the contending factions, by whom that peaceful plain had been so often stained with blood, be roused against him? Before putting the friendship of the city to the test, it would be prudent to retire to one of the suburbs, and Coba lay invitingly before them. 'Lead us,' said Mahomet to the guide, 'straight to the Beni Amr at Coba, and draw not yet nigh unto Medina.' So, leaving the path to Medina on the left, they descended at once into the plain and made for Coba.

Mahomet
makes for
Coba

For several days the city had been in expectation of its illustrious visitor. Tidings had been received of Mahomet's disappearance from Mecca; but no one knew of his three days' withdrawal to the cave. He ought before now to have arrived, even with the delay of a devious route. Every

People of
Medina
watch for
his coming

morning a company of Medina converts and refugees from Mecca had for some days gone forth a mile or two on the Mecca road, and posted themselves on the first rocky ridge to the west. There they watched till the heat of the ascending sun drove them from the unsheltered spot to their homes. On this day they had gone out as usual and after a fruitless watch had retired to the city, when a Jew, catching a glimpse of the three travellers wending their way to Coba, shouted from the top of his house: 'Ho! ye Beni Cayla! he has come! he whom ye have been looking for has come!' Every one now hurried forth from the city to Coba. A shout of joy arose from the Beni Amr (the Ausite tribe inhabiting Coba) when they found that Mahomet had come amongst them. The wearied travellers, amidst the greeting of old friends and smile of strange faces, alighted and sat down under the shadow of a tree.² It was Monday, June 28, A.D. 622. The journey had been accomplished in eight days. The ordinary time is eleven.³

He arrives
12th Rabi.
A.H. 1.
June 28,
A.D. 622

Is joyfully
received

The joyful news spread speedily over the city. The very children in the streets cried out with delight: 'Here is the Prophet! He is come! He is come!' The converts from all quarters flocked to Mahomet and made obeisance to him. He received them courteously, and said: 'Ye People! show your joy by giving your neighbours the salutation of peace; send portions to the poor; bind close the ties of kinsmanship; and offer up your prayers whilst others sleep. Thus shall ye enter Paradise in peace.' It was shortly arranged that Mahomet should for the present lodge at Coba with Kolthum, a hospitable chief, who had already received many of the emigrants on their first arrival. A great part of every day was also spent in the house of Sad son of Khaithama, one of the Ausite 'Leaders.' There Mahomet

Lodges
with
Kolthum
at Coba

¹ Cayla, mother of the two patriarchs of the Beni Aus and Khazraj.

² This quarter was called *Aliya*, or upper Medina, from its more elevated position, and included Coba and some other hamlets with the Jewish settlements of the Coreitza and Nadhr. When Mahomet was seated on Abu Bekr's camel, few knew which was the Prophet, till the sun's rays fell upon him, and then Abu Bekr rose to place him in the shade. Out of this, probably, has grown the tradition that the people of Medina recognised the Prophet from his body *casting no shadow*. Abu Bekr was known to some of the citizens, as he used to pass through Medina on his mercantile trips to Syria.

³ It *can* be travelled by swift dromedaries in five.

received such persons as wished to see him, and conferred with his friends on the state of feeling in Medina.¹ Abu Bekr was entertained by Khârija, another chief, in the adjoining suburb of Al Sunh. He showed his gratitude by marrying the daughter of his host, and permanently took up his residence with the family.²

Abu Bekr lodges at Al Sunh

A day or two after, Aly who, as we have seen, remained only three days at Mecca after the disappearance of Mahomet, reached Medina and was accommodated by Kolthum in the same house with the Prophet. It was soon determined that Mahomet might with safety enter Medina. The welcome he had already received was warm, and to all appearance unanimous and sincere. Elements of disaffection might be slumbering among the Jews and other unconverted citizens; but they were unnoticed amid the universal joy and the first impulses of generous hospitality. Mahomet, therefore, stopped only four days at Coba, from Monday till Friday. During this period, he laid the foundations of a mosque at Coba, which at a later period was honoured in the Coran with the name of the 'Mosque of godly fear.'³

Aly joins Mahomet

Mahomet remains four days at Coba

On the morning of Friday, Mahomet mounted his favourite camel Al Caswa, with Abu Bekr seated behind him, and surrounded by a crowd of followers proceeded towards the city. He halted at a place of prayer in the vale of the Beni Salim, a Khazrajite tribe, and there performed his first Friday service with about a hundred Moslems; the spot is still shown to pilgrims, and is marked by a building called in memory of the event the *Masjid al juma*, or 'the Friday mosque.' On this occasion he added an address composed chiefly of religious exhortation and eulogy of the new faith. Friday was thenceforward set apart for the weekly celebration of public worship.

Departure for Medina

Performs public service by the way

¹ Sad being a bachelor, the unmarried refugees were accommodated in great numbers in his house, so that it went by the name of the 'bachelors' hostelry.'

² That is to say, his wife remained at her father's house, and he used to visit her there when it was her turn to enjoy his society, for he had other wives. Khârija was joined in *brotherhood* (a practice explained below, p. 167) to Abu Bekr.

³ Sura ix. Mahomet enlarged it after the Kibla was changed, and advanced its foundations and walls 'to their present position.' With his followers he aided in the pious work by carrying the materials. He used to visit it every Saturday, and attached to the saying of prayers therein the merit of the *Omra* or Lesser pilgrimage.

Entry into
the city

When the service was finished, Mahomet resumed his progress. He had sent a message to the Beni Najjâr, his relatives through Salma mother of Abd al Muttalib, to escort him into the city. But there was no need of special invitation. The tribes and families of Medina came streaming forth, and vied one with another in showing honour to their noble visitor. It was indeed a triumphal procession. Around the camels of Mahomet and his immediate followers, rode the chief men of the city clad in their best raiment and in glittering armour. The cavalcade pursued its way through the gardens and palm-groves of the southern suburb; and as it now threaded the streets of the city, the heart of Mahomet was gladdened by the incessant call from one and another as they flocked around: 'Alight here, O Prophet! We have abundance with us, means of defence and weapons and room. Abide with us.' So urgent was the appeal that sometimes they seized hold of Al Caswa's halter. Mahomet answered them courteously and kindly: 'The decision,' he said, 'rests with the camel; make way for her; let her go free.' It was a stroke of policy. His residence would be hallowed in the eyes of the people as selected supernaturally; while the jealousy which otherwise might arise from the quarter of one tribe being preferred to that of another would thus receive decisive check.

His camel
halts at an
open yard

Onwards Al Caswa moved, with slackened rein; and, leaving the larger portion of the city to the left, entered the eastern quarter inhabited by the Beni Najjâr. There finding a large and open court-yard with a few date-trees, she halted and sat down.¹ The house of Abu Ayub was close at hand. Mahomet and Abu Bekr, alighting, inquired who the owner was. Abu Ayub stepped forward and invited them to enter. Mahomet became his guest, and occupied the lower storey of his house for seven months, until the Mosque and his own apartments were ready. Abu Ayub offered to resign the upper storey in which his family lived, but Mahomet preferred the lower as being more accessible to his visitors.²

Mahomet
occupies
Abu
Ayub's
house;

¹ To invest the incident with a supernatural air, it is added that Mahomet having left the rein quite loose, Al Caswa got up again and went a little way forward; perceiving her error, she returned straightway to the selfsame spot, knelt down, and, placing her head and neck on the ground, refused to stir.

² Abu Ayub used to tell that he and his wife accidentally broke a

When Mahomet had alighted, Abu Ayub lost no time in carrying into his house the saddle and other property of the travellers; while Asad ibn Zorara, a neighbour, seized Al Caswa's halter and conducted her to his court-yard where he kept her for the Prophet. Dishes of choice viands, bread and meat, butter and milk, presently arrived from various houses; and this hospitality was kept up daily so long as the Prophet resided in the house.

And is treated hospitably

The first concern of Mahomet was to secure the plot of land on which Al Caswa halted. It was a neglected spot: on one side was a scanty grove of date-trees; the other, covered here and there with thorny shrubs, had been used partly as a burial-ground and partly as a yard for tying camels up. It belonged to two orphan boys under the guardianship of Asad, who had rudely constructed a place of worship there, and had already held service within its roofless walls. The Prophet called the two lads before him, and desired to purchase this piece of ground from them that he might build a mosque upon it. They replied: 'Nay, but we will make a free gift of it to thee.' Mahomet would not accept the land in gift; and so the price was fixed at ten golden pieces, which Abu Bekr by desire of Mahomet paid over to the orphans.

Purchases the yard

Arrangements for the construction of a great Mosque upon the spot, with two houses adjoining—one for his wife Sawda, the other for his intended bride, the precocious maiden Ayesha—were forthwith set on foot. The date-trees and thorny bushes were cut down. The graves were dug up, and the bones elsewhere deposited. The uneven ground was carefully levelled, and the rubbish cleared away. A spring, oozing in the vicinity, rendered the site damp; it was blocked up and drained, and at length quite disappeared. Bricks were prepared, and other materials collected.¹

Prepares to build Mosque and habitation

Having taken up his residence in Abu Ayub's house, Mahomet bethought him of his family, and despatched his

Is joined by his family from Mecca

water-pot in the upper story, and, having wiped up the water as best they could with their clothes, hurried down to Mahomet's apartment in alarm lest any of it should have dropped on him. Abu Ayub was killed at Constantinople, A.H. 52.

¹ The court-yard in the time of Ibn Jubeir contained fifteen date-trees; they are now (according to Burton) reduced to a dozen in a railed-in and watered space, called 'Fatima's garden'; it also contains the remains of a venerable lote-tree. The 'Prophet's well' is hard by.

adopted son Zeid with a slave named Abu Râfi¹ on two camels, with a purse of 500 dirhems, to fetch them from Mecca. They met with no difficulty or opposition, and returned with Sawda the Prophet's wife and his daughters Fatima and Omm Kolthum. The latter had been married into the family of Abu Lahab, but, being separated from her husband, had for some time been living in her father's house. Zeinab, the eldest daughter, remained at Mecca with her husband Abul Aas. Rockeya, the second, had already emigrated to Medina with her husband Othman. Zeid brought with him his own wife Omm Ayman (Baraka) and their son Osâma. Accompanying the party were Ayesha and her mother Omm Rumân, with other members of the family of Abu Bekr, who had no doubt supplied the purse to Zeid. They were conducted by Abu Bekr's son and Talha.² The family of Abu Bekr, including Ayesha, was accommodated in a neighbouring house. Sawda must have lived with Mahomet in the house of Abu Ayub; from the time of her marriage with Mahomet, shortly after the death of Khadija, she had been for three or four years his only wife.³

And by
Abu Bekr's
family

Sawda,
Mahomet's
wife

Unwhole-
some
climate of
Medina

The climate of Medina contrasts strongly with that of Mecca. In summer, the days are intensely hot (a more endurable and less sultry heat, however, than that of Mecca); but the nights are cool and often chilly. The cold in winter is for the latitude severe, especially after rain which falls heavily in occasional but not long-continued showers; and even in summer these are not infrequent. Continuous rain always deluges the adjacent country. The drainage is sluggish, and after a storm the water forms a widespread lake in the open space between the city and the southern suburb. The humid exhalations from this and other stagnant pools, and perhaps also the luxuriant vegetation in the neighbourhood, render the stranger liable to attacks of intermittent fever, which is often followed by swellings and tumours in the legs and stomach,

¹ He had been the servant of Mahomet's uncle Abbas, and was given by him to Mahomet, who freed him on his bringing tidings of the conversion of Abbas.

² Talha, as we have seen, met the Prophet on his way to Medina. He married Omm Kolthum, daughter of his cousin Abu Bekr; and with him he always seems to have been on terms of close intimacy.

³ Fatima probably lived with Sawda. Eighteen months afterwards she was married to Aly.

and is sometimes fatal. The climate is altogether unfavourable.¹

Refugees
suffer from
Medina
fever

Accustomed to the dry air and parched soil of Mecca, the Refugees were sorely tried by the dampness of the Medina summer and the rigour of its winter. Mahomet himself escaped, but most of his followers were prostrated by fever. Abu Bekr and his household suffered greatly. Ayesha once related to Mahomet how they all wandered in their speech when struck down by the fever, and how they longed to return to their home at Mecca; on which Mahomet, looking upwards, prayed: 'O Lord! make Medina dear unto us, even as Mecca, or even dearer. Bless its produce, and banish far from it the pestilence!'²

To raise the spirits of his followers thus home-sick and suffering, and draw them into nearer relations with the Medina converts, Mahomet established a new fraternity between the Refugees and Citizens. 'Become brethren every two and two of you,' he said; and he set the example by taking Aly, or as others say Othman, for his brother. Accordingly each of the Refugees selected one of the Citizens as his brother. The bond was of the closest description, and involved not only a special devotion to each other's interests in the persons thus associated, but in case of death the 'brother' inherited the property of the deceased. From forty to fifty Refugees were thus united to as many Citizens of Medina. This peculiar custom lasted for about a year

'Brother-
hood' be-
tween
Refugees
and
Citizens

¹ The cold in winter is severe; ice and snow are not unknown in the adjoining hills. This is natural if, as Burton says, the city be 6,000 feet above the sea; but this estimate is surely exaggerated. The height, however, must be great, as the rise of the mountains is rapid and continuous from the sea-shore on the western side, and the descent insignificant on the eastern. The city is much exposed to storms. We learn from Burton that 'chilly and violent winds from the eastern deserts are much dreaded; and though Ohod screens the town on the N. and N.E., a gap in the mountains to the N.W. fills the air at times with rain and comfortless blasts. The rains begin in October, and last with considerable intervals through the winter; the clouds, gathered by the hill tops and the trees near the town, discharge themselves with violence; and at the equinoxes, thunderstorms are common. At such times the Barr el Munákah, or the open space between the town and the suburbs, is a sheet of water, and the land about the S. and S.E. wall of the faubourg, a lake.'

² So prevalent was the fever that at one time Mahomet was almost the only person at prayers able to stand up; but he said, 'the prayer of one who sits is worth only half the prayer of him that stands;' so they all made efforts to stand.

and a half, when Mahomet, finding it after the victory of Bedr to be no longer necessary for the encouragement of his followers, and probably attended with some inconvenience and unpopularity as overriding the ties of nature, abolished the bond and suffered inheritance to take its usual course.

Abd al
Rahmân
and Sad

The following incident shows at once the familiar and friendly footing on which the strangers were received by the Citizens, and something also of their manner of life. Abd al Rahmân, on his first reaching Medina, was lodged by Sad, a convert of Medina to whom Mahomet had united him in brotherhood. As they sat at meat Sad thus addressed his guest: 'My brother! I have abundance of wealth; I will divide with thee a portion. And behold my two wives! choose which of them thou likest best, and I will divorce her that thou mayest take her to thyself to wife.' And Abd al Rahmân replied: 'The Lord bless thee, my brother, in thy family and in thy property!' So he married one of the wives of Sad. Mahomet, meeting him with the nuptial attire of saffron upon him, said: 'How is this?' Abd al Rahmân replied: 'I have married me a wife from amongst the people of Medina.' 'For what dower?' 'For a small gold piece the size of a date stone.' 'And why,' replied Mahomet, 'not a goat?'¹

Building
of the
Mosque;

During the first half-year of Mahomet's residence at Medina his own attention and that of his followers was mainly occupied by the construction of the Mosque and of houses for themselves. In the erection of the Mosque all united with enthusiasm. Their zeal was stimulated by the Prophet, who himself took an active share in the work, and joined in the song which the labourers chanted with loud and cheerful voice, as they bore along their burdens:—

¹ The story is meant to illustrate the poverty of Abd al Rahmân when he reached Medina, as contrasted with his vast wealth in after days. 'At his death he left gold in such quantities that it was cut with hatchets till the people's hands bled.' He had 1,000 camels, 3,000 sheep, and 100 horses. He had issue by sixteen wives, besides children by concubines. Each of his four widows inherited 100,000 dinars.

The Prophet warned him once against his penuriousness: 'Oh son of Awf! Verily thou art amongst the rich, and thou shalt not enter Paradise but with great difficulty. Lend therefore to thy Lord, so that He may loosen thy steps.' And he departed by Mahomet's advice to give away all his property. But the Prophet sent for him again, and told him by Gabriel's desire that it would suffice if he used hospitality and gave alms.

O Lord ! there is no joy but the joy of Futurity.

O Lord ! have mercy upon the Citizens and the Refugees !¹

The site (on the southern portion of the ground which he had just purchased) is the same as that now occupied by the great Mosque and its spacious court ; but the style and dimensions were naturally less ambitious. It was built four-square, each side being one hundred cubits or somewhat less in length.² The foundations to three cubits above the ground were of stone, the rest of the wall of brick. The roof was supported by trunks of palm-trees, and covered over with branches and rafters of the same material. The Kibla, or quarter whither the faithful directed their faces when they prayed, was towards Jerusalem. While leading the public prayers Mahomet stood close to the northern wall looking in that direction ; his back was thus turned upon the congregation, who facing similarly fell into rows behind him. When the prayers were ended, he turned himself round to the people, and, if there was occasion for an address, made it then. To the south, opposite the Kibla, was a doorway for general entrance.³ Another opened on the west, called *Báb Rahmah*, the Gate of mercy, a name it still retains. A third gate, on the eastern side, was reserved for the use of Mahomet ; south of this entrance, and forming part of the eastern wall of the Mosque itself, were the apartments destined for the Prophet's wives. The house of Ayesha was at the extreme S.E. corner, the road into the Mosque passing behind it. That of Sawda was next ; and beyond it were the apartments of Rockeya and her husband Othman, and of the two other daughters of Mahomet. In later years, as Mahomet added to the number of his wives, he provided each with a room or house, on the

And apart-
ments for
Prophet's
wives

¹ The couplet ran thus :

Ilâhum lâ áish illâ áish al ákhira.

Ilâhum arham al Ansâr w'al Muhájira.

Mahomet joining in the chorus would transpose the last words into *al Muhájira w'al Ansâr*, thus losing the rhyme. Having been taunted at Mecca with being a mere rhapsodist, he affected to have no ear for poetry, and tradition gives this as an instance. The fine rhythm of the Coran was thus held to be all the stronger evidence of divine origin.

² According to some authorities the breadth was only sixty or seventy cubits.

³ This was probably closed when the Kibla was turned towards the south. It corresponded with the doorway afterwards opened out to the north.

same side of the Mosque. From these he had private entrances into the Mosque, used only by himself. The eastern gate still bears in its name *Báb al Nisa* ('Women's porch') the memory of these arrangements. To the north of the Mosque the ground was open, and on that side a place was appropriated for the poorer followers of Mahomet who had no other home. They slept in the Mosque, and had within its courts a sheltered bench or pavement. Mahomet used to send them portions from his table; and others followed his example. But in a few years victory and the spoil of war caused poverty and distress to disappear, and 'the men of the bench' survived in memory alone. To be near the Prophet, his chief Companions by degrees erected houses for themselves in the vicinity, some of which adjoined upon its court and had doors opening directly on it.

The
Mosque,
how used

It is to the north of the Mosque, as thus erected by Mahomet, that subsequent additions have been mainly made. The present magnificent buildings occupy probably three or four times the area of the primitive temple. Asked why he did not build a more substantial roof to the House of prayer, he made answer thus: 'The thatching is as the thatching of Moses, rafters and branches; verily man's estate is more fleeting even than this.' But though rude in material, and insignificant in dimensions, the Mosque of Mahomet is glorious in the history of Islam. Here the Prophet and his Companions spent most of their time: here the daily service, with its oft-recurring prayers, was first publicly established: and here the great congregation assembled every Friday, listening with reverence and awe to messages from Heaven. Here the Prophet planned his victories; here he received embassies from vanquished and contrite tribes; and from hence issued edicts which struck terror amongst the rebellious to the very outskirts of the Peninsula. Hard by, in the apartment of Ayesha, he yielded up the ghost; and there, side by side with his first two Successors, he lies entombed.

Type of
Saracenic
architec-
ture

The simple building, with its slender arches and tapering supports, laid the type for Saracen architecture. It is the model after which buildings for prayer throughout the Moslem world (finding their ideal at Agra in the exquisite Motee Masjid) have been everywhere constructed. The graceful minaret and dome, such as we find them in the Taj Mehal,

may perhaps be traced to the same original. Certainly, if these are the legitimate developments of the Medina mosque, Art owes some of its most signal triumphs to this humble germ.¹

The Mosque and its adjoining houses were finished within seven months from Mahomet's arrival, and by the winter Sawda was established in her new abode. Shortly after the Prophet celebrated his marriage with Ayesha at her father's house in the suburb of Al Sunh, and then brought her to the bridal home, alongside that of her 'sister' Sawda. Ayesha was Mahomet's only virgin bride; all his other wives had been married before they came to him; and Ayesha, though three years affianced, was still a girl only ten years of age. But her accomplishments both of body and mind must have developed rapidly. Slim and graceful, her ready wit and arch vivacity set off attractions of no ordinary charm.

Houses of
Sawda and
Ayesha

Marriage
with
Ayesha

Thus, at the age of fifty-three, a new phase commenced in the life of Mahomet. Hitherto, limiting himself to a single wife, he had shunned the indulgences, with the cares and discord, of polygamy. The unity of his family was now broken, never again to be restored. Thenceforward his love was to be shared by a plurality of wives, and his days spent alternately between their several houses; for Mahomet had no separate apartment of his own.

Change
wrought in
Mahomet's
domestic
life

For some time we may suppose that the girl of ten or eleven years would require at the hands of Mahomet the solicitude of a father, rather than the devotion of a husband. He conformed to the childish ideas of his bride who carried her playthings with her to her new abode; and at times even joined in her nursery games. As time went on she enthralled the heart of Mahomet; and, though exposed while still a girl to the rivalry of many beautiful women, she maintained her supremacy in the Prophet's harem to the end.

Ayesha's
influence
over him

By uniting himself to a second wife Mahomet made a serious movement away from Christianity, by the tenets and

Polygamy
creates
divergence
from Chris-
tianity

¹ The idea is Sprenger's. He thinks it probable that only the inner part of the temple (that namely next the northern wall, and which formed the 'bachelors' bench,' or hostelry), was originally roofed over; and that the rest, or about two-thirds of the area, as in modern mosques, was open to the heavens.

practice of which he must have known that polygamy was forbidden. Christianity, however, had little influence over his life; and the step was not repugnant to Judaism, the authority of which he still recognised, and which in the example of many illustrious kings and prophets would afford powerful support to his procedure. But, whatever the bearing of this second marriage, it was planned by Mahomet in a cool and unimpassioned moment three years before at Mecca. And it may be doubted whether the propriety of interfering with the license of Arabian practice, and enforcing between the sexes the stringent limitations of Christianity, was at any time even debated in his mind.



MEDINA AS IT NOW IS.

CHAPTER IX

STATE OF PARTIES AT MEDINA. FIRST TWO YEARS OF
MAHOMET'S RESIDENCE THERE

A.H. II.—A.D. 623

As the enthusiasm of the Citizens gradually subsided, various sentiments began to be entertained towards their visitor by different sections of the community; and there arose in consequence a new disposition of parties in the city. Let us glance for a moment at each of these.

Parties at
Medina

The disciples of Mahomet who forsaking house and home had preceded or now followed him into exile, were called by the title, soon to become illustrious, of MUHĀJERĪN or Refugees. They are already known to the reader as a devoted band, forward to acknowledge Mahomet not only as their prophet but now also as their chief and leader. Upon them he could depend to the uttermost.¹

I. *Muhā-*
jerfīn, or
Refugees.

Next come the converts of Medina. Bound to Mahomet by fewer ties of blood or fellowship, they did not yield to the Refugees in loyalty to his person, or in enthusiasm for the faith. They had made less outward sacrifice; but their pledge at Acaba had involved them in serious risks, as well at home should their fellow-citizens resent or disown the engagement, as from the men of Mecca. In short, they had compromised themselves almost as deeply as the Refugees. Bound by their oath only to defend Mahomet in case of attack, they soon practically identified themselves with the Refugees in

II. *Anṣār*,
or converts
of Medina

¹ *Muhājir* (participle of the same root as *hijra*) signifies one who has emigrated, or fled from his home, for the faith. Among the 'Refugees' are reckoned not only those who having quitted Mecca were now at Medina, but also all who subsequently joined Mahomet (whether from Mecca, Abyssinia, or elsewhere) up to the conquest of Mecca A.H. VIII. The roll of the Refugees then closed; for Mecca itself being converted, the merit of emigrating from it ceased.

offensive measures against his enemies at Mecca. Hence they were styled ANSAR, 'Helpers' or 'Allies.' But as in process of time Medina was entirely converted, and as Mahomet found other auxiliaries amongst the Arab tribes, it will be more convenient to speak of them simply as Citizens or men of Medina.¹

Enmity of
Aus and
Khazraj
suppressed
by Islam

The ancient feuds of the Beni Aus and Khazraj were almost forgotten among the converts from those tribes. Acceptance of the faith required that as Moslems they should acknowledge not only the spiritual but also the temporal authority of Mahomet, and, holding subordinate every distinction of race and kindred, regard each other as brethren. Having surrendered to his will and government, little room was left for tribal rivalry. Still, the memory of long-standing jealousy and strife was not always suppressed by the lessons of religion; and believer was sometimes arrayed against believer in unseemly if not dangerous contention. We have no precise data for calculating the proportion of the inhabitants thus actively ranged on the side of Mahomet. The 75 adherents who pledged themselves at Acaba were but the representatives of a larger body even then existing at Medina; and the cause of Islam had since that time been daily gaining ground. We may conclude that the professed converts at this time numbered several hundreds.

Converts at
Medina
numerous

Abu Aamir
and fol-
lowers go
off to Mecca

There was at Medina one Abu Aamir who had travelled in Syria and other countries, and from his secluded habits was called the *hermit*. This man professed to be a teacher in religion; and he challenged Mahomet with having 'super-added doctrines of his own to the 'Faith of Abraham.' Offended at the popularity of the new religion, and sympathising rather with the people who had cast forth the upstart Prophet, Abu Aamir, with about twenty followers, retired to Mecca.² Eventually he died an exile in Syria.

¹ Before Mahomet's death, the two terms *Ansâr* and *Citizens* became convertible; that is to say, all the citizens of Medina were ostensibly converted and so became *Ansârs*.

² When Mahomet denied his imputations against Islam, Abu Aamir abused him as 'a poor solitary outcast.' 'Nay,' replied the Prophet, 'that will be thine own fate, thou liar!' He took a prominent part with fifty followers against Mahomet in the battle of Ohod, in which his own son Hantzala, a devoted Moslem, was killed fighting on the other side. After the conquest of Mecca, he retired to Tayif. When Tayif gave in its

The body of unconverted inhabitants were at the first neutral, or at least outwardly passive. There was no active opposition, nor, as at Mecca, any open denial of Mahomet's supernatural claims; neither was his temporal authority over his adherents questioned. The constitution of society enabled him to exercise absolute and unquestioned control over his own people, without for the present arrogating jurisdiction over others. But although there was nowhere apparent hostility, and the whole body of the citizens, unbelievers as well as converts, held themselves bound in honour to fulfil the pledge of protecting the Exile, yet it was not long before an undercurrent of jealousy and discontent amongst a large and influential part of the community set in against him. We have seen that Abdallah ibn Obey, chief of the Khazrajites and the most powerful citizen in Medina, was already aspiring to the sovereign power when his hopes were blighted by the arrival of Mahomet.¹ Around Abdallah rallied a numerous party sceptical of the Prophet's claims and unfriendly to the extension of his rule; but these were unable to check the mysterious influence of the Stranger, or stem the tide of his popularity. The circle of his adherents steadily expanded, and soon embraced nominally the whole city. Idolatry disappeared, and scepticism, overmatched, was forced to hide its head.

Mahomet's
authority
recognised
over his
own ad-
herents

Idolatry
and scepti-
cism sup-
pressed

adhesion to Mahomet, he proceeded to Syria; and there died (in fulfilment of the Prophet's curse) 'a solitary wretched outcast.' He seems to have been an ascetic, and is described by Sprenger as the leader of a party who adhered to the Jews as Proselytes of the Gate.

¹ *Vide* p. 112. The following incident is related of him: One day Mahomet saddled his ass and went forth to inquire after Sad ibn Obáda, who was sick. By the way he passed Abdallah sitting with a circle of his followers under the shade of his house. Mahomet's courtesy would not permit him to pass without speaking; so he alighted, and saluted him and sat a little while beside him reciting some portion of the Coran, and inviting him to the faith. Abdallah listened quietly till he ended; then he said: 'Nothing could be better than this discourse of thine, if it were true. Now, therefore, do thou sit at home in thine own house, and whosoever cometh to thee preach thus unto him, and he that cometh not unto thee refrain from troubling him with that which he dislikes.' Mahomet went on his way to the house of Sad, downcast at what Abdallah, the enemy of God, had said unto him. Sad, perceiving him dispirited, inquired the cause. Mahomet told him what Abdallah had said. Then Sad replied: 'Treat him gently, for I swear that when God sent thee unto us, we had already strung pearls to crown him, and he seeth that thou hast snatched the kingdom out of his grasp.'

III. The
Disaffected

Real belief in Mahomet was not, however, always of such rapid growth. Doubts and jealousies possessed the hearts of many; and in private, and at convenient distance, found free expression. They had foolishly espoused an Exile's cause which would make them run the gauntlet of all Arabia; and for what return? Only to lose their liberties, and bring themselves under bondage to a foreign usurper! The class which cherished these sentiments are named Hypocrites in the Coran. But *hypocrisy* and *disaffection* are, in its vocabulary, nearly synonymous; and, as the views of this party developed into political rather than into religious antagonism, it will be more correct to call them the DISAFFECTED. Such outward conformity, cloaking an opposition ill concealed, was more dangerous than open animosity. The class soon became peculiarly obnoxious to Mahomet; he established through his adherents a close and searching watch over both their words and actions; and in due time followed up his espionage by acts which struck dismay into the hearts of the disaffected.¹

IV. The
Jews

On an entirely different footing were the three JEWISH TRIBES established in their settlements without the city. Mahomet had acknowledged the divine authority of their religion, and had even rested his claim, in an important degree, upon the evidence of their Scriptures and the testimony of their learned men. One of the objects nearest his heart was a federal union with the Jews. His feasts, his

¹ Ibn Ishac thus describes them: 'When the Jewish doctors were filled with hatred and envy of Mahomet, because God had chosen a prophet from amongst the Arabs, there joined them certain men of the Beni Aus and Khazraj, who were in reality little removed from heathenism and unbelief, only that Islam had by its prevalence overpowered them. So they took the faith outwardly as a shield unto them from death; but in secret they were traitors, and their hearts were with the Jews in their rejection of the Prophet.'

Tradition delights to hold up this class to scorn, in stories such as this:—'Jallás, the hypocrite, said privately of Mahomet's teaching: "Verily, if this man speak the truth, we are all worse than asses." Omeir, his ward, a believer, overheard the saying and told it to Mahomet; Jallás went also to Mahomet, and swore by the day of judgment that Omeir lied. Whereupon, a passage of the Coran, convicting Jallás of falsehood, was revealed." There are also tales of the 'disaffected' being ignominiously expelled from the Mosque, and even from the clubs or social circles of the citizens; but all such tales are to be received with caution, owing to the natural bias against this class.

fasts and ceremonies were, up to this time, framed in close correspondence with Jewish custom. His very Kibla, the Holy of holies to which he and his people turned five times a day while they prostrated themselves in prayer, was Jerusalem. No concession, in fact, short of the abandonment of his claim to the prophetic office, was too great to gain the Jews over to his cause.

It was natural that Mahomet, holding these sentiments, should desire to enter into a close and binding union with the Jews, and this he did in a formal manner shortly after reaching Medina. He associated them with himself by a treaty of mutual obligation drawn up in writing, which bound his followers on the one hand, and the Jews on the other, and confirmed the latter among other things in the practice of their religion and the secure possession of their property. The main provisions are the following :—

Treaty of
Medina
with the
Jews

‘IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL !

‘THE CHARTER of Mahomet the Prophet, in behoof of the Believers, and whosoever else joineth himself unto them and striveth with them for the faith. The Refugees shall defray the price of blood shed among themselves, and shall ransom honourably their prisoners. The Believers of the various tribes of Medina (named in detail) shall do the same. Whosoever is rebellious, or seeketh to spread enmity and sedition, the hand of every man shall be against him, even if he be a son. No Believer shall be put to death for the blood of an infidel ; neither shall any infidel be supported against a Believer. Whosoever of the Jews followeth us shall have aid and succour ; they shall not be injured, nor shall any enemy be aided against them. No unbeliever shall grant protection to the people of Mecca, either in person or property, nor interpose between the Believers and them.¹ Whosoever killeth a Believer wrongfully the Moslems shall join as one man against him.

‘The Jews shall contribute with the Moslems, while at war with a common enemy. The Jewish clans in alliance with the several tribes of Medina are one people with the Believers.² The Jews will profess their religion, the Moslems theirs. As with

¹ *Unbeliever* here refers apparently to that portion of the population of Medina which had not yet submitted to Mahomet’s claims, and who are thus brought indirectly within the covenant.

² Said to refer to Jewish proselytes from the Aus and Khazraj ; but the expression may also mean Jews who had simply attached themselves to those tribes.

the Jews, so with their adherents. No one shall go forth to war excepting with the permission of Mahomet ; but this shall not hinder any from seeking lawful revenge. The Jews shall be responsible for their expenditure, the Moslems for theirs ; but, if attacked, each shall come to the assistance of the other. Medina shall be sacred and inviolable for all that join this treaty. Strangers, under protection, shall be treated as their protectors are ; but no female shall be so received save with consent of her kindred. Controversies and disputes shall be referred for the decision of God and His prophet. None shall join the men of Mecca or their allies ; for verily the engaging parties are bound together against every one that shall threaten Medina. War and Peace shall be made in common. He that goeth forth shall be secure ; and he that sitteth at home shall be secure ;—saving him that transgresseth and committeth wrong. And verily God is the protector of the righteous and the godly ; and Mahomet is His Prophet.’¹

Ill-will
grows up
between
Mahomet
and Jews

We are not told when this treaty was entered into, but it probably was not long after the arrival of Mahomet at Medina. For a short time the Jews remained on terms of cordiality with their new ally ; but it soon became evident that Judaism could not go hand in hand with Islam. The position of Mahomet was no longer negative : his religion was not a mere protest against error and superstition. It was daily becoming more positive, exclusive, and exacting in its terms. The Prophet rested his claims on the predictions of the Jewish Scriptures ; yet he did not profess to be the Messiah of the Jews ;—the Messiah had already appeared in the person of Jesus, and had been rejected by their forefathers. He was another, and a greater Prophet, also foretold in their Book. The Jews knew this well. They recognised in him the promised Prophet, ‘even as they recognised their own sons ;’ yet, out of jealousy, and wilful blindness, they rejected him, in like manner as they had rejected their own Messiah. This was the position Mahomet now held, and to concede it was simply to abandon Judaism. Thus Judaism

¹ The translation is in an abridged form. There is throughout frequent reiteration that upright and honest dealing shall be observed, and whoever transgresses shall do so at his own risk, &c. There are some references to the hostility of Mecca and also anticipatory allusions to religious wars—additions made apparently at a later time. As there is no reason to believe that the original or any copy was preserved, we can only regard the treaty as transmitted by memory, and this will account for spurious clauses and loose expression.

and Islam came rapidly into antagonism. In short, a Jew, in joining Mahomet, of necessity now abandoned his ancestral faith, and went over to another. With few exceptions, however, the Jews remained steadfast, and fearlessly testified that their Scriptures contained no warrant for the assumptions of the Ishmaelite;—the prophet that was to come—their long-looked for Messiah—should be not of Arabian, but of Jewish blood, and of the lineage of David. The cherished and now disappointed hope of the Jews, that they would find in Mahomet a supporter of their faith, soon changed into bitter hostility. What availed his oft-repeated professions of respect for their ancient prophets and of allegiance to their Scriptures, when he now so openly contradicted their clearest testimony?

The few faithless Jews, whom Mahomet was able (by what inducements we shall see by-and-by) to gain over, were of the utmost service to his cause. They are constantly referred to as his 'Witnesses.' They bore evidence that the person and character of Mahomet agreed in every particular with the prophetic description in their Books. Their brethren, jealous that the gift of prophecy should pass from them to another people, had hid the proofs of the Prophet's mission, or, by 'dislocating' them from the context, had misinterpreted the clear prediction. Of the believing few alone, the eyes were open. Judicial blindness had seized the rest; a 'thick covering' enveloped their hearts, and rendered them seared and callous. They followed in the footsteps of their forefathers. What but unbelief and rebellion should be looked for from the descendants of those who murmured against Moses, killed their prophets, and rejected the Messiah?

They are inveighed against as blind and stiff-necked

Such was the plausible reasoning by which Mahomet succeeded with his own followers in setting aside the adverse testimony of the Jews. Yet the Jews were a constant cause of trouble and anxiety. They plied him with questions of which the point was often difficult to turn aside. The very people to whose testimony he had so long appealed in the Coran, proved now a stubborn and standing witness against him.¹ The

The Jews a standing cause of annoyance to Mahomet

¹ Tradition gives a great variety of tales in illustration, but they are all cast in a mould of ridicule and contempt of the Jew, who is represented as always coming off the worst, humbled and abased. We may be allowed to doubt whether the scales did not oftener turn on the other side. Mahomet evidently smarted at this period under the attacks of the Jews.

Jewish tribes were also allied each with some one or other of the Medina clans; they had stood by them in trouble, and repeatedly shed blood in their defence. Sympathy in such a direction, especially amongst the doubting and disaffected Citizens, was dangerous to Mahomet. He resolved to rid him of the risk and trouble; and he was not long in finding means to gain his end.

Notices of
them in
Coran

Meanwhile, the portions of the Coran given forth at this period teem with invectives against the Israelites. The tales of their forefathers' disobedience, folly, and idolatry are reiterated at wearisome length; and the conclusion is continually drawn that the descendants of so flagitious and incorrigible a race must themselves be equally incorrigible and flagitious. All this led, as will be explained in the following chapter, to the early and decisive secession of Mahomet from the Jews, his abandonment of their customs and institutions, and the widening of the breach between the two.¹

¹ We find, for example, such injunctions as the following in the Suras of this period: 'Neither the Jews nor the Christians will rest satisfied with thee, until thou followest their religions. SAY,—Verily, God is the Guide, if thou followest their desires, thou shalt not have God for thy Master nor thy Helper.'—Sura ii. 114.

CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, AND MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS DURING
THE FIRST AND SECOND YEARS OF THE HEGIRA

A.H. I. & II.—A.D. 623

THE new faith touched the outer life of its votaries at every step. Five times a day, as commanded in the Heavenly journey,¹ the Believer, however occupied, must turn aside to prayer. The rite remains to the present day the same, and consists in repeating a few petitions or short passages, with fixed ceremonial of genuflexion and prostration. The prayers by day were ordinarily said in the Mosque by the Prophet and such as dwelt in the vicinity. They might with equal merit be offered anywhere, at home or by the way, singly or in companies, but ever at the stated times. The service was invariably led by Mahomet himself, when present; in his absence, by the chief person in the assembly, or by any one else charged by the Prophet with the duty. The nightly prayers were generally said at home.²

The five
times of
daily
prayer



Lustration had by this time become the necessary preliminary to prayer. When prescribed is uncertain. It may have been at Mecca; but, however that may be, it was evidently borrowed from the Jews, with whose teaching the ordinances established by Mahomet respecting ceremonial impurity and ablutions very closely correspond.

Lustration
prelimi-
nary to
prayer

¹ See p. 117.

² When the fast of Ramadhan was appointed, the people in their zeal gathered in the Mosque at a late hour for the nightly prayer; and, fancying that the Prophet had fallen asleep, coughed at his door as a sign for him to issue forth. He came out, and said: 'I have observed for some days your coming for the nightly prayer into the Mosque, until I feared that it would grow by custom into a binding ordinance; and, verily, if it were so commanded, my people could not fulfil the command. Wherefore, pray ye at eventide in your own houses. Truly, the best prayer is that which a man offers up in his own house, excepting only the prayers which are commanded to be offered up in the Mosque.'

Daily
round of
prayer

The Believer's life has thus from the first been a daily round of religious observance. At dawn he begins the day with lustration, preliminary to the matin prayer; at mid-day he must for the moment leave his employment for the same duty; in the afternoon, and again when the sun has set, the ceremony is repeated; and the day is closed when darkness has set in by the same rite with which it opened. With this duty nothing may interfere. Saints and sinners join in the stereotyped form; no engagement, good or bad, however inappropriate to the occasion, may interfere with the performance of these devotions; and the neglect to observe them is an abnegation of the faith and insult to the majesty of Islam which demands interposition of the temporal arm.

Friday, or
public
service

The daily prayers are not necessarily congregational. They may be offered up by the worshippers singly or in companies, in the mosque, at home, or by the way. But at mid-day of Friday, the service took a more public form, at which the Believers as a body, unless detained by sufficient cause, were expected to attend. The usual prayers were on this occasion followed by an address or sermon pronounced by Mahomet. This weekly oration was usefully adapted to the circumstances of the day and feelings of the audience. It allowed full scope for the Prophet's eloquence, and by its frequent recurrence helped to confirm his influence and rivet the claims of Islam. No religious antagonism is to be supposed in the selection of Friday for the public service, because, when he fixed upon it, Mahomet was still on friendly terms with the Jews, and inclined to adopt their institutions. In the Christian Sunday he had a precedent for change, and he may have desired in a similar manner to distinguish the sacred day of Islam from the Jewish Sabbath.¹ Perhaps also he hoped by the choice of another day to secure the attendance of the Jews at his public service, which was composed, like theirs, of prayer, reading of the Scripture, and a sermon. As a Jew (according to the doctrine of Mahomet at this time) might follow all the precepts of Moses and yet be a perfect Moslem, it is by no means im-

Sermon

¹ There is, moreover, no close analogy between the Jewish Sabbath and the Mussulman Friday. In the latter there is no *hallowing* of the day as one meant for rest or religious worship. After the public service, the people were encouraged to return to their ordinary work.

probable that some Jews may at the first have attended both the synagogue and the mosque. There are instances of Rabbins being present at the service in the Mosque, as, indeed, there also are of the Synagogue being visited by Mahomet himself, and by his followers.

But in the second year, a change took place, which rendered it impossible for faithful Jews any longer to join in the Moslem service. Jerusalem was the first *Kibla* of Mahomet; that is to say, after the fashion of the Jews, he and his followers prayed with their faces turned towards the Temple of Solomon. When no longer any hope remained of gaining over the Jews, or of fusing into one religion Judaism and Islam, then the ceremony lost its value. Rather it opened a vulnerable point: 'This Prophet of yours,' said the Jews tauntingly, 'knew not where to find his *Kibla*, till we pointed it out to him.' He might now avoid the charge by transferring the homage of his people from Jerusalem, and concentrating it upon the Kaaba. His system would receive a fresh accession of strength and local influence if he were thus to magnify the Holy house and make it the *Kibla* of his people.

Jerusalem
the first
Kibla

Mahomet, we are told, and also some of his followers, greatly desired the change. How it was effected is told us with the usual supernatural colouring. Sixteen or seventeen months after his arrival, the Prophet thus addressed his guardian angel: 'O Gabriel! would that the Lord might change the direction of my face at prayer away from the *Kibla* of the Jews!' 'I am but a servant,' replied Gabriel; 'address thy prayer to God.' So Mahomet made his petition to the Lord. And it came to pass that on a certain day, as he was praying towards the Temple of Jerusalem, and raising his face upwards in that direction, the following divine revelation came unexpectedly to him: '*Verily We have seen thee turning about thy face towards the Heavens; wherefore We shall cause thee to turn towards a *Kibla* that shall please thee. Turn therefore thy face toward the holy Temple of Mecca. Where-soever ye be, when ye pray, turn toward the same.*' The Prophet had already performed two prostrations with his face towards Jerusalem, when, receiving this behest, he turned suddenly round, and with him all the worshippers in the Mosque, and finished thus the service looking to the south.

The *Kibla*
changed
to the
Kaaba.
A. H. II.
Nov.
A. D. 628

Thenceforward Jerusalem was abandoned for the Kaaba as the Kibla of Islam.¹ The incident significantly marked a change of policy. The tide, rising rapidly towards Judaism, now stayed and turned. The Jews, knowing full well the motives for the change, were mortified and estranged. Mahomet had broken, as it were, the last outward link that bound him to their creed. They charged him with fickleness, and worshipping towards an idolatrous Temple, charges which he endeavoured in the Coran to meet.² But it re-

¹ About three miles to the N.W. lies a mosque called the 'Mosque of the *double Kibla*,' where some say the change took place. Others give the title also to the mosque at Coba. The change of the Kibla has elicited a great mass of discrepant tradition. Many spots are mentioned as the scene of its occurrence, and many different companies claim the honour of being its witnesses. Tradition delights to tell how, as the rumour spread abroad, one and another was startled by the strange intelligence. The most probable account gives the Great mosque as the scene, and the time that of mid-day prayer.

² The passage is instructive:—

Sura ii.
v. 186.

'The Fools from amongst the people will say, *What hath turned them from their Kibla, towards which they used to pray?* SAY, Unto God belongeth the East and the West: He guideth whom He chooseth into the right way. Thus have We made you an intermediate People, that ye should be Witnesses for mankind; and the Prophet shall be Witness for you. We appointed the Kibla towards which thou usedst to pray, only that We might know him who followeth the Apostle from him that turneth back on his heels, although it be a stumbling block, excepting unto those whom God hath directed.' [*Here follows the verse quoted in the text; after which the passage proceeds:*] 'And verily, if thou wert to show unto those who have received the Scriptures every kind of sign, they would not follow thy Kibla; and thou shalt not follow their Kibla. Neither doth one part of them follow the Kibla of the other part.* And if thou wert to follow their desires after the knowledge that hath reached thee, then verily thou shouldst be amongst the Transgressors. They to whom We have given the Scriptures know this,† even as they know their own children; but verily, a party amongst them hideth the truth designedly. . . . And every (people) hath a direction to which it turneth (in prayer). . . . Now, therefore, from whatsoever place thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the Holy Temple; for it is the truth from thy Lord, and God is not regardless of that which ye are doing. . . . Fear them not therefore; but fear Me, that I may fulfil My grace upon you, and that ye may be rightly directed.'

Shortly after comes the following passage (addressed probably also to the Jews) in justification of the pilgrim ceremony at *Safa* and *Marra*, alleged to be, or to have been, the sites where two idols stood: 'Verily *Safa* and *Marra* are of the monuments of God. Whosoever, therefore,

* Christians turn towards the East, and Jews towards Jerusalem: whence Mahomet would argue a propriety in having a distinctive Kibla for Islam.

† Either the change, or Mahomet himself.

quired the victory at Bedr, and hostilities against the Jews themselves, to silence their objections. From this time forward Islam cast aside the trammels of the Mosaic law, and bound itself up with the worship of the Kaaba.

The rite of circumcision is hardly to be mentioned as an institution of Islam. It was current among the Arabs as an Abrahamic ceremony, and so continued (without any command in the Coran) to be practised by the followers of Mahomet.¹

Circum-
cision

A few months after his arrival in Medina, Mahomet saw the Jews keeping the great Fast of the Atonement; ² and he readily adopted it for his own people. Prior to this, fasting does not appear to have been a prescribed ordinance of Islam. It was established at a period when it was the object of Mahomet to bring his religion into harmony with the Jewish rites and ceremonies. But when he had cast off Judaism and its customs, this fast was to be superseded by another. Accordingly about a year and a half later, the divine command was promulgated that the following month of Ramadhan (or Ramzan) was to be observed thenceforward as an annual fast. Although the new ordinance was expressly ordained as similar in principle to that of the Jews, yet its term and the mode of its observance were entirely different. At first the Moslems (following the Jews who fasted for four-and-twenty hours from sunset to sunset) thought themselves bound to abstain from all enjoyments

Fast of
Atonement.
A.H. II.
Sept.
A.D. 622

Fast of
Ramadhan
substituted.
A.H. II.
Dec.
A.D. 623

performeth the Greater pilgrimage, of the Holy house, or the Lesser, it shall be no crime in him if he perform the circuit of them both. And whosoever performeth that which is good of a willing heart, verily God is grateful and knowing.'

¹ The practice is incumbent on Moslems as a part of the *Sunnat* (custom or example of the Prophet), but it is curious that we have no authentic account of Mahomet's own circumcision.

² *Ashor*, or the 'Fast of the Tenth,' *i.e.* tenth day of the seventh month.—*Lev. xxiii. 27.* It was a day of affliction and atonement; but popular tradition at Medina assigned to it another origin. 'When Mahomet asked the Jews what was the origin of the Fast, they said that it was in memory of the delivery of Moses out of the hands of Pharaoh, and the destruction of the tyrant in the Red Sea: "We have a greater right in Moses than they," said Mahomet; so he fasted like the Jews, and commanded his people to fast also. Afterwards, when the Mussulman Fast of Ramadhan was imposed, Mahomet did not command the Fast of Ashor (*i.e.* of the Tenth) to be observed, neither did he forbid it; *i.e.* he left it optional to keep up the one as well as the other.

night and day throughout the month. Mahomet checked this ascetic spirit. His followers were to fast rigorously by day, but from sunset till dawn they might eat and drink and indulge in all pleasures that were otherwise lawful.¹

Its unequal
pressure
and rigour

It was winter when this fast was ordained, and Mahomet probably then contemplated its being always kept at the same season, in which case the prohibition to eat or drink during the day would not, even for a month, have involved any extreme hardship.² In the course of time, however, by the introduction of the lunar year, Ramadhan gradually shifted till it reached the summer season; and then the prohibition to taste water from morning till evening became a burden heavy to bear. The strictness of the fast, as thus instituted, has nevertheless been maintained unrelaxed at whatever season it may fall; and to this day, in the parched plains of the East, for the whole month, however burning the sun and scorching the wind, the follower of Mahomet may not suffer a drop of water, during the

Sura ii

¹ 'O ye that believe! A Fast is ordained for you, as it was ordained for those before you, that haply ye may follow Piety,—

'For the computed number of days. The sick amongst you, and the traveller, (shall fast) an equal number of other days; but he that is able to keep it (and neglecteth) shall make amends by the feeding of a poor man. And whoever performeth that which is good, of a willing heart, it shall be well for him. And if ye fast it shall be well for you, if ye comprehend,—

'In the month of Ramadhan; wherein the Coran was sent down. . . . Wherefore let him that is present in this month fast during the same; but he that is sick, or on a journey, shall fast an equal number of other days. God willeth that which is easy for you: He willeth not for you that which is difficult. . . . It is lawful unto you, during the nights of the Fast, to consort with your wives. They are a garment unto you, and ye are a garment unto them. God knoweth that ye are defrauding yourselves, wherefore He hath turned unto you, and forgiven you. Now, therefore, sleep with them, and earnestly desire that which God hath ordained for you; and eat and drink until ye can distinguish a white thread from a black thread, by the daybreak. Then keep the fast again until night, and consort not with them during the day; but be in attendance in the places of worship. These are the limits prescribed by God: wherefore draw not near unto them. Thus God declareth His signs unto mankind, that they may follow Piety.'

² The Jewish intercalary year, which was probably in use at this time, would have prevented any change of season for a long series of years (see *ante*, p. lxxxix). But when Mahomet introduced the lunar year, that which might have been 'easy' at the first, came by the change of seasons to be often a grievous burden to his followers.

long summer day, to pass his lips; and he looks forward with indescribable longing for the sunset when, without compromising his faith, he may slake his thirst and refresh with food his drooping frame. For the sick and for travellers a dispensation is given; but, with this exception, a penalty is imposed on every breach. The trial, though thus unequally severe in different climes and at different terms of the cycle, is no doubt a wholesome exercise of faith and self-denial; but its limitation to the daytime must defeat the lesson of self-control, so far, at least, as certain classes of indulgence are concerned.

As soon as the new moon of the following month was seen (and it is still eagerly looked for every year throughout the Moslem world) the restriction was to cease, the next day being celebrated as a festival, called the EED AL FITR, or 'Breaking of the fast.' A day or two previously, Mahomet assembled the people, and instructed them in the ceremonies to be observed on the occasion. Early in the morning, they were to bring together their offerings for the poor; each one, young or old, bond or free, male or female, a measure of dates, of barley, or of raisins, or a smaller measure of wheat.¹ 'See,' said he, 'that ye give plenty to the poor this day, so that they need not to go about and beg.' Having thus presented their alms, all went forth with the Prophet, who was clad in festive garments, to the *Musalla*, or place of prayer, outside the city on the road to Mecca.² A short spear or iron-shod staff (brought by Zobeir from Abyssinia) was carried before him by Bilâl and planted on the spot. Taking his stand there, the Prophet recited certain prayers appropriate to the occasion, and then addressed the assembled multitude. The service over, they returned to their homes, after which Mahomet, having made a feast at the Mosque, distributed the alms of his followers amongst the poor.

Another great festival was established shortly after;—

¹ This was before the imposition of regular almsgiving, or *Zakât*, which will be noticed hereafter.

² Speaking of 'Mahomet's mosque in the *Munâka*' (or open space between the city and its western suburb), Burton writes: 'Others believed it to be founded upon the *Musalla el Nabi*, a place where the Prophet recited the first Festival prayers after his arrival at El *Medinah*, and used frequently to pray, and to address those of his followers who lived far from the *Haram*' (or Great mosque).—ii. 192.

Eed al Fitr,
or Festival
of 'break-
ing the
fast.'
A. H. II.
Feb. A. D.
624

Eed al Zoha combined with Fast of Atonement. Dzul Hiji, A.H. I. March, A.D. 623

But subsequently shifted to correspond with Meccan pilgrimage. A.H. II. April, A.D. 624

the EED AL ZOHA, or 'Day of sacrifice.' At the annual pilgrimage of Mecca (as we have seen) victims have from time immemorial been slain at the close of the ceremonies in the vale of Mina. For the first year at Medina the occasion passed unnoticed. But, Jewish rites being still in favour, Mahomet kept the great Day of Atonement with its sacrifice of victims in its stead; and had he continued on a friendly footing with the Jews, he would, no doubt, have maintained the practice. In the following year, however, it was in keeping with his altered relations to abandon altogether the Jewish ritual of sacrifice, and to substitute for it another somewhat similar in character, but grounded on the ceremonies of the Kaaba and held simultaneously with them. It was after having waged war against one of the Jewish tribes settled in the suburbs of Medina, and having expatriated them from the country, that Mahomet resolved upon the change. Accordingly at the moment while the votaries of the Kaaba were engaged in the closing solemnities of the pilgrimage at Mina, Mahomet preceded by Bilâl carrying the Abyssinian staff, and followed by the people, went forth to the place of prayer without the city. After a service resembling that of the breaking of the Fast, two fatted sucking kids, with budding horns, were placed before him. Seizing a knife, he sacrificed the first, saying: 'O Lord! I offer this for my people, those that bear testimony to thy Unity and to my Mission.' Then he called for the other, and, slaying it likewise, said:—'O Lord! this is for Mahomet, and for the family of Mahomet.' Of the latter kid both he and his family partook, and that which was over he gave to the poor. The double sacrifice seems in its main features to have been founded on the practice of the Jewish High-priest at the Day of the Atonement, when he sacrificed 'first for his own sins, and then for the people's.'¹ The ceremony was repeated by Mahomet every year when present at Medina, and it is still observed throughout the Moslem world at the time when the sacrificial rite is being performed at Mina which closes the Greater pilgrimage.²

¹ *Hob.* vii. 27; *Lev.* xvi. Aaron offered a sacrifice 'for himself and for his house,' besides 'the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people.'

² The short staff or lance, used at the two Festivals by the Prophet, was still in the keeping of the Muâddzin at Medina in the 2nd or 3rd century,

The summons to prayer was at first the simple cry, 'To public prayer!' After the Kibla was changed, Mahomet be-
 thought himself of a more formal call. Some suggested the Jewish trumpet, others the Christian bell; but neither was grateful to the Prophet's ear.¹ The ADZAN, or call to prayer, was then established. Tradition claims for it a supernatural origin;—'While the matter was under discussion, a citizen dreamed that he met a man clad in green raiment carrying a bell, and he sought to buy it, saying that it would do well for assembling the faithful to prayer. "I will show thee," replied the stranger, "a better way than that; let a crier call aloud, GREAT IS THE LORD! GREAT IS THE LORD! *I bear witness that there is no God but the Lord: I bear witness that Mahomet is the Prophet of God. Come unto Prayer: Come unto Salvation. God is Great! God is Great! There is no God but the Lord!*" Awaking from sleep, he went straightway to Mahomet, and told him the dream; when, perceiving that it was a vision from the Lord, the Prophet forthwith commanded Bilâl, his negro servant, to carry out the divine behest.' Ascending the top of a lofty house beside the Mosque while it was yet dark, Bilâl watched for the break of day, and on the first glimmer of light, with his far-sounding voice, aroused all around from their slumbers, adding to the divinely-appointed call these words, 'Prayer is better than Sleep! Prayer is better than Sleep!' Every day, at the five appointed times, the well-known cry summoned the people to their devotions. For twelve centuries the same call has continually sounded forth from a myriad minarets; and the traveller in the East is still startled in his sleep at early dawn by Muâddzins crying aloud from their various mosques the self-same words used by Bilâl.²

The Adzân,
 or call to
 prayer

and used to be carried in state before the Governor of Medina when he went forth to celebrate these Festivals.

¹ Ibn Hisham says that he had actually given orders for a trumpet to be made, which was probable enough during his first relations with the Jews. Afterwards disliking the idea, he ordered a wooden bell or 'gong' to be constructed; and it was already hewn out, when this dream settled the question in favour of the *Adzân*.

² After crying the *Adzân*, Bilâl used to come to the door of Mahomet and rouse him thus: 'To prayer, oh Apostle of God! to Salvation!' Then Bilâl would take his stand in the front row of the worshippers, who used strictly to follow his example in the prayers and genuflections. There were two other Muâddzins employed by Mahomet, but they acted only in case of

Call used for convening a general assembly

The old cry, 'To public prayer,' was still retained for secular occasions, as when an assembly was summoned for the announcement of a victory, or for the proclamation of a general order, such as the going forth to war. The people hurried to the Mosque at the call, but it had no longer any connection with their devotions.

The pulpit

On the spot where Mahomet used to stand in the Great mosque at public prayers, the branch of a date-tree was planted as a post for him to hold by. When the Kibla was changed, the post was taken up from the northern end and fixed near the southern wall. In process of time Mahomet, now beyond the prime of life, began to feel fatigue at standing throughout the long Friday service. So he consulted with his followers; and one said: 'Shall I make for thee a pulpit such as I have seen in the churches of Syria?' The thing pleased Mahomet, both as a relief to himself, and with the view of being better seen and heard at public worship. Accordingly one or two tamarisk trees were felled and fashioned into a pulpit, having a place to sit on, and three steps leading up to it. It was erected near the southern wall on the spot which the pulpit of the Great mosque occupies to the present day.

Manner of daily prayer

Mahomet ascended the pulpit for the first time on a Friday. As he mounted the steps, he turned towards the Kaaba, and uttering a loud *Takbir*, 'Great is the Lord!' the whole assembly from behind burst forth into the same exclamation. Then he bowed himself in prayer, still standing in the pulpit with his face to the south, and his back to the people; after which he descended, stepping backwards, and at the foot of the pulpit prostrated himself towards the Kaaba. This he did twice, using appropriate verses and ejaculations. Then, the prayers being ended, he turned round to the assembly and told them he had done all this that they might know and imitate his manner of worship. Such was the form of daily prayer; and, handed down from generation to generation, such to the minutest point it has

Bilâl's absence. As the Prophet's treasurer, Bilâl also kept the money and the gifts presented to Mahomet. He was held in much esteem by the Moslems; and by his influence obtained a free-born Arab wife for his negro brother. Bilâl, like many other Moslem warriors, was granted landed property at Damascus, where he died A.H. 20, aged sixty, and where his tomb is still shown. *Caliphate*, p. 238.

continued ever since. Worshippers drawn up now as then by rows in the mosques, the wayfarer who overtaken at the hour spreads his carpet for prayer by the road-side, high and low, rich and poor, prince and peasant, all follow with exactest scrupulosity the example of their Prophet in his forms of obeisance and prostration.¹

The order of the Friday service, which all were expected to attend, is thus described. On entering the place of worship the Prophet mounted the pulpit and gave the assembly the salutation of peace. Then he sat down, while Bilál sounded forth the call to prayer. When this was over, he descended, and, turning towards the Kaaba, performed the prayers as at other times. After this, he usually ascended the pulpit again, and delivered one or more addresses, sitting down between each. He would on such occasions gesticulate in earnest discourse, with outstretched arm and pointed finger. The people, with faces raised, would hang upon his words, and at the close join in a loud *Amen*. As he discoursed he leant upon a staff. On Fridays and Festivals he was clad in a mantle of striped Yemen stuff thrown over his shoulders, with a girdle of fine cloth from Oman, bound about his waist. At the conclusion of the service, these robes were folded up and carefully put away. At other times he ministered in his ordinary dress.

And of the
Friday
service

The pulpit was invested with a special sanctity. Oaths regarding disputed rights were taken close beside it. Any one who should swear falsely by it, 'even if the subject were as insignificant as a toothpick,' was doomed to hell. The Prophet used to speak of the space between the pulpit and his door 'as one of the gardens of Paradise.' The figurative words were soon taken literally, and the fond conceit we find perpetuated to the present day by flowery carpeting on the floor, and festoons to correspond, upon the walls. 'It is a space,' says Burton, 'of about eighty feet in length, tawdrily decorated, so as to resemble a garden. The carpets are flowered, and the pediments of the columns are cased with bright green tiles, and adorned to the height of a man

Extraordi-
nary sanc-
tity of the
pulpit

¹ A series of two obeisances followed by prostration, with appropriate ejaculations and prayers, is called a *Rakaat*. It is said that Mahomet, a month after his arrival at Medina, prescribed two such *Rakaats* for each time of prayer, but subsequently increased them to four, excepting for persons on a journey.

he moan-
ing post

with gaudy and unnatural vegetation in arabesque.’¹ When Mahomet took possession of the pulpit, he expressed in feeling terms his sorrow at parting with the post by side of which he had so long prayed, and commanded it to be buried beneath the pulpit. Tradition adds the romantic story that the post moaned loudly at its desertion, and would not cease until the Prophet, placing his hand upon it, soothed its grief.²

Death of
Kolthum
and Asad
ibn Zorara

During the first year of his residence Mahomet lost two of his chief adherents among the men of Medina. Kolthum, with whom he had lodged at Coba, died shortly after his arrival. And the Mosque was hardly completed, when Asad son of Zorara, one of the earliest converts, was seized with a virulent sore-throat. He belonged to the famous Six who first met Mahomet at Mina. Elected ‘Leader’ of the Beni Najjâr when they pledged their faith to the Prophet at the ‘Second Acaba,’ he had ever since taken a prominent part in the spread of Islam. Musab, when sent from Mecca to instruct the inquirers at Medina, lodged with him, and together they had openly established prayers in the city. His house was hard by the Great mosque, where, as we have seen, he welcomed Mahomet on his arrival, and took charge of his favourite camel. The Prophet was deeply grieved at his illness; but most of all was he troubled by the insinuations of the Jews and disaffected citizens. ‘If this man were a prophet,’ they said, ‘could he not have warded off sickness from his friend?’ ‘And yet,’ said Mahomet, ‘I have no power from my Lord over even mine own life, or over that of any of my followers. The Lord destroy the Jews that speak thus!’ He visited his sick friend frequently, and

¹ Similarly, Mahomet said that his pulpit was ‘over one of the Fountains of Paradise;’—as a church might be called ‘the gate of Heaven.’ The sanctity of the pulpit was so great that, at times other than the public assembly, worshippers used to come, and, catching the knob of the pulpit, pray, holding it with their hands.

² It is a congenial subject for tradition. The people were terrified at the noise, for the groanings of the post were ‘like those of a she-camel ten months gone with young;’ and it ceased not till the Prophet fondly stroked it with his hand. It was then buried under the pulpit, or, as others say, placed among the rafters of the roof. According to another tradition, Mahomet *embraced* the post, and then it stopped moaning; on which the Prophet said, that ‘had he not done so, it would not have ceased to moan till the Day of judgment.’

twice caused his neck to be cauterised all round. But the remedies were of no avail; he sank rapidly and died. Mahomet preceded the funeral procession to the spot which had been selected for a burial-ground. It was a large enclosure, studded with thorny shrubs, without the city, to the east, called *Bakie al Gharcad*.¹ Asad was the first of the illustrious band of early heroes buried in the cemetery, whose tombs are still visited by the pilgrim.

For many months after their arrival, it so happened that no children were born to the Moslem women; and the rumour began to spread abroad that their barrenness was due to the sorcery and enchantments of the Jews. More than a year of the Hegira had elapsed when the first infant was born to the Refugees—the wife of Zobeir presenting him with a son; and shortly after, the same good fortune happened to one of the Citizens. These births, dispelling their apprehensions, caused great joy among the Believers. It may possibly have been with reference to such supposed enchantments that Mahomet composed one or other of the two short Suras which now stand at the close of the Coran and which are used as spells to counteract mischievous designs. A later occasion (hereafter mentioned) is, however, assigned them by tradition.

Barrenness
of the
Moslem
women

The Prophet was of a highly strung and nervous temperament. So afraid was he of darkness, that, on entering a room at night, he would not sit down till a lamp had been lighted for him; and Wakidy adds that he had such a repugnance to the form of the cross that he broke everything brought into the house with the figure upon it. When cupped, he would have the operation performed an *odd* number of times, believing that the virtue was greater than with an even number. He also fancied that cupping on any Tuesday which fell on the 17th of the month was peculiarly efficacious, a remedy even for all the disorders of the coming year. If the heavens were overcast with heavy clouds, he would change colour, and betray a mysterious apprehension till they cleared away; and he was also strangely anxious about the effect of the winds.² Such traditions, which, from

Mahomet's
nervous
tempera-
ment

¹ So called from the thorns that covered it.

² When the wind blew (Ayesha tells us) the Prophet would say: "O Lord! verily I supplicate Thee for good from this wind, and good from its

their number and agreement, must be more or less founded on fact, illustrate the nervous sensibility, and apprehension of unseen and supernatural influences for good or for evil, which were liable to affect his mind.

Simplicity
of Maho-
met's life

Mahomet lived a simple life. His wives' apartments, in which he dwelt by turns, were homely in appearance, built of sun-burnt brick and thatched with palm-branches, in dimension but twelve or fourteen feet square, and so low that the roof might be reached by the hand. The doorway was protected by a screen of goat and camel hair; but Ayesha's apartment had a wooden door. Some had an outer room or verandah formed by a second wall, in others by a mere partition of palm-twigs daubed with mud. At the door of Ayesha's chamber was a closet, where in the evening or at night Mahomet used to retire for his devotions. The furnishings were in keeping. A leathern mattress stuffed with palm-coir was spread for repose upon the floor, with pillows of the same material. The Prophet himself sometimes used a cot of teak-wood strung with coarse cords of the palm;¹ but ordinarily the mattresses sufficed. In place of garniture the walls were hung with skins such as are used in the East to hold water, milk, or honey, and when empty are blown out and so suspended.

Abdallah,
the atten-
dant of
Mahomet

The constant attendant of Mahomet was Abdallah ibn Masûd, whose mother, once like her son a slave, performed the same menial office for the Prophet's wives. Both were now free. Abdallah was secretary to Mahomet as well as body-servant, and attended him in his campaigns. He took charge of his bed, his shoes or sandals, his toothpicks, and

nature, and good for that thing for which it is sent; and I seek protection with Thee from the bad effects of this wind, and its baneful influence, and the harm which it was sent to do." And when black clouds loomed, he used to change colour; and he would come out, go in, walk forwards and backwards; and when they rained, and passed away without doing harm, his alarm would cease. On Ayesha asking him the reason, he said: "O Ayesha! peradventure these clouds and winds might be like those which are mentioned in the history of the tribe of Ad. For when they saw a cloud overshadowing the heavens, they said, *This is a cloud bringing rain for us*; but it was not so, but a punishment because they had called for rain impatiently; and there was in it a destroying wind."

¹ The cot is said to have been a gift from Asad. After the Prophet's death it was used as a bier at funerals, and was eventually sold for a great price.

his washing gear. When bathing he screened him; when sleeping he watched him; and he accompanied him abroad. If the Prophet went forth upon a visit, Abdallah would bring his shoes for him to put on, and taking charge of his staff precede him on the way. Reaching his destination, Abdallah again took charge of his shoes and gave the staff into his hand; returning home, he did as before, re-entering in advance. He resided close by the Mosque, and was always ready at the call of Mahomet. From Abdallah much of the tradition regarding the life and habits of the Prophet has been gathered; and his known intelligence and veracity have secured for his narrations special weight.¹ Anas also attended the Prophet, and above a dozen other persons are named as having served him at various times: but Abdallah was his favourite.²

Comparing the sumptuous luxury which rapidly sprang up throughout the Moslem world with the homeliness of Mahomet's life, tradition would draw for his degenerate followers a lesson of frugality and self-denial, and even imply that the Prophet suffered want and hardship. But meanness and discomfort lay only in contrast with the pomp and splendour of a Caliph's court. Bred in the simplicity of Arab life, artificial comforts, soon regarded by his followers as necessaries of life, would to him have been irksome and weary. The Prophet was happier with his wives each in her small and rudely furnished cabin, than he would have been surrounded with all the delicacies and grandeur of a palatial residence.

Contrast between Mahomet's simple life and the luxury of his followers

In this, and the preceding chapter, the history has been somewhat anticipated in order to trace the development of several of the social and religious institutions that followed close upon the Hegira. Our story will now lead us to more stirring scenes.

¹ If one may judge by the style of his traditions, he was particularly careful and conscientious in the statement of his recollections; though, like the other Companions of the Prophet, he used to be surrounded by crowds of curious inquirers, and thus had every temptation to exaggerate. He was settled by Omar at Cufa with great distinction, and survived Mahomet twenty years.

² Anas, or Anis, must now have been young, for some seventy-five years after we find him seized by the tyrant Hajjaj, but liberated with honour by the Caliph, 'as one who had faithfully waited on the Prophet for ten years.' See *Caliphate*, p. 345.

CHAPTER. XI

HOSTILITIES BETWEEN MEDINA AND MECCA

A.H. I. & II.—A.D. 623

Repose at Medina for the first six months

THE first six months of Mahomet's residence at Medina were disturbed neither by alarms from without nor by hostile counsels at home. Vindictive thoughts died out of Mecca. He who had for so many years kept the city in excitement, broken up old parties, and introduced a new faction of his own, was now with all his adherents gone, and his absence gave immediate relief. The current of society, long troubled and diverted by his designs, now returned to flow peaceably for a while in its ancient channel.

Hostilities contemplated by Mahomet from the first;

The thoughts of Mahomet, on the other hand, from the day of his flight, were not thoughts of peace. In his Revelation vengeance was threatened against his enemies—a vengeance not postponed to a future life, but immediate and overwhelming even now. Sheltered in his present refuge, he might become the agent for executing the divine sentence, and at the same time triumphantly impose the true religion on those who had rejected it. Hostility to the Coreish lay as a seed germinating in his heart; it wanted but a favourable opportunity to spring up.

But deferred from motives of policy

The opportunity did not at once present itself. The people of Medina were pledged only to defend the Prophet from attack, not to join in aggressive steps against enemies. He must take time to gain their affections, and secure co-operation in offensive measures against those who had cast him out. His followers from Mecca were too few to measure arms alone with the Coreish. They were also, like himself, at present occupied by the duty of providing dwelling-places for their families. In fulfilling this domestic obligation, in establishing friendly relations with the citizens of Medina and at the first also with the Jewish tribes, in organising civil

and religious institutions for his followers now fast assuming the position of an independent body, and in riveting the hold of his theocratic government upon them, the autumn of the first year passed away. From midsummer to winter was passed in peace.

But in their caravan traffic with the north (the beaten path of which passed between Medina and the sea-coast), the Coreish offered a point for attack too vulnerable, and prospect of booty too tempting, for this inaction long to last. The trade of Mecca was large and profitable. From thence, and from its sister city Tayif, caravans proceeded in the autumn to Yemen and Abyssinia, and in spring to Syria. Leather, gums, frankincense, the precious metals, and other products of Arabia, formed the staples of export. The leather of Mecca, Tayif, and Yemen was in much request both in Syria and Persia, and fetched a high price. Piece-goods, silk, and articles of luxury were received in exchange at Gaza and other Syrian marts, and carried back to Mecca. We read of at least six such expeditions during the year following the Flight, and there were, no doubt, several more. Some of these caravans were very large and very rich. One consisted of 2,000 camels, whose freight was valued at 50,000 dinars. The annual export trade of Mecca has been estimated by Sprenger at not less than 250,000 dinars, and the return merchandise at the same amount.¹ The ordinary profit being 50 per cent., it is easy to see how lucrative was the traffic, and how greatly the merchants of Mecca must have been dismayed at any contingency that might threaten its safety. Moreover, the whole city of Mecca was devoted to the trade.

Extent and value of the caravan trade of Mecca with Syria

¹ These figures can only be taken as conjectural; but as each camel carried about two cwt. of costly goods, the value must, no doubt, have been very considerable. The dinar (or *mithqal*) was a golden coin corresponding with the Byzantine *aurous*; the dirhem (drachma) a silver coin. Sprenger, by elaborate calculation, estimates the dinar at about 15 francs,—or say about two-thirds of a pound sterling. The silver dirhem he rates at 72 centimes, say 6d. to 8d. Considering the high value in that age of the precious metals, the caravans at the figures mentioned in the text must have been rich indeed. By the Byzantine system, gold stood to silver in the ratio of 14½ to 1; among the Moslems, strange to say, the ratio was as low as 8 or 9, and even 7, to 1; at which rate the legal demands were commuted; subsequently the ratio rose to 10 or 12. Gold was the currency in the Byzantine provinces, as Syria and Western Mesopotamia; silver in Persia and Babylonia.

The whole city devoted to the traffic

While the leading merchants embarked great sums in these expeditions, almost every citizen who could spare a dinar or two invested in them his little capital. A caravan was ordinarily under the conduct of the one or two chief men who owned the bulk of the merchandise; but these, for a consideration of half the profit, readily took charge also of the smaller ventures, as commissions to be accounted for on their return. It thus happened that in some of the larger caravans, almost every citizen, man and woman, having any means at command, owned a share however small; and when such a caravan was threatened the whole city was thrown into alarm.

This trade a vulnerable point of attack from Medina

The caravans, indeed, had always been subject to a certain risk from the attack of Arab bandits. Halting by day and travelling by night, the long strings of camels, with but a slender escort, were at once thrown into confusion, especially in defiles and narrow passes, by the onset of a few determined brigands, who in the turmoil could secure their plunder and effect an easy retreat. The danger from such desultory attack was ordinarily met by extreme caution on the part of the leader, whose scouts gave timely notice of any risk, and who was able accordingly, either by retiring or by a hurried movement forward, to avoid it. But the Coreish were not slow to perceive that their position must be very different now with an enemy on the watch, who, like an eagle from his eyrie, was ever ready to swoop down unawares upon their caravans. During the first six months, however, it was not the period for traffic northwards, and Mahomet was otherwise engaged at home. But the season was now approaching; and the Coreish watched with anxiety the attitude of the Prophet and his exiled band towards the first caravans which they were now despatching to Syria.

Expeditions against Coreishite caravans

First: Hamza. Ramadhan, A.H. 1. Dec. A.D. 622¹

The earliest acts of hostility were of a petty and marauding character; but still sufficiently indicative of the impending struggle. In the winter, about seven months after his arrival, Mahomet despatched his uncle Hamza, at the head of some 30 Refugees, to surprise a caravan returning from Syria under the guidance of Abu Jahl. Guarded by 300 Coreish, it was overtaken near the sea-shore, when a chief of the Beni

¹ I follow the chronology of M. C. de Perceval. Sprenger makes the date fall about two and a half months later.

Joheina, confederate of both, interposed between the parties already drawn up for an encounter; Hamza upon this retired to Medina, and Abu Jahl proceeded on his journey. About a month later a body, double the strength of the first, was sent by Mahomet under command of his cousin Obeida, in pursuit of another caravan protected by Abu Sofian with 200 men. The Coreish were surprised while their camels were grazing by a fountain in the valley of Rabigh; but the Moslems found the escort too strong for them, and, beyond the discharge of arrows from a distance, no hostilities were attempted. Obeida is distinguished in tradition as he who, on this occasion, 'shot the first arrow for Islam.' In the convoy there were two Believers who, finding an opportunity, fled from the caravan and joined the party of Obeida. After the lapse of another month, a third expedition started, under the youthful Sad with 20 followers, in the same direction. He was to proceed as far as a certain valley on the road to Mecca, and there lie in wait for a caravan expected to pass that way. Like most of the subsequent parties intended to effect a surprise, they marched by night and lay in concealment during the day. Notwithstanding this precaution, when they reached their destination on the fifth morning, they found that the caravan had passed a day before, and so they returned empty-handed to Medina. These excursions occurred in the winter and spring of the year. On each occasion, Mahomet mounted a white banner on a staff or lance, and presented it to the leader on his departure. In these and all other expeditions of any importance the names of the leaders, and also of those who carried the standard, are carefully recorded by tradition.¹

In the summer and autumn of the same year, Mahomet led in person three somewhat larger, though equally unsuccessful, expeditions. The first set out in midsummer, nearly twelve months after his arrival, and was directed to Abwa (the spot where his mother was buried) in pursuit of a Coreishite caravan. The prey was missed; but something was gained in a friendly treaty concluded with a tribe hitherto connected with Mecca, but now detached from its alliance. The treaty

Second:
Obeida ibn
al Hârith.
A.H. 1.
Jan.
A.D. 628

Third:
Sad, son
of Abu
Wakkas

A standard
presented
by Maho-
met to each
leader

Three ex-
peditions
conducted
by Maho-
met him-
self:—
Abwa:
Safar,
A.H. II.
June,
A.D. 628

¹ These small night attacks are called *Sariya*; the larger expeditions, those especially in which Mahomet himself was leader, *Ghazwa*—a term still in use.

Bowat :
A.H. II.
July,
A.D. 628

was committed to writing, the first that Mahomet entered into with any outside body. He returned, after fifteen days' absence, to Medina. Next month, the Prophet again marched, at the head of 200 followers, including a large number of the Citizens,¹ to Bowat on the caravan route south-west of Medina. A rich burden laden on 2,500 camels, under the escort of one of Mahomet's chief opponents, Omeyya ibn Khalf, with 100 armed men, was to proceed that way. But it eluded pursuit, and passed on safely. The presence of so many Citizens shows the advancing influence of Mahomet; they were, no doubt, tempted by the hope of so great a prize; but whether or no, they had now crossed the Rubicon and identified themselves with Mahomet in hostilities against the Coreish. Shortly after their return, some of the camels and flocks of Medina, while feeding in a plain a few miles from the city, were fallen upon by Kurz ibn Jâbir, a marauding Bedouin chieftain, and carried off. Mahomet pursued him nearly to Bedr, but he made good his escape. We find him not long afterwards converted to Islam, and leading a Moslem expedition against a Bedouin robber like himself.

(Kurz ibn Jâbir commits a raid near Medina)

Osheira :
A.H. II.
Oct.
A.D. 628

Two or three months elapsed before Mahomet set out on his third expedition. Volunteers were invited, and from 150 to 200 followers joined the party. They had between them only thirty camels, on which they rode by turns. At Osheira, distant nine marches on the way to Yenbo, they expected to waylay a rich caravan which Abu Sofian was conducting towards Syria, and of the departure of which from Mecca tidings had been received. But it had passed several days before. It is the same caravan which, on its return from Syria, gave occasion to the famous action of Bedr. In this excursion the Prophet entered into an alliance with several tribes inhabiting the vicinity of Osheira. He was thus gradually extending his influence along the sea-shore, and so still further hedging the passage of the Meccan caravans. An instance of the pleasantry in which the Prophet sometimes indulged, is here recorded. Aly had fallen asleep on the dusty ground under the shade of a palm-grove. Mahomet espied him lying thus, all soiled with the dust, and,

Mahomet concludes alliance with tribes by the way

Mahomet calls Aly, Abu Torâb

¹ More than half must have been Medina men: for at the battle of Bedr, when every exile from Mecca was mustered, there were but 83 Refugees present.

pushing him with his foot, called out, 'Ho! Abu Toráb! (*Father of dust*) is it thou? Abu Toráb, sit up!' Aly, half-ashamed, sat up; and the sobriquet ever after clung to him. On each of these expeditions Mahomet appointed a standard-bearer to carry his white banner. Hamza, Sad, and Aly successively had this honour.

His
standard-
bearers

Whenever the Prophet left Medina to proceed to any distance, he named a representative to exercise authority over those who were left behind, and to lead the public prayers during his absence. The first person selected for the office was one of the twelve 'Leaders,' Sad ibn Obáda, of the Beni Khazraj. The next who received this token of confidence was Sad ibn Muádh, of the Beni Aus, so carefully was Mahomet minded to distribute his favours between these two jealous tribes. On the third occasion his friend Zeid was honoured with the post.

Mahomet
leaves re-
presenta-
tive at
Medina

In November and December, Mahomet did not himself quit Medina; but he sent forth Abdallah ibn Jahsh, with seven other Refugees, on an expedition attended with more serious results than any of the preceding. As he bade farewell to Abdallah, the Prophet placed in his hands a closed packet, and charged him not to open it till he entered a certain valley two days' march toward Mecca. On reaching the spot, Abdallah broke open the letter, and read it aloud to his comrades as follows: *Go forward to Nakhla, in the name of the Lord, and with His blessing! Yet force not any of thy followers against his inclination. Proceed with those that accompany thee willingly; and when thou hast arrived at the valley of Nakhla, lie there in wait for the caravans of the Coreish.* Nakhla has been already noticed as lying to the east of Mecca, about half-way to Tayif; and the trade with South Arabia all passed that way. Watched and pursued in their commerce with Syria, traffic would be all the more securely and busily prosecuted towards the South by the merchants of Mecca; for the route lay far removed from the outlook of their enemy. Mahomet had, no doubt, intimation of some rich venture, shortly expected at Mecca by this route, and by his sealed instructions effectually provided against intelligence of his design being conveyed to the Coreish.

Affair of
Nakhla.
Rajab:
A.H. II.
Nov.
A.D. 628

Having read the order, Abdallah told his comrades that any who wished was at liberty to go back: 'As for myself,

A Coreish-
ite killed,
and cara-
van plun-
dered

he said, 'I will go forward and fulfil the command of the Prophet.' All joined in the same determination, and proceeded onwards; but two fell behind in search of their camel which had strayed, and lost the party.¹ The remaining six, having reached Nakhla, waited there. In a short time the expected caravan, laden with wine, raisins, and leather from the South, came up. It was guarded by four Coreish, who, seeing the strangers, were alarmed and halted. With the view of disarming their apprehensions, one of Abdallah's party shaved his head, thus making the convoy believe that they had just returned from the Lesser pilgrimage; for this was one of the months in which that ceremony was ordinarily performed. The men of the caravan seeing his shaven head were reassured, and, turning the camels adrift to pasture, began to cook their food. Meanwhile, Abdallah and his comrades debated what to do. It was the last day of Rajab, in which it was forbidden to fight; and so they said to one another: 'If we defer the attack this night, they will surely move off, and find asylum in the Holy territory; and if we fight against them now, it will be a transgression of the Sacred month.' They were thus fixed on the horns of a dilemma. At last they overcame their scruples. One of their number advanced covertly, and, discharging an arrow, killed a man of the convoy, Amr the Hadhramite, on the spot. All then rushed upon the caravan, and securing two, Othman and Hakam, carried them off prisoners, with the spoil, to Medina. Nowfal, brother of Othman, leaped on his horse and escaped to Mecca; but too late to give alarm for the pursuit.

Mahomet
at first
disclaims
responsi-
bility

On Abdallah reaching Medina, he acquainted Mahomet with what had passed. The Prophet, who had probably not expected the party to reach Nakhla till after the close of Rajab, appeared displeased, and said: 'I never commanded thee to fight in the Sacred month.' So he put the booty aside, pending further orders, and kept the prisoners in bonds. Abdallah and his comrades were crestfallen, and the people reproached them. But Mahomet was unwilling to discourage his followers; and, soon after, a revelation appeared, justify-

¹ By some accounts they took advantage of the option to go back, and turned aside. The straying of the camel may have been invented to cover what in after days must have appeared discreditable lukewarmness.

ing warfare even in the sacred months as a lesser evil than hostility to Islam :—

Then promulgates an approving revelation Sura ii

They will ask thee concerning the Sacred months, whether they may war therein. SAY :—Warring therein is grievous ; but to obstruct the way of God and to deny Him, to hinder men from the Holy temple, and to expel His people thence, that is more grievous with God. Tempting (to idolatry) is more grievous than slaughter.

Having promulgated this dispensation, Mahomet made the booty over to the captors, who (anticipating the subsequent practice) presented a fifth to Mahomet, and divided the remainder among themselves.

The relatives of the two prisoners now sent a deputation from Mecca for their ransom. Sad and Otba, the two who had wandered from Abdallah's party, were not yet returned. Mahomet, apprehensive for their safety, refused to ransom the captives till he was assured that no foul play had been used towards them : ' If ye have killed my two men,' he said, ' verily, I will put yours also to death.' But, soon after, they made their appearance, and Mahomet accepted the proffered ransom, forty ounces of silver, for each.¹ Hakam, however, continued at Medina, and eventually embraced Islam.

Prisoners ransomed

Arabian writers rightly attach much importance to this expedition. ' This,' says Ibn Hisham, ' was the first booty the Mussulmans obtained, the first captives they seized, and the first life they took.' Abdallah is said to have been called in this expedition *Amir al Mominin*—an appellation, ' Commander of the Faithful,' assumed in after days by the Caliphs.

Importance of this expedition

It was now a year and a half since Mahomet and his followers had fled for refuge to Medina. Their attitude towards Mecca was becoming daily more hostile. Latterly, no opportunity had been lost of threatening the numerous caravans passing through the Hejaz. On the regular and uninterrupted march of these to Syria depended the prosperity of Mecca, for the traffic with Yemen and Abyssinia was of greatly less importance ; and even for it, as now appeared, their enemy would allow them no security. The last attack had also shown that Mahomet and his followers, in the

Growing hostility towards the Coreish

¹ The silver *owkeea*, or ounce, was equal to forty dirhems. For the value of the dirhem see note *ante*, p. 197.

Forbear-
ance of the
Coreish

combat on which they were entering, would respect neither life nor the inviolability of the Sacred months. Blood had been shed—treacherously and sacrilegiously shed—and was yet unavenged. Still Mecca made no hostile response. Though followers of the Prophet were in the city, no cruelties were perpetrated on them, nor any reprisals attempted. But the breach was widening, and the enmity becoming deeper seated : blood could be washed out by blood alone.

Command
to fight
against the
Coreish

At Medina, on the other hand, the prospect of mortal conflict with their enemies was steadily contemplated, and openly spoken of by Mahomet and his adherents. At what period the divine command to fight against the Unbelievers was promulgated, is uncertain. Repeated attacks on the caravans of the Coreish had been gradually paving the way ; and at last, when given forth, the heavenly behest appeared but as the embodiment of a long-formed resolution for revenge. The following are the earliest passages on the subject :—

Sura xxii
v. 41

Bear good tidings unto the Righteous ! Truly the Lord will keep back the Enemy from those who believe, for God loveth not the perfidious Unbeliever. Permission is given to bear arms against those that have wronged them, and verily the Lord is mighty for the assistance of such as have been driven from their homes for no other cause than that they said, *God is our Lord*. And truly if it were not that God holdeth back mankind, one part by means of another part, Monasteries and Churches and Places of prayer and worship, wherein the name of the Lord is frequently commemorated, would be demolished. God will surely assist them that assist Him. For God is Mighty and Glorious.

Sura ii
v. 191

Fight in the way of God with them that fight against you : but transgress not, for God loveth not the Transgressors. Kill them wheresoever ye find them ; and expel them from whence they have expelled you : for temptation (to idolatry) is more grievous than killing. Yet fight not against them beside the Holy temple, until they fight with you thereat. * * * Fight, therefore, until temptation to idolatry cease, and the Religion be God's. And if they leave off, then let there be no hostility, excepting against the Oppressors.

War is ordained for you, even if it be irksome unto you. Perchance ye may dislike that which is good for you, and love that which is evil for you. But God knoweth, and ye know not.

Thus war, upon grounds professedly religious, was established as an ordinance of Islam. Hostilities, indeed, were

justified by the 'expulsion' of the Believers from Mecca. But the main and undisguised issue which Mahomet in this warfare set before him was the victory of Islam. They were to fight 'until the religion became the Lord's alone.'

Fighting prescribed on religious grounds

Although the general bearing of his followers was, like that of their Prophet, defiant and daring, yet there were timorous men amongst them, who needed encouragement and reproof:—

The fearful reproved

The Believers say,—*If a Sura were revealed (commanding war) we would fight*; yet now when a plain Sura is revealed, and fighting mentioned therein, thou seest those in whose heart is an infirmity, looking towards thee with the look of one overshadowed with death. But obedience had been better for them, and propriety of speech. Wherefore, when the command is established, if they give credit unto God, it shall be well for them.

Sura xlvii

For such as might fall in battle, the promise of Paradise is given:—

They who have gone into exile for the cause of God, and then have been slain, or have died, We shall certainly nourish these with an excellent provision, for God is the best Provider. He will surely grant unto them an entrance such as they will approve. For God is knowing and gracious.

Paradise promised to the slain

Yet the Believer was not to imagine the success of Islam dependent on his feeble efforts. God could accomplish the work equally without him. Thus after a fierce exhortation to 'strike off the heads of the Unbelievers, to make great slaughter amongst them, and bind them fast in bonds,' the command runs thus:—

The cause not dependent on their efforts

This do. If the Lord willed, He could surely Himself take vengeance on them: but (He hath ordained fighting) in order that He may prove some of you by others. They that are slain in the way of God, He will not suffer their works to perish. He will guide them, and dispose their hearts aright. He will lead them into the Paradise whereof He hath told them.

Sura xlviii

Furthermore, the true Believer was not only to fight: he was to contribute also of his substance towards the charges of war:—

Believers to contribute towards war expenditure

What hath befallen you that ye contribute not of your substance in the cause of God? and to God belongeth the inheritance

of the Heavens and of the Earth. Those of you that contribute before the victory,¹ and fight, shall not be placed on the same level, but shall have a rank superior over those who contribute after it and fight. Who is he that lendeth unto the Lord a goodly loan? He shall double the same, and he shall have an honourable recompense.

The Lord asketh you not for (all) your substance. Had He asked you for (the whole of) it, and importunately pressed you, ye had become grudging, and it had stirred up your ill-will. But ye are they who are called on to contribute part of the same in the cause of God, and there be some of you that grudge; but whosoever grudgeth, he verily grudgeth against his own soul. God needeth nothing, but ye are needy. If ye turn back, He will substitute in your room a people other than you, and they shall not be like unto you.

And somewhat later:—

Prepare against them what force ye can, and troops of horse of your ability, that ye may thereby strike terror into the enemy of God and your enemy, and into others beside them; ye know them not, but God knoweth them. And what thing soever ye contribute in the cause of God, it shall be made good unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly.

These
commands
addressed
to the
Citizens as
well as
Refugees

Such passages were promulgated within two or three years after Mahomet's arrival in Medina. They are no longer addressed to the Refugees only, but to all Believers including the Citizens. We have seen that some of these latter had already joined in expeditions against the caravans of Mecca; but the first occasion on which they came forward in any considerable number to the aid of Mahomet, was on the field of Bedr;—and there, probably more from the hope of sharing in the spoil of a richly-laden caravan, than with any idea of fighting for the faith, and avenging the exiles' wrongs. But the effect was equally important to Mahomet. It pledged them to his cause.

¹ *Al Fath*; the 'decision' of God against the idolaters, and the victory of Islam. The term came subsequently to be applied *par excellence* to the taking of Mecca—the great crisis, prior to which there was a peculiar merit in fighting for and supporting Islam. But the word had of course at this moment no such distinct and anticipative sense.

CHAPTER XII

BATTLE OF BEDR

Ramadhan, A.H. II.—January, A.D. 624

WITH the battle of Bedr opens a new era in Islam. The biographers of Mahomet have shown their sense of the influence it exercised on his future fortunes, by the extraordinary space allotted to this chapter of their story. The minutest circumstances and most trifling details, even to the name of each person engaged in it, have been carefully treasured up. From this vast mass of undigested tradition it will be my endeavour to frame a brief and consistent narrative.

Great detail with which campaign of Bedr is related

The caravan of Abu Sofian, which, on its passage through the Hejaz, had escaped pursuit in the autumn, would now, in ordinary course, after two or three months, be returning to Mecca. Mahomet was resolved that it should not this time elude his grasp. His first step was to secure the neutrality, if not co-operation, of the tribes upon the way. In the beginning of January he despatched two scouts to Haura, a caravan station on the sea-shore west of Medina, for early intelligence of the approach of Abu Sofian. They were hospitably lodged and concealed by an aged chief of the Joheina tribe, whose family was subsequently rewarded by the grant of Yenbo. When the caravan appeared, they were to hasten back and apprise Mahomet of its approach.

Scouts for news of Abu Sofian's caravan. A.H. II. Jan. A.D. 624

The Prophet had not yet learned to mask his movements. His intention of attacking the caravan was noised abroad. The rumour reached Abu Sofian while yet on the confines of Syria. He was warned, perhaps by the treachery of some disaffected Citizen, to be on his guard as Mahomet had entered into confederacy with the tribes upon the road to surprise the caravan. Greatly alarmed, he forthwith despatched a messenger, named Dhamdham, to Mecca, bidding the Coreish hasten with an army to his rescue. The caravan

Abu Sofian, warned, sends for succour

then moved with quickened pace, and yet with caution, along the route which lay close by the shore of the Red Sea.

Mahomet gives command for the campaign

Mahomet, becoming impatient, and apprehensive lest the caravan should, as on previous occasions, be beforehand with him, resolved not to wait for the spies' return. He called upon his followers at once to make ready, with this command;—'See! here cometh a caravan of the Coreish in which they have embarked much wealth. Come! let us go forth; peradventure the Lord will enrich us with the same.' The love of booty and of adventure, so passionate in the Arab, induced not only all the Refugees, but a large body of the Citizens also, to respond with alacrity to the call. Of the former, Othman alone remained behind to tend the sick bed of his wife Rockeya, the Prophet's daughter.¹

Marches from Medina, Ramadhan, A.D. 11, Jan. 8, A.D. 623

On Sunday, the 12th of Ramadhan, Mahomet set out upon his march. He left Abu Lubába, one of the Citizens, in charge of Medina; and, for some special reason, appointed another over Coba and Upper Medina.² At a short distance

¹ The motive which prompted most of Mahomet's followers to accompany the force, as well as tempted many to join Islam itself, is illustrated by the following anecdote, which bears the stamp at least of verisimilitude. Two Citizens of Medina, still heathens, were noticed by Mahomet among the troops. He called them near his camel, and asked them what had brought them there. 'Thou art our kinsman,' they replied, 'to whom our city hath given protection; and we go forth with our people in the hope of plunder.' 'None shall go forth with me,' said Mahomet, 'but he who is of our Faith.' They tried to pass, saying that they were great warriors, and would fight bravely by his side, requiring nothing beyond their share of plunder; but Mahomet was firm. 'Ye shall not go thus. *Believe and fight!*' Seeing no alternative they 'believed,' and confessed that Mahomet was the Prophet of God. 'Now,' said Mahomet, 'go forth and fight!' So they accompanied the army, and became noted spoilers both at Bedr and in other expeditions. On Mahomet's return to Medina, one of the Citizens exclaimed: 'Would that I had gone forth with the Prophet! Then I had surely secured large booty!'

Eight persons who remained behind are popularly counted in the number of the veterans of Bedr—the future nobility of Islam; *three* Refugees, viz. Othman and the two spies; and *five* Citizens, viz. the two left in command of the City and of Upper Medina, a messenger sent back to the Beni Amr at Coba, and two men, who, having received a hurt on the road, were left behind. The names of the famous Three hundred and five were recorded in a Register at Medina, called *Sadr al Kitáb*.

² It is said that he did this because he heard something suspicious regarding the Beni Amr ibn Awf who lived there. He also sent back Hárith from his camp with a message to the same tribe. The two persons left in charge, as well as this messenger, belonged to the Beni Aus.

from the city on the Mecca road, he halted to review his little army, and send back the striplings unfit for action. The number that remained, with which he proceeded onwards, was 305. Eighty were Refugees; of the remainder, about one-fourth belonged to the Beni Aus, and the rest to the Beni Khazraj. They had but two horses; and there were 70 camels, on which by turns they rode.

For two or three days they travelled by the direct road to Mecca but, on reaching Safra, turned to the west by a path-way leading to Bedr, a halting-place on the route to Syria. While on the march, Mahomet despatched two spies thither, to find out whether any preparations were making for the reception of Abu Sofian; for it was at Bedr that he hoped to waylay the caravan.¹ At the fountain there, the spies overheard some women who had come to draw water talking among themselves 'of the caravan expected on the morrow or the day after,' and they returned in haste with the intelligence to Mahomet.

Spies sent forward by Mahomet to Bedr

Let us now turn to Abu Sofian. As he approached Bedr, his apprehensions were quickened by the dangerous vicinity, and he hastened in advance to reconnoitre the spot. Reaching Bedr, he was told by a chief of the Beni Joheina that no strangers had been seen, excepting two men, who, after resting their camels for a little by the well, and drinking water, went off again. Proceeding to the spot, he carefully scrutinised it all around. 'Camels from Yathreb!' he exclaimed, as among their litter he spied out the small stone peculiar to the dates of Medina;—'these be the scouts of Mahomet!' With such words, he hurried back to the caravan; and striking to the right, so as to keep close by the sea-shore, pressed forward, halting neither day nor night, till he was soon beyond the reach of danger. Then hearing that an army had marched from Mecca to his aid, he despatched a courier to them saying that all was safe, and that they should now return.

Abu Sofian, discovering traces of the scouts, hastens forward and escapes

Ten or twelve days before this, Mecca had been thrown into great alarm by the sudden appearance of Dhamdham,

Alarm at Mecca

¹ This was probably on the Monday. It is somewhat difficult to find time for all the events that crowd in between Sunday and Thursday evening. The spies were of the Joheina tribe which dwelt on the sea-shore; they were acquainted with the vicinity, and better fitted than either Refugees or Citizens to gain the information Mahomet required.

Coreish
resolve to
rescue
caravan

the first messenger of Abu Sofian. Urging his camel at full speed along the valley and up the main street of Mecca, he made it kneel down in the open space before the Kaaba, hastily reversed its saddle, cut off its ears and nose, and rent his shirt before and behind. Having signified thus the alarming import of his mission, he cried at the pitch of his voice to the crowd around him :—‘ Coreish ! Coreish ! your caravan is pursued by Mahomet. Help ! O help ! ’ Immediately the city was in a stir ; for the caravan was the chief one of the year, in which every Coreishite of any substance had a venture ; and the value of the whole was 50,000 golden pieces. It was at once determined to march in force, repel the marauding troops, and rescue the caravan. ‘ Doth Mahomet, indeed, imagine,’ said they among themselves, ‘ that it will be this time as in the affair of the Hadhramite ! ’ alluding to the treacherous surprise at Nakhla where, two months before, Amr the Hadhramite had been slain. ‘ Never ! He shall know it otherwise.’

Meccan
army meets
Abu
Sofian’s
messenger

Preparations were hurried forward on every side. The resolve, at any sacrifice, to chastise and crush the Moslems was universal. Every man of consequence prepared to join the army. A few, unable themselves to go, sent substitutes ; among these was Mahomet’s uncle, Abu Lahab.¹ One fear there was that Mecca might, during their absence, be surprised by the Beni Bekr, an adjacent tribe, with which there was a present feud. But this was obviated by the guarantee of a powerful chief allied to both tribes. So great was the alacrity, that in two or three days after the alarm by Dhamdham, and about the very time that Mahomet was marching from Medina, the army was in motion. They then despatched a messenger to apprise Abu Sofian of their approach, but he missed the caravan, which (as we have seen) had left the ordinary route. The army marched in haste, but not with-

¹ Some say that Abu Lahab neither went himself nor sent a substitute; others that he sent in his stead the grandson of Moghira, in consideration of the remission of a debt of 400 dirhems ; others that he refused to accompany the army in consequence of a dream of his sister Atika. I have omitted any allusion to this dream, as well as to other dreams and prodigies seen by the Coreish, anticipatory of the disasters at Bedr, because I believe them all to be fictitious. The tinge of horror in after days reflected back on the ‘ sacrilegious ’ battle, the anxiety to excuse certain families, and the wish to invest others with a species of merit in having, even while unbelievers, served Islam by dreams or prophecies, combined to give them rise.

out some rude display ; for singing women, with their tabrets, followed and sang by the fountains at which they halted. At Johfa, the second courier of Abu Sofian (who himself, with his caravan, passed unnoticed by a route closer to the sea) reached the army with intelligence of his safety, and the message that now they should go back.

On receiving this welcome intimation, the question of going forward or of turning back was warmly debated by the leading chiefs. On the one hand, it was argued that, their object being now secured, they might at once retrace their steps ; and further, that, being all so closely related to the army of Mahomet, they should abstain from fatal extremities. 'When we have fought, and spilled the blood of our brethren and our kinsmen,' said the advocates of peace, 'of what use will life be to us any longer? Let us now go back, and we will be responsible for the blood-money of Amr, killed at Nakhla.' Many persons, and among them Hakim, the nephew of Khadija (he who supplied food to Mahomet's party when shut up with Abu Tâlib), were urgent with this advice. Others, and Abu Jahl at their head, demanded that the army should advance. 'If we turn back,' they said, 'it will surely be imputed to our cowardice. Let us go forward to Bedr ; and there, by the fountain, spend three days eating and making merry. All Arabia will hear of it, and ever after stand in awe of us.' The affair of Nakhla, and the slaughter of the Hadhramite, still rankled in the heart of the Coreish, and they listened willingly to the warlike counsel. Two tribes alone, the Beni Zohra and Adi, returned to Mecca.¹ The rest marched onwards.² Leaving Medina to the right, they kept straight along the Syrian road, and made for Bedr.

Coreishite
army
debates
whether to
return or
go forward

They
resolve to
advance on
Bedr

¹ The reason is not given ; the Beni Zohra (of whom 100 men were present) was the tribe of Mahomet's mother ; the Beni Adi, that of Omar.

² But they sent back the singing girls. The messenger, who carried the intelligence to Abu Sofian that the Coreish refused to turn back, reached him near Mecca ; and Abu Sofian is represented as lamenting the folly of his countrymen. All this seems apocryphal. Till viewed in the light of its disastrous issue, the advance on Bedr must have appeared a politic and reasonable measure. It was not *an attack on Medina*, for Bedr was on the road to Syria, so that the Coreish left Medina far on their right. If therefore they should meet any enemy at Bedr, it could only be because they had come forth gratuitously to attack the Meccan caravan—a fair and sufficient *casus belli* ; for what security could there any longer be if the men of Medina were allowed thus with impunity to attack the convoys and plunder the caravans of Mecca ?

Mahomet receives intelligence of Coreishite army. Thursday

Council of war decides on onward march

We now return to Mahomet. He, too, was advancing rapidly on Bedr; for there he expected, from the report of his spies, to find the caravan. On Tuesday night he reached Ruha; as he drank from the well there, he blessed the valley in terms of which the pious traveller is reminded to the present day. On Wednesday he proceeded onwards. Next day, while on the last march to Bedr, the startling news was brought by some wayfarers that the enemy was in full march upon him. This was the first intimation that the Coreish, having heard of the danger to the caravan, were on their way to defend it. A council of war was summoned, and the chief men invited to offer their advice. There was but one opinion, and each delivered it more enthusiastically than another. Abu Bekr and Omar advised an immediate advance. The Prophet turned to the men of Medina, for their pledge did not bind them to offensive action, or even to fight in his defence when away from their city. Sad ibn Muâdh, their spokesman, replied: 'Prophet of the Lord! march whither thou listest: encamp wheresoever thou mayest choose: make war or conclude peace with whom thou wilt. For I swear by Him who hath sent thee with the Truth, that if thou wert to march till our camels fell down dead, we should go forward with thee to the world's end. Not one of us would be left behind.' Then said Mahomet: 'Go forward, with the blessing of God! For, verily, He hath promised one of the two—the army or the caravan—that He will deliver it into my hands.¹ By the Lord! methinks I even now see the battle-field strewn with dead.'²

It is remarkable, when comparing this council with that of

¹ This point is alluded to in the Coran, which henceforth becomes often the vehicle of the 'general orders' of Mahomet, as of a military commander. 'And when the Lord promised one of the two parties that it should be given over unto you; and ye desired that it should be the party unarmed for war (i.e. that ye should meet the caravan, and not the Coreishite army), whereas the Lord willed to establish the Truth by His words, and to cut away the foundation from the Unbelievers;—that He might establish the Truth, and abolish Falsehood, even though the transgressors be averse thereto.'—Sura viii.

² The latter clause may be apocryphal. In later traditions it is worked out to a fabulous extent. Mahomet, for example, points out what was to be the death spot, as seen in the vision, of each of his chief opponents; 'and,' it is added, 'the people were by this apprised for the first time that it was the Coreishite army they were about to encounter, and not the caravan.'

the Coreish at Johfa, to find that in the minds of Mahomet and his followers there was no trace whatever of compunction at the prospect of a mortal combat with their kinsmen. The Coreish, goaded as they had been by oft-repeated attacks upon their caravans and the blood shed at Nakhla, were yet staggered by the prospect of an internecine war, and nearly persuaded by their better feelings to turn back. The Moslems, though the aggressors, were hardened by memory of former injuries, by the dogma that their faith had severed all earthly ties without the pale of Islam, and by a fierce fanaticism for the Prophet's cause. At one of the stages, where he halted to lead the public devotions, Mahomet, after rising from his knees, thus called down the curse of God upon the infidels, and prayed: 'O Lord! Let not Abu Jahl escape, the Pharaoh of his people! Lord! let not Zamaa escape; rather let the eyes of his father run sore for him with weeping, and become blind!' The Prophet's hate, indeed, was unrelenting against his chief opponents, and his followers imbibed from him the same inexorable spirit.

Moslems
more im-
placable
than
Coreish

In the afternoon of Thursday, on nearing Bedr, Mahomet sent forward Aly, with a few others, to reconnoitre the rising ground about the springs. There they surprised three water-carriers filling their skins at the wells. One escaped to the Coreish; the other two were captured and taken to the Moslem army. The chiefs questioned them about the caravan, imagining that they belonged to it; and, receiving no satisfactory answer, had begun to beat them, when Mahomet, coming up, soon discovered the proximity of his enemy. The camp, they replied to his inquiries, lay just beyond the sand-hills skirting the western side of the valley. As they could not tell the strength of the force, the Prophet asked how many camels they slaughtered for their daily food. 'Nine,' they answered, 'one day, and ten the next, alternately.' 'Then,' said Mahomet, 'they are between 900 and 1,000 strong.' The estimate was correct. There were 950 men;—more than threefold the number of the Moslem force. They were mounted on 700 camels and 100 horses, the horsemen all clad in mail.¹

Mahomet
learns
strength of
enemy

The followers of Mahomet were chagrined at finding

¹ Well would make their number 600, but apparently on insufficient grounds.—*Einleitung*, p. 20.

Escape of caravan & benefit to Mahomet

their expectation of an easy prey thus changed into the prospect of a bloody battle. They seem to have advanced even to the field of action with the hope that they might still, as conquerors, pursue and seize the caravan. But it was, in truth, a fortunate event that it had already passed, for the continuing jeopardy of the caravan would have nerved the enemy and united them by a bond which the knowledge of its safety had already dissipated. The prize of victory on the field of Bedr was of incomparably greater consequence to Mahomet than any spoil, however costly.

Mahomet's position at Bedr

The valley of Bedr consists of a plain, with steep hills to the north and east; on the south is a low rocky range; and on the west a succession of sandy hillocks. A tiny rivulet from the eastern hills ran through the valley, breaking out here and there into springs, which at various spots were dug for the use of travellers into cisterns. At the nearest of these springs, the army of Mahomet halted. Hobáb, a Citizen acquainted with the ground, advised him to proceed onwards: 'Let us go,' he said, 'to the farthest spring on the side of the enemy. I know a never-failing fountain of sweet water there; make that our reservoir, and destroy all other wells.' The advice was good. It was at once adopted, and the command of water thus secured.

Mahomet sleeps in a hut of palm branches

The night was drawing on. So, near the well, they hastily ran up a hut of palm branches, in which Mahomet and Abu Bekr passed the night. Sad ibn Muádh kept watch by the entrance with his drawn sword. It rained during the night, but more heavily towards the camp of the Coreish.¹ The Moslem army, wearied with its long march, enjoyed sound and refreshing sleep—a mark of the Divine favour, we are told. The dreams of Mahomet turned upon his enemies, and they were pictured to his imagination as a weak and contemptible force.² In the morning rising betimes he drew up

¹ The rain is thus alluded to in the Coran: 'When He overshadowed you with a deep sleep, as a security, from Himself; and caused to descend upon you Rain from the heavens, that He might purify you therewith, and take from you the uncleanness of Satan; and that He might strengthen your hearts, and establish your steps thereby.'—Sura viii. As a foil to this picture, the Coreish are represented apprehensive and restless till morning broke.

² 'And when God caused them to appear before thee in thy sleep, few in number; and if He had caused them to appear unto thee a great multitude, ye would have been affrighted, and have disputed in the matter (of

his little army, and, pointing with an arrow which he held in his hand, arranged thus the ranks. The previous day, he had placed the chief banner, that of the Refugees, in the hands of Musab, who nobly proved his right to the command. The Khazrajite ensign was committed to Hobáb; that of the Beni Aus, to Sad ibn Muádh.¹

Mahomet
draws up
his army

Meanwhile dissension again broke out in the camp of the Coreish on the policy of fighting with their kinsmen. Sheyba and Otba, two chiefs of rank, influenced by their slave Addas (the same who comforted the Prophet on his flight from Tayif), strongly urged that the attack should be abandoned. Just then, Omeir, a diviner by arrows, having ridden hastily round the valley, returned to report the result of his reconnaissance. 'Ye Coreish,' he said, after telling the enemy's number, 'calamities approach you, fraught with destruction. Their numbers are small, but death is astride upon the camels of Yáthreb. Their only refuge is the sword; dumb as the grave, their tongues they put forth with the serpent's deadly aim. Not a man of them shall fall but in his stead one of ourselves will be slain; and when there shall have been slaughtered amongst us a number equal unto them, of what avail will life be to us after that!' The words began to tell, when Abu Jahl taunted his comrades with cowardice, and, turning to Amir the Hadhramite, bade him to call his brother's blood to mind. The flame burst forth again. Amir threw off his clothes, cast dust upon his head, and began frantically to cry aloud his brother's name. The deceased had been a confederate of the family of Sheyba and Otba themselves, and their honour was affected; thoughts of peace must now be scattered to the winds; and their name vindicated from the imputation of cowardice cast on it by Abu Jahl. The army was at once drawn up in line. The three standards, for the centre and wings, were borne, according to ancient privilege, by members of the house of Abd al Dâr. They moved forward slowly over the sandy hillocks which separated them from the enemy, and which the rain had made heavy

Coreish,
after
further
dissensions,
move for-
ward

their attack). But truly God preserved thee, for He knoweth the heart of man.'

¹ The name given is *Liva*, a white ensign. The *Raya*, Mahomet's black banner, is said to have been first unfurled five years later on the expedition to Kheibar.

and fatiguing. The same rain, acting with less intensity, had rendered the ground in front of Mahomet lighter and more firm to walk upon. The Coreish laboured under another disadvantage; facing eastwards, the rising sun was in their eyes, a serious drawback that told in favour of the Moslem side.

Mahomet's
earnest
prayer

Mahomet had barely arrayed his line of battle, when the advanced column of the enemy was discerned over the rising sands in front. Their greatly superior numbers were concealed by the fall of the ground behind; and this imparted confidence to the Moslems.¹ But Mahomet knew the disparity of his little army; and, alive to the issue that hung upon the day, retired for a moment with Abu Bekr to his hut; and, there raising his hands aloft, he thus poured forth his soul: 'O Lord! I beseech thee, forget not Thy promise of assistance and of victory. O Lord! if this little band be vanquished, Idolatry will prevail, and the pure worship of Thee cease from off the earth!' 'The Lord,' rejoined his friend, 'will surely come to thine aid, and will lighten thy countenance with the joy of victory.'²

The time for action had arrived. Mahomet again came

¹ Represented in the Coran (Sura viii.) as the result of divine interposition. After mentioning Mahomet's dream, the passage proceeds: 'And when He caused them to appear in your eyes, at the time ye met, to be few in number, and diminished you in their eyes, that God might accomplish the thing that was to be;' *i.e.* by this ocular deception his followers were encouraged in their advance to victory, and the Coreish lured on to their fate. So again: 'When ye were on the hither side, and they on the farther side (of the valley), and the caravan below you;* and if ye had made a mutual appointment to fight, ye would surely have declined the appointment; but (the Lord ordered otherwise) that he might bring to pass the thing that was to be—that He who perisheth might perish by a manifest interposition, and he that liveth might live by a manifest interposition;—that is, each army advanced to the field of battle, without knowing of the approach of the other; an unseen hand led them on.

In a later passage, the interposition of God is represented as *doubling* the army of Medina in the eyes of the Coreish. The discrepancy is thus explained by the commentators: The Coreish were at first drawn on by fancying Mahomet's army to be a mere handful; when they had actually closed in battle, they were terrified by the exaggerated appearance of the Moslems, who now seemed a great multitude.

² Sprenger (iii. 122) says that outside the hut a swift dromedary was tied up to carry Mahomet off in case of defeat; but I do not remember seeing this in any early authority.

* *I.e.* on the plain, by the sea-shore, passing on towards Mecca.

forth. The enemy was already close; but the army of Medina remained still. Mahomet had no cavalry to cover an advance; and before superior numbers he must keep close his ranks. Accordingly his followers were strictly forbidden to stir till he should order an advance; only if their flank were threatened by the Coreishite cavalry, they were to check the movement by a discharge of archery. The cistern was guarded as their palladium. Some desperate warriors of the Coreish swore that they would drink water from it, destroy it, or perish in the attempt. But they were met with equal daring and hardly one escaped alive the fatal enterprise. With signal gallantry, Aswad advanced close to the brink, when a blow from Hamza's sword fell upon his leg and nearly severed it from his body. Still defending himself, he crawled onwards and made good his vow; for he drank of the water, and with his remaining leg demolished part of the cistern before the sword of Hamza put an end to his life.

Fierce combat by the reservoir

Already, after Arab fashion, single combats had been fought at various points, when the two brothers Sheyba and Otba, and Walid the son of Otba, still smarting from the taunts of Abu Jahl, advanced into the space between the armies, and defied three champions from the enemy to meet them singly. Three Citizens stepped forward; but Mahomet, unwilling that the glory or the burden of the opening conflict should rest with his allies, called them back; and, turning to his kinsmen: 'Ye sons of Hashim!' he cried, 'arise and fight, according to your right.' Then Obeida, Hamza, and Aly, uncle and cousins of the Prophet, went forth. Hamza wore an ostrich feather in his breast, and Aly a white plume in his helmet. But their features were hid by their armour. Otba, therefore, not knowing who his opponents might be, cried aloud: 'Speak, that we may recognise you! If ye be equals, we shall fight with you.' Hamza answered: 'I am the son of Abd al Muttalib, *the Lion of God, and the Lion of his Prophet.*' 'A worthy foe,' exclaimed Otba; 'but who are these others with thee?' Hamza repeated their names. 'Meet foes, every one!' replied Otba.

Three Coreish challenge Moslems to single combat

Then Otba called to his son Walid, 'Arise and fight!' So Walid stepped forth and Aly went out against him. They were the youngest of the six. The combat was short and sharp;

Coreishite champions slain

Walid fell mortally wounded by the sword of Aly. Eager to avenge his son's death, Otba hastened forward, and Hamza advanced to meet him. The swords gleamed quick, and again the Coreishite warrior was slain by the Moslem lion. Sheyba alone remained of the three champions of Mecca; and Obeida, the veteran of the Moslems, threescore years and five, now drew near to fight with him. Both well advanced in years, the conflict was less decisive than before. But at the last, Sheyba dealt a blow which severed the tendon of Obeida's leg and brought him to the ground. At this, Hamza and Aly rushed on Sheyba and despatched him with their swords. Obeida survived but for a few days, and was buried on the march back at Safra.

The armies
close

The fate of their champions was ominous for the Coreish, and their spirits sank. The ranks began to close, with the battle-cry on the Moslem side of *Ya mansur amit*, 'Ye conquerors, strike!' and the fighting became general. But there were still many of those scenes of individual bravery which characterise the irregular warfare of Asiatic armies, and impart an Homeric interest to the page. Prodigies of valour were exhibited on both sides; but the army of the Faithful was borne forward by an enthusiasm which the half-hearted warriors opposite were unable to withstand. What part Mahomet himself took in the battle is not clear. Some traditions represent him as moving along the ranks with a drawn sword. It is more likely, according to others, that he contented himself with inciting his followers by the promise of divine assistance, and by holding out the prospect of Paradise to those who fell. Tradition revels in details of gallantry. Thus we read that the spirit of Omeir, a stripling of sixteen, was kindled within him as he listened to the Prophet's words. Throwing away a handful of dates which he was eating—'Is it these,' he cried, 'that hold me back from Paradise? Verily I will taste no more of them until I meet my Lord!' And so, rushing on the enemy, he obtained the fate he coveted.

Mahomet
incites his
followers

Moslems
put the
Coreish to
flight

It was a stormy day. A piercing blast swept across the valley. *That*, said Mahomet, *is Gabriel with a thousand angels charging down upon the foe.* Another, and yet another blast:—it was Michael and Seraphil, each with a like angelic troop. The battle raged. The Prophet stooped, and lifting

a handful of gravel, cast it at the enemy, shouting—*Confusion seize their faces!* The action was well timed. Before the onset of the brave Three hundred, they began to waver. Their movements were impeded by the heavy sands on which they stood; and, when the ranks gave way, their numbers added but confusion. The Moslems followed eagerly their retreating steps, slaying or taking captive all that fell within their reach. Retreat soon turned into ignominious rout; and the flying host, casting away their armour, abandoned beasts of burden, camp, and equipage. Forty-nine were killed, and a like number taken prisoners. Mahomet lost only fourteen, of whom eight were Citizens and six Refugees.

Many of the principal men of Mecca, and some of Mahomet's bitterest opponents, were amongst the slain. Chief of these was Abu Jahl. Muâdh brought him to the ground by a blow which cut his leg in two. Muâdh, in his turn, was attacked by Ikrima, the son of Abu Jahl, and his arm nearly severed from his shoulder. As the mutilated limb hanging by the skin impeded his action, Muâdh put his foot upon it, pulled it off, and went on his way fighting. Such were the heroes of Bedr. Abu Jahl was yet breathing when Abdallah ran up, and, cutting off his head, brought it to his master. 'The head of the enemy of God!' exclaimed Mahomet; 'God! there is none other God but he!' 'There is no other!' responded Abdallah, as he cast it gory at the Prophet's feet. 'It is more acceptable to me,' cried Mahomet, 'than the choicest camel in all Arabia.'

Slaughter
of Ma-
homet's
chief oppo-
nents.
Abu Jahl

But there were others whose death caused no gratification to Mahomet. Abul Bokhtari had shown him special kindness at the time when he was shut up in the quarter of Abu Tâlib; Mahomet, mindful of this favour, had commanded that he should not be harmed. Abul Bokhtari had a companion seated on his camel behind him. A warrior, riding up, told him of the quarter given by Mahomet; but added, 'I cannot spare the man behind thee.' 'The women of Mecca,' Abul Bokhtari exclaimed, 'shall never say that I abandoned my comrade through love of life. Do thy work upon us.' So they were killed, both he and his companion.

Abul
Bokhtari

After the battle was over, some of the prisoners were cruelly put to death. Omeyya ibn Khalf and his son, unable to escape with the fugitive Coreish, and seeing Abd al Rah-

Cruel
slaughter
of some of
the pri-
soners

mân pass, implored that he would make them his prisoners. Abd al Rahmân, mindful of ancient friendship, cast away the plunder he was carrying, and, taking charge of both, was proceeding with them to the Moslem camp. As the party passed, Bilâl espied his old enemy, for Omeyya had used to persecute him when a slave; and he screamed aloud, 'Slay him. This man is the head of the Unbelievers. I am lost, if he lives, I am lost!' From all sides the infuriated comrades, hearing Bilâl's appeal, poured in upon the wretched captives; and Abd al Rahmân, finding resistance impossible, bade them save their lives as best they could. Defence was vain; and the two prisoners were immediately cut in pieces. Such was the savage spirit already characteristic of the faith.¹

When the enemy had disappeared, the army of Medina spent some time in gathering the spoil. Then as the sun declined, they hastily dug a pit on the battle-field, and cast the enemy's dead into it. Mahomet looked on. Abu Bekr too stood by, and, examining their features, called aloud their names. 'Otba!—Sheyba!—Omeyya!—Abu Jah!' exclaimed Mahomet, as one by one the corpses were, without ceremony, thrown into the common grave. 'Have ye now found true that which your Lord did promise you? What my Lord promised me, that verily have I found to be true. Woe unto this people! Ye have rejected me, your Prophet! Ye cast me forth, and others gave me refuge; ye fought against me, and others came to my help!' 'O Prophet!' said the bystanders, 'dost thou speak unto the dead?' 'Yea, verily,' replied Mahomet, 'for now they well know that the promise of their Lord hath fully come to pass.' At the moment when the corpse of Otba was tossed into the pit, a look of distress overcast the countenance of his son, Abu Hodzeifa. Mahomet turned kindly to him, and said: 'Perhaps thou art distressed for thy father's fate?' 'Not so, O Prophet of the Lord! I

Enemy's
dead cast
into a pit

Colloquy of
Mahomet
with the
dead

Abu
Hodzeifa's
grief for
his father

¹ Two other prisoners were slaughtered in cold blood. The first was Nowfal, for whose death Aly overheard Mahomet praying; so, when he saw him being led off a prisoner, he fell upon him and killed him. Mahomet uttered a *takbir* of joy when told of it, and said that it had happened in answer to his prayer. The other was Mabad. Omar met one of his comrades carrying him off, and taunted him: 'Well, ye are beaten now!' 'Nay, by Lât and Ozza!' said the prisoner. 'Is that the manner of speech for a captive Infidel towards a Believer?' cried Omar, as he cut off the wretched man's head by one blow of his scimitar.

do not doubt the justice of my father's fate ; but I knew well his wise and generous heart, and I had trusted that the Lord would have led him to the faith. But now that I see him slain, and my hope destroyed, it is for that I grieve.' So the Prophet comforted Abu Hodzeifa, and blessed him ; and said, 'It is well.'¹

On the way home from Bedr, the day after the battle, the booty was divided. Every man was allowed to retain the plunder of such as had been slain by his own hand. The rest was thrown into a common stock. The booty consisted of 115 camels, 14 horses, an endless store of vestments and carpets, articles of fine leather, with much equipage and armour. A diversity of opinion arose about the distribution. Those who had hotly pursued the enemy and exposed their lives in securing the spoil, claimed the whole, or at the least a superior portion ; while such as had remained behind upon the field of battle for the safety of the Prophet and of the camp, urged that they had equally with the others fulfilled the part assigned to them, and that, restrained by duty from the pursuit, they were entitled to an equal share. The contention was so sharp that Mahomet interposed with a message from Heaven, and assumed possession of the whole. It was God who had given the victory, and to God the spoil belonged : 'They will ask thee concerning the prey. Say, the prey is God's and his Prophet's. Wherefore, fear God, and dispose of the matter rightly among yourselves ; and be obedient unto God and his Prophet, if ye be true Believers ;'—and so on in the same strain. Shortly afterwards, the following ordinance, the law of prize to the present day, was given forth :

The booty
is collected

Contention
about its
division
decided by
revelation
Sura viii

And know that whatsoever thing ye plunder, verily one Fifth thereof is for God and the Prophet, and for him that is of kin (unto the Prophet), and for the Orphans, and the Poor, and the Wayfarer,—if ye be they that believe in God, and in that which WE sent down to our Servant on the day of Discrimination, the day on which the two armies met : and God is over all things powerful.—Sura viii.

¹ On the other hand, we are told that when Otba came forth to challenge the Moslem army, Abu Hodzeifa arose to combat with his father, but Mahomet bade him sit down. It is said that he aided Hamza in giving his father the *coup de grâce*. Tradition gloats over such savage passages ; and it is all the more pleasing to light upon the outburst of natural affection in the text.

Spoil
divided
near Safra

In accordance with this command, the booty gathered on the field was placed under a Citizen who acted the part of Prize agent for the army. It was then divided, as they encamped at Safra, in equal allotments, among the whole army, after the Prophet's Fifth had been set apart.¹ All shared alike, excepting that each horseman received two extra portions for his horse. To the lot of every man fell a camel, with its gear; or two camels unaccounted; or a leathern couch, or some such equivalent. Mahomet obtained the camel of Abu Jahl, and the famous sword known as *Dzul Ficâr*.² This sword was selected by him beyond his share; for, in virtue of the prophetic dignity, he was privileged to choose from the booty, before division, whatever thing might please him most.

A prisoner
put to
death by
Mahomet

The army of Medina, leading their captives handcuffed and carrying their dead and wounded, retired in the evening to the valley of Otheil, several miles from Bedr; and there Mahomet passed the night. On the morrow, the prisoners were brought up before him. As he scrutinised each, his eye fell fiercely on Nadhr, made captive by Micdâd. 'There was death in that glance,' whispered Nadhr trembling to a bystander. 'Not so,' replied the other; 'it is but thine imagination.' The unfortunate prisoner thought otherwise, and besought Musab to intercede for him; on which Musab reminded him that he had denied the faith and persecuted Believers. 'Ah!' said Nadhr, 'had the Coreish made thee a prisoner, they would never have put thee to death!' 'Even were it so,' replied Musab scornfully, 'I am not as thou art; Islam hath rent all bonds asunder.' Micdâd, the captor, fearing lest his prisoner, and with him the chance of a rich ransom, was about to slip from his hands, cried out: 'The prisoner is mine!' At this moment, the command to 'strike off his head!'³ was interposed by Mahomet, who had been

¹ Weil supposes the distribution to have been equal all round; and that the passage ordaining the Fifth was subsequently revealed.—*Einleitung*, p. 21.

² We find notices of this sword at Medina, A. H. 145, and again at Baghdad, A. H. 320. *Caliphate*, pp. 452, 561.

³ The phrase, *Strike his neck*, used for beheading. The executioner, by a dexterous stroke of the sword on the back of the neck can sever the head at one blow. It is still the mode of capital punishment in Mahometan countries.

watching what passed. 'And, O Lord!' he added, 'do thou of Thy bounty grant unto Micdâd a better prey than this.' Nadhr was forthwith beheaded by Aly.

Two days afterwards, about half-way to Medina, Ocba, another prisoner, was ordered out for execution. He ventured to expostulate, and demand why he should be treated more rigorously than the other captives. 'Because of thine enmity to God and his Prophet,' replied Mahomet. '*And my little girl!*' cried Ocba, in the bitterness of his soul—'*who will take care of her?*' 'Hell-fire!' exclaimed the Prophet; and on the instant the victim was hewn to the ground. 'Wretch that thou wast!' he continued, 'and persecutor! unbeliever in God, in his Prophet, and in his Book! I give thanks unto the Lord that hath slain thee, and comforted mine eyes thereby.'¹

Ocba,
another
prisoner,
executed

We are even told that it had been in contemplation to put the whole of the prisoners, some 50 in number, to death. Indeed, Mahomet is represented as himself directing this course.² Abu Bekr, always on the lenient side, pleaded for mercy. Omar, the personification of stern justice, urged Mahomet vehemently to put them to death. At this juncture Gabriel brought a message from heaven, leaving it at the Prophet's option either to slay the captives or demand a ransom; with the condition, however, that, for every captive spared, a Believer would be hereafter slain in battle the ensuing year.³ Mahomet consulted his followers; and they said:—'Let us save the prisoners alive, and take their ransom; hereafter, they that are killed in lieu thereof will inherit Paradise and the crown of martyrdom;'—which counsel was adopted.

Mahomet
said to
have been
reprimanded
for saving
prisoners
alive

¹ The incident was made plentiful use of in the factious days ending in Othman's death; for Omm Kolthum, daughter of Ocba, was foster-sister to that unfortunate Caliph; as was Abu Sarh (noticed at the taking of Mecca) his foster-brother. See Ibn al Athir, iii. 56.

² Thus Mahomet said: 'Tell not Saïd of his brother Mabad's death' (see *ante*, p. 220 note); 'but kill ye every man his prisoner.' Again: 'Take not any man his brother prisoner, but rather kill him.' I would not, however, lay much stress on these traditions. I am inclined rather to view them as called into existence by the passage quoted from the Coran. Mahomet (they say) likened Abu Bekr to Michael, Abraham, and Jesus, all advocates of mercy; and Omar to Gabriel, Noah, and Moses, the ministers of justice. He added that if the sin of Bedr in sparing the prisoners had been punished rigorously, none would have escaped but Omar and Sad ibn Muâdh (another sanguinary Believer, as we shall have full proof hereafter), who both urged the slaughter of all the prisoners.

³ 'Which thing' (tradition adds) 'came to pass at Ohod.'

Teaching
of Coran
on the
subject

These traditions embody the popular belief on the subject. But the only mention of the matter in the Coran is the following verse ; which, though produced by Mahomet rather to justify the slaughter of the few prisoners put to death by himself and his followers, and to gain the character of having, against the divine commission, erred on the side of mercy, has, no doubt, given rise to this mass of fiction :—

Sura viii

It is not for a prophet to take prisoners until he hath inflicted a grievous wound upon his enemies on the Earth. Ye seek after the good things of this Life : but God seeketh after the Life to come. . . . Unless a revelation from the Lord had interposed, surely a grievous punishment had overtaken you for (the ransom) which ye took. Now, therefore, enjoy of that which ye have gained, whatever is lawful and good ; and fear God, for God is gracious and merciful.

‘O thou Prophet ! speak thus unto thy prisoners :—If God should know anything in your hearts which is good He will give unto you better than that which hath been taken from you ; and He will forgive you, for the Lord is forgiving and merciful. But if they seek to act unfaithfully towards thee—verily they have acted unfaithfully towards the Lord already, and God is knowing and wise.’

It will be seen from this quotation that Mahomet already contemplated the possibility of converting the prisoners to his cause ; and in some instances, as we shall see, he was successful.

Tidings of
victory
reach
Medina

From Otheil, shortly after the battle, Mahomet had despatched Zeid and Abdallah the poet, to make known his victory at Medina. At the valley of Akick, Abdallah struck off to the right, and spread the good tidings throughout Coba and Upper Medina. Zeid, mounted on Al Caswa, proceeded straightway to the city. The disaffected Citizens had buoyed themselves with the hope of Mahomet’s defeat ; and now, seeing his favourite camel approach without her master, they prognosticated that he had been slain. But they were soon undeceived and crestfallen ; for Zeid, taking his stand at the entrance of the city, proclaimed the overthrow of the Coreish and named the chief men slain or taken prisoner. The joy of the Prophet’s adherents was unbounded ; and, as the news ran from door to door, even the little children made the streets resound with the cry, *Abu Jahl, the sinner, is slain !*

The next day, Mahomet himself arrived. His gladness was damped by finding that his daughter Rockeya had died during his absence. They had just smoothed the earth over her tomb in the graveyard of Bakie, as Zeid entered Medina. Othman had watched tenderly over her death-bed; and Mahomet sought to solace him by uniting him, a few months later, to his remaining single daughter, Omm Kolthum. Like Rockeya, she had been married to one of Abu Lahab's sons, but had for some time been separated from him. She died a year or two before Mahomet, who used, after her death, to say he so dearly loved Othman, that, had there been a third daughter, he would have given her in marriage to him also.

Mahomet's
return ;
death of his
daughter
Rockeya

In the evening, the prisoners were brought in. Sawda, the Prophet's wife, had gone out to join in lamentation with the family of a Citizen who had lost two sons at Bedr. On her return, she found, standing by her house, Suheil, one of the prisoners, with his hands tied behind his neck.¹ Surprised at the sight, she, without thinking, offered to loose his hands, when she was startled by the voice of Mahomet, calling loudly from within: 'By the Lord and his Prophet! O Sawda, what art thou doing?' She replied that she had addressed Suheil from an involuntary impulse. Yet Mahomet was far from intending to treat the prisoners whose lives he had spared, with harshness. He rather hoped, by kind and friendly demeanour, to win their affections and draw them over to the Faith. Thus, when Omm Salma was engaged mourning at the same house with Sawda, news was brought that some of the prisoners had been quartered at her home. She went at once to Mahomet, whom she found with Ayesha, and thus addressed him:—'O Prophet! my uncle's sons desire that I should entertain certain of the prisoners, anoint their heads, and comb their dishevelled hair; but I did not venture to do so until I had first obtained thine orders.' Mahomet replied that he did not at all object to these

Prisoners
brought
into
Medina

¹ Perhaps greater stringency was used in his restraint, as he had nearly escaped on the road. Mahomet gave orders to chase and kill him. Coming up with him, he spared his life, but bound his hands behind his neck, and tied him with a rope to his camel. Osâma met Mahomet entering Medina with Suheil following in this condition, and exclaimed: 'What! Abu Yazid!' (Suheil's name). 'Yes,' said Mahomet, 'it is the same; the Chief who used to feed the people with bread at Mecca.'

marks of hospitality, and desired her to do to them as she was minded.¹

Prisoners
treated
kindly ;

In pursuance of Mahomet's command, and in accord with the passage already quoted, the Citizens, and such of the Refugees as had houses of their own, received the prisoners with kindness and consideration. ' Blessings on the men of Medina ! ' said one of these in later days : ' they made us ride, while they themselves walked afoot ; they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates.' It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the captives, yielding to these influences, declared themselves Believers, and to such their liberty was at once granted. The rest were kept for ransom. But it was long before the Coreish could humble themselves to visit Medina for the purpose. The kindly treatment was thus prolonged, and left a favourable impression on the minds even of those who did not at once go over to Islam. Eventually the army of Bedr was enriched by the large payments given. The captives were redeemed according to their several means—some paying a thousand, and others as much as four thousand pieces. Such as had nothing to give were liberated without payment ; but a service was required which shows how far Mecca was in advance of Medina in learning. To each were allotted ten boys, to be taught the art of writing ; and the teaching was accepted as a ransom.

And
ransomed
from
Mecca

Importance
of the
victory,
and rank
assigned to
those en-
gaged in it

The importance of Bedr is marked, as already said, by the marvellous labour with which every incident relating to it has been treasured up, so that the narrative far exceeds in profusion of detail that of probably any other of the great battles that have shaped the destinies of the world. Its significance is also stamped by the exalted rank assigned to the famous Three Hundred. Their names were enrolled in the first rank of the ' Register of Omar,' as entitled to the highest of all the princely dotations there recorded.² They were, in fact, the peerage of Islam. ' Bring me hither the garment in which I went forth to Bedr ; for this end have I kept it laid up unto this day.' So spake Sad, the youthful convert of Mecca, now about to die at fourscore years.

¹ A year or two afterwards, on her husband's death, Mahomet married this lady.

² See *Caliphate*, p. 157.

Crowned with renown as the conqueror of Persia, the founder of Cufa, and the Viceroy of Irac, his honours were cast into the shade by the glory of having been one of the heroes of Bedr. In his eyes the 'garment of Bedr' was the highest badge of nobility, and in it would he be carried to his grave.¹

The battle of Bedr was indeed a critical point in the career of Mahomet. However skilful in turning every incident into proof of the divine interposition for the furtherance of Islam, he would have found it difficult to maintain his position at Medina in the face of a reverse. The victory now supplied him with new and cogent arguments. He did not hesitate to ascribe his success to the miraculous assistance of God; and this was the easier in consequence of the superior numbers of the Coreish. Passages have already been quoted to this effect, and the following are equally conclusive. An Angelic host, a thousand strong, was present on his side:—

The victory
a divine
declaration
in favour
of Islam

When ye sought assistance from your Lord; and He answered, *Verily, I will assist you with a thousand Angels, in squadrons following one upon another*:—This the Lord did as good tidings for you, and to confirm your hearts thereby. As for victory, it is from none other than from God: for God is glorious and wise.

Angelic
auxiliaries

Sura viii

Verily there hath been given unto you a Sign in the two armies which fought. One army fought in the way of God. The other was unbelieving, and saw their enemy double of themselves by the sight of the eye. And God strengtheneth with His aid whom He pleaseth. Verily, therein is a lesson unto the discerning people.

Sura iii

And ye slew them not, but God slew them. Neither was it thou, O Prophet, that didst cast the gravel; but God did cast it; that He might prove the Believers by a gracious probation from Himself. Verily, God heareth and knoweth. It was even so. And God weakeneth the devices of the Infidels.

Sura viii

If ye (the unbelievers) desire a decision, now verily the decision hath already come unto you. If ye hold back, it will be better for you; but if ye return, We also shall return. And your troops will not avail you anything, even though they be many in number, for surely God is with the Believers.

¹ He had amassed great wealth in his various commands, and, avoiding the civil wars which followed the death of the Caliph Othman, had retired to his castle at Al Akick near Medina, where he died A.H. 55.

Satan
forced to
abandon
the Coreish

Furthermore, not only was divine aid afforded to the army of Medina, but the help which Satan had designed for the army of Mecca was signally frustrated:—

Sura viii .

Be not like unto those who went forth from their habitations vain-gloriously to be seen of men, and who turned aside from the way of God : and God compasseth about that which they do.

Remember, when Satan bedecked their works unto the Enemy, and said,—*None shall prevail this day against you; for I verily am your Confederate.* But when the armies came within sight one of the other, he turned back upon his heels, and said,—*Verily I am clear of you. Truly I see that which ye see not. I fear God, for God is terrible in vengeance.*¹

Mahomet
now stands
or falls by
success in
the field

The cause of Mahomet, it was distinctly admitted, must stand or fall by the result of the armed struggle with his native city on which he had now fairly entered: difficult and dangerous ground, no doubt, for a fallible mortal to stand upon; but the die was cast, and the battle must be fought out to the death. The scabbard cast away, little additional risk was incurred when success in arms became the criterion of his prophetic claim. However strong his position otherwise, it could not be maintained in the face of an armed defeat; however otherwise weak, the sword would establish it triumphantly.

Chief
Coreish
killed at
Bedr

There was much in the battle of Bedr which Mahomet could plausibly represent as a special interposition of the Deity in his behalf. Not only was a most decisive victory gained over a force three times his own in number, but the slain on the enemy's side included in a remarkable manner many of his most influential opponents. In addition to the chief men killed or made prisoners, Abu Lahab, who was not present in the battle, died a few days after the

¹ As may be imagined, these passages have given rise to endless legends. The Devil appeared in the favourite form of Ibn Suraca. This man was seen running away from the field of battle, and was taxed with it by the Coreish—while all the time it was the Devil! We have gravely given to us the circumstantial evidence of a witness regarding the Devil's words and behaviour on this occasion, his jumping into the sea, &c. As to the angels, we have pages filled with accounts of them:—such as that one of the enemy suddenly perceived a tall white figure in the air, mounted on a piebald horse; it was an angel who had bound his comrade, and left him on the spot a prisoner, and this was the cause of his conversion. But it would be endless and unprofitable to multiply such tales.

return of the fugitive army—as if the decree marking out the enemies of the Prophet was inevitable.¹

At Mecca, the news of the defeat was received with consternation. Burning shame and thirst for revenge stifled for a time all outward expression of grief. 'Weep not for your slain,' was the counsel of Abu Sofian, 'mourn not their loss, neither let the bard bewail their fate. If ye lament with elegies, it will ease your wrath and diminish your enmity towards Mahomet and his fellows. And, should that reach their ears, and they laugh at us, will not their scorn be worse than all? Haply the turn may come, and ye may yet obtain your revenge. As for me, I will touch no oil, neither approach my wife, until I shall have gone forth again to fight with Mahomet.' It was this savage pride which so long prevented their sending to Medina for the ransom of their captive kinsmen.²

Consternation and thirst for revenge at Mecca

A month elapsed thus; and then they could refrain no longer. The wild cry of long stifled grief burst forth at last from the whole city. In almost every house there were tears and wailings for the captive or the dead. And this lasted an entire month.³ One house alone was silent: 'Why sheddest thou no tears,' said they to Hind, the wife of Abu

Wailing for the dead at Mecca

¹ Abbasside traditions add that his death was caused by malignant and infectious ulcers; that he remained two days unburied, as no one would approach the offensive corpse; that he was not washed, but that water was cast from a distance on his body, which was then carried forth and thrown into a well in Upper Mecca, and stones heaped over the well. The bias is palpable.

² Abu Sofian declared that he would not send to ransom his own son, even if Mahomet kept him a whole year. His son was eventually exchanged for a Moslem who incautiously visited Mecca for the Lesser pilgrimage.

³ A plaintive illustration of the force of pent-up grief is given by Wakidy with all the pathos of Arab feeling. The blind and aged Aswad had lost two sons and a grandson in the battle. Like the rest of the Coreish, he sternly repressed his grief; but as days rolled on he longed to give vent to his feelings. One night he heard the wild notes of a female wailing, and he said to his servant: 'Go see! it may be that the Coreish have begun to wail for their dead: perchance I, too, may wail for Zamaa, my son; for grief consumeth me within.' The servant returned, saying, that it was but the voice of a woman lamenting for her strayed camel. On this the old man gave way to a burst of beautiful and impassioned poetry. 'Doth she weep for her camel, and for it banish sleep from her eyes? Nay, if ye will weep, let us weep over Bedr:—Weep for Ockail, and for Hârith the lion of lions!' &c.

Sofian ; ' why weep not for thy father Otha, thine uncle also, and thy brother ? ' ' Nay,' replied Hind, ' I will not weep until ye again wage war with Mahomet and his fellows. If tears could wipe the grief from off my heart, I too would weep as ye ; but it is not thus with Hind.' To mark her sullen sorrow, she forswore to use oil for her hair, or to go near the bed of Abu Sofian, until an army should march forth against Medina.

CHAPTER XIII

THE YEAR FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF BEDR

Ramadhan, A.H. II., to Shaban, A.H. III.—A.D. 624

ÆTAT. 56

THE triumph of Bedr was not less important in its effect upon the inhabitants of Medina than it was upon the Coreish at Mecca. It was, indeed, more important. It consolidated the power of Mahomet over the wavering, and struck alarm into the hearts of the Disaffected. The issue had been put not on political, but upon religious grounds. It was for their unbelief the Coreish were overthrown. The victory, the 'Decision,' was vouchsafed by God to vindicate the Faith. The Lord had 'frustrated the devices of the Infidels; for surely God is with the Believers.' The conclusion applied with equal force to the Unbelievers of Medina. 'Verily,' said the Prophet in his Revelation, 'herein is a lesson unto the discerning people;' and the Citizens were not slow to learn it. Abdallah ibn Obey still possessed great influence; he was the head of all who had not gone over to the new faith or tendered allegiance to the Stranger. Mahomet on his first arrival had been counselled to deal tenderly with this Chief, and he had followed the advice. Abdallah saw no opportunity for a successful rupture; his own position was too insecure, and the attitude of his people too weak and wavering, for an open conflict with the enthusiasm of Mahomet's followers. The stranger's power was daily undermining his authority and rising on its ruins.

Important effect of victory on Mahomet's position at Medina

Still there were clans as well as individuals who declined to go over to the new faith, and there were the Jewish tribes, and their adherents, whom, on account of their religion, Mahomet was obliged at first to respect. All these were a thorn in his side. They spoke covertly against him, and

Disaffected Jews a thorn in Mahomet's side

ridiculed him in satires which passed readily into the mouths of the Disaffected, but they had not calculated on the policy of Mahomet and his power to crush them. The unquestioning devotion of his followers made them ready instruments not only of an all-pervading espionage from which no family was secure, but also for ridding him of those whose opposition was dangerous to his cause. Even secret conversations were reported to the Prophet, and on such information he countenanced proceedings that were sometimes both cruel and unscrupulous. It was the strength gained at Bedr which enabled him fearlessly to enter on this course.

Assassina-
tion of
Asma,
Ramadhan,
A. H. II.
January,
A. D. 624

The first blood shed at Medina with the countenance of Mahomet was a woman's. Asma, daughter of Merwan, belonged to a disaffected tribe, the Beni Aus, and to a family which had not as yet thrown off their ancestral faith. She made no secret of her dislike to Islam; and, being a poetess, composed some couplets, after the battle of Bedr, on the folly of receiving and trusting a Stranger, who had risen against his own people, and slain the chief of them in battle. The verses quickly spread from mouth to mouth (one of the few means of giving expression to public opinion), and at last reached the ears of the Mussulmans. They were offended; and Omeir, a blind man of the same tribe (and according to some a former husband of Asma) vowed that he would kill the author. It was but a few days after the return of Mahomet from Bedr, that this man, in the dead of night, crept into the apartment where Asma with her little ones lay asleep. Feeling stealthily, he removed her suckling babe, and plunged his sword into her breast with such force that it transfixed her to the couch. Next morning, in the Mosque at prayer, Mahomet, who was aware of the bloody design, said to Omeir: 'Hast thou slain the daughter of Merwan?' 'Yes,' he answered; 'but tell me now, is there cause of apprehension?' 'None,' said Mahomet; 'a couple of goats will hardly knock their heads together for it.' Then turning to the people assembled in the Mosque, he said: 'If ye desire to see a man that hath assisted the Lord and his Prophet, look ye here!' 'What!' cried Omar, 'the blind Omeir!' 'Nay,' replied the Prophet, 'call him not blind; call him rather *Omeir the Seeing*.' As the assassin returned to his home in Upper Medina, he passed the sons of Asma burying

their mother; they accused him of the murder, which without compunction he avowed, and added that if they dared to repeat things such as she had uttered he would slay the whole clan of them. The bloody threat had the desired effect. Those of the family who had secretly espoused the cause of Mahomet now openly professed their faith, and the whole tribe soon succumbed before the fierce determination and growing influence of the Prophet's followers. In short, as Sprenger remarks, the only alternative to a hopeless blood-feud was the adoption of Islam.

Many weeks did not elapse before another murder was committed by expressed authority of Mahomet. The victim was an aged Jewish proselyte, Abu Afak, whose offence was similar to that of Asma. He belonged to the Beni Amr, whose doubtful loyalty, it will be remembered, is marked by the message sent them by the Prophet on his march to Bedr. Notwithstanding his change of faith, Abu Afak still lived with his tribe in Upper Medina; and, though (as is said) above a hundred years of age, was active in his opposition to the new religion. He, too, had composed some stinging and disloyal verses which annoyed the Mussulmans. 'Who will rid me of this pestilent fellow?' said Mahomet to those about him; and not long after a convert from the same tribe watched his opportunity, and falling unawares upon the aged man, as he slept in the court-yard outside his house, despatched him with his sword. The death shriek drew his neighbours to the spot; but though they vowed vengeance against the murderer, he escaped unrecognised.

These lawless and sanguinary acts alarmed all that party at Medina which still regarded the strangers and the new faith with suspicion and dislike. And above all, terror crept over the hearts of the Jews. There was good reason for it.

The Beni Cainucaa, who followed the goldsmiths' craft in their stronghold outside the city, were the first of the three Jewish tribes to bear the brunt of the Prophet's displeasure. It is asserted that they rebelled and broke their treaty. How the breach first occurred is not altogether certain. Mahomet, we are told, went to their chief place of resort, shortly after his return from Bedr; and, having assembled the chief men, summoned them to acknowledge him as their Prophet. 'By the Lord!' he said, 'ye know full well that I am the Apostle

And of
Abu Afak.
A.H. II.
February,
A.D. 624

Alarm of
Jews

Beni
Cainucaa
threatened
by Ma-
homet

Quarrel
between
Jews and
citizens of
Medina

of God. Believe, therefore, before that happen to you which has befallen the Coreish!' They refused, and defied him to do his worst. An incident soon occurred which afforded the pretext for attack. A Moslem maiden visited their market-place, and at a goldsmith's shop, waiting for some ornaments, sat down. A silly neighbour, unperceived, pinned her skirt behind to the upper dress. When she arose, the awkward exposure excited laughter, and she screamed with shame. A Mussulman, apprised of the affront, slew the offending Jew; the brethren of the Jew, in their turn, fell upon the Mussulman and killed him. The family of the murdered Mussulman appealed to the converts of Medina, who espoused their cause. Though bound by a friendly treaty, Mahomet made no attempt to compose the quarrel, or single out the guilty. Forthwith he marshalled his followers, and, placing the great white banner, which had waved over the field of Bedr but a month before, in the hands of Hamza, marched forth to attack the offending tribe. Their settlement, sufficiently fortified to resist assault, was invested, and a strict blockade maintained. This happened within one month from the battle of Bedr.

Beni Cai-
nucaa are
besieged.
A.H. II.
February,
A.D. 624

Surrender
at discre-
tion, and
are sent
into exile

The beleaguered garrison expected that Abdallah ibn Obey and the Beni Khazraj, with whom they had long been in alliance, would have interfered in their behalf; but no one dared to stir. For fifteen days they were closely besieged; and at last, despairing of the looked-for aid, they surrendered at discretion. As, one by one, they issued from the stronghold, their hands were tied behind their backs, and preparations made for execution. But Abdallah, fallen as he was from his high estate, could not endure to see his faithful allies led thus away to be massacred in cold blood. Approaching Mahomet, he begged for mercy; but Mahomet turned his face away. Abdallah persisted in his suit, and seizing the Prophet by the arm, as he stood armed in his coat of mail, reiterated the petition. 'Let me alone!' cried Mahomet; but Abdallah did not relax his hold. The marks of anger mantled in the Prophet's face, and again he exclaimed loudly: 'Wretch, let me go!' 'Nay!' said Abdallah, 'I will not let thee go until thou hast compassion on my friends; 300 soldiers armed in mail, and 400 unequipped—they defended me on the fields of Hadaick and Boath from

every foe.¹ Wilt thou cut them down in one day, O Mahomet? As for me, I am one verily that feareth the vicissitudes of fortune.' Abdallah was yet too strong for Mahomet with safety to neglect the appeal so urgently preferred. 'Let them go!' the Prophet said, reluctantly; 'the Lord curse them, and him too!' So Mahomet released them, but commanded that they should be sent into exile. They were led forth some distance by Obâda, one of the Khazrajite 'leaders;' thence they proceeded to the Jewish settlement of Wadi al Cora, and, being assisted there with carriage, reached Adzraat, on the confines of Syria. The spoil consisted mainly of armour and goldsmiths' tools, for that was the chief occupation of the tribe: they possessed no agricultural property, nor any fields. Mahomet took his choice of the arms—three bows, three swords, and two coats of mail. The royal Fifth was then set aside, and the rest distributed amongst the army.

The Jews might now see clearly the designs of Mahomet. It was no petty question of an affronted female. Blood had, no doubt, been shed in the quarrel; but it was shed equally on both sides. And had there not been relentless enmity, and predetermination to root out the Israelites, the difference might easily have been composed. Moreover, Mahomet was bound by treaty to deal justly and amicably with the tribe: the murderer alone was 'liable to retaliation.'² Indeed, of such minor importance was the quarrel, that some biographers do not mention it at all, but justify the attack by a heavenly message revealing Jewish treachery. The violent treatment of the tribe widened also to some extent the breach between the Believers and the disaffected Citizens. Abdallah thus upbraided Obâda (both were principals in the confederacy with the Cainucaa) for the part he had taken in abandoning their allies, and aiding in their exile: 'What! art thou free from the oath,' he said, 'with which we ratified their alliance? Hast thou forgotten how they stood by us, and shed for us their blood, on such and such a field?'—and he began enumerating the engagements in which they had fought together. Obâda cut him short: 'Hearts have changed,' he said, 'Islam hath blotted all treaties out.'

After the expulsion of the Beni Cainucaa, Medina en-

¹ See *ante*, p. 111.

² See *ante*, p. 177.

Effect on
the Jews
and dis-
affected
Citizens

Affair of
the *Meal-*
bags, petty
attack by
Abu Sofian.
A.H. II.
April,
A.D. 624

joyed a month of repose. It was then thrown into alarm by a petty inroad of the Coreish. Abu Sofian, smarting under the defeat at Bedr, and still bound by his oath of abstinence, resolved, by way of revenge, to beard his enemies at their very doors. Setting out with 200 mounted followers, he took the eastern road skirting the table-land of Nejd, and arrived by night at the settlement of the Beni Nadhir, one of the Jewish tribes living close to Medina. Refused admittance by their chief, Huwey, Abu Sofian repaired to another leading man of the same tribe, who furnished him with intelligence regarding Medina, and hospitably entertained his party during the night. When the dawn was about to break, the party moved stealthily forward, and fell upon the corn-fields and palm-gardens two or three miles north-east of the city. Some of these, with their farm-houses, they burned to the ground, and killed two of the cultivators. Then, holding his vow fulfilled, Abu Sofian hurried back to Mecca. Meanwhile, the alarm was raised in Medina, and Mahomet hastened, at the head of the Citizens, in pursuit. To accelerate their flight, the Coreish cast away their wallets filled with meal (whence the name of the expedition), which were picked up by the pursuers. After an absence of five days, Mahomet returned from the fruitless chase. And shortly after, he celebrated the first festival of the *Eed al Zoha*, already described.

Expedition
to Carcarat
al Cadr,
against the
Ghatafân
and Suleim.
A.H. III.
May,
A.D. 624

During the summer and autumn, two or three expeditions were undertaken against the tribes inhabiting the plain east of Medina. These were of minor interest in their immediate results, but are significant of the widening circle of the struggle. The Joheina and other tribes on the sea-coast being already in the interest of Mahomet, the Syrian trade by that route was now absolutely barred. There remained the eastern route to Babylonia. This passed through the territories of two powerful nomad tribes, Suleim and Ghatafân, both allied to the Coreish and employed by them as carriers. They inhabited part of the great plain of Nejd, in the centre of the Peninsula. There the Beni Suleim had their head-quarters in a fruitful plain, the seventh station from Mecca on the caravan route which crosses the table-land to the head of the Persian Gulf. The Coreish now turned their eyes towards this territory, and entered into closer bonds

with the tribes inhabiting it. Henceforth the attitude of the Suleim and Ghatafân, especially of the former, became actively hostile towards Mahomet. Incited by the Coreish, and by the example of Abu Sofian, they now projected a plundering attack upon Medina, a task in itself congenial with their predatory habits. Timely intelligence reached Medina that they had begun to assemble at Carcarat al Cadr; Mahomet, anticipating their design, hastened to surprise them, at the head of 200 men. On reaching the spot he found it deserted; but a herd of 500 camels, securely feeding under charge of a single boy, fell into his hands, and was divided as spoil of war. The boy was made captive, but afterwards, on professing faith in Mahomet, released.

A month later, the Beni Ghatafân were reported to be again collecting troops in Nejd. Heading a strong force of 450 men, some mounted on horses, Mahomet himself proceeded to disperse them. In three or four marches he reached the spot; but the enemy, having notice of his approach, had retired to the hills, and secured in fastnesses their families and cattle. One of them, who was met on the road, and employed as a guide, embraced Islam and was spared. In effecting this demonstration Mahomet was absent eleven days. In the autumn he led another attack, at the head of three hundred followers, against the Beni Suleim, who still maintained a threatening attitude. Arrived at their rendezvous, he found that the force had broken up. So, after staying unavailingly for some time to watch the autumn caravans of the Coreish proceeding northwards, he returned without meeting the enemy.

The following month was marked by a more successful affair. The Coreish, finding the sea-shore closely watched by Mahomet, dared not expose their merchandise to the perils of that route. They were reduced to great straits. 'If we sit still at home,' they said, 'we shall be eating up our capital; how can we live, unless we keep up the winter and the summer caravans? We are shut out from the coast; let us try the eastern road by Irac.' Water is scarce upon this route, but the summer was now past, and, moreover, a sufficient supply could be carried on camels between the distant wells. Accordingly, they equipped a caravan to traverse the table-land of the central desert. It was headed by Safwân,

Second expedition against the Ghatafân, to Dzu Amr. June

And against the Suleim, to Bohrân. August

Zeid plunders caravan at al Carada. September

and the Coreish sent much property with him for barter, chiefly in vessels and bars of silver. An Arab guide promised to lead them by a way unknown to the followers of Mahomet; but intelligence of the rich venture, and of the road which it was to take, reached the Prophet through an Arab who chanced to visit the Jews at Medina; whereupon Zeid was immediately despatched in pursuit, with a hundred picked and well-mounted men. He came up with the caravan, and fell suddenly upon it. The leaders of the Coreish fled, the rest were overpowered, and all the merchandise and silver were carried off, with one or two prisoners, to Medina. The booty was valued at 100,000 pieces; so that, after appropriation of the Prophet's Fifth, 800 pieces fell to the lot of each soldier. The guide was brought to Mahomet, who promised him liberty, if he would believe. He embraced Islam, and was set free. This was the first occasion on which the Moslems secured the rich plunder of a caravan. Zeid obtained great distinction in consequence, and thenceforward became a favourite commander.

Assassination of
Kab son of
Ashraf.
A.H. III.
July,
A.D. 624

No further expedition took place this year; but I must not omit to notice another of those dastardly acts of cruelty which darken the pages of the Prophet's life. Kab ibn Ashraf was the son of a Jewess of the Beni Nadhîr, and with that tribe appears to have identified himself. He was a 'proselyte of the gate,' and is said to have followed Mahomet till he abandoned Jerusalem as his Kibla. The victory of Bedr deeply mortified him, in common with other ill-wishers of the Prophet. He made no attempt to conceal his discontent; and soon after proceeded to Mecca, where, being a poet, he stirred up the Coreish to avenge their heroes buried in the pit of Bedr, by elegies lamenting their hard fate. On his return to Medina he was further accused of disquieting the Mussulmans by the publication of amatory sonnets addressed to certain of their women—a curious and favourite mode of annoyance amongst the Arabs.¹ Mahomet, appre-

¹ The following couplets are quoted in support of the accusation:—
Alas my heart! Wilt thou pass on? Wilt thou not tarry to praise her?
Wilt thou leave Omm al Fadhl deserted?
Of saffron colour is she: so full of charms, that if thou wert to clasp her,
there would be pressed forth Wine, Henna, and Katam; *

* The elements of beauty: red, yellow, and black.

hensive that the free expression of hostile feeling by persons of such influence would sap his authority at Medina, made no secret of his animosity towards Kab. He prayed aloud : ‘ *O Lord, deliver me from the son of Ashraf, in whatsoever way it seemeth good unto Thee, because of his open sedition and his verses.*’ But instead of adopting a straightforward course, he prompted his followers, as on previous occasions, to take his life, by saying to them : ‘ Who will ease me of the son of Ashraf? for he troubleth me.’ Mohammed son of Maslama replied : ‘ Here am I ;—I will slay him.’ Mahomet, signifying his approval, desired him to take counsel with Sad ibn Muâdh, chief of his tribe the Beni Aus. By the advice of Sad, the conspirator chose four other men from the same clan as accomplices, and, taking them to Mahomet, obtained his sanction to their plan of throwing the victim off his guard by fair words and pretence of unfriendliness to the Prophet’s rule. Abu Naila, foster-brother of Kab, being deputed to pave the way, complained to him of the calamities and poverty which the advent of Mahomet had brought upon them, and begged that he would advance corn and dates for the sustenance of himself and a party like-minded with him. Kab, taken in the snare, demanded security ; Abu Naila agreed that they should pledge their arms, and appointed a late hour of meeting at the house of Kab, when the bargain would be completed. Towards evening the conspirators assembled at the house of Mahomet. It was a bright moonlight night, and the Prophet accompanied them to the outskirts of the town. As they emerged from the low shrubs of the Moslem burying ground, he bade them god-speed : ‘ Go!’ said he ; ‘ the blessing of God be with you, and assistance from on high!’ The house of Kab was near one of the Jewish suburbs, two or three miles from the city. When they reached it he had retired to rest. Abu Naila

So slim that her figure, from ankle to shoulder, bends as she desires to stand upright, and cannot.

When we met she caused me to forget (my own wife) Omm Halim, although the cord that bindeth me to her is not to be broken.

Sprung of the Beni Aamir, my heart is mad with the love of her ; and if she chose she could cure Kab of his sickness.

She is the Princess of women ; and her father the Prince of his tribe, the Entertainer of strangers, the Fulfiller of promises.

I never saw the Sun appear by night, except on one dark evening when she came forth unto me in all her splendour.

called aloud for him to come down, and Kab started from his couch. His bride (for he had been lately married, and the biographers omit nothing that adds to the heartlessness of the affair) caught him by the skirt, and warned him not to go. 'It is but my brother Abu Naila,' he said; and, as he pulled the garment from her, gaily added the verse: 'Shall a warrior be challenged and not respond?' Descending, he was not alarmed to find the party armed, as the weapons were to be left with him in pledge. They wandered along, conversing on the misfortunes of Medina, till they reached a waterfall, and upon its bank they proposed to pass some part of the moonlight night. Meanwhile, his foster-brother, having thrown his arm around Kab, was familiarly drawing his hand through his long locks, and praising their sweet scent, which Kab said was that of his bride. Suddenly the traitor seized his hair, and dragging him to the ground, shouted: '*Slay him! slay the enemy of God!*' Drawing their swords, they fell upon the victim. The wretched man clung so close to his foster-brother that he was with difficulty put to death. As he received the fatal wound he uttered a fearful scream, which resounded far and near amongst the strongholds of the Jews, and lights were seen at the windows of the affrighted inhabitants. The assassins, fearful of pursuit, retired in haste, carrying in their arms one of their number who had received two sword-cuts aimed at Kab. As they regained the burying ground, they shouted the well-known *takbir*, 'Great is the Lord;' which Mahomet hearing knew that their work had been successfully accomplished. At the gate of the Mosque he met them, saying: 'Welcome; for your countenances beam of victory.' 'And thine also, O Prophet,' they exclaimed, as they cast the ghastly head of their victim at his feet. Then Mahomet praised God for what had been done, and comforted the wounded man.

Reflections
on Kab's
assassina-
tion

I have been thus minute in the details of the murder of Kab, as it faithfully illustrates the ruthless fanaticism into which the teaching of the Prophet was fast drifting. It was a spirit too congenial with the passions of the Arabs not to be immediately caught up by his followers. The strong religious impulse under which they acted hurried them into excesses of barbarous treachery, and justified that treachery by the interests of Islam and approval of the Deity. I am

far from asserting that every detail in the foregoing narrative, either of instigation by Mahomet, or of deception by the assassins, is beyond question. The actors, indeed, in such scenes were not slow to magnify and embellish their own services at the expense of their imagination. There may also have been the desire to justify an act of perfidy that startled even the loose morality of the day, by casting the burden of it on the infallible Prophet. But, after due weight given to both considerations, enough remains to prove some of the worst features of assassination, and the presumption that these were countenanced, if not in some instances directly prompted, by Mahomet himself.¹

On the morning after the murder of Kab, Mahomet, exasperated at the opposition (or, as tradition puts it, the treachery) of the Jews, accorded a general permission to his followers to slay them wherever met. Accordingly, Muheiasa, having encountered Ibn Sanfna, a Jewish merchant, slew him, though a confederate of his tribe. The occurrence is alluded to by the biographers rather for the purpose of explaining the sudden conversion of the assassin's brother Huweisa, than to record the murder of a petty Jewish trader. When Huweisa upbraided his brother for killing the confederate Jew, and appropriating his wealth;—'By the Lord!' replied Muheiasa, 'if he that commanded me to kill him had commanded to kill thee also, I would have done it.' 'What!'

Murder
of Ibn
Sanfna, a
Jew,

Causes conversion
of the murder-
er's
brother

¹ There can be little doubt that some Moslems were at times scandalised by crimes like this; though it is not in the nature of tradition to preserve the record of what they said. The present is one of the few occasions on which such murmurs have come to light. When Merwan was Governor of Medina, he one day asked Benjamin, a convert from Kab's tribe, in what manner Kab met his death. 'By guile and perfidy,' said Benjamin. Now Mohammed son of Maslama (the assassin), by this time a very aged man, was sitting by. He exclaimed: 'What, O Merwan! could the Prophet of the Lord, thinkest thou, be guilty of perfidy? By the Lord! we did not kill him but by command of the Prophet. I swear that no roof, save that of the Mosque, shall hereafter cover thee and me.' Then, turning to Benjamin, he swore that if he had had a sword in his hand, he would have cut off his head. The unfortunate Benjamin could not thenceforward quit his house without first sending a messenger to see that Mohammed was out of the way; but one day he was caught at a funeral by Mohammed, who seized a bundle of date branches from a woman passing by, and broke them every one over the face and back of Benjamin. Thus were murmurers against such acts silenced in the early days of Islam.

Huweisa cried; 'wouldst thou have slain thine own brother at Mahomet's bidding?' 'Even so,' answered the fanatic. 'Strange indeed!' Huweisa responded; 'hath the new religion reached to this? Verily, it is a wonderful faith.' And Huweisa was converted from that very hour. The progress of Islam begins to stand out in unenviable contrast with that of early Christianity. Converts were gained to the faith of Jesus by witnessing the constancy with which its confessors suffered death; they were gained to Islam by the spectacle of the readiness with which its adherents inflicted death. In the one case conversion imperilled the believer's life; in the other, it was the only means of saving it.

New treaty
with the
Jews

The Jews were now in extreme alarm. None ventured abroad. Every family lived in fear of a night attack; every individual dreaded the fate of Kab and Ibn Sanina. A deputation of their principal men waited upon Mahomet, and complained that he had treacherously cut off one of their chiefs without fault or apparent cause. 'Had Kab conducted himself,' replied Mahomet, 'as ye have done, he would not have been cut off. But he offended me by his seditious speeches and his evil poetry. And if any one amongst you,' he added, 'doth the same, verily the sword shall be again unsheathed.' At the same time he invited them to enter into a fresh compact with him, such as he might deem sufficient for the interests of Islam. So a new treaty was written out and deposited with Aly. Nevertheless, adds Wakidy, the Jews thenceforward lived (as well they might) in a state of depression and disquietude.

Mahomet
marries
Haphsa,
A.H. III.
November,
A.D. 624

Towards the close of the year 624 the Prophet took to himself a third wife, Haphsa, the daughter of Omar, then about twenty years of age. She was the widow of Khoneis, an early convert, who had died six or seven months previously. By this marriage Mahomet not only gratified the passion for fresh espousals, a leading feature of his advancing years, but bound himself closer in friendship to her father Omar. Abu Bekr and Omar were now connected equally with the Prophet, and through their daughters had access to his ear. There was much rivalry between Ayesha and Haphsa; but youth, vivacity, and beauty maintained the supremacy of Ayesha.

The marriages contracted by Mahomet at Medina were

all unfruitful. But meanwhile his house was built up in the female line of Khadija's progeny. We hear of no issue, certainly of none that survived, by his daughters Zeinab and Omm Kolthum, though the name of the latter would imply maternity. Rockeya bore Othman a son, two or three years before the Flight, but his eyes were pecked out at Medina by a fowl, and he died still a child. It was through Fatima alone that the Prophet's race, the famous *Syads* or nobility of Islam, was to be perpetuated. Aly was now five-and-twenty years of age. Though not above middle stature, he was broad and powerful in make, with a ruddy complexion, and a thick and comely beard. He had already given proof of daring gallantry and prowess on the field of Bedr. Endowed with a clear intellect, warm in affection, and confiding in friendship, he was from boyhood devoted heart and soul to the Prophet. Simple, quiet, and unambitious, when in after days he obtained the rule of half the Moslem world, it was rather thrust upon him than sought. Shortly after the field of Bedr (some authorities say before it) Mahomet gave him the hand of Fatima his youngest daughter, now seventeen or eighteen years of age, in marriage. Within the next twelve months she gave birth to Hasan, the first grandson born to Mahomet that survived, and the year after to Hosein ;—names famous in Islam.

Marriage of
Fatima
with Aly,
A.D. 624;
birth of
Hasan and
Hosein

CHAPTER XIV

THE BATTLE OF OHOD

Shawwal, A.H. III.—*January*, A.D. 625

ÆTAT. 56

Coreish
resolve to
avenge
defeat at
Bedr

THE third year of Mahomet's life at Medina had nearly closed, and the winter had again set in, when a storm clouded the horizon. Twelve months had elapsed since the battle of Bedr. The cry of revenge had ever since resounded in the valley of Mecca; and the long-suspended threat was now put into execution.

Mahomet
receives
intimation
from Abbas

Rumours of a threatened attack had for some time been reaching Mahomet; but the first authentic notice of impending invasion was a sealed letter placed in his hands, while at the Mosque in Coba, by a messenger from Mecca. It was from his uncle Abbas, who, as usual holding with both sides, had engaged the courier, by a high reward, to deliver it in three days. The letter, read aloud on the spot, contained the startling intelligence that the Coreish, 3,000 strong, were on the point of marching. Mahomet enjoined secrecy; but the tidings could not be suppressed. The Prophet communicated the news privately to Sad, the Khazraj 'Leader,' and his wife overheard it. Whether thus, or otherwise, the coming attack was soon noised abroad, and caused great excitement, especially among the Jews and those who sympathised with them.

Coreish
march from
Mecca,
A.H. III.
January,
A.D. 625

The movement did, indeed, justify alarm. The Coreish had unanimously agreed to devote the profits of the caravan, whose precious freight was still retained in the Council-hall as it were in bond, and for which so much blood had been shed at Bedr, towards avenging their defeat. These profits amply sufficed for the equipment and provisioning of a great army. Emissaries were despatched throughout the Bedouin

tribes, connected with the Coreish by alliance or descent, inviting them to join the enterprise. At length, in the month of January, they commenced their march, 3,000 strong; 700 were mailed warriors, and 200 well-mounted cavalry; the remainder rode on camels. The Beni Zohra (who had, on the previous occasion, retired before reaching Bedr) alone remained behind; but the army was reinforced by 100 men from Tayif. The chiefs of the Coreish all joined the force. After a sharp discussion, women were allowed to accompany them; and fifteen, including two wives of Abu Sofian, availed themselves of the permission. Taking timbrels in their hands, they sang to their wild cadence songs of vengeance for kinsmen slain at Bedr. Foremost, Hind the wife of Abu Sofian, thirsting for the blood of Hamza who slew her father in that field, had engaged an Ethiopian, with his deadly javelin, to make sure of her victim. There was also with the army a band of Medina citizens under Abu Aamir 'the Monk,' who, it will be remembered, went over to Mecca in disgust at the enthusiastic reception of Mahomet, and now boasted that his simple presence with the army would produce an immediate reaction amongst his former fellow-citizens.

The army took the ordinary route by the sea-shore, and, after ten days, reached Dzul Huleifa, in the valley of Akick, about five miles west of Medina. It was Thursday morning; and the same day, fetching a circuit to the left, and then marching northward for a few miles, they encamped in the fertile plain beneath the hill of Ohod. The corn was cut down as forage for the horses; and the camels, set loose to graze, trampled the rich fields around. Friday was passed

And encamp near Medina

Thursday

Friday

Meanwhile Mahomet, by his spies, was kept apprised of

Proceed-
ings in
Medina
Thursday

the enemy's movements. Hobâb reconnoitred their camp and brought back an alarming estimate of its strength, which the Prophet desired him to keep secret. The farmers, with their cattle and their stuff, had effected a timely retreat; but the destruction of their fields was a trial sore to bear. Still, there was no ebullition of feeling against Mahomet as the cause of their misfortune. Indeed, so great was the hold he had already gained, that, the elements of disaffection notwithstanding, he was at once recognised throughout the city as the leader and director in its defence. Several chief men, with an armed band of Citizens, posted themselves at the great Mosque, and kept watch throughout the night by his door. The sleep of Mahomet was troubled. He dreamed that, securely clad in mail, he rode upon a ram, when suddenly his sword was broken at its point, and a steer was slaughtered in his sight.

Resolution
to remain
within the
city;

Friday

The next day, Friday, the people came together, and Mahomet discussed with them the course to be pursued. He told them of his dream. 'The fracture in my sword portendeth an injury to myself,' he said; 'the slaughter of the steer, some damage to the people; riding upon the ram signifieth carnage amongst the enemy; and the impenetrable coat of mail is Medina fortified and safe. Within the city we are secure: without it there is risk and danger.' In this opinion the men of years and wisdom, both Citizens and Refugees, agreed. Abdallah ibn Obey, who, notwithstanding his jealousy of Mahomet, was equally concerned in the defence, strongly supported the views of Mahomet: 'O Prophet! Our city,' he said, 'is a virgin inviolate. Quitting it, we have ever suffered loss: remaining, we have beaten back attack. Leave the Coreish alone. If they remain, it will be in evil case. At length, frustrated in their designs, they will retire.' It was resolved accordingly to bring all outlying inhabitants within the walls, and, if the Coreish should venture near, to drive them back by a galling discharge of arrows and stones from the walls and house-tops.

Set aside by
ardour of
younger
converts

The decision was displeasing to the younger and more impetuous Citizens. 'Shall we sit quietly here,' they asked indignantly, 'a laughing-stock to all Arabia, and look on in patience while our possessions are ravaged all around? Disgrace will cleave to us ever after, and the enemy, emboldened,

will repeat the insult. Nay, we will go forth and smite our foes, even as we did at Bedr.'¹ There were not wanting men even among the Refugees who sided with this party, and their ardour was so great that Mahomet against his better judgment at last gave way, and announced his readiness to offer battle. Ascending the pulpit for the weekly service (the day was Friday) he stirred up the people, in his discourse, to fight courageously: 'If ye be steadfast,' he said, 'the Lord will grant you victory.' Then he commanded to make ready for the battle. The most part rejoiced greatly, but some were grieved that the first decision had been set aside.

By the time the afternoon prayer was ended, the people had assembled in the court of the Mosque, armed for battle. Mahomet then retired with Abu Bekr and Omar, to make ready. In a little while he issued from his chamber clad in mail and helmet, his sword hanging from a leathern girdle,² and shield slung over his shoulder. The Citizens, seeing him thus accoutred, repented of their rash remonstrance, and

Mahomet
puts on his
armour ;

¹ As usual, we are overwhelmed with anecdotes of believers bent on martyrdom, and dreams and pious anticipations of rewards to be enjoyed in Paradise. These are the growth of after years; the halo pictured by tradition around the martyr's head. There were nevertheless worldly motives enough to justify this party in their desire to go forth. The Citizens were grieved at the occupation of their fields; the barley crops were being destroyed, and the season for sowing was passing away. Even Hamza joined them on political considerations. 'We fear,' he said, 'lest the Coreish should attribute our backwardness to cowardice, and that it will embolden them ever after. We were but few at Bedr, and we are many now. Verily, this is the day we have longed and prayed to the Lord for; and now He hath driven the enemy as a prey into our very midst.'

Some specimens of the martyr spirit may interest the reader. One said to Mahomet: 'The slaughtered steer thou sawest was an emblem of the dead amongst thy followers, and verily I shall be of the number; wherefore, hinder me not from Paradise. Let us go forth; surely, by the one God! I shall quickly enter therein.' Again, Khaithama told Mahomet that his son, whom he had lost at Bedr, appeared to him in his sleep;—'A goodly appearance truly he had; he described to me the blessedness of Paradise; all is true that our Lord hath promised; and he besought me to come quickly, and be his companion there. And now, verily, I am old, and long for the meeting with my Lord. Pray, therefore, that God would grant me martyrdom, and reunite me with my son.' So Mahomet prayed; and Khaithama was slain at Ohod. Such are the tales which tradition delights to embellish or haply to create.

² This girdle was preserved and handed down in the family of Abu Râfi, Mahomet's servant.

prayed that he would even now do as seemed good to him. But it was too late. 'I invited you to this,' he said, 'and ye would not. It becometh not a prophet, when once he hath girded himself to the battle, to lay his armour down again until the Lord hath decided betwixt him and his enemies. Wait, therefore, on the Lord. Only be steadfast, and He will send you victory.'

Marches
from
Medina,
and halts.
Friday
night

So saying, he called for three lances, and fixed banners upon them. One for the Refugees he gave to Musab, the second and third to the leaders of the Aus and Khazraj. Abdallah ibn Omm Maktum (the blind man of whom we read at Mecca) was appointed to command the city, and lead the public prayers. Just then the bier of a Citizen was brought into the Mosque. Mahomet pronounced over it the usual service; then mounting his horse, and surrounded by his followers, he took the road to Ohod. There was but one other horse with the Moslem army. Arrived at an eminence, the Prophet turned round and saw following, amid the palm plantations on the right, a rude and disorderly band of men, and being told that they were the Jewish confederates of Abdallah ibn Obey, he commanded that they should go back; 'for,' said he, 'ye shall not seek the aid of Unbelievers to fight against the unbelieving.' He then passed onwards to Sheikhain, half way to Ohod,¹ and having reviewed the force, and sent back some striplings unequal to the fight, there halted for the night. Abdallah ibn Obey, with his followers, encamped near at hand; but, displeased at the rejection of his advice, and also at the unfriendly treatment of his Jewish friends, kept sullenly aloof. Mahomet passed the night with the Beni Najjâr, and a guard of faithful followers was stationed over him. Mohammed son of Maslama patrolled the camp with fifty men. A similar duty was performed for the Coreish by Ikrima with a troop of horse; these approached close enough to alarm the Moslems by their neighing, but did not venture over the ridge which still separated the two armies.

At early dawn the army of Medina, 1,000 strong, was in

¹ Burckhardt notices it as 'a ruined edifice of stones or bricks,' a mile from the town, 'where Mahomet put on his coat of mail;' *i.e.* on the following morning. 'Farther on,' he tells us, there is a stone where the Prophet 'leaned for a few minutes on his way to Ohod.'

motion. In the dim morning light they marched, by the nearest path, through the intervening fields and gardens,¹ and emerged upon the sandy plain beneath the peaks of Ohod. The vicinity owes its verdure to a watercourse, which carries off the drainage of the country lying to the south and east. The hill of Ohod, three miles distant from Medina, is a rugged and almost insulated offshoot of the mountain range, projecting eastward for three or four miles into the plain. The torrent, sometimes swollen so as quite to inundate the adjacent tract, sweeps along its southern and western face, and discharges its flood into the *Ghāba*, or low basin lying beyond. Now dry, its course was marked only by deep sand and scattered stones. On the farther bank, upon a slightly sloping plain, bare and stony, over which, as Burton tells us, 'the seared and jagged flanks of Ohod rise like masses of iron,' Mahomet halted his army. By this time it was daylight, and, although the columns of the enemy were in sight, the cry for morning prayers was raised by Bilāl, and the whole army, led by the Prophet, prostrated itself in worship. Abdallah ibn Obey at this moment wheeled suddenly round, and, deserting the army with his 300 followers, took the road back to the city. Mahomet was thus left with but 700 followers, of whom only a hundred were clad in mail; but they were all true men, and, fighting in what they believed to be the cause of God, they boldly faced a well-appointed enemy four times their number. Advancing, they occupied the rising ground in front; their rear was thus protected by the frowning heights of Ohod, excepting on the left, where the rocks, receding, afforded the enemy a dangerous opening, suited to the movements of the Coreishite horse. Mahomet, therefore, posted on an adjoining eminence the flower of his archery, and gave their leader stringent orders on no possible contingency to quit the spot,

Mahomet advances to Ohod, and draws up line of battle. Saturday, A.H. III. January, A.D. 624

¹ As he passed through one of these gardens, its owner, a blind man, murmured at the injury to his property, and cast dust at Mahomet. One of the Beni Aus sprang up and beat him. A chief of the Beni Khasraj resented the affront, and a fierce contention arose. It was ended by a savage threat from Oseid, the Ausite 'Leader,' who said that had he not known that it would be displeasing to Mahomet, he would have cut the blind man's head off. There must, no doubt, have been difficulty in keeping down these intestine quarrels and jealousies, though, in the hands of a skilful administrator like Mahomet, they were really elements of power.

but steadily to check any attempts which the Coreish might make to turn his flank: 'Guard our rear,' he said, 'and stir not from this spot: if ye see us pursuing and plundering the enemy, join not with us: if we be pursued and even worsted, do not venture to our aid.' Then he drew out his line, facing towards Medina;—Musab, with the Refugee standard, being in the centre, and the Aus and Khazraj clans forming either wing. He forbid his followers to engage the enemy till he gave command; for he knew that the strength of his position would be sacrificed by a premature advance. Having thus disposed his force, he put on a second coat of mail, and calmly awaited the enemy's approach.

Army of
Mecca
advances

Meanwhile Abu Sofian, as hereditary leader, brought up the Meccan army; and, facing Ohod, marshalled it in front of the Moslem line. The banner, which had been duly mounted on its standard in the Council-hall at Mecca, was borne by Talha son of Abd al Ozza.¹ The right wing was commanded by Khalid; the left by Ikrima son of Abu Jahl. Amr ibn al Aas (the famous Amru) was over the Coreishite horse. The women at first kept to the front, and beat their timbrels to shrill martial song; but as the line advanced, they fell to the rear.

Battle
opens with
single
combats

The battle opened by the inglorious advance of the exile Abu Aamir, who vainly expected his fellow-citizens of Medina to fraternise with him. He was received with a shower of stones, and forced with his band of followers to retire; Talha crying out indignantly:—'Get to the rear, ye slaves! Guard the camp,—a fitting employment for you!' Then, flourishing the Coreishite banner, Talha advanced alone, and challenged the enemy to single combat, shouting these words:—

The standard-bearer hath the right
To dye its shaft in blood,
Till it be broken in his hand.

¹ This Talha is to be distinguished from Talha son of Obeidallah, who stood by Mahomet in the battle. The Talha in the text was of the family of Abd al Dâr, which retained the right of carrying the Coreishite standard (*vide* p. xvi.). Abu Sofian desired not only to lead the army, but to carry the standard, or at least to raise a second banner; but the descendants of Abd al Dâr would hear of no encroachment on their ancestral privilege. There is a tradition that, as the enemy drew near, Mahomet inquired who bore their standard. On being told that it was one of the house of Abd al Dâr, he

Aly stepped forth, and, rushing on him, with one blow of his sword brought him to the ground.¹ Mahomet, who had intently watched the rapid combat, exclaimed with loud voice, *Great is the Lord!* and the cry, taken up all round, arose in an overwhelming shout from the whole Moslem army. Talha's brother, Othman, who was in charge of the women, then ran forward and seized the banner which lay by the lifeless body. The women beat their timbrels loudly, as they sang:—

Daughters of the brave are we,
On carpets step we delicately;
Boldly advance, and we embrace you!
Turn your backs and we will shun you,—
Shun you with disdain.

Hamza responded to Othman's challenge, and, after a brief encounter, brought him also lifeless to the ground. Then striding proudly back to the Moslem ranks, he shouted: 'I am the son of him that gave the pilgrims drink,'—meaning of Abd al Muttalib, who had held that office. One after another, the family of Talha, two brothers and three sons, seized the standard; one after another, they fell in single combat.²

This Arab custom of single combat put the two armies on an equality for the time. So long as it went on, the Coreish derived no advantage from their superior numbers; and the rapid destruction of their standard-bearers carried dismay into their ranks. A general engagement ensued; and, pressed by the fierce ardour of the Mussulmans, the Meccan army began to waver. Their horse sought repeatedly to turn the left flank of Mahomet; but they were each time

Coreish are
pressed,
and waver

exclaimed: 'Our side is more worthy of the honour;' and, calling for Musab (who was of the same lineage), he placed the standard in his hands.

¹ Mahomet declared that thus was fulfilled that part of his vision in which he appeared to ride upon a ram. Talha was the ram.

² One of the sons was wounded by an arrow, shot by Aasim. The wounded lad was carried to his mother Suláfa, at the rear. She asked him, as he was breathing his last, who killed him. He said that as his foe shot the arrow, he heard him cry: 'Take that from me, the son of Al Aclah!' 'By the Lord!' Suláfa said, 'it was Aasim, one of our own kin;' and she vowed she would yet drink wine out of Aasim's skull. The savage vow was nearly being fulfilled, as we shall see hereafter.

forced back by the galling archery of the little band which Mahomet had posted there. The same daring contempt of danger was displayed as at Bedr. The Meccan ranks might be seen to quiver as Abu Dujána, distinguished by a red kerchief round his helmet, swept along the enemy's ranks, and, with a sword given him by Mahomet, dealt death on every hand.¹ Hamza, conspicuous from his waving ostrich feather; Aly, known by his long white plume, and Zobeir, by his bright yellow turban,—like heroes of the Iliad,—carried confusion wherever they appeared. Such were the scenes in which were reared the great leaders of the Moslem conquests.²

But now the Moslems pressed too hotly their success. Their line lost form and order; and a portion, piercing the enemy's ranks, fell to plundering his camp. The archers, who had hitherto held the Meccan horse in check, saw from their height the tempting opportunity, and casting the Prophet's strict injunction to the winds, as well as the earnest expostulation of their leader, hurried to the spoil. The ready eye of Khalid saw the chance, and he hastened to retrieve the day. Wheeling his cavalry round the enemy's left, and sweeping from the rising ground the few remaining archers, he suddenly appeared in rear of the Moslems and charged into their ranks. The surprise was fatal, and the discomfiture complete. Musab was slain, and his banner disappeared.³ Hind's wild negro, Wahshi, who had been watching for Hamza, now singled out his victim, and swinging his javelin with unerring aim, brought him lifeless to the ground. The

Day
changed by
charge of
Khalid, and
army of
Medina
routed

¹ There is a mass of tradition about Abu Dujána's prodigies of valour. At the commencement of the action Mahomet held up his sword, and said: 'Who will take this sword, and give to it its due?' Omar, Zobeir, &c., one after another, came forward and were rejected; last of all Abu Dujána offered, and Mahomet gave it to him; 'And he clave therewith the heads of the Unbelievers.'

After the battle, Aly, giving his bloody sword to Fatima to wash, said: 'Take this sword, for it is not to be despised,' alluding to his own acts of prowess that day. Mahomet added: 'If thou hast done well, O Aly! verily Hârith and Abu Dujána have done well also.'

² For example, in this battle we have Sad and Abu Obeida on the side of Mahomet, and Khalid and Amru on the side of the Coreish; all famous in after days.

³ Tradition tells it was seized by an angel. 'The angels,' it is added, 'though present, did not fight that day; but had the Believers stood fast they would have fought.'

Coreish now raised their war cry of OZZA and HOBAL, and advanced with rapid step. The Moslems broke at every point, and fled for refuge to the heights of Ohod.

It was a moment of peril for Mahomet. He was still in the rear watching from a rising ground the first success, when he narrowly escaped the sweeping charge of Khalid's horse. Marvellous tales are given of his prowess, as well as of repeated signal escapes. With the staff of followers who surrounded him, he joined in discharging arrows till his bow was broken; and then he betook himself to casting stones. He is even said to have inflicted a deadly wound on one of the Coreish, who pressed madly forward to cut him down. When the Moslem ranks were broken and forced back, he tried to stay their flight, crying aloud: *Whither away? Come back! I am the Apostle of God! Return!* But still they fled. The enemy soon bore down upon the Prophet himself; and if a party of devoted followers (seven Citizens and seven Refugees) had not rallied round the spot, he surely had been slain. The Coreish scoured the field in special quest of their arch enemy. Suddenly, Ibn Camia, the hero who had just slain Musab, and others, came upon the little group. Stones and arrows flew thick around. A missile wounded the Prophet's under lip and broke one of his front teeth.¹ Another blow drove the rings of his helmet deep into his cheek, and made a gash in his forehead. The sword of Ibn Camia was barely warded off his head by the naked hand of Talha son of Obeidallah, whose fingers were thereby for life disabled. Mahomet fell to the ground, and Ibn Camia returned to his comrades exclaiming that he had killed him. The cry was taken up all round, and resounded from the rocks of Ohod.² It spread consternation among his followers;—'Where now,' they cried, 'the promise of his Lord?' At the same time, however, the rumour checked the ardour of the enemy's pursuit. Their controversy was with Mahomet rather than Medina. If he were killed, their object was accomplished, their revenge fulfilled.

Mahomet wounded

Cry that Mahomet is slain

¹ The spot of Mahomet's misfortunes is marked by a Cupola, *Cubbat al Sanaya*, the dome of the teeth, 'nearer the foot of the mountain' than the graves of Hamza, &c. The print of a tooth is still shown there.

² As usual, it is the Devil who is accused of this piece of malice. In the shape of Ibn Suraca (see *ante*, p. 132 note), he screamed aloud that Mahomet was dead.

Mahomet
takes
refuge
behind
rocks of
Ohod

But Mahomet was only stunned. The cliffs of Ohod were close behind. Talha (himself in several places wounded) raised him gently, and, with one or two others affording support, helped him to climb the rocks where the greater part of his army had already found secure retreat. The joy of his followers was unbounded at finding their Prophet still alive. Kab met him on the way, and began to call aloud the good news; but Mahomet, feeling that he was not yet beyond the reach of danger, motioned him to be silent. When they had found shelter in a cave,¹ the first care of his followers was to remove the helmet from his head. Two of its rings were so firmly imbedded in his cheek that Abu Obeida lost two teeth in the endeavour to extract them. The blood flowed copiously from the Prophet's wounds. Aly ran to a hollow in the rock, and brought some water in his shield. Mahomet could not drink of it, but only rinsed his mouth. As the blood was being washed off his face, he cried out: *How shall a people prosper that treat thus their Prophet who calleth them unto the Lord! Let the wrath of God burn against the men that have besprinkled the face of His Apostle with his own blood!*² He then put on the yellow helmet of Kab in place of his own broken one; and, joining the rest of his followers, watched thus the movements of the Coreish in the plain below. Many of the Moslem warriors, wearied with the struggle, fell asleep. And so mid-day passed away.

Colloquy
between
Abu Sofian
and Omar.
Coreish
retire

The leaders of the Coreish were now busy on the field of battle. They sought for the body of Mahomet, and, not finding it, began to doubt his death. Many acts of barbarous mutilation were committed on the slain. Hind gloated over the body of her victim Hamza. Tearing out his liver, she chewed it, fulfilling thus a savage vow, and she strung his nails and pieces of his skin together to bedeck her arms and legs.³ When the Coreish had spent some time thus, and had

¹ It is still shown to the pilgrims. Burton, ii. 248. There are some stories of Mahomet's party having been pursued up the hill. Also that they were in danger of being shot upon by their own people, who mistook them for the enemy. But they seem embellishments.

² 'He cursed those that inflicted the wounds, saying: *Let not the year pass over them alive*; and it came to pass that not one of those that shot at the Prophet survived beyond the year.' Compare Luke xxiii. 34.

³ But tradition delights to abuse Hind, as it did Abu Jahl; and we must beware of the patent tendency to exaggerate.

leisurely disposed of their own dead, Abu Sofian drew near to the foot of the hill, and, raising his voice, called aloud the names successively of *Mahomet, Abu Bekr, Omar*. Receiving no reply (for the Prophet enjoined silence) he cried again: 'Then all are slain, and ye are rid of them!' Omar could contain himself no longer. 'Thou liest!' he exclaimed; 'they are all alive, thou enemy of God, and will requite thee, yet.' 'Then,' rejoined Abu Sofian, 'this day shall be a return for Bedr. Fortune alternates, even as the bucket. Harken! ye will find mutilated ones upon the field: this was not by my desire, but neither am I displeased thereat. Glory to OZZA! Glory to HOBAL! OZZA is ours; it is not yours!'¹ At the bidding of Mahomet, Omar replied: '*The Lord is ours; He is not yours.*' Abu Sofian said: 'We shall meet after a year again at Bedr.' 'Be it so,' answered Omar. With these words Abu Sofian turned to go, and the Meccan army began its homeward march.

As soon as the enemy was out of sight, Mahomet and his followers descended from their retreat. The full extent of the overthrow was now apparent. Seventy-four corpses were strewn upon the plain,—four were Refugees,² and seventy citizens of Medina. Indeed, it was evident that the destruction of the whole force was only averted by the foresight of Mahomet in keeping a secure place of refuge in his rear. On the enemy's side the loss was but twenty. The news of the discomfiture reached Medina, with rumours of the death of Mahomet; and the road was soon covered with men and women hastening to nurse the wounded or search for the dead. The disaffected Citizens did not conceal their satisfaction, and some even talked of an embassy to Abu Sofian.

Arrived at the field of battle, Fatima dressed the gash on her father's temple, staunching the blood with the ash of some burned matting. This added to the ghastly appearance of the wound, which was deep, and did not fully heal for above a month. Safa, the Prophet's aunt, was fondly attached

Number of slain

The news reaches Medina

Dressing of Mahomet's wounds

¹ A play on the word, which signifies *glory* as well as the idol of the goddess OZZA.

² One Refugee, being mortally wounded, was carried to Upper Medina, where he died; but his body, by desire of Mahomet, was carried back to Ohod, and buried there. The tombs of the four Refugees are still shown to pilgrims and maintained in repair.

Safia
mourns
over her
brother
Hamza

to her brother Hamza; and Mahomet, fearful of the effect which the sight of his mangled remains might have upon her, had desired her son Zobeir to keep her aside till the body was buried; but she was not to be kept back. 'Where is my brother?' she eagerly inquired of Mahomet. 'Among the people,' he replied. 'I will not go back,' she cried, 'until I see him.' So he led her to the spot, saying: 'Leave her to her grief alone.' She sat down with Fatima by the body, and both sobbed aloud. Mahomet wept also. His spirit was stirred within him at Safia's anguish and the disfigured remains of the noble dead. Seizing his beard and pulling it angrily, as when grieved and agitated he was wont to do, he swore that he would mutilate the bodies of thirty of the Coreish in Hamza's stead.¹ To comfort Safia, he told her that her brother's name was already enrolled in Paradise as the *Lion of God and of His Apostle*. He spoke comfortably also to the women of Medina, who were wailing over their dead. The graves being now ready, and the bodies laid out in order, he prayed over them, and commanded that they should be buried by twos and threes in each grave.² The obsequies ended, he mounted his horse, and the whole company, turning sadly from Ohod, took the homeward road.

Mahomet
returns to
Medina

The Meccan army, though withdrawn from the field of battle, might still have fallen upon Medina, uncovered as it was by the absence of the Moslem army. Mahomet and his followers trembled for the safety of their families. On descending from the heights, the Prophet had despatched Sad son of Abu Wakkas to watch the movements of the enemy. When they reached the valley of Akick, the Coreish paused there awhile. Their counsels were divided. Some urged to follow up their success by a blow on the defenceless city. Others pointed to the danger of entanglement and loss in the

Coreish,
after hesi-
tation, take
route to
Mecca

¹ But he afterwards thought better, and forbade the savage practice. The passage is at the end of Sura xvi., which, however, is a Meccan one, and does not bear very plainly on the occasion here referred to. However this may be, there is no doubt that Mahomet abolished the practice of mutilation, and it is to the credit of his humanity that he did so.

² They were not washed. 'Wind them,' said the Prophet, 'as they are, in their wounds and in their blood. I will be surety for them;' alluding to the necessity for legal ablution. Hence the angels are said to have washed Hamza and Hantzala. Some of the traditions, to the effect that the latter was in a state of legal impurity, can hardly be quoted.

outskirts and narrow streets, and contended that they should rest content with their signal victory. The opinions of the latter prevailed; mounting their camels, and leading their horses,¹ they slowly wended their way through the defiles that led back to Mecca. Sad, hurrying at once to Mahomet, cried aloud the joyful news. 'Gently,' said Mahomet; 'let us not appear before the people to rejoice at the departure of the enemy!' The intelligence, nevertheless, brought intense relief both to Mahomet and his people; for the crestfallen, crippled army of Medina could ill have ventured on a second struggle.

As Mahomet and his followers reached the foot of the intervening ridge, the whole company, at his command, fell into two lines, with the women ranged behind, and there offered up prayer to God. As they entered the city, the voice was heard all round of women wailing for their dead: 'And Hamza!' cried Mahomet, 'alas for Hamza! who is there to wail for him!' The wounded here received permission to go to their homes. The rest followed Mahomet to the Mosque, which they reached in time for the sunset prayer. It was a night of mourning. A sense of insecurity still prevailed, for the Coreish might even yet return, and so the chief men again kept watch at the Prophet's door. Some of the wounded were laid near the Mosque, and the fires kindled for them cast a fitful and lurid light around its courts. Mahomet slept heavily, and did not answer the call of Bilâl for eventide prayer. Shortly afterwards he awoke, and, rising, asked who it was that wailed so loudly near the Mosque. It was the wailing of the women, who had heard his plaintive words regarding Hamza, and came there to mourn for him. Mahomet blessed them, and sent them to their homes. And so it grew to be a custom at Medina for the women, when they mourned for their dead, first to wail for Hamza.

On the morrow, Mahomet commanded Bilâl to proclaim through the city that he was about to start in pursuit of the Coreish, but that none should accompany him excepting those who had been present at the battle of Ohod. It was

Night of
distress
and inse-
curity at
Medina

Mahomet
makes de-
monstra-
tion in
pursuit of
Coreish

¹ This was the sign given by Mahomet to Sad: 'If they mount their horses,' said he, 'and lead their camels, then they meditate an advance on Medina; if they mount the camels, and lead the horses, then they are going home.' The camel was their working animal.

intended thus to raise the spirits of his followers, remove the impression of defeat, and show the Coreish that an attack upon the city would have been vigorously repelled. As the warriors assembled at the Mosque, Talha came up: 'What thinkest thou,' inquired Mahomet of him; 'how far have the Coreish by this time reached on their journey homewards?' 'To the valley of Sayyala,' he answered, one long march from Medina. 'So was I thinking also,' rejoined Mahomet; 'but, Talha! they will never again inflict upon us such a disaster as we suffered yesterday,—no, not till we wrest Mecca from them.' The white flag of the Refugees was not recovered from the field of battle; but one of the other banners stood in the Mosque yet unfurled, and the Prophet placed it in the hands of Abu Bekr. Stiff and disfigured as he was, he mounted his horse, and set out on the Meccan road. Two scouts, whom he sent in advance, fell into the enemy's hands, and were put to death; their bodies were found at Hamra al Asad, a little way short of Safra, which Mahomet reached the day after it was evacuated by the Coreish. At this spot the force spent three days, and regaled themselves with fresh dates, a plentiful harvest of which had just been gathered. Having kindled five hundred fires on the adjoining heights, to make the Coreish believe that the pursuing force was very large, Mahomet, contenting himself with this demonstration, returned to Medina, after an absence of five or six days.

Abu Ozza,
a prisoner,
put to
death

At Hamra al Asad Mahomet made prisoner one of the enemy, the poet Abu Ozza, who had loitered behind the rest. He had been taken prisoner at Bedr, and, having five daughters dependent on him, had been freely released on the promise that he would not again bear arms in the war against the Prophet. He now sought for mercy: 'O Mahomet!' he prayed, 'forgive me of thy clemency!' 'Nay, verily,' said the Prophet, 'a Believer may not twice be bitten from the same hole. Thou shalt never return to Mecca; stroke thy beard, and say, *I have again deceived Mahomet*. Lead him forth to execution!' So saying, he motioned to a bystander, who with his sword struck off the captive's head.

Another,
after three
days' truce,
pursued
and killed

Another Coreishite, Othman son of Moghira, perished by too great confidence in the generosity of his enemy. When quitting Ohod, he missed his way, and passed the night near

Medina. Next morning he ventured to the house of Othman, the Prophet's son-in-law, who procured for him a three days' truce, and, having found him a camel and provisions for the way, joined Mahomet on his march to Hamra al Asad. The Coreishite incautiously lingered at Medina till the last day of his term of grace, when he set out for Mecca. In the endeavour to avoid the returning Moslem force, he again lost his way; and Mahomet, hearing of his delay, sent men upon his track, who came up with him, and killed him.

The field of Ohod came before long to be invested with a special interest. A flood of glory crowns the memory of the dead. Mahomet used to visit the scene once a year, and bless the martyrs buried there. '*Peace be on you!*' he would say, '*for that which ye endured,—and a blessed Futurity above!*' The Citizens, as they passed to and fro, visiting their fields at Al Ghâba, would invoke blessing on the souls of the warriors buried by the way; and, to the invocation 'Peace be upon you,' would conjure up the audible response, 'And on you be peace!' We are also told that, half a century after, a great flood having ploughed up the banks of the torrent and uncovered many graves, the bodies of the martyrs were seen reclining in the attitude of sleep, fresh as the day of their interment, and blood still trickling from their wounds.

Halo of
glory
around the
martyrs of
Ohod

Thus a halo, in course of time, settled on the 'Martyrs of Ohod' and glorified their memory. But at the present moment humiliation and not glory overshadowed the battlefield. Murmurs at the inglorious retreat were rife throughout the city. Tradition passes lightly over the uncongenial subject, and dwells complacently on the ignominious manner in which Abdallah ibn Obey, and the Jews who hazarded remarks disparaging to the Prophet, were treated, and on the boastful threats of Omar against them. But the Coran tells a different story. We there find that even the adherents of Mahomet were staggered by the reverse. It was natural that they should. The success at Bedr had been assumed as proof of divine support; and, by parity of reasoning, the defeat at Ohod was subversive of the prophetic claim. The Jews broadly advanced this stubborn argument.¹ It required all

But
Mahomet's
prestige
affected at
the time

¹ 'How can Mahomet pretend now,' they asked, 'to be anything more than an aspirant to the *kingly* office? No true claimant of the *prophetic*

Line of
argument
by which
Mahomet
obviated its
ill effect

the address of Mahomet to avert the dangerous imputation, sustain the credit of his cause, and reanimate his followers. This was done by a message from Heaven, forming now the latter half of the Third Sura.¹ A lofty tone of assurance pervades the studied explanation and remonstrance of the Prophet. Stress is laid on the marvellous interposition which brought victory at Bedr. But the reverse at Ohod was necessary to sift true Believers from such as were Hypocrites at heart. The light afflictions of the day were a meet prelude to the eternal glories of Paradise. The faithful, coveting the blessed state of the martyrs at Bedr, had longed for the same fortune; and now, when death presented itself, they fled before its terrors! The slaughter, anywise, could not have been averted by following the counsels of those who stayed at home; for the hour of death is fixed for every one, and is inevitable. Future success was largely promised, if Believers would but remain steadfast and courageous. The Lord had already at Ohod placed victory within their reach, when by cowardice and disobedience they drew defeat upon themselves. Even if Mahomet had been killed in battle, what then? he was but the Messenger of God like other Apostles who had died before him. The cause itself was immortal and divine. Such is the line of argument, mingled with comfort, reproof, and exhortation. Whatever the Disaffected might say of the Prophet's reasoning, it served to reassure his loyal followers, and while these were with him heart and soul, his position at Medina was secure.

Passages
from
Sura iii. on
the subject

The style and tenor of this remarkable chapter so fully and curiously illustrate the present situation of Mahomet that the reader will not, I think, object to a somewhat lengthy extract:—

Remember when thou wentest forth from thy family in the early morning to secure for the Faithful an encampment for the battle; And when two companies of you² became anxious,

dignity hath ever been beaten in the field, or suffered loss in his own person and that of his followers, as Mahomet hath.—*Wakidy*.

¹ The Third Sura is a collection of passages belonging to various periods. We have in it portions revealed shortly after Bedr, A.H. II.; after Ohod, A.H. III.; after the second Bedr, A.H. IV.; also after an interview with the Najran Christians, A.H. IX.

Meaning apparently both *Refugees* and *Citizens*; though the commen-

so that ye lost heart ; and God is the Patron of both, and in God let the Believers put their trust. And, truly, God helped you at Bedr, when ye were fewer in number. . . . When thou saidst to the Believers : *What ! doth it not suffice you that your Lord should aid you with 3,000 Angels sent down ?* Nay, if ye persevere, and fear God, and this Enemy were to come suddenly upon you, your Lord would help you with five thousand Angels attired for battle ;—And God made this promise none otherwise than as glad tidings for you, and that your hearts might be stayed. Victory cometh from God alone, the Glorious, the Wise, that He may cut off the uttermost part of the unbelievers. * * * * *

Sura iii
Battle of
Ohod.

Be not cast down, neither be ye grieved. Ye shall be yet victorious, if ye are true Believers. If a wound hath befallen you, verily a wound like unto it hath befallen your enemy. This various success WE cause to alternate among men, that God may know those that believe, and may have witnesses amongst you . . . that God might prove them that believe, and annihilate the Infidels. What ! did ye think to enter Paradise, while as yet God knew not those that fight for Him, and knew not the persevering ones amongst you ? And truly ye were longing for death before ye faced it. And verily ye saw it and looked on. Mahomet is no more than an Apostle, as other Apostles that have gone before him. What ! if he were to die or be killed, must ye needs turn back upon your heels ? He that turneth back upon his heels injureth not God in the least degree ; but God will reward the thankful. Furthermore, no soul dieth but by the permission of God, as it is written and predestined. * * * How many Prophets have fought against those that had multitudes on their side. And they were not cast down at that which befell them fighting in the way of God, neither did they become weak, nor make themselves abject ; and God loveth the persevering. * * * * *

WE will surely cast terror into the hearts of the Infidels, because they have associated with God that which He hath no-wise authorised. Their resting-place shall be the Fire : wretched is the abode of the transgressors ! And truly the Lord had already made good unto you His promise at what time ye were, by His permission, cutting them to pieces ;—until ye lost heart and fell to variance in the matter, and disobeyed.¹ Amongst you were those that desired the present Life, and amongst you those that desired the Life to come. Then He caused you to flee from before them, that He might prove you (but now He hath pardoned tators refer it to the two wings *Aus* and *Khazraj*, in whose minds an ill impression had arisen by the desertion of Abdallah ibn Obey.

¹ The disobedience of the archers who quitted their post.

Sura iii
Battle of
Ohod.

you, for God is gracious unto the Believers), when ye made for the mountain (Ohod), and looked not back on any one, though the Apostle was calling unto you,—even unto those of you that were behind. Wherefore He caused grief to overtake you upon grief, that ye may not be afflicted hereafter at that which ye lose, nor at that which shall befall you : for God knoweth what ye do. Then He caused to descend upon you after the grief, Security, even slumber which covered a part of you ;¹ and a part of you were troubled in your own souls,—questioning about God that which is not the truth,—a questioning of ignorance ;—In that ye said, *What ! Is there any reality in this matter unto us ?*² SAY :—Verily the matter belongeth wholly unto God. They concealed in their hearts that which they did not open unto thee. They say,—*Had there been any reality in the matter, we had not been slain here.* Say,—If ye had been in your own houses, verily those would have gone forth for whom fighting was decreed, unto the places of their death ;—and (so it came to pass) that the Lord might prove what is in your hearts, for God knoweth the breast of Man. Verily they amongst you who turned their backs on the day when the two armies met, Satan caused them to slip for some part of that which they had wrought : but God hath forgiven them, for God is Forgiving and Merciful.

Blessedness
of the
Martyrs.
Sura iii

The blessed state of the Martyrs is thus described :—

Think not in anywise of those killed in the way of the Lord, as if they were dead. Yea, they are alive, and are nourished with their Lord,—exulting in that which God hath given them of His favour, and rejoicing on behalf of those who have not yet joined them, but are following after. No terror afflicteth them, neither are they grieved.³

¹ Those who fell asleep on finding refuge on the mountain.

² *I.e.* questioning the truth of Mahomet's mission, and his promise of divine interposition and victory.

³ To secure the crown of martyrdom, it sufficed to make at the very last moment the simplest and most formal profession of faith in God and Mahomet. Thus Amr ibn Thabit had, up to the day of Ohod, been an open unbeliever. He accompanied the Moslem army and was mortally wounded on the field. His comrades asked him regarding his creed; with his dying breath he whispered in reply that it was for Islam he had fought, and that he believed in God and in his Prophet. When this was told to Mahomet, he blessed his memory, and said that he was already an inheritor of Paradise. On the other hand, any amount of bravery without such formal profession was of no avail. Thus Cozman, who was numbered among the Disaffected, showed incredible valour at Ohod, killing with his own hands seven or eight of the Coreish. When expiring on the field, and being congratulated on the prospect of Paradise, he said, with his last breath,

The reader may picture to himself the now venerable Prophet delivering, as the spokesman of the Almighty, these pregnant messages. He is about to issue from one of the apartments which, built for his increasing harem, form the eastern side of the Mosque. Under its rude but spacious roof of palm-branches, the Citizens and Refugees assemble at mid-day for the weekly service, throng around the pulpit, and occupy the long space in front of it. As Mahomet appears, the hum and bustle cease (for it was the hall of business and politics, as well as the house of worship), and the whole congregation fall into the ranks for prayer. Mahomet advances to the foot of the pulpit, and with his face turned toward the holy temple of Mecca, and his back to the people, goes through the stated ritual. The assembly, arrayed in rows behind, follow every motion of their leader, as a Moslem congregation at the present day follow the genuflexions and prostrations of their Imam. The prayers ended, the Prophet, with grave step, ascends the slightly elevated pulpit, and in a solemn voice, and accents suited to the measured cadence of the revelation, delivers to the audience the message which he says that he has received from Heaven. Fear creeps over the heart. It is as if the Deity were present by some visible token, like the cloud overshadowing the Tabernacle. The Disaffected may scoff elsewhere, and the Jew in his own assembly curse the upstart Prophet; but at this moment, disaffection and treason vanish, for the dread sense of immediate communication with the Almighty overwhelms all other feelings. And now the rhetoric of Mahomet comes into play. In his oration are mingled rebuke, exhortation, encouragement, in pure and nervous eloquence, such as no Arab could hear without emotion. Hell, with its flaming gates, and the gardens and joys of Paradise, are conjured up as vivid and close realities before the hearer; for the hour, the present life fades into insignificance, excepting as the means of escaping the one, and of winning the other. Thus did Mahomet wield at will the awe-stricken assembly; and wind his enchantments in inextricable folds around them. Thus he moulded to his purpose the various elements about

Mahomet
addressing
people in
Mosque

that he had been fighting not for the faith, but for his people, and in defence of his native city. Mahomet, when told of it, declared that in spite of his services he was 'a child of hell-fire.'—*Wakidy* and *Ibn Hisham*.

him, and even under adversity and misfortune maintained his influence supreme.

Execution
of Hârith
for the
murder of
Mujaddzir

In close connection with the field of Ohod was the execution of a stern judicial sentence. Mujaddzir, a confederate of the Aus party, had a few years previously in the pre-Islamite disputes, slain Suweid, a chief of the Khazraj. The battle of Boath ensued; but the blood there shed did not efface the memory of the murder. Hârith son of Suweid had long sought to avenge his father's death; at last, he found his opportunity at Ohod. In the confusion of that reverse, he treacherously drew near to Mujaddzir, and killed him. A comrade, who was witness of the deed, reported it to Mahomet. An investigation was held, and the crime brought home to Hârith. Shortly after his return from Hamra al Asad, the Prophet called for his ass, and rode forth to Cobâ. It was not one of the days (Saturday and Monday) on which he ordinarily repaired to that suburb, and the men of Upper Medina boded no good from his visit. He entered their mosque and received the salutation of the chief inhabitants of the vicinity. At length the culprit himself, clothed in a yellow dress, and little anticipating the event, came up. Perceiving him approach, Mahomet called aloud to Oweim, chief of the Beni Aus to which the murdered man belonged: *Take Hârith son of Suweid unto the gate of the Mosque, and there strike off his head, because of Mujaddzir whom he slew on the day of Ohod.* Oweim prepared to obey, when Hârith desired leave to speak, and hastening towards Mahomet laid hold of his stirrup as he was about to mount his ass. He begged for mercy, and promised to expiate the crime by any sacrifice the Prophet might direct. Mahomet turned from him, and reiterated the order of execution. Seeing the decree to be irrevocable, Oweim dragged Hârith back to the gate, and there beheaded him, in the presence of Mahomet, the sons of Mujaddzir, and the assembled chiefs. The assumption of supreme authority was unquestioned, and is evidence of the absolute command now exercised by the Prophet over the whole city.

Widow of
Sad enters-
tains Ma-
homet at a
feast

Another scene which occurred shortly after the battle of Ohod illustrates the manner in which the oracles of Mahomet were given forth, and the incidental way in which the political and social code that still rules the Moslem world grew up.

Among the slain was Sad son of Rabi,¹ who left a widow and two daughters, but whose brother, according to the practice of the times, took possession of the whole inheritance. The widow was grieved at this; and, being a discreet and prudent person, pondered how she might obtain redress. She invited Mahomet to a feast, with some twenty of his chief companions. He agreed to go. A retired spot among the palm-trees of her garden was sprinkled with water, and the repast there spread. Mahomet arrived, and with his followers seated himself upon the carpets prepared for them. He spoke kindly to the widow of her husband's memory, so that the women wept, and the eyes of the Prophet also filled with tears. The supper was then eaten, and a feast of fresh dates followed. When the repast was over, the widow arose, and thus disclosed her grief: 'Sad, as thou well knowest, was slain at Ohod. His brother hath seized the inheritance. There is nothing left for the two daughters; and how shall they be married without a portion?' Mahomet, moved by the simple tale, replied: 'The Lord shall decide regarding the inheritance; for no command hath been yet revealed to me in this matter. Come again unto me when I shall have returned home.' So he departed. Shortly after, as he sat at his door surrounded by companions, symptoms of inspiration came upon him;—he was oppressed, and drops of sweat fell like pearls from his forehead. Then he commanded that the widow of Sad and his brother should be summoned, and when they came, he thus addressed the latter: 'Restore unto the daughters of Sad two-thirds of that which he hath left behind him, and one-eighth part unto his widow: the remainder is for thee.' The widow, overjoyed, uttered the *Takbir*: 'Great is the Lord!' Such was the origin of one of the main provisions of the Mahometan law of inheritance.²

Origin of
the law of
female in-
heritance

¹ The same who allowed Abd al Rahmán, when he lodged with him on his arrival, to choose one of his two wives.

² See Sura iv. 10, *et seq.* Supplementary rules are added at the close of the Sura.

CHAPTER XV

FROM THE BATTLE OF OHOD TO THE EXPULSION OF THE
BENI NADHİR

A.H. IV.—A.D. 625

ÆTAT. 57

Satisfac-
tion of
Coreish at
the victory
of Ohod

THE Coreish were satisfied with the punishment they had inflicted upon Mahomet. Abu Sofian, on his return home, went straight to the Kaaba, where he rendered thanks to HOBAL for the victory, shaved his head, and returned to his home absolved from his vows of abstinence. Medina enjoyed a long respite from the designs of the Coreish. But the prestige of Mahomet had been seriously shaken among the Arab tribes; and these, emboldened by his late defeat, or it may be instigated by the Coreish, gave, from time to time, fresh trouble and anxiety. The early intelligence, however, which he secured by means of an effective espionage, enabled him to anticipate these movements, and generally to disperse the gatherings without serious loss. But there were exceptions.

Beni Asad
dispersed.
A.H. IV.
April,
A.D. 625

The first two months after the battle were passed in tranquillity; but with the opening of the fourth year of the Hegira, rumours reached Mahomet from various quarters of gatherings being organised against him, and he hastened to take the initiative. The Beni Asad, a powerful tribe, confederates of the Coreish, ranged over an extensive territory in the central desert. Intelligence was received that their chief, Tuleiha, had assembled a force of cavalry and rapid camel-riders to make a raid upon Medina. Mahomet forthwith despatched 150 men, Citizens and Refugees indifferently, under Abu Salma, with instructions to march at night by an unfrequented route, and conceal themselves by day, so as to take the hostile camp by surprise. They were so far success-

ful as to fall unexpectedly upon a large herd of camels, which, with three of the herdsmen, they captured, and, having ravaged the country far and wide, returned after eleven days with their booty to Medina. The usual share of the plunder, with one of the captives, having been set apart for Mahomet, the remainder was divided amongst the soldiers. The Beni Asad were effectually dispersed for the present; but they reserved their hostility for a future occasion. This Tuleiha is the same who at a later period set himself up as a prophet in antagonism to Mahomet. Abu Salma had signalled himself at Bedr, and there received a deep wound. It broke out afresh on this expedition, and in the end proved fatal, as we shall see.

Another gathering took place at Orna, a spot between Mecca and Tayif. The Lahyan, a branch of the Hodzeil (which inhabited, as they still do, a territory two days east of Mecca), and other neighbouring tribes, rallied round Sofian, their chief, with the avowed intention of following up the late victory at Ohod. Mahomet, knowing that their movements depended solely upon Sofian, despatched Abdallah ibn Oneis, with instructions to assassinate him. Abdallah joined Sofian as a volunteer, fell upon him unawares while no one was near, and, having cut off his head, carried it away with him. He eluded pursuit, and, reaching Medina in safety, presented himself before Mahomet in the Mosque. The Prophet welcomed him, and asked the issue of his adventure. Abdallah replied by displaying the head of his victim. Mahomet, in token of his gratification, presented Abdallah with his staff: '*This,*' said he, '*shall be a token betwixt thee and me on the day of resurrection. Verily, few on that day shall have wherewithal to lean upon.*' Abdallah joined the precious memorial to his sword, and wore it by his side till the day of his death, when it was buried with him. The murder of Sofian broke up the assemblage at Orna; and probably, from the laxity of Arab morals, the outrage did not much affect the reputation of the Prophet; but Mahomet had no right to complain when he shortly afterwards paid the penalty in the loss of several of his followers by an act no worse than Abdallah's.

In the following month, Mahomet despatched six of his followers in the direction of Mecca. The object is variously

Chief of
Lahyan as-
sassinated.
A.H. IV.
April,
A.D. 625

Mishap at
Raji.
A. H. IV.
May,
A. D. 625

stated. The most likely is that they were simply spies sent to gain information of the intentions of the Coreish. But the tradition most generally received is, that they were deputed for the instruction of two small tribes, which, at the instigation of the Beni Lahyan, pretended a desire to embrace Islam. The party were, with one exception, Citizens. When they had journeyed as far as Raji, a stage or two from Mecca, they were treacherously surrounded and overpowered by an armed band of the Lahyan, who thirsted to avenge the assassination of their chief. Three died fighting bravely: ¹ the other three were seized and bound as prisoners to be sold at Mecca. One succeeded in loosening his bands, and had nearly escaped when he was crushed by pieces of rock hurled down upon him; his tomb is preserved and visited to the present day at Marr al Tzahran. The only survivors, Zeid and Khobeib, were purchased by the heirs of two chiefs of the Coreish slain at Bedr. They were kept till the sacred month of Safar had expired; and then taken to Tanim beyond the limits of the holy territory, where, in presence of a large concourse from Mecca, they were put to death. The scene is memorable. The two 'martyrs,' for such to the cause of Islam they really were, refused their liberty at the price of recantation. The curse of Khobeib was not easily forgotten by the witnesses of the spectacle. After praying briefly, while they bound him to the stake, he called out with a loud voice: '*O Lord! number these men one by one, and destroy them utterly. Let not one escape!*' At this imprecation, the multitude, thinking to avoid its potency, fell with their children flat upon the ground. Then, with daggers put into the hands of children whose fathers had fallen at Bedr, ² they stabbed the bodies of their victims. And thus ended the wretched tragedy. ³

Martyrdom
of Zeid
and Kho-
beib

¹ One of these was Aasim, out of whose skull Sulâfa, the mother of one slain at Ohod, swore that she would drink wine. See *ante*, p. 251, note. The Beni Lahyan were about to cut off the head of Aasim and carry it to Sulâfa, but a swarm of bees interposed, and when the people went to seek for it afterwards, the Lord had swept it away with a flood, and thus frustrated the vow of Sulâfa.

² To keep up the fiction that it was *the children* who slew the victims in retaliation for their parents' death.

³ I see no reason to doubt the main facts of the story, although in the details much of the marvellous has been superadded. Thus Khobeib, when in confinement, was supplied by supernatural visitants with large

In the same month another and more serious catastrophe took place. The Beni Aamir, and their neighbours the Beni Suleim, belonged to the great Hawázin tribe in Nejd, which some time before had fought against the Coreish. They were under the leadership of two chiefs, Abu Bera and Aamir ibn Tofail. The former, from great age relieved from active command, paid a friendly visit to Mahomet about this time.¹ He came with a present of two horses and two riding-camels. These the Prophet refused to receive, unless Abu Bera would embrace Islam. This he declined; but said: 'If thou wilt send a company of thy followers to my people, the Beni Aamir, I have hopes that they will accept thy call.' Mahomet replied, that he feared for the safety of his people among the treacherous tribes of Nejd, some of whom were in immediate alliance with the Coreish. But Abu Bera declared that he would himself be responsible for their safety. Trusting to this pledge, Mahomet despatched forty (by some accounts seventy) of his followers, mostly Citizens of Medina, with a letter to the Beni Aamir.² After four days, they

Moslem party cut to pieces at Bir Mauna. A.H. IV. May, A.D. 625

bunches of grapes, not a single grape being at the season to be had elsewhere. At his execution he bade his salutation to be sent to Mahomet, and there being none to take it, Gabriel himself carried it to the Prophet, who returned the salutation in the hearing of his companions. When imprisoned, the only requests he made were to be furnished with sweet water, to have no food that had been offered to idols, and to be told beforehand of the time of his execution. The day before he was put to death, he desired a razor to shave himself with, which a female attendant sent by her little boy. He asked the child whether he did not fear that he would kill him with it, out of revenge. The mother was alarmed, and then Khobeib said: 'Nay, fear not. I would never kill your son; for treachery is not allowable in our religion.' When they had bound him to the stake, they said: 'Now abjure Islam, and we will let thee go.' 'Not so,' he said; 'I would not abjure Islam if it were to get me the whole world in return.' 'Wouldst thou not that Mahomet were in thy place, and thou sitting in security at home?' 'I would not,' he replied, 'that I should have deliverance, and Mahomet suffer the pain even of a thorn.' Similar stories are told of Zeid. They embraced each other when they came to the place of execution.

¹ Abu Bera (called also Amr ibn Málík) at a later period consulted Mahomet regarding an internal disease from which, in his old age, he was suffering. It is possible that this visit also may have had a similar object.

² They are described as chiefly Citizens who spent the day in hewing wood and drawing water for Mahomet's family, and at night slept in the Mosque. But there were several Refugees; and among them Amr ibn Foheira, the freedman of Abu Bekr, who accompanied his master and the

reached a fountain called Bir Mauna, lying between the Beni Aamir and Suleim. Here they halted, and despatched a messenger with the letter to Aamir ibn Tofail. This chief, without reading the letter, put the messenger to death, and called upon his tribe to attack the rest of the party; but they refused to break the pledge of Abu Bera. Aamir then sought the aid of the Beni Suleim, who, having lost some of their kinsmen at Bedr, were bitterly hostile to Mahomet. Joined by a large body of these, he proceeded to Bir Mauna and fell upon the party still waiting the return of their messenger. They were all cut to pieces, excepting two men, one who was left for dead on the field, and another, Amr ibn Omeyya, who, having been absent with the camels at the time of the slaughter, was spared on his return by the chief, in fulfilment of a vow made at his mother's grave.¹

Mahomet's
grief, and
commina-
tory prayer

The news of this disaster, following immediately on that of Raji, greatly afflicted Mahomet. Next day, when concluding the morning prayer, he invoked the Divine vengeance on the perpetrators of both these massacres, saying: '*O Lord! in thine indignation trample under foot the Beni Lahyan, Beni Ril, Beni Dzakwan*' (and so on, naming the several tribes in succession); '*make their years like unto the years of Joseph,² for that they have rebelled against God, and rebelled against His Prophet!*' This commination was offered up with the daily prayers in public for a month. The Prophet professed also to have received through Gabriel the following message from the martyrs of Mauna: 'Acquaint

Prophet in their flight from Mecca. The number *seventy* is a favourite one; Wakidy remarks that seventy men of Medina were killed at Ohod; seventy at Bir Mauna; seventy at Yemama; and seventy at Yasar Abu Obeid, or the battle of the Bridge.

¹ Mundzir, the leader, escaped the massacre and was offered quarter, which he refused. Mahomet, on hearing this, declared that *he embraced death*; which expression has been magnified into meaning that he proceeded on the expedition with a sure presentiment of his end. When Amr ibn Tofail went over the field, he asked his prisoner to identify the dead bodies. This he did, but the corpse of Amr ibn Foheira was nowhere to be seen; whereupon one of the tribe declared that when Ibn Foheira was stabbed he heard him call out, '*I have gained Paradise*,' and saw him straightway ascend in the air to heaven. There is a multitude of such traditions.

² Alluding to the seven bad years in Pharaoh's dream. The tribes named after the Beni Lahyan were the clans of the Beni Suleim who joined in the attack.

our People that we have met our Lord. He is well pleased with us, and we are well pleased with Him.'¹

Amr ibn Omeyya, on his way home from the disaster, fell in with two men belonging to a branch of the Beni Aamir, and slew them while asleep as a reprisal for the massacre at Bir Mauna. But it turned out that these men were returning from Mahomet, with whom they had just entered into terms. When Amr, therefore, reported what he had done, instead of being praised, he was rebuked by Mahomet, who declared his intention of paying blood-money for the two murdered men. The act, indeed, being a breach of truce, was so contrary to the international code of the Arabs, that Aamir ibn Tofail himself sent a despatch to Mahomet, complaining of it. Accordingly, full compensation for both was transmitted to the tribe, together with the booty taken from them.

Mahomet pays blood-money for two men, wrongly killed as reprisals

The tragedy of Mauna involved a still graver issue. The Beni Nadhir, one of the Jewish tribes in the vicinity, were confederate with the Beni Aamir. Mahomet thought it right, perhaps on account of the ill treatment he had received from their allies, that they should aid in defraying the blood-money for the two men murdered by Amr. Attended by a few followers, he visited their settlement, distant two or three miles from Coba, and laid his request before their chiefs. They answered courteously, promised assistance, and invited him to sit down while they made ready a repast. After sitting thus for a little while, he arose abruptly and walked out of the assembly. His followers waited long, expecting his return. But they waited in vain; at length they got up, and went back to Medina. To their surprise, they found that Mahomet had returned straightway to the Mosque, and given

Beni Nadhir ordered into exile. A.H. IV. June, A.D. 625

¹ This formed a verse of the Coran; but, for some reason not apparent, it was 'cancelled' and removed. On receiving the message Mahomet prayed: 'O Lord! guide the Beni Aamir to the truth. I seek unto Thee for protection from Aamir ibn Tofail!' The visit of Abu Bera, and what immediately follows, show that there had been some friendly communication between the parties. Perhaps there were divided opinions in the tribe. The mode in which tradition treats the massacre, and Mahomet's having almost immediately after entered into communication with Aamir ibn Tofail on the subject of a claim for blood-money, look as if the attack was not so gratuitous as might appear. Mahomet at first attributed it to Abu Bera; but Abu Bera cleared himself. His son attacked Aamir with a spear, to show that his father disowned the transaction.

out that his hasty departure was due to a divine monition that the chiefs of the Nadhír had formed a plot to ascend the roof, and roll down great stones upon him. But as he makes no mention of this in the Coran (which dwells at some length on the siege), and there had been nothing to excite the suspicion of his companions, the story is somewhat doubtful. However this may be, Mahomet resolved that the tribe should no longer remain in the neighbourhood of Medina. Mohammed son of Maslama (the assassin of Kab) was immediately commissioned to deliver this command: '*Thus saith the Prophet of the Lord, Ye shall go forth out of my land within the space of ten days: whosoever after that remaineth behind shall be put to death.*' Startled and alarmed, 'O Mohammed!' they said, 'we did not think that thou, our friend, or any other of the Beni Aus, would ever have consented to be the bearer of a message such as this.' '*Hearts are changed now,*' was his only reply, as he turned and left them in dismay.

They
refuse, and
are be-
sieged

They hesitated. At first they began their preparations to depart. But it was a grievous prospect to be exiled from the home of their fathers, from their fertile fields and choice date-groves. Abdallah ibn Obey, and others who had not yet forgotten the close and ancient obligations which bound them to the Jews, were displeased at the order for their banishment. Abdallah at first strove to bring about a reconciliation.¹ Failing in this, he accused Mahomet of having invented the charge of treachery against the Jews, and promised himself to stand by them with his own people and with allies from Nejd. Reassured by this hope, and trusting to the strength of their fortress, they resolved to hold fast. So they sent to Mahomet, saying: 'We shall not depart from our possessions; do what thou wilt against us.' '*Allah Akbar!*' cried the Prophet, when he heard it, unable to conceal his delight: '*The Jews are going to fight! Great is the Lord!*' and the cry, taken up by his companions, re-echoed through

¹ That Abdallah really broke faith with the Jews in promising them aid, and then holding back, is questionable, for tradition delights to cast contempt and abuse upon Abdallah as the impersonation of disaffection and hypocrisy. The accusation, however, appears in the Coran, as will be seen below. The position of Abdallah was trying. The new faith had penetrated into every branch of the Medina tribes, and rendered any combined opposition to Mahomet impossible. He probably found it impracticable to fulfil his promise.

the courts of the Mosque. Arming at once, they marched forth, Aly carrying the standard, to invest the stronghold of the rebellious tribe. The besiegers were kept at a distance by arrows and stones; but the Nadhîr looked in vain for succour either from Medina or from the tribes of Nejd. The Beni Coreitza, the only remaining Jewish tribe, either swayed by ancient jealousies or fearful of incurring the Prophet's wrath, pretended that they could not break their treaty with him, and held aloof. It would have been better for them now to have perished on the field than to have had to rue the day two years later on. Notwithstanding these disappointments, the Nadhîr held bravely out, and gallantly defied all the attempts of their enemy. Mahomet became impatient, and at last, to hasten their departure, had recourse to an expedient, unusual, if not unwarranted, by the laws of Arab warfare. He cut down the surrounding clumps of palm-trees, and burned the choicest of them to the roots with fire. The Jews remonstrated against this proceeding as not only barbarous in itself but specially forbidden by the law of Moses; and Mahomet, sensible of the reproach, had to justify the act by divine command.¹

Their date-trees are burned

When the siege had now lasted for two or three weeks, the unfortunate Jews, seeing no prospect of relief, sent to say that they were now ready to lay down their arms and abandon the lands which had already lost to them their special value. Mahomet was glad to accede to the offer; for the siege might still have been indefinitely prolonged, and there were dangerous elements around him. They submitted, moreover, to the stipulation that they should leave their weapons behind them. Upon this, the besieging force retired; and the Nadhîr, having laden their property, even to their doors and lintels, upon camels, set out, with tabrets and music, on the road to Syria. Some of them, with their chiefs Huwey and Kinâna, turned aside at Kheibar. The rest went on to Jericho and the highlands south of Syria. Two only of their number abandoned their ancestral faith, and, having

They submit to expatriation

Two renegades

¹ The Beni Nadhîr, on their palm-trees being cut down, called out from their ramparts: 'O Mahomet! thou wert heretofore wont to forbid injustice on the earth, and to rebuke him that committed it. Wherefore, then, hast thou cut down our palm-trees, and burned them with fire?'—*Ibn Hisham*. The prohibition is in Deut. xx. 19.

embraced Islam, were maintained in the possession of their fields and property. Thus early were temporal inducements brought to bear on the aggrandisement of Islam.

The spoil consisted of fifty coats of mail, fifty stand of armour, and three hundred and forty swords. But of greater importance was the fertile tract now at the disposal of Mahomet. This, by a special revelation, was exempted from the usual law of distribution, because it had been gained without actual fighting; and he divided it at his discretion. A portion of the confiscated lands was kept for the support of his own family and for the relief of the poor. Two indigent Citizens who had distinguished themselves in the field also received grants, but with this exception the remainder was given entirely to the Refugees, who were now enabled to dispense with the bounty of their neighbours, and promoted to a position of independence and affluence. Abu Bekr, Omar, Zobeir, and other chief Companions, are named among the persons endowed thus with valuable estates.

The expulsion of the Nadhír was a material triumph for Mahomet. One by one he was breaking up the Jewish settlements, and weakening the cause of disaffection; for a combination at any time, between the Jews and the other enemies of Islam, would have proved critical to his safety at Medina. An entire Sura is devoted to the victory now achieved, which is ascribed to the terror struck by the Almighty into the Jewish heart. The following are extracts:—

All that is in the Heavens and in the Earth praiseth God—the Mighty and the Wise. He it is that hath driven forth the unbelieving Jews from their habitations to join the former Exiles. Ye thought not that they would go forth; and they themselves thought that their Strongholds would defend them against God. But God visited them from a quarter on which they counted not, and cast terror into their hearts. They destroyed their houses with their own hands, and with the hands of the Believers. Take warning, therefore, ye that have eyes. And if God had not decreed against them expatriation, He had verily punished them otherwise in this World; and in the World to come there is prepared for them the punishment of Fire. This because they set themselves up against God and His Prophet; and whosoever setteth himself up against God,—verily God is strong in Vengeance. That which thou didst cut down of the Date-trees, or left of them standing upon their roots, it was by the command of

Fields of
the Beni
Nadhír
divided
among
Refugees

Importance
of victory
over the
Beni
Nadhír

Notices of
it in Coran

Sura lix

God,—that He might abase the evildoers. And that which God gave unto his Prophet as booty from them ;—ye did not march horses or camels against them ; but God giveth unto His Prophet dominion over whom He pleaseth ; and God is over all things Powerful. That which God hath given unto His Prophet from the inhabitants of the Villages (thus surrendering), is for God and the Prophet, and his Kindred, and the Orphan, and the Destitute, and the Wayfarer, that the turn (of booty) be not confined unto the Rich amongst you. That therefore which the Prophet giveth unto you, receive it : and that which he withholdeth from you, withhold yourselves from the same ; and fear God ; for God is strong in vengeance. It is for the poor of the Refugees,—those who have been driven forth from their homes and from their properties, desiring the grace of God and His favour, and assisting God and His Apostle. These are the sincere ones. They that were before them in possession of the City (Medina) and the faith, love those that have taken refuge with them, and find not in their breasts any want of the spoil :¹ they prefer (their Guests) before themselves, even if they themselves be destitute. * * * *

Hast thou not observed the Disaffected ?² They say unto their Brethren,—the unbelieving People of the Book : ‘ *If ye be driven forth, we will surely go forth with you. We will never submit concerning you unto any one : and if ye be attacked we shall certainly aid you.*’ But God is witness that they are liars. If such are driven forth, these will not go forth with them ; and if they be attacked, they will not assist them ; and if they were to assist them, they would surely turn their backs, and then they would be bereft of aid. Verily ye are the stronger, because of the terror cast into their breasts from God ;—this, because they are a People devoid of understanding. They shall never fight against you unitedly, excepting in fenced towns, or from behind walls. Their warlike strength is mighty among themselves ; ye think they are united, but their hearts are divided, because they are a people that doth not comprehend.

They are like unto those that shortly preceded them (*i.e.* the Beni Cainucca) ; they have tasted the grievous punishment of their undertaking. They are like unto Satan when he said unto Man : ‘ *Become an Infidel ;*’ and when he had become an Infidel, the Tempter said : ‘ *Verily, I am clear of thee ! Verily, I fear the Lord of all Worlds.*’ Wherefore the end of them both is that

¹ That is, the Citizens of Medina had no grudge against the Refugees because the booty was appropriated to them.

² Referring to Abdallah's promise of assistance.

they are cast into the Fire, dwelling for ever therein ! That is the reward of the transgressors.

Peroration
on the
Deity

The Sura, catching (as the oracle every here and there still does) something of its early fire, closes with a splendid peroration :—

He is the Lord. Beside Him there is no God. It is He that knoweth both the Seen and the Unseen. The Merciful, the Compassionate. There is no God but He ; the King, the Holy, the Giver of Peace, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Glorious, the Almighty, the Most High. Far exalted is the Lord above that which they associate Him with,—God, the Creator, the Maker, the Framer. Most goodly are His names. All that is in the heavens and in the earth praiseth Him. He is the Glorious, the Wise.

Zeid
qualifies
himself as
secretary
by learning
Hebrew
and Syriac

Mahomet had hitherto trusted Jewish amanuenses with the transcription of such despatches as were needed in the Hebrew or Syriac tongues. But his relations were gradually expanding northwards, and he could no longer trust documents of political importance in the hands of any one belonging to a people whom he had so deeply injured. About this time, therefore, he desired a youth of Medina, Zeid the son of Thâbit, to learn the Hebrew and Syriac languages. He had already been taught to write Arabic by one of the prisoners of Bedr. Mahomet now made use of him as Secretary, both for his vernacular and his foreign despatches. It is the same Zeid who was afterwards employed by Abu Bekr in collecting the scattered Suras and fragments of the Coran into one volume ; and was also appointed controller of the syndicate charged with its recension in the Caliphate of Othman.¹

¹ He was eleven years old when Mahomet arrived in Medina, and was now therefore fifteen or sixteen. He learned Hebrew (or Syriac) in *half a month*, it is said. Mahomet used to tell him to stick his pen behind his ear, ' for this will bring to remembrance that which the distracted mind is seeking after.'

CHAPTER XVI

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH YEARS OF THE HEGIRA ;

OR, FROM THE MIDDLE OF A.D. 625 TO THE END OF A.D. 626

ÆTAT. 57, 58

FOR about a year and a half after the expulsion of the Beni Nadhîr, Medina was little disturbed by the hostile sound of arms at home. The summer and autumn of the fourth year of the Hegira passed in peace. But at last the winter came round when, by appointment, the forces of Mecca and Medina were again to meet at Bedr. The year being one of drought, Abu Sofian was desirous that the expedition should be deferred to a more plentiful season. Accordingly, the Coreish engaged Nueim, of a neutral tribe, to repair to Medina, and there give forth an exaggerated account of the preparations at Mecca, in the hope that, with the field of Ohod yet fresh in memory, the Moslems might be deterred from setting out. The Coreish eventually marched from Mecca with 2,000 foot and 50 horse ; but after one or two days, the scarcity of provender forced them to retrace their steps. The report of Nueim alarmed the inhabitants of Medina, and a disinclination appeared in some quarters again to meet the enemy. But Mahomet, indignant at this cowardly spirit, or it may be better informed of the real counsels of the Coreish, declared with an oath that he would go forth to Bedr, even if he went alone. His bold front inspired such confidence that 1,500 men, a force double the number he had as yet commanded, rallied round his standard ; and they carried with them a great store of wares and merchandise for the annual fair. They maintained a standing camp at Bedr for eight days in defiance of the Coreish, and, having bartered their goods to advantage, returned to Medina. Mahomet was much pleased at the

*Bedr the
Second.
Mahomet
marches to
Bedr.
Coreish
remain at
home.
A.H. IV.
February,
March,
A.D. 625*

Mahomet gratified at the result
Sura iii

result of the campaign, which is named the Second Bedr, and the divine approbation was signified in a special revelation :—

Those that responded to the call of God and His Prophet, after the wound which they had received—to such of them as are virtuous and fear God, there shall be a great reward. Certain men said unto them,—‘ *Verily the people have gathered themselves against you ; wherefore be afraid of them.*’ But it increased their faith, and they said,—‘ *God sufficeth for us : He is the best Patron.*’ Therefore they returned with a blessing from God, and favour. No evil touched them. They followed after that which is well pleasing unto God : and God is possessed of boundless grace.

Verily this devil¹ would cause you to fear his friends ; but fear Me if ye be Believers.

Coreish mortified

The Coreish, mortified at this triumph, projected another grand attack against Mahomet. But a year elapsed before the design was carried into execution : meanwhile Medina enjoyed a respite.

Expedition to Dzât al Rica.
A.H. V.
May,
A.D. 626

In the beginning of the fifth year, a party of 400 men, commanded by Mahomet himself, set out to disperse certain tribes of the Beni Ghatafân, assembled with suspicious purpose at Dzât al Rica. They fled to the mountains at his approach. Mahomet advanced unexpectedly upon their habitations, and carried off some of their women. After an absence of fifteen days the party returned to Medina.² It

¹ Applied by some to Abu Sofian ; by others, with more likelihood, to Nueim.

² A story illustrative of the kind and unbending manner by which Mahomet engaged the affections of his followers may be briefly recounted here, as it relates to the present expedition. Jabir, a poor Citizen, son of a man slain at Ohod, was mounted on a wretched camel, which Mahomet (after miraculously transforming it from a slow into a very rapid walker) said he would buy from him. He spoke to Jabir kindly concerning his father, and five-and-twenty times invoked mercy on him. Then in a livelier strain : ‘ Hast thou married lately ? ’ Jabir replied, ‘ Yes. ’ ‘ A maiden, or one that had before been married ? ’ ‘ The latter, ’ said Jabir. ‘ And why not a young damsel, who would have sported with thee, and thou with her ? ’ ‘ My father, ’ he explained, ‘ left seven daughters, so I married a woman of experience, able to guide them. ’ ‘ Thou hast done well, ’ rejoined Mahomet ; (he might here himself have learned a lesson from his humble follower)—‘ Now when we reach thy home, we shall kill a camel and rest there, and thy wife will hear of it and will spread carpets for us. ’ ‘ But, O Prophet ! I have not any carpets. ’ ‘ We shall get them for thee : do therefore as I have said. ’ On Mahomet’s returning home, Jabir took his camel to Mahomet, who not only gave him its full price, but also returned to him the camel itself. Jabir, thus set up in life, prospered greatly

was in this short campaign that the 'Service of Danger' was introduced. Fearing that the enemy, who held the fastnesses above the Moslem army, might attempt a surprise to rescue their women, a part of the force was kept constantly under arms. The public prayers were therefore repeated twice,—one division watching while the other prayed. The revelation sanctioning this practice is quoted less for its own interest, than to illustrate the tendency of the revelation to become the vehicle of military commands. In the Coran, victories are announced, success promised, actions recounted; failure is explained, bravery applauded, cowardice or disobedience chided; military or political movements are directed;—and all this as an immediate communication from the Deity. The passage resembles what one might expect to find in the 'General Orders' of some Puritan leader, or Commander of a crusade in the Holy Land :—

'Service of
Danger'

Coran, a
vehicle for
'General
Orders'

When ye march abroad in the earth, it shall be no crime unto you that ye shorten your prayers, if ye fear that the Unbelievers may attack you; for the Unbelievers are an open enemy unto you. And when thou art amongst them, and leadest their prayers, let one Division of them arise to prayer with thee, taking their weapons with them, and when they have worshipped, let them remove behind you. Then let the other Division come up that hath not prayed, and let them pray with thee, and let them take their due precaution and their weapons. The Unbelievers would that ye should neglect your weapons and your baggage; then would they fall upon you with one onset. It shall be no crime unto you, if ye be incommoded by rain, or if ye be sick, that ye lay down your weapons; but take your due precaution. Verily God hath prepared for the Unbelievers an ignominious punishment. Sura iv

During the summer, another campaign was undertaken by Mahomet. It was in the direction of Dumah, an Oasis and entrepôt on the borders of Syria midway between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Persia, where marauding bands, driven to violence by the prevailing famine, were plundering travellers, and even threatened a raid upon Medina. Mahomet stopped short a march or two from Dumah, and contented himself with capturing the herds which grazed in the neighbourhood. The robbers fled without offering any opposition. This expedition is touched upon very lightly in a brief Campaign
to Dumah
al Jandal.
A.H. V.
July,
A.D. 626

notice of two or three lines ; but it was in reality most important. Mahomet, followed by a thousand men, had reached the confines of Syria ; distant tribes learned the terror of his name ; the political horizon was extended ; the lust of plunder in the hearts of the Moslems acquired a wider range, and they were inured, at the hottest season of the year, to long and fatiguing marches. The army was absent for nearly a month. On his way back Mahomet entered into a treaty with Oyeina, chieftain of the Fezâra, for the right to graze on certain tracts of table-land to the east of Medina, where, notwithstanding the drought, forage was still procurable.

Mahomet
marries a
fourth wife,
*Zeinab bint
Khozeima.*
A. H. IV.
January,
626

We now turn to what was passing within the home of Mahomet. Since his marriage with Haphsa—that is for above a year—Mahomet had been content with the three inmates of his harem. He now added to the number two other wives. The first was Zeinab daughter of Khozeima, widow of his cousin Obeida, killed at Bedr. Noted for her charity, she gained the title of *Mother of the Poor*. She survived but a year or two, being the only one of the Prophet's wives (excepting K̄hadija) who died before him.¹

And a
fifth, *Omm
Salma.*
A. H. IV.
February,
626

Within a month of this marriage, he sought the hand of a fifth wife. *Omm Salma* was the widow of Abu Salma, to whom she had borne several children. Both had been exiles to Abyssinia, from whence they returned to Medina. At Ohod, Abu Salma was wounded ; but he had so far recovered as to take the command against the Beni Asad, when the wound broke out afresh. Mahomet visited his death-bed. He was breathing his last, and the women wailed loudly. 'Hush!' said the Prophet as he entered. 'Invoke not on yourselves aught but what is good ; for verily the angels are present with the dying man, and say *Amen* to that which ye pray. *O Lord ! give unto him width and comfort in his grave : Lighten his darkness : Pardon his sins : Raise him to Paradise : Exalt his rank among the Blessed ; and raise up faithful followers from his seed !* Ye indeed are looking at the fixed eyes, but the sight itself hath already followed the dead.' So saying he drew the palm of his hand over the eyes of his departed friend, and closed them. It was eight months after being wounded at Ohod that Abu Salma died ; and four

Prayer at
death-bed
of her
previous
husband

¹ Rihâna, the Jewess, also died a year before him ; but it is doubtful whether she was ever more than his concubine.

months afterwards Mahomet made proposals of marriage to his widow, who though not young was very beautiful. She at first excused herself on the score of her age and rising family; but the Prophet removed her objection by saying that he too was well advanced in years, and that her children should be his care. After the marriage he tarried three days with his bride—a precedent followed by Moslem husbands when adding fresh inmates to their harems. Her son Omar was brought up by Mahomet.

Mahomet was now near threescore years of age; but weakness for the sex seemed but to grow with age; and the attractions of his increasing harem instead of satisfying appear rather to have stimulated desire after new and varied charms. Happening one day to visit his adopted son Zeid, he found him absent. As he knocked, Zeinab his wife, now over thirty years of age, but fair to look upon, invited him to enter; and, starting up in her loose and scanty dress, made haste to array herself for his reception. But the beauties of her figure through the half-opened door had already unveiled themselves too freely before the admiring gaze of Mahomet. He was smitten by the sight: '*Gracious Lord!*' he exclaimed; '*Good Heavens! how Thou dost turn the hearts of men!*' The rapturous words, repeated in a low voice as he turned to go, were overheard by Zeinab, who perceived the flame she had kindled, and, proud of her conquest, was nothing loth to tell her husband of it. Zeid went straightway to Mahomet, and declared his readiness to divorce Zeinab for him. This Mahomet declined: 'Keep thy wife to thyself,' he said, 'and fear God.' But Zeid saw probably that the admonition proceeded from unwilling lips, and that the Prophet had still a longing eye for Zeinab. Perhaps he did not care to keep her, when he found that she desired to leave him, and was ambitious of the new and distinguished alliance. And so he formally divorced her. Mahomet still hesitated. There might be little scandal according to Arab morals in seeking the hand of a married woman whose husband had no wish to keep her; but the husband in the present case was Mahomet's adopted son, and even in Arabia such a union was unlawful. The flame, however, would not be stifled; and so, casting his scruples to the winds, he resolved at last to have her. Sitting by Ayesha, the prophetic ecstasy appeared to come over him.

Mahomet
marries
Zeinab bint
Jahsh,
divorced
by his
adopted
son, Zeid.
A.H. V.
June,
A.D. 626

As he recovered, he smiled joyfully and said: 'Who will go and congratulate Zeinab, and say that the Lord hath joined her unto me in marriage?' His maid Salma made haste to carry the glad news to Zeinab, who showed her delight by bestowing on the messenger all the jewels she had upon her person. Mahomet made no delay, but hastened to fulfil the divine behest; and, having made a great feast in the court of the Mosque, took thus a second Zeinab to be his wife.¹

And supports the marriage by divine command

The marriage caused no small obloquy, and, to save his reputation, Mahomet had to fall back upon the Oracle. A revelation appeared, in which a divine warrant is given for the union, the objections on the score of adoptive affinity are disallowed, and the Prophet is even reprehended for his hesitation and fear of men:—

Sura xxxiii

God hath not given to a man two hearts within him. * * * Nor hath He made your adopted sons your (real) sons. This your speech proceedeth from your mouths; but God speaketh the Truth; and He directeth in the right way. Let your adopted sons go by their own fathers' names. This is more just with God. * * *

And when thou saidst to him on whom God hath bestowed favours, and upon whom thou too hast bestowed favours: ² 'Keep thy Wife to thyself, and fear God;' and thou didst conceal in thy breast that which God was minded to make known, and thou fearedst man—whereas God is more worthy to be feared. And

¹ Zeid, her previous husband, was short and not well favoured, having a pug-nose; but he was ten years younger than the Prophet.

Zeinab was industrious, and could tan leather and make shoes. What she made in this way, even after her marriage with the Prophet, was given away to the poor. She survived Mahomet ten or eleven years.

Tabari is the fullest of the earliest authorities on this passage, and in the text I have followed him closely. He gives a second narrative, differing only in this, that, as Mahomet waited at Zeid's door, the wind blew aside the curtain of Zeinab's chamber and disclosed her in a scanty undress. After Zeid had divorced her, Mahomet asked him whether he had ever seen anything to dislike in her. 'Nothing,' he replied, 'only good.' Ayesha relates that strange misgivings arose in her heart when she heard the divine message commanding the marriage, and, mindful of the beauty of Zeinab, feared lest she should glory over the other wives of Mahomet as his divinely appointed bride. We learn from tradition that Zeinab did thus vaunt herself, saying that *God had given her in marriage to His Prophet, whereas his other wives were given to him by their relatives.*

² Meaning Zeid, whom Mahomet, after freeing, had adopted. In the following verse he is mentioned *by name*, a singular instance, for no other follower is named in the Coran.

when Zeid had fulfilled her divorce, WE joined thee with her in marriage, that there might hereafter be no offence to Believers in marrying the Wives of their adopted sons, when they have fulfilled their divorce ; and the command of God is to be fulfilled. . . . Mahomet is not the father of any man amongst you. Rather he is the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets ; and God knoweth all things.

Strange to say, the scandal was removed by this revelation, and Zeid was thenceforward called not 'the son of Mahomet,' as heretofore, but by his proper name, 'Zeid, the son of Hârith.' We hear of no doubts or questionings, and can only attribute the confiding spirit of his followers to the absolute ascendancy of his powerful mind over all who came within its influence.

Scandal of the transaction thus removed

The seclusion of the *Veil* or curtain was at this time enjoined upon the wives of Mahomet. Himself well stricken in years, surrounded by six wives, some of them sprightly, young, and beautiful, and with a continual concourse of courtiers, visitors, and suitors, such a restriction was not unneeded. Indeed, he had himself proved in the case of Zeinab the danger that might arise from the too free admission of friends or strangers ; and his followers could hardly expect to be freer from temptation than the Prophet himself. No one unless bidden was to enter his wives' apartments ; they were not to be spoken to but from behind a curtain ; and to slake the last embers of jealousy (or uneasiness as it is euphemistically called), an interdict is declared against their ever marrying again, even after his death. Henceforward they were known as '*the Mothers of the Faithful.*' Here is the passage. How has the fine gold become dim !—

Veil and other restrictions imposed on Mahomet's wives

O ye Believers ! Enter not the apartments of the Prophet, except ye be called to sup with him, without waiting his convenient time. When ye are bidden, then enter ; and when ye have eaten, then disperse. And stay not for familiar converse ;—for verily that giveth uneasiness to the Prophet. It shameth him to say this unto you : but God is not ashamed of the Truth. And when ye ask anything of the Prophet's wives, ask it of them from behind a curtain ; this will be more pure for your hearts and for their hearts. It is not fitting that ye should give uneasiness to the Apostle of God, nor that ye should marry his Wives after him for ever. Verily that would be a grievous thing

Sura xxxiii

in the sight of God. * * * The Prophet is nearer unto the Believers than their own souls, and his Wives are their Mothers.

Moslem women to be partly veiled when walking abroad

Certain restrictions, but of a less stringent nature, were about the same time placed upon the dress and demeanour of all believing women. These were exposed in their walks abroad to the rude remarks of disaffected and licentious Citizens; they were therefore commanded to throw their garments around them so as partially to veil their persons, and conceal their ornaments. The men who thus troubled the Moslem females were threatened with expulsion and with a general slaughter, thus:—

Sura xxxiii

O Prophet! Speak unto thy wives and thy daughters, and the wives of the Believers, that they throw around them a part of their mantles. This will be more seemly, that they may be known (as women of reputation) and may not be subject to annoyance; for God is gracious and merciful. And truly, if the Disaffected, and they in whose hearts is disease (of incontinency), and the propagators of falsehoods in the city, hold not back, We shall surely stir thee up against them. Then they shall not be permitted to live near unto thee therein but for a little. Accursed! wherever they are found, they shall be taken and killed with a great slaughter. This is the wont of God concerning those that have gone before. And these shall not find in the wont of God any variation.

And elsewhere:—

Sura xxiv

Speak unto the Believing women that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty; and display not their ornaments, except what appeareth thereof; and let them throw their veils over their bosoms; and let them not display their ornaments except to their husbands, fathers (and so on, enumerating a number of relations, and ending with slaves, eunuchs, and children). And let them not shake their feet that their hidden ornaments be discovered.

Rules for entering houses &c. of neighbours

Rules and precautions were also prescribed to regulate the visits of strangers to their neighbours' houses, and to prevent the privacy of Believers being intruded upon without due warning.¹

¹ Sura xxiv. Believers are forbidden to enter any house but their own (even if there be no one inside) until they have first asked leave and saluted the family. During three periods of the day—*i.e.* before morning prayer at the time of the siesta, and after evening prayer—even slaves and young

Out of these commands have grown the stringent usages of the Harem and Zenana, which, with more or less seclusion, prevail throughout the Moslem world. However degrading and austere these usages may appear, yet with the loose code of polygamy and divorce some restraints of the kind are almost indispensable in Islam, if only for the maintenance of decency and social order.¹

Restrictions rendered necessary by loose code of Coran

A goodly row of modest dwellings, one for each of the 'Mothers of the Faithful,' now formed the eastern side of the Mosque and of its court. Mahomet shared his attentions equally amongst his wives, spending thus a day and night in the chamber of each successively. Thus their turn was known as 'the day of Sawda,—'the day of Zeinab,' and so on. Yet Ayesha maintained her pre-eminence; and, however much there may have been the formal circuit reducing nominally her portion to one day in six, still hers was the most frequented of all the houses, and best deserved the name of *home*. The irregularity of his attentions at length provoked

children (who are otherwise excepted) must ask permission before entering an apartment. Women past child-bearing may alone dispense with the outer garment. The sick, and certain near relatives, are also exempted from the prohibition of dining familiarly in each other's inner apartments.

¹ European manners and customs in this respect would be altogether unsuited to Mahometan society. The tendency of the *system* without its present checks would certainly be unfavourable to morality. Let the laxity of manners be conceived, if with unrestricted social intercourse there existed also under the sanction of divine revelation the practice of polygamy, divorce, and remarriage; if the marriage bond were simply at the discretion of the husband to hold or to break; if any man might look upon any married woman (relatives excepted) as within his reach by marriage; and if every married woman felt like Zeinab, that she might become the lawful wife of any other man who could persuade her husband to pronounce a divorce! The foundations of society would be broken up.

Burckhardt tells us of an Arab, forty-five years old, who had had fifty wives. And as regards the sacred city itself, we have the evidence of a keen observer, the late reigning Begum of Bhopal, herself an orthodox follower of the Prophet. After performing the pilgrimage a few years ago, her Highness tells us: 'The women frequently contract as many as ten marriages, and those who have been only married twice are few in number. If a woman sees her husband growing old, or if she happen to admire any one else, she goes to the Sherif, and, after having settled the matter with him, she puts away her husband, and takes to herself another, who is perhaps young, good-looking, and rich. In this way, a marriage seldom lasts more than a year or two.' It may be remarked that the *wife* (excepting under a few rare conditions) has not legally the power of divorce; but the impression on the Begum's mind from personal intercourse with the upper society of Mecca sufficiently proves the laxity of morals prevailing there.

a natural discontent; and Mahomet was by a divine dispensation released from the obligation of consorting with his wives equally and in undeviating order:—

Sura xxxiii Postpone the turn of such as thou mayest please; and admit unto thyself her whom thou choosest, as well as her whom thou mayest desire of those whom thou hadst put aside; it will be no offence in thee. This will be easier, that they may be satisfied, and not repine, but be all content with that thou givest unto them.¹

The command was incorporated in the Coran (whether Mahomet intended that it should be so, we have no means of judging); and to this day it is recited in its course, as part of the Word of God, in every Mosque throughout Islam.

Mahomet attacks and takes captive the Beni Mustalik. A.H. V. December, A.D. 626

We gladly turn to other matters. Some months after his return from Dumah, rumours reached the Prophet of new projects against him in the neighbourhood of Mecca. The Beni Mustalik, a branch of the Khozáa hitherto friendly to his cause, were now raising forces with the view of joining the Coreish in their long-talked-of attack on Medina. Having inquired into these reports through a Bedouin spy who ingratiated himself with the hostile chief, Mahomet at once resolved by a bold inroad to anticipate their design. Besides his own adherents, many of the Citizens hitherto lukewarm towards Islam, with Abdallah ibn Obey at their head, desirous to maintain a friendly appearance, or allured by the hope of plunder, joined his standard. Mahomet could now muster thirty well appointed horse.² After eight days he encamped by the sea-shore at the wells of Moraisi, some marches short

¹ A passage follows probably of a later stage, for in this Sura are collected a great variety of precepts, of different periods, relating to the treatment of women: 'No more Women are lawful unto thee after this: nor that thou shouldst exchange any of thy wives for others, even though their beauty fascinate thee, excepting such (slaves) as thy right hand may possess, and God observeth all things.' Some commentators think that this prohibition was abrogated by a preceding verse, which makes lawful to the Prophet in marriage any of his maternal or paternal cousins, and 'any believing woman who might willingly give herself to him in case he desired to take her to wife.' Others say that the passage was revealed after his number of nine wives was completed. In the latter case, it is to be noted that cohabitation with slaves as concubines, in addition to his regular wives, is still permitted.

² Of the thirty horse, twenty belonged to Citizens and ten to Refugees. The standard of the Refugees was held by Abu Bekr, that of the Citizens by Sad ibn Obada.

of Mecca. Here he had a tent of leather pitched for himself and for Ayesha and Omm Salma, his companions in the campaign. The tidings of his approach struck terror into the Beni Mustalik, and caused their allies to fall away. The force advanced, and, after a brisk discharge of archery, closed so rapidly on the tribe, that they were all surrounded and taken prisoners with their families, herds, and flocks. Of the enemy ten were killed, while Mahomet lost but one man, and that from an erring shot by a Moslem. Two hundred families, 2,000 camels, and 5,000 sheep and goats, besides much household goods, formed the booty. It was divided in the usual manner.¹

The army having encamped for several days at the wells of Moraisi, an altercation sprang up between a Citizen and Omar's servant, a Refugee. The latter struck the Citizen a blow, and the men of Medina rushing in to avenge their comrade's insult, the Refugee cried loudly on his fellows for aid. High words passed on both sides, swords were drawn, and the result might have been serious, had not the Citizen been induced to withdraw his complaint and forgive the injury. During the quarrel, the disaffected party gave free expression to their disloyal feelings:—'This,' said Abdallah ibn Obey openly, 'ye have brought upon yourselves, by inviting these strangers to come amongst us. Wait till we return to Medina; then the Mightier shall surely expel the Meaner!'

Altercation
between
the Citizens
and Re-
fugees

Mahomet no sooner heard of the strife, and of the violent language of Abdallah, than he gave orders for an immediate march. The discontent of the Citizens and momentary antagonism betwixt them and the Refugees, if allowed to spread, would have been dangerous; indeed, it was the one thing he had to dread as fatal to his cause. By breaking up the camp, and at once ordering a long and wearisome march, he would divert attention from the events of the morning and make the quarrel to die away. Therefore, though the hour was early and unseasonable, and amity had apparently been re-established, Mahomet started without

Mahomet
orders
immediate
march

¹ The household stuff was sold to the highest bidder. In the division a camel was reckoned equal to ten sheep or goats. Each horseman had three times the share of a footman, two being reckoned for the horse. Mahomet desired by this rule to encourage the development of cavalry in his army.

delay, and kept the army marching the whole of that day and night and the following day, till the sun was high. Then he halted, and the force, overpowered with fatigue, was soon asleep. From thence they proceeded home by regular marches.

Abdallah
and dis-
affected
Citizens re-
primanded
in Coran

Before the army moved, Abdallah protested that he had not made use of the expressions attributed to him; and Mahomet, although some of his followers counselled severe and decisive measures, received with civility his excuse. When Abdallah was being hardly handled by his own fanatical son, who tried to extort from him the confession that he was the *Meaner*, and Mahomet the *Mightier*,¹ the Prophet, chancing to pass by, interfered and said: 'Leave him alone! For, by my life! so long as he remaineth with us, we shall make our companionship pleasant unto him.' Still, when he returned to Medina, and found himself again firmly fixed in the affections of the Citizens, the Prophet deemed it necessary to administer to Abdallah and his followers a public reprimand. The heavenly message contains a curse against the insincere and disaffected professors of Islam; while the quotation of Abdallah's very words points the rebuke, notwithstanding his denial, against him.²

¹ There are worse speeches than this attributed to Abdallah's son. He offered to bring his father's head, if Mahomet desired it; saying: 'If he is to be killed, I will do it myself. If any other man commits the deed, the Devil will tempt me to avenge my father's blood: and by killing a Believer for an Unbeliever, I shall go to hell. Suffer me to kill him myself!'

Omar also is said to have counselled Mahomet at Moraisi to put Abdallah to death. But Mahomet replied: 'Omar! How will it be if men should say that Mahomet killeth his own followers? nay, but let us give orders for an immediate march.' In after days when Abdallah's authority waned, and he was treated without reverence even by his own people, Mahomet reminded Omar of his advice on this occasion, and asked whether it was not far better to have reserved him for this fate, than to have put him to death. Omar confessed the wisdom of the Prophet.

² The following is the passage:—'When the Disaffected come before thee, they say: *We testify that thou art the Prophet of God*: and God knoweth that thou art his Prophet, and God testifieth that the Disaffected are liars. This because they believed, and afterwards disbelieved; Wherefore, their hearts are sealed, and they understand not. When thou seest them, thou admirest their outward man; but when they speak, thou listenest to their words, as if of logs set up (against the wall); they fancy every cry is against themselves. Beware of them! God curse them! How are they turned unto lies!' And when it is said unto them: *Come! let the Prophet of God ask pardon for you*, they avert their heads, and ye see them turn aside, puffed up with pride. . . . These are they which say:

The captives of the Beni Mustalik having been carried to Medina with the rest of the booty, men from their tribe soon arrived to make terms for their release. One of them was Juweiria, a damsel of birth and beauty, about twenty years of age, and married to one of the chiefs of the tribe. She fell to the lot of a Citizen, who, taking advantage of her rank and comeliness, fixed the ransom at nine ounces of gold.¹ Despairing to raise so large a sum, she ventured into the presence of the Prophet while seated in the apartment of Ayesha, and pleaded for some remission. A qualm passed over Ayesha, as she saw the Prophet listening to the fair and winning suppliant, and soon perceived that the conqueror had become the captive of his prisoner. 'Wilt thou hearken,' he said, 'to something that may be better than what thou askest of me?' Marvelling at his gentle accents, she asked what that might be. 'Even that I should pay thy ransom, and take thee for myself!' The maiden was nothing loth. And so the ransom was paid. Mahomet, taking her at once to wife, built a seventh house for her reception. As soon as the marriage was noised abroad, the people said that, the Beni Mustalik having now become their relatives, they would let the rest of the prisoners go free as Juweiria's dower; 'and so,' Ayesha used in after days to say, 'no woman was ever a greater blessing to her people than this Juweiria.'

Mahomet
marries the
captive
Juweiria,
his seventh
wife

But a severer trial than the advent of a new rival was at that moment hanging over Ayesha. Her virtue was about to be called in question. The wives of Mahomet, when they marched with him, travelled each in a camel litter which, since the order for the veil, was carefully shrouded from the public gaze. At the hour of marching, the litter was brought up and placed close to the door of the lady's tent; at her convenience she would enter and close the curtain, when the servants would approach, and, lifting the litter, fasten it upon the camel's back. When alighting the same privacy was

Ayesha's
mis-
adventure
with
Safwan

Withhold your Wealth from those that are with the Prophet of God, and so they will disperse:—Whereas unto God belong the treasures of the Heavens and of the Earth: but the Disaffected understand not. They say: *When we return unto Medina, verily the Mightier shall expel from thence the Meamer:*—Whereas Might belongeth to God and His Prophet, and to the Believers: but the Disaffected do not comprehend.'

¹ The ordinary ransom of a woman or child was ten camels.

observed. When the army returned to Medina from the expedition against the Beni Mustalik, the litter of Ayesha was set down at the door of her house near the Mosque; but when opened it was found to be empty. Some little time after, Safwán, one of the Refugees, appeared leading his camel, with Ayesha seated upon it. Her explanation of the misadventure was this. On the previous night, just before the hour to march, she had occasion to go to some little distance from her tent, when she dropped her necklace of Yemen beads. On returning to enter her litter, she missed the necklace, and went back to seek for it. Meanwhile the bearers came up, and, imagining Ayesha to be within the litter (for she was of light and slender figure), lifted it into its place, and so led the camel away. On her return, Ayesha was astonished to find the litter and tent both gone, and no one left anywhere in sight.¹ So, expecting that the mistake would be discovered, and the litter brought back for her, she wrapped her clothes around her, sat patiently on the ground and fell fast asleep. Towards morning, Safwán, who had been also accidentally detained, passed by, and, recognising Ayesha, expressed surprise at finding one of the Prophet's wives in this predicament. She did not answer him. No other words (so Ayesha declared) passed between them, excepting this, that Safwán brought his camel near her, and turning his face away so as not even to see her, desired her to mount. Then he approached, and, holding the halter, led the camel towards Medina. Though he made every haste, he could not overtake the army; and thus, some time after the others had alighted and pitched their camp, Ayesha, led by Safwán, entered the city before the gaze of all.

Mahomet's
estrangement
from
Ayesha

The scandal-loving Arabs were not slow in drawing sinister conclusions from the inopportune affair, and spreading them abroad. These, reaching the ears of Mahomet, caused him much uneasiness. Ayesha felt his change of manner towards her, and (though professing ignorance till some time after of the cause) it preyed upon her mind. She fell sick; and learning at length from a friend the rumours affecting her character, obtained permission to return to her father's house. The estrangement of Mahomet from his favourite

¹ The tent, being small and light, was easily taken down and carried off immediately she was supposed to have entered the litter.

wife strengthened the grounds of defamation. Her fall was gloried over by those who bore no love to the Prophet, and became a topic of malicious conversation even among some of his staunch adherents. At the head of the former was Abdallah ibn Obeiy; and foremost among the latter were Mistah (a relative and dependent of Abu Bekr), the poet Hassân, and Hamna daughter of Jahsh, who rejoiced over the dishonour of her sister Zeinab's rival.¹

Scandal occasioned in Medina

When matters had gone on thus from bad to worse for several weeks, Mahomet resolved to put an end to the scandal. He mounted the pulpit, and sharply upbraided his followers:—‘O ye people!’ he said, ‘what concern is it of others that they should disquiet me in affairs touching my family, and unjustly blame them! Whereas, I myself know naught but that which is good concerning them. And moreover ye have traduced Safwân, a man regarding whom likewise I know not aught but what is good.’ Then Oseid, a leader of the Beni Aus, arose and swore that he would punish the delinquents, even to the death, if Mahomet would but give command. On this an altercation sprang up between him and the Beni Khazraj, to whom the chief offenders amongst the Citizens belonged. The quarrel was with some difficulty appeased by Mahomet, who then left the Mosque and proceeded to the house of Abu Bekr. There, having called to him Osâma² and Aly, he asked counsel of them. Osâma declared his utter disbelief of the slanderous report. Aly, with greater caution, recommended the examination of Ayesha's maid; and the maid when called could only give testimony which, if anything, was in her mistress's favour.³

Mahomet chides his followers for meddling in the matter

He consults Osâma and Aly

¹ Ayesha says: ‘Now Hamna took up the scandal, because she was sister of Zeinab daughter of Jahsh (the former wife of Zeid); and there was none that dared to put herself in competition with me but Zeinab only. She herself said nothing bad; but her sister did so, envying me because of my superiority to Zeinab.’

² Son of the Prophet's nurse Baraka (Omm Ayman) and her husband Zeid.

³ Aly answered Mahomet: ‘O Prophet! there is no lack of women, and thou canst without difficulty supply her place. Ask this servant girl about her, perchance she may tell the truth.’ So Mahomet called the maid. Aly arose and struck her, saying: ‘Tell the truth unto the Prophet.’ ‘I know nothing,’ said she, ‘of Ayesha but what is good:—excepting this, indeed, that one day I was kneading corn, and I asked her to watch it, and she went asleep, and the goats came and ate thereof.’ We must not forget, however, that all this is from Ayesha herself, who had a strong antipathy to Aly.

Ayesha
cleared by
revelation
from
heaven

Mahomet then went to the chamber where Ayesha herself was sitting. From the time she had first learned the imputation on her character, she abandoned herself to excessive grief. Her mother used to exhort her to patience: 'Assuage thy sorrow, my daughter!' she would say; 'it is seldom that a beautiful woman is married to one who loves her and has other wives besides, but these multiply scandal against her; and so do men likewise.' But she ever refused to be comforted, and continued to pine away. When Mahomet now entered, with her father and mother, he sat down beside her, and said: 'Ayesha! thou hearest what men have spoken of thee. Fear God. If indeed thou art guilty, then repent toward God, for the Lord accepteth the repentance of His servants. She held her peace, expecting (as she tells us) that her parents would reply for her;—but they too were silent. At last she burst into a passionate flood of tears, and exclaimed: 'By the Lord! I say that I will never repent towards God of that which ye speak of. I am helpless. If I confess, God knoweth that I am not guilty. If I deny, no one believeth me. All I can say is that which Joseph's father said,—*Patience becometh me, and the Lord is my helper!*'¹ Then, as all sat silent, Mahomet appeared to fall into a trance. They covered him over, and placed a pillow under his head. Thus he lay seemingly unconscious. Ayesha assures us that her mind was perfectly tranquil at the moment, confident that her innocence would be vindicated from heaven. In a little while he recovered, cast off the clothes, and sat up. Wiping away the great drops of sweat from his forehead, he exclaimed: '*Ayesha! rejoice! Verily the Lord hath declared thine innocence.*' 'Embrace thy husband!' cried her mother. But Ayesha could do no more than ejaculate, '*Praise be to the Lord!*'

Passages
revealed on
the occa-
sion

Then Mahomet went forth to the people, and recited before them the commands he had received in this matter, which form the law of adultery to the present day. The 24th Sura opens with declaring one hundred stripes² the punishment for harlotry, and proceeds thus:—

¹ Ayesha says that the name of *Jacob* having gone out of her head at the moment, she substituted the words *Joseph's father*.

² This penalty is made by the Moslem divines to apply to fornication only, and not to adultery. For the latter no punishment is mentioned in *the Coran*, but the *Sunna* awards death by toning for it.

They that slander married women, and thereafter do not bring forward four witnesses, scourge them with four-score stripes : and ye shall never again receive their testimony ; for they are infamous,—Unless they repent after that, and amend, for God is forgiving and merciful.¹ * * * Verily as for them,—a party amongst you,—that have fabricated lies, think it not to be an evil unto you. To every man amongst them shall be dealt out punishment according to the crime which he hath wrought ; and he that hath been forward amongst them in aggravating the same, his punishment shall be grievous.² Wherefore, when they heard it, did not the faithful men and women imagine good in their hearts, and say,—*This is a manifest falsehood?* Have they brought four witnesses thereof ? Wherefore, since they have not produced the witnesses, they are liars, these men, in the sight of God. If it were not for the favour of God upon you, and His mercy in this world and in the next, verily for that which ye have spread abroad, a grievous punishment had overtaken you ;—when ye published it with your tongues, and said with your mouths that of which ye had no knowledge : and ye counted it light, but with God it is weighty. Why, when ye heard it, did ye not say : *It belongeth not to us that we should speak of this ;—Gracious God ! It is a monstrous calumny !*

God admonisheth you that ye return not to the like again for ever. . . . Verily, they who love that infamy should be punished regarding the Believers : to them shall be a grievous torment in this world and in the next. And if it had not been for the grace of God upon you, and His mercy,—Verily, God is merciful and forgiving.

After some further denunciations and threats of punishment, both in this life and the next, against the publishers of scandal and traducers of innocent females, Mahomet stopped short ; and, in accordance with the divine command, ordered the prescribed punishment to be inflicted on the calumniators of Ayesha. Mistah and Hassán received each four-score stripes ; and even Hamna, the sister of the favourite

Calumniators of Ayesha scourged

¹ Here intervenes the ordinance prescribed for a husband charging his wife with adultery. If he have no witnesses, the charge, sworn to by himself four times, with a fifth oath imprecating the wrath of God if swearing falsely, is accepted without witnesses. The wife may avert the punishment by similar oaths and a similar imprecation. No corresponding privilege is conceded to the wife who accuses her husband of adultery.

² The expression here is so strong that some take it to mean hell, and apply it to Abdallah. Others refer it to Hassán, who shortly after became blind. But the natural meaning is the punishment of stripes, severe enough certainly for the honourable class on whom it was inflicted.

Zeinab, did not escape. Against Abdallah alone, Mahomet did not venture to enforce the sentence. It was fortunate that he refrained from doing so, for a time of trial was at hand when the alienation of this powerful Citizen and his adherents might have proved dangerous to his cause.

Hassân
conciliated
by present
of an estate

Satisfied with such emphatic vindication of his favourite wife, Mahomet dropped the grudge, and sought now rather to conciliate her calumniators. Safwân (the hero of the misadventure), smarting from the imputations veiled under the satires of the poet Hassân, drew his sword upon him and inflicted a deep wound. Hassân and his friends seized and bound Safwân, and carried him before Mahomet. The Prophet first rebuked Hassân for troubling the Citizens with his lampoons; and then, having composed the difference, more than compensated the Poet for his wound and the disgrace of the stripes, by conferring on him a valuable estate and mansion in the vicinity of Medina. He also commanded Abu Bekr not to withdraw from Mistah, his indigent relative, the support he had hitherto given him.¹

Hassân
reconciles
Ayesha by
an ode

Ayesha resumed her place, more secure than ever as the queen of the Prophet's heart and home. Hassân, changing his muse, sang in glowing verse of her purity, elegance, and wit, and (what she piqued herself the most upon) her slender, graceful figure.² The flattering compliment reconciled her to the Poet; but she never forgave Aly for his doubting.

Guilt or
innocence
of Ayesha

Little remark is needed regarding the character of Ayesha, and the revelation to which it gave occasion. The reason assigned for her innocence and the punishment of her slanderers, namely, the absence of four witnesses, is inconclusive; but her life both before and after must lead us to believe her innocent of the charge. It might have been necessary that Mahomet should caution his followers, and even punish them, for lightly or maliciously damaging a reputation

¹ This was not thought too small a matter for a special injunction; see Sura xxiv. 23. Of Hassân, we learn that, though by far the first poet in Medina, his character was not such as to inspire respect. He was foul-mouthed and cowardly, and never went into battle. Combing his hair over his forehead and eyes, and dyeing his moustache a bright red while the rest of his hair was black, he affected often the wild appearance of a wolf.

² When he came to the passage referring to her *slimness*, she archly interrupted him by a piece of raillery at his own corpulence.

hitherto untarnished ; but to prohibit, on pain of stripes, all comment on suspicious morality unless attested by four witnesses, is to cast a veil over conduct which the interests of society might imperatively require to be canvassed and held up to reprobation. The direct evidence of four eye-witnesses is still needed to prove the charge of adultery, so that the draconic penalty of stoning is practically inoperative.¹ But the law itself is a fair example of the way in which the Code of Islam grew out of the circumstances of the day, concrete rather than based on abstract considerations.

Law of slander established by Mahomet

Although admitting so decisively the innocence of Ayesha, Mahomet did not deem the character of his wives above the necessity of caution, and the threat of a double punishment if they erred. They were not as other women ; far more than others they were bound to abstain from every word and action that might encourage those ‘ whose hearts are diseased.’ The passage enjoining this is too curious to be curtailed, even at the risk of the reader’s patience.

Mahomet cautions his wives against immodesty

O Prophet, say unto thy Wives,—*If ye seek after this present Life and the fashion thereof, come, I will make provision for you and dismiss you with a fair dismissal.* But if ye seek after God and His Apostle, and the Life to come, then verily God hath prepared for the excellent amongst you a great reward. O ye Wives of the Prophet ! if any amongst you should be guilty of incontinence, the punishment shall be doubled unto her twofold ; and that were easy with God. But she that amongst you devoteth herself to God and His Apostle, and worketh righteousness, We shall give unto her her reward twice told, and We have prepared for her a gracious maintenance.

Sura xxxiii

O ye Wives of the Prophet ! Ye are not as other women. If ye fear the Lord, be not bland in your speech, lest he indulge desire in whose heart is disease. Yet speak the speech that is suitable. And abide within your houses ; and array not yourselves as ye used to do in the bygone days of Ignorance. And observe the times of Prayer ; and give Alms : and obey God and His Apostle. Verily the Lord desireth only to purge away from you impurity, ye that are of (his) household, and to purify you wholly. And keep in memory that which is recited in your houses, of the Word of God, and Wisdom : for God pierceth that which is hidden, and is acquainted with all things.

¹ *Vide* p. 292, note 2. It is true that an exception is made in favour of the husband whose oath five times repeated may be substituted, as above noted (page 293, note 1).

CHAPTER XVII

SIEGE OF MEDINA, AND MASSACRE OF THE BENI COREITZA

Dzul Cada, A.H. 7.—February, March, A.D. 627

Stirring
scenes open
upon
Mahomet

WHILE Mahomet thus busied himself with the cares of his increasing harem, and, by messages addressed from heaven, enjoined upon its inmates virtue and propriety of life, more stirring scenes awaited him. A storm was gathering in the south.

Coreish,
joined by
Bedouin
tribes,
march
against
Medina

The winter season was again come round at which it had become the wont of the Coreish to arm themselves against Medina. Their preparations now exceeded those of any previous year. Huwey, and other exiled Jewish chiefs, undertook to rouse the Bedouin tribes bound by alliance or sympathy in the same cause. Among these were several clans of the Ghatafân family, between whom and Mahomet there had already been some warlike passages. The Ashja and Murra each brought 400 warriors; and the Fezâra a large force, with 1,000 camels, under Oyeina; the Suleim, who had been concerned in the massacre at Mauna, joined the army on the way, with 700 men. The Beni Sad and Asad also swelled the force, the latter still smarting from the attack made on them by Mahomet about two years before. The Coreish themselves brought into the field 4,000 soldiers, including 300 horse, and 1,500 riders upon camels. The banner was mounted in the hall of Council and delivered to Othman, son of Talha the standard-bearer killed at Ohod. The entire force was estimated at 10,000 men. They marched in three separate camps; all were under the general leadership of Abu Sofian, but, when the time for action came, the several chiefs each for a day commanded in succession.

Mahomet was apprised of the danger by a friendly message from the Khozâa, but barely in time to prepare. Alarm

overspread Medina. The defeat at Ohod by numbers much inferior put it out of the question to offer battle; and the only anxiety now was how successfully to defend the city. By advice of Salmân 'the Persian'—who, taken captive in Mesopotamia, was familiar with warlike tactics practised there—it was resolved to entrench Medina, a stratagem as yet unknown to the Arabs.¹ The outer line of houses was built together so compactly that, for a considerable length, they presented a high stone wall, of itself a solid defence against the enemy. But it was necessary to connect this barrier on one hand with the rocks which on the north-west approach the city,² and on the other to carry it round the open and unsheltered quarter on the south and east. The work, consisting of a deep ditch and rude earthen dyke, was portioned out amongst the various clans. Shovels, pick-axes, and baskets were borrowed from the Beni Coreitza. Mahomet stimulated the enthusiasm of his followers by himself carrying basket-loads of the excavated earth, and joining in their song, as at the building of the Mosque:—

O Lord! there is no happiness but that of Futurity.

O Lord! have mercy on the Citizens and the Refugees!

He also frequently repeated the following verses, covered as he was, like the rest, with earth and dust:—

O Lord! without Thee, we had not been guided!

We should neither have given alms, nor yet have prayed!

Send down upon us tranquillity, and in battle stablish our steps!

For they have risen up against us, and sought to pervert us, but we refused!—Yea, WE REFUSED.

And as he repeated the last two words, he raised his voice high and loud.

In six days the trench was dug, deep and wide through-

¹ He is said to have been a Christian captive of Mesopotamia, bought by a Jew from the Beni Kalb, and ransomed on his profession of Islam. This is the first occasion on which he comes to notice.

² The fortress or castle of Medina is now built on this 'out-cropping mass of rock.'—*Burton*. Burckhardt calls it a small rocky elevation. Speaking of the great mountain chain, he also says: 'The last undulations of these mountains touch the town on the north side.' This is apparently what, in tradition, is called *Sila*, though Burckhardt gives that name, 'Jebel Sila,' to the *Monâkh* (or encamping ground) lying immediately to the south. I gather that the part of modern Medina immediately to the east of the fort was in ancient times open and unbuilt upon.

Mahomet
defends
Medina by
a trench.
A.H. V.
February,
A.D. 627

Army of
Medina
posted
within
trench.
A.H. V.
March 2,
A.D. 626

out almost the whole length of the defence; and well-sized stones were piled along its inner bank to be used against the enemy. The dwellings outside the town were evacuated, and the women and children bidden to stay at the top of the double-storied houses within the entrenchment. These things were barely done when the enemy was reported to be advancing, as before, by the hill of Ohod. The army of Medina, 3,000 strong, marched out at once into the open space between the city and the trench. It commanded the road leading to Ohod, its rear resting upon the north-eastern quarter of the city and the eminence of Sila. The northern face was the most vulnerable point, the approaches from the east being covered by walls and palm enclosures. A tent of red leather was pitched for Mahomet on the ground, in which Ayesha, Omm Salma, and Zeinab visited him by turns.

Coreish
encamp
opposite
them,

The Coreish, with their Bedouin hordes, and multitudes of camels and horses, encamped at first upon their old ground, under the hill of Ohod. Then, finding the country deserted, they swept rapidly round by the scene of their former victory, and, still advancing unopposed, were brought to a stand by the trench. Closely guarded all along by pickets on the city side, it formed a barrier which they could not pass. They were astonished and disconcerted at the new tactics of Mahomet. Unable to come to close quarters, they pitched their camps on the plain beyond, and contented themselves for some time with a distant discharge of archery.

And de-
tach Beni
Coreitza
from allegi-
ance to
Mahomet

Meanwhile, Abu Sofian succeeded in detaching the Beni Coreitza, now the only remaining Jewish tribe, from their allegiance to Mahomet. Huwey, the exiled Jew and ally of the Coreish, sent by him to their fortress, was at first refused admittance. But, persevering in his solicitations, dwelling upon the ill-concealed enmity of Mahomet towards the Jews at large, and representing the overwhelming numbers of the confederate army as 'a surging sea,' he at last persuaded Kab their chief to relent. It was agreed that the Coreitza would assist the Coreish, and that Huwey should retire into their fortress in case the allies marched back without inflicting a fatal blow upon Medina. Rumours of this defection reaching Mahomet, he sent the two Sads, chiefs of the Aus and Khazraj, to ascertain the truth; and strictly charged them, if the result should prove unfavourable, to divulge it to none other but

himself. They found the Coreitza in a sullen mood. 'Who is Mahomet,' said they, 'and who is the Apostle of God, that we should obey him? There is no bond or compact betwixt us and him.' After high words and threats, the messengers took their leave, and reported to Mahomet that the temper of the Jews was worse even than he had feared.¹

The news alarmed Mahomet and disturbed the city. The Jews, whom the previous treatment of their brethren might now drive to desperate measures, had still a powerful party in their favour; and the defences, moreover, were weakest on that side. Disaffection lurked everywhere, and some began even to talk of deserting to the enemy. To protect the town in the quarter most exposed, and guard against surprise

Danger to Medina from this defection, and measures for its safety

¹ It is not easy to say exactly what compact did at this time exist between Mahomet and the Coreitza, and what part the Coreitza actually took in assisting the Allies. The evidence is altogether *ex parte*, and naturally adverse to the Coreitza. The Coran, our surest guide, says simply that they 'assisted' the Allies; and the best traditions confine themselves to this general expression. Had they entered on active hostilities, no doubt it would have been more distinctly specified in the Coran. On the other hand, a tradition from Ayesha states that, when the Allies broke up, the Coreitza 'returned' to their fort; and some traditions, though not of much weight, speak of them as part of the besieging force *before Medina*. There is also a weak tradition that Hodzeifa, sent by Mahomet as a spy to the enemy's camp, overheard Abu Sofian telling his comrades the good news that the Coreitza had agreed to join him, *after ten days' preparation*, provided he sent seventy warriors to hold their fortresses while they were absent in the field; and that Hodzeifa's report was the first intelligence Mahomet had of the defection.

On the whole, my impression is that the Coreitza entered into some kind of league with the Jewish exile Huwey, making common cause with him, and promising to take part in following up any success on the part of the Coreish—a promise which they were in the best position to fulfil—their fortress being, though at some distance from the city, on its undefended side. But, before opportunity offered, they saw the likelihood of the siege failing, and then distrust of the Coreish broke out, and so their promise never was fulfilled. The compact existing betwixt them and Mahomet is described by Wakidy as a '*slight*' one. Al Jowhari says that this term means a treaty entered into without forecast or design, or 'infirm.' '*Fœdus vel pactum forte initum, vel haud firmum.*'

Sprenger notes these alternatives;—*First*, that, as at Ohod, the Coreitza were forbidden by Mahomet to take part with him in the fight; *second*, that of their own free-will they remained neutral. He decides in favour of the first;—that they resisted the temptation and remained faithful, and that even the Jews of Kheibar kept aloof from the Coreish for fear of compromising their brethren at Medina.

The question is important as bearing on the sentence executed against the Coreitza after the Coreish retired.

or treachery, Mahomet was obliged to detach from his force, already barely adequate to man the trench, two parties under Zeid and a Citizen respectively, which night and day patrolled the streets. A strong guard was also posted over the Prophet's tent.

Attack on
trench
repulsed

The vigilance of the Moslem pickets kept at bay the Confederate host, who proclaimed the trench to be an unworthy subterfuge. 'Truly this ditch,' they cried in their chagrin, 'is the artifice of strangers, a shift to which no Arab yet has ever stooped.' But it was, nevertheless, the safety of Medina. The Confederate host resolved if possible to storm the trench, and, having discovered a narrow and ill-guarded part, a general attack was made upon it. Spurring their horses, a few of them, led by Ikrima son of Abu Jahl, cleared the ditch, and galloped vauntingly before the Moslem line. No sooner was this perceived, than Aly with a guard of picked men moved out against them. These, by a rapid manœuvre, gained the rear of Ikrima, and, occupying the narrow point which he had crossed, cut off his retreat. At this moment Amr, an aged chief in the train of Ikrima, challenged his adversaries to single combat. Aly forthwith accepted the challenge, and the two stood man to man in the open plain. Amr, dismounting, maimed his horse, in token of his resolve to conquer or to die. They closed, and for a short time were hidden in a cloud of dust. But it was not long before the loud *Takbir*, 'Great is the Lord!' from Aly's lips, made known that he was the victor.¹ The rest, taking advantage of the diversion, again spurred their horses across the trench, and escaped, all excepting Nowfal, who, failing in the leap, was despatched by Zobeir.

General
attack
successfully
repelled

Nothing further was attempted that day. But great preparations were made during the night; and next morning, Mahomet found the whole allied forces drawn out against him. It required unceasing vigilance to frustrate their manœuvres. Now they would threaten a general assault; now breaking up into divisions they would attack various posts in rapid and distracting succession; and at last, watching their opportunity, they would mass their troops together on the least protected point, and, under

¹ The Coreish, it is said, offered a great sum for the body; but Mahomet returned the 'worthless carcase' (as he termed it) free.

cover of galling archery, attempt to force the trench. Once and again a gallant dash was made at the city by such leaders of renown as Khalid and Amru, and the tent of Mahomet himself was at one moment in peril; but the brave Moslem front, and showers of arrows, drove the assailants back. This continued throughout the day; and, as the army of Mahomet was but just sufficient to guard the line, there could be no relief. Even at night Khalid's troop kept up the alarm, and rendered outposts at frequent intervals necessary. But the endeavours of the enemy were all without effect. The trench was never crossed in force; and during the whole affair Mahomet lost only five men. Sad ibn Muádh, chief of the Beni Aus, was wounded severely by an arrow in the shoulder; the archer crying aloud:—'There, take that from the son of Arca.' Whereupon Mahomet exclaimed, with a bitter play upon the name: '*Arrack!* the Lord cause thy face to sweat in hell fire!' The Confederates had but three men killed.

No prayers had been said that day: the duty at the trench was too heavy and incessant. When it was dark, therefore, and the greater part of the enemy had retired, the Moslem troops assembled, and a separate service was held for each omitted prayer. On this occasion Mahomet cursed the allied army thus:—'They have kept us from our daily prayers: God fill their bellies and their graves with fire!'

Prayers repeated in the evening for those omitted during day

Though the loss of life had been trifling, yet the army of Medina was harassed and wearied with unceasing watch and duty night and day. They were, moreover, dispirited by finding themselves hemmed in, and seeing no prospect of the siege being raised. Mahomet himself was in constant alarm lest the trench should be forced, or his rear be threatened by the Jews or disaffected Citizens. Many followers, whose possessions lay outside the city, afraid lest they should be plundered, begged leave to go and protect them. Mahomet was to outward look weak and helpless. 'Where,' it was asked, 'were now the Prophet's hopes, and where his promises of Heaven's assistance?' It was a day of rebuke, when (as we read in the vivid language of the Coran) '*the enemy came upon them from above and from beneath, and the sight became confused; and hearts reached to the throat; and the people imagined of God strange imaginations; for there*

Distress at Medina.

Sura xxxiii

Secret
negotiation
to buy off
Beni Gha-
tafân

were the Faithful tried, and made to tremble violently.' In this state of alarm, when the siege had now lasted ten or twelve days, Mahomet bethought him of buying off the Bedouins as the least hostile portion of his foe. He sent therefore to Oyeina chief of the Fezâra, and sounded him as to whether he would engage to withdraw the Ghatafân tribes, on condition of receiving one third of the produce of the date-trees of Medina. Oyeina signified his readiness, if one half were guaranteed. But Mahomet had over-estimated his authority. On sending for the two Sads, as representatives of the Beni Aus and Khazraj, they spurned the compromise ; but, still maintaining their subordination to the Prophet, added : ' If thou hast received a command from heaven for this, then do thou act according to the same.' ' Nay,' said Mahomet, ' if I had received a bidding from the Lord, I had not consulted you ; I but ask your advice as to that thing which is the most expedient.' ' Then,' said the chiefs, ' our counsel is to give nothing unto them but the Sword.' And so the project dropped.

Mutual
distrust
sown
between
Coreish
and Jews
by emissary
from Ma-
homet

Another and more artful device was now tried. There was a man of the allied army, who possessed the ear of both sides—the same Nueim who had been employed by the Coreish in the previous year to prevent Mahomet from advancing upon Bedr, by exaggerated accounts of the preparations at Mecca. He is here represented as an exemplary believer, but secretly for fear of his tribe. His services now offered were gladly accepted. ' See now,' said Mahomet to him, ' whether thou canst not break up this confederacy : for War after all is but a game of deception.' Nueim went first to the Coreitza and, representing himself as their friend, artfully insinuated that the interests of the allied army were diverse from theirs ; before they compromised themselves irretrievably by joining in the renewed attack on Medina, they ought to demand from the Coreish hostages, as a guarantee against being in the last resort deserted and left in the power of Mahomet.¹ Suspecting no harm, they agreed to act on his advice. Next he went

¹ The tenor of Nueim's advice, as given uniformly by tradition, is opposed to the supposition that the Coreitza had as yet joined in active hostilities against Mahomet, or committed any such overt act as would have prevented them rejoining his cause. Sprenger says that, at this stage, Huwey made a last attempt to persuade the Coreitza to fall upon the rear of the Moslems at the time of a general attack, but did not succeed.

to the allied chiefs and cautioned them against the Jews : ' I have heard,' said he, ' that the Coreitza intend asking for hostages ; beware how ye give them, for they have already repented of their compact with you, and promised Mahomet to give him up the hostages to be slain, and then join in the battle against you.' The insidious plot immediately took effect. When the Coreish sent to demand of the Coreitza the fulfilment of their engagement to join in a general attack on the following day, they pleaded their Sabbath as a pretext against fighting on the morrow, and their fear of being deserted as a ground for demanding hostages. The Allies, regarding this as a confirmation of Nueim's intelligence, were so fully persuaded of the treachery of the Coreitza that they began even to fear an attack upon themselves from that quarter.

The Confederate chiefs were already disheartened. After the first two days of vigorous fighting, they had not again attempted any general assault.¹ The hopes entertained from another engagement, during which the Coreitza were to have fallen upon the city in the rear of Mahomet, were now changed into the fear of hostilities from the Coreitza themselves. Forage was obtained with the utmost difficulty ; provisions were running short, and the camels and horses dying daily in great numbers. Wearied and damped in spirit, the night set in upon them cold and tempestuous. Wind and rain beat mercilessly on the unprotected camp. The storm rose to a hurricane. Fires were extinguished, tents blown down, cooking vessels and other equipage overturned. Cold and comfortless, Abu Sofian suddenly resolved on an immediate march. Hastily summoning the chiefs, he made known his decision : ' Break up the camp,' he said, ' and march ; as for myself, I am gone.' With these words he leaped on his camel (so great, we are told, was his impatience) while its fore leg was yet untied, and led the way. Khalid with 200 horse brought up the rear, as a guard against pursuit. The Coreish took the road by Ohod for Mecca, and the Beni Ghatafân retired to their desert haunts. The grateful intelligence soon reached Mahomet, who had sent a follower in the dark to spy out the enemy's move-

A tempest :
Abu Sofian
orders
allied force
to break up

Enemy re-
tires

¹ Perhaps the system by which the chiefs commanded each on successive days may have paralysed their energies.

Mahomet
attributes
relief to
divine in-
terposition

ments. In the morning not one of them was left in sight. This happy issue was an answer, the Prophet said, to the earnest prayer he had for some days been offering up: '*O Lord! Revealer of the Book, thou that art swift in taking account! turn to flight the confederate Host! Turn them to flight, O Lord, and make them to quake!*' The Lord, in answer, had sent the tempestuous wind, he said; the armies of heaven had been fighting for them; terror had been struck into the heart of the enemy. And now they were gone.

Moslem
army
breaks up

The army of Medina, thus unexpectedly relieved, joyfully broke up their camp, in which they had been besieged now for fifteen days, and returned to their homes. Mahomet had no thoughts of a pursuit: it would have been affording the Coreish that which perhaps they still desired—an action in the open country. His thought was of a surer and more important blow nearer home.

But imme-
diately
re-formed
to chastise
Beni
Coreitza

He was still cleansing himself from the dust of the field, when suddenly Gabriel brought him command to proceed against the Jews. 'What!' said the heavenly visitant, reproaching him, 'hast thou laid aside thine armour, while as yet the Angels have not laid theirs aside! Arise! go up against the Coreitza. Behold I go before thee to shake the foundations of their stronghold.'¹ Instantly Bilâl made proclamation throughout the town;—immediate march was ordered; all were to be present at evening prayer in the camp pitched before the fortress, two or three miles south-east of Medina. The great banner, standing yet unfurled in the Mosque, was placed in the hands of Aly. Mahomet mounted his ass, and the army (as before 3,000 strong, with 36 horse) followed. The fortress was at once invested, and a discharge of archery kept up steadily, but without effect. One man, approaching incautiously near, was killed by a Jewess casting down a millstone from the walls. The im-

Siege of
Coreitza
fortress.
A.H. V.
March,
A.D. 626

¹ Tradition abounds with stories of Gabriel on this occasion. He was seen to go before the Mussulman army in the appearance of Dihya the Kalbite, who 'resembled Gabriel in his beard and face.' Again, Mahomet desired to postpone the campaign a few days as his people were fatigued; but Gabriel would not admit of a moment's delay, and galloped off with his troop of angels, raising a great dust. Gabriel's dress is particularised: he rode on a mule with a silken saddle, a silken turban, &c. Mahomet had washed the right cheek and was beginning to wash the left, when Gabriel appeared and gave him the order to march to the siege of the Coreitza; so, leaving thus his face half washed, he obeyed at once!

provident Jews, whom the fate of their brethren should have taught to better purpose, had not calculated on the chances and necessities of a siege. Soon reduced to great distress, they sought to capitulate on condition of quitting the neighbourhood even empty-handed. But Mahomet, having no longer other Jewish neighbours to alarm or alienate, was bent on severer measures, and refused. In this extremity, the Coreitza appealed to their ancient friendship with the Beni Aus, and the services rendered to them in by-gone days. They begged that Abu Lubába, an ally belonging to that tribe, might be allowed to visit them. He came, and, overcome by the wailing of the children and the cries of the women, had no heart to speak; but, symbolically drawing his hand across his throat, intimated that they must fight to the last, as death was all they had to hope for. On retiring, he felt that he had been too plain and honest in his advice; for 'War,' as the Prophet had said, 'was a game of deception.' Therefore he went to Mahomet, and, confessing his guilt, said: 'I repent; for verily I have dealt treacherously with the Lord, and with his Prophet.' Mahomet vouchsafed no reply; and Abu Lubába, the more strongly to mark his contrition, went straightway to the Mosque and bound himself to one of its posts. In this position he remained for several days, till at last Mahomet relented, and sent to pardon and release him. The 'Pillar of repentance' is still pointed out to the pious pilgrim.

Abu Lubába visits Beni Coreitza

At last the wretched Jews, brought now to the last verge of starvation, offered to surrender, on condition that their fate should be decided by their allies the Beni Aus. To this Mahomet agreed; and, after a siege of two or three weeks, the whole tribe, men, women, and children, over 2,000 souls, came forth from their stronghold. The men, handcuffed behind their backs, were kept apart, under Mohammed, the assassin of Kab. The women and children, torn from their protectors, were placed under charge of a renegade Jew. As they passed before the conqueror, his eye marked the lovely features of Rihána, and he destined her for himself. The spoil, consisting of household stuff, clothes and armour,¹ camels and flocks, were all brought forth to await the arbiter's

They surrender at the discretion of the Beni Aus

¹ There were 1,500 swords, 1,000 lances, 500 shields, and 300 coats of mail.

award. The store of wine and fermented liquors was poured forth, as now forbidden to Believers.

Sad ibn
Muâdh
appointed
arbiter of
their fate

The Beni Aus, with whom the judgment lay, were urgent with the Prophet that their ancient allies should be spared. 'These are *our* confederates,' they cried importunately; 'show them at least the same pity as, at the suit of the Beni Khazraj, thou didst show to *their* allies the Beni Nâdhîr.' 'Are ye then content,' replied Mahomet, 'that they be judged by one of yourselves?' They answered, 'Yes,' and Mahomet forthwith nominated Sad ibn Muâdh to be the judge.

Bloody
judgment
of Sad

Sad still suffered from the injury inflicted by the arrow at the trench. From the field of battle he had been carried to a tent pitched by Mahomet in the court-yard of the Mosque, where the sick were waited on by Rufeida, an experienced nurse. His wound had begun apparently to heal. But the sense of the injury still rankled in his heart; and Mahomet, no doubt, knew the bitter hate into which his former friendship had been turned by the treachery of the Coreitza.¹ He was now summoned. Large and corpulent, he was mounted with some difficulty on a well-padded ass, and, amidst appeals for mercy from his tribesmen crowding round him, was conducted to the camp. He answered not a word till he approached the scene, and then replied: 'Verily, to Sad hath this grace been given, that he careth not, in the cause of God, for any blame the Blamers may cast upon him.' As he drew near, Mahomet called aloud to those around him: 'Stand up to meet your Master, and assist him to alight.'² Then he commanded that Sad should pronounce his judgment. It was a scene well worthy the pencil of a painter. In the background, the army of Medina watch with deep interest this show of justice, regarding eagerly the booty, the household stuff and armour, the camels and flocks, the date-groves, and the deserted town, all, by the expected decree of confiscation, about to become their own. On the right, with hands

¹ On his being wounded, Sad is said to have cursed the Coreitza and prayed: 'O Lord! suffer me not to die until my heart hath had its revenge against them.'

² The Refugees held with much pertinacity that this order was only addressed to the Citizens of Medina, as Sad was their chief. The Citizens, on the contrary, regarded the words as addressed to all then present, including the Refugees, and as significant of the honourable and commanding post of judge, assigned to Sad.

pinioned behind their backs, are the captive men, seven or eight hundred in number, dejection and despair at the ominous rigour of their treatment stamped upon their faces. On the left, are the women and the little children, pale with terror, or frantic with grief and alarm for themselves and for their husbands and fathers, from whom they have been just now so rudely dragged. In front is Mahomet, with his chief Companions by his side, and a crowd of followers thronging behind. Before him stands Sad, supported by his friends, weak and jaded with the journey, yet distinguished above all around by his portly and commanding figure. 'Proceed with thy judgment!' repeated the Prophet. Sad turned himself to his people, who were still urging mercy upon him, and said: 'Will ye, then, bind yourselves by the covenant of God that whatsoever I shall decide, ye will accept?' There was a murmur of assent. 'Then,' proceeded Sad, '*my judgment is that the men shall be put to death, the women and children sold into slavery, and the spoil divided amongst the army.*' Many a heart quailed, besides the hearts of the wretched prisoners, at this bloody decree. But all questionings were forthwith stopped by Mahomet, who sternly adopted the verdict as his own, nay, declared it to be the solemn judgment of the Almighty. 'Truly,' he said, '*the judgment of Sad is the judgment of God pronounced on high from beyond the seventh heaven.*'

No sooner was the sentence passed and ratified than the camp broke up, and the people wended their way back to Medina. The captives, still under charge of Mohammed, were dragged roughly along; one alone was treated with tenderness and care,—it was Rihâna the beautiful Jewess, set apart for Mahomet. The men were shut up in a yard, separate from the women and children; they were supplied with dates and spent in prayer the hours of darkness, repeating passages from their Scriptures and exhorting one another to faith and constancy. During the night trenches sufficient to contain the dead bodies of the men were dug across the market-place of the city. In the morning, Mahomet, himself a spectator of the tragedy, commanded the male captives to be brought forth in companies of five or six at a time. Each company as it came up was made to sit down in a row on the brink of the trench destined for its

Butchery
of the
Beni
Coreitza

grave, there beheaded, and the bodies cast therein. And so with company after company, till all were slain.¹ One woman alone was put to death; it was she who threw the millstone from the battlements. When she heard that her husband had been slain, she loudly avowed what she had done, and demanded of Mahomet that she might share her husband's fate;—a petition which, perhaps in more mercy than was meant, he granted; and she met her death with a cheerful countenance. This heroine's smile, as she stepped fearless to her death, Ayesha tells us, haunted her ever after. For Zoheir, an aged Jew, who had saved some of the Beni Aus in the battle of Boath, Thâbit interceded and procured a pardon, including the freedom of his family and restoration of his property. 'But what hath become of all our chiefs,—of Kab, of Huwey, of Ozzal the son of Samuel?' asked the old man. As one after another he named the leading chiefs of his tribe, he received the same reply;—they had all been put to death already. 'Then of what use is life to me any longer? Leave me not in the tyrant's power who hath slain all that are dear to me. Slay me also, I entreat thee, that I may join them in their home. Here, take my sword, it is sharp; strike high and hard.' Thâbit refused, and gave him over to another who, under Aly's orders, beheaded the aged man, but attended to his last request in obtaining freedom for his family. When told of his dying words, Mahomet answered: '*Yea, he shall join them in their home,—the fire of Hell!*'

Mahomet
takes the
captive
Rihâna for
his concu-
bine

The butchery, begun in the morning, lasted all day, and continued by torchlight till the evening. Having thus drenched the market-place with the blood of seven or eight hundred victims,² and having given command for the earth to be smoothed over their remains, Mahomet returned from the horrid spectacle to solace himself with the charms of

¹ As the messenger went to bring up each successive party, the miserable prisoners, not conceiving a wholesale butchery possible, asked what was about to be done with them. 'What! will ye never understand?' said the hard-hearted keeper; 'will ye always remain blind? See ye not that each company goeth and returneth not hither again? What is this but death?'

² The numbers are variously given as six hundred, seven hundred, eight hundred, and even nine hundred. If the number of arms enumerated among the spoil in a former note be correct, nine hundred would seem to be a moderate calculation for the adult males; but I have taken eight hundred as the number more commonly given.

Rihána, whose husband and all her male relatives had just perished in the massacre. He invited her to be his wife ; but she declined, and chose to remain (as indeed, having refused marriage, she had no alternative) his slave or concubine.¹ She also declined the summons to conversion, and continued in the Jewish faith, at which the Prophet was much concerned. It is said, however, that she afterwards embraced Islam. She did not many years survive her unhappy fate.

The booty was divided into four classes—lands, chattels, cattle, and slaves ; and Mahomet took a fifth of each. There were (besides the little children who counted with their mothers) a thousand captives ; from his share of these, Mahomet made certain presents to his friends of slave girls and female servants. The rest of the women and children he sent to be sold among the Bedouin tribes of Nejd, in exchange for horses and arms in the service of the State ; for he kept steadily in view the advantage of raising a body of efficient cavalry. The remaining property was divided amongst the 3,000 soldiers of Medina, to the highest bidders among whom the women were also sold.²

The women and children sold as slaves in Nejd

We are told that three or four men of the doomed tribe saved their lives, their families, and property by embracing Islam, probably before the siege began. No doubt the whole tribe might have, on the same terms, bought their safety. But they remained firm, and may be counted as martyrs to their faith.

Notice of these events in Coran

¹ She is represented as saying, when he offered her marriage and the same privileges as his other wives : 'Nay, O Prophet ! But let me remain as thy slave ; this will be easier both for me and for thee.' By this is probably meant that she would have felt the strict seclusion as a married wife irksome to her. That she refused to abandon the faith of her fathers shows a more than usual independence of mind ; and there may have been scenes of sorrow and aversion in her poor widowed heart, which tradition is too one-sided to hand down, or which indeed tradition may have never known. She died A.H. 632, a year before Mahomet himself.

² Mohammed (Kab's assassin) said that, being mounted, his share was three females with their children, worth forty-five golden pieces ; the whole booty at the prize valuation would thus be 40,000 dinars. Mahomet sold a number of the State slaves to Othman and Abd al Ráhman, who made a good speculation therefrom. They divided them into old and young. Othman took the old, and found as he expected much money on their persons. Large sums were obtained from the Jews of Kheibar and other places for the ransom of such of the women and children as they were interested in.

The siege of Medina, and the massacre of the Beni Coreitza, are noticed, and the Disaffected bitterly reproached for their cowardice before the besieging army, in a passage revealed shortly after, and recited by Mahomet, as was customary, from the pulpit :—

Sura xxxiii

O ye that believe ! Call to mind the favour of God unto you, when Hosts came against you, and We sent upon them a tempest and Hosts which ye saw not ; and God beholdeth that which ye do ;—when they came at you from above you, and from beneath, and when the sight was confused, and the hearts reached to the throat, and ye imagined of God strange imaginations. There were the Faithful tried and made to tremble violently. And when the Disaffected said, and they in whose hearts is a disease said, *God and His Prophet have promised only a delusion :—*And when a Party amongst them said :—*O men of Yathreb there is no security for you, wherefore retire ;* and a part of them asked leave of the Prophet to depart, saying, *Our houses are without protection ;* and they were not without protection, but they desired only to escape :—And if an entrance had been effected amongst them (by the enemy) from some adjacent quarter, and they had been invited to desert, they had surely consented thereto ; then they had not remained in the same, but for a little. And verily they had heretofore covenanted with God, that they would not turn their backs. Say,—Flight will not profit you, were ye to flee from death and slaughter ; and if ye did, ye would enjoy this life but for a little . . . Verily God knoweth those amongst you that turn others aside, and such as say to their brethren,—*Come hither to us ;* and they go not to the battle excepting for a little. Covetous are they towards you. But when fear cometh, thou mayest see them looking towards thee, their eyes rolling, like unto one that is overshadowed with death. Then, when the fear hath gone, they attack thee with sharp tongues, covetous of the choicest of the spoil. They thought that the Confederates ¹ would not depart. And if the Confederates should come (again), they would wish themselves away amongst the Bedouins, asking tidings of you. And if they were amongst you, they would not fight, excepting a little . . . And when the Believers saw the Confederates, they said,—*This is what God and His Apostle promised us, and God and His Apostle have spoken the Truth.* And it only increased their faith and submission . . . Verily God is forgiving and merciful. And God drave back the heathen in their rage. They obtained no advantage. And God sufficeth for the Believers in battle. He is strong and mighty.

¹ The Coreish and their allies.

And He hath caused to descend from their strongholds the Jews that assisted them. And he struck terror into their hearts. A part ye slaughtered, and a part ye took into captivity. And He hath made you to inherit their land, and their habitations, and their wealth, and a land which ye had not trodden upon ; and God is over all things powerful.

In reviewing these transactions, it is evident that the position of Mahomet was now greatly improved in strength and influence. The whole weight of the Coreish and of the Bedouin tribes, with all their mighty preparations, had been successfully repelled, and that with hardly any loss. The entire defence of Medina, by tacit consent, had been conducted by Mahomet as its Chief ; and notwithstanding the ill-concealed disaffection of some of the inhabitants, he was now the acknowledged Ruler, as well as Prophet, of the city. The negotiation with Oyeina was, no doubt, a proof of weakness at the moment, and distrust in his own cause ; but, fortunately for him, it was hardly entered upon when, by the firmness of the two Sads, it was broken off ; and the episode was lost sight of afterwards in the signal success of the defence.

Mahomet's
position
greatly
improved

The fate of the Coreitza removed the last remnant of open opposition, political or religious, from the immediate neighbourhood of Medina ; and though the bloody deed did not at the time escape hostile criticism, yet it struck so great a terror into the hearts of all, and the authority of the Prophet was already invested with so mysterious and supernatural a sanction, that no one dared openly impugn it. The ostensible grounds upon which he proceeded were political, for as yet he did not profess to *force* men to join Islam, or to punish them for not embracing it. It may be admitted that a sufficient *casus belli* had arisen. The compact with the Coreitza indeed was weak and precarious. Mahomet's policy towards the Jews, from a period shortly after his arrival at Medina, had been severe and oppressive ; he had attacked and expatriated the other two tribes on very doubtful grounds ; he had caused the assassination of several Jews in such a manner as to create universal distrust and alarm ; after the murder of Kab and the incautious permission at the moment given to slaughter the Jews indiscriminately, he

Effect of
massacre
of the
Coreitza on
Mahomet's
position

himself felt that the existing treaty had been practically set aside, and, to restore confidence, he had entered into a new compact.¹ All these circumstances must plead against the strength of obligation which bound the Coreitza to his cause. They had, moreover, stood by the second contract at a time when they might fairly have set it aside and joined the Beni Nadhîr. That they now hearkened to the overtures of the Coreish, though a singular want of prudence and foresight, was no more than Mahomet might have expected. Still the Coreitza had joined his enemies at a critical period, and he had now a sufficient cause for warring against them. He had, furthermore, fair grounds of political necessity for requiring them perhaps to quit altogether a vicinity where they must have continued a dangerous nucleus of disaffection, and possibly an encouragement for renewed attack. We might even concede that the conduct of their leaders amounted to treason against the city, and warranted a severe retribution. But the indiscriminate slaughter of eight hundred men, and the subjugation of the women and children of the whole tribe to slavery, cannot be recognised otherwise than as an act of monstrous cruelty. The plea of divine ratification or command may allay the scruples of the Moslem; but it will be summarily rejected by those who call to mind that the same authority was now habitually produced for personal ends, and for the justification even of questionable actions. In short, the butchery of the Coreitza casts an indelible blot upon the life of Mahomet.

Death-bed
of Sad ibn
Muâdh

Before closing this chapter, I will follow to its end the career of Sad ibn Muâdh. After delivering himself of the bloody decree, he was conducted back upon his ass to Rufeida's tent. But the excitement was fatal to him; the wound burst forth anew. Mahomet hastened to the side of his bed: embracing him, he placed the dying man's head upon his knee and prayed thus: '*O Lord! Verily Sad hath laboured in thy service. He hath believed in thy Prophet, and hath fulfilled his covenant. Wherefore do thou, O Lord, receive his spirit with the best reception wherewith thou receivest a departing soul!*' Sad heard the words, and in faltering accents whispered: 'Peace be on thee, O Apostle of God!—Verily I testify that thou art the Prophet of the Lord.' When he

¹ See p. 242.

had breathed his last, they carried to his home the corpse.¹ After the forenoon prayer, Mahomet proceeded to join the burial. He reached the house as they were washing the body. The mother of Sad, weeping loudly, gave vent to her grief in plaintive Arab verse. They chided her for reciting poetry on such an occasion; but Mahomet interposed, saying: 'Leave her thus alone; all other poets lie but she.' The bier was then carried forth, and Mahomet helped to bear it for the first thirty or forty yards. Notwithstanding that Sad was so large and corpulent, the bier was reported to be marvellously light. The Disaffected said: 'We have never heard of a corpse lighter in the bier than that of Sad: know ye why this is? It is because of his judgment against the Beni Coreitza.'² Mahomet, hearing the rash remark, turned aside its point by a mysterious explanation which was eagerly caught up by his followers: 'The angels are carrying the bier,' he said, 'therefore it is light in your hands. Verily the throne on high doth vibrate for Sad, and the portals of heaven are opened, and he is attended by seventy thousand angels that never trod the earth before.' The long procession, with Mahomet at its head, wended its way slowly to the burial-ground.

His burial

¹ The tale of Sad is surrounded with supernatural associations. For instance, when Mahomet went to be present at the washing of the body, he walked so rapidly that the people could scarcely keep up with him; 'you would have thought the thongs of their sandals would have broken, and their mantles fallen from their shoulders, they hurried so fast.' When they asked why he hastened so, he replied: 'Verily, I feared lest the Angels should have reached the house before us, as they got before us unto Hantzala;'—alluding to the burial of the latter, and the supposed washing of his corpse by the angels (p. 256). Then there are numerous legends about the angels crowding into the room where the corpse was laid out, and one of them spreading out his wing for Mahomet to sit upon. These traditions have grown out of the reply of Mahomet to the Disaffected, viz. that the bier was light, *because supported by a crowd of Angels*.

² The death of Sad followed so immediately on his sanguinary judgment, that the Disaffected coupled the two together. To avert this inference, tradition tells us that Sad had prayed thus: 'O Lord! If thou hast in store any further fighting with the Coreish, then preserve me to take part in it: but if thou hast put an end to their warring against thy Prophet, then take me unto thyself!' which when he prayed, he was to all appearance well, the wound presenting only a cicatrised ring. But shortly after he was carried to the tent, and died. Although, in fact, there was hardly any more fighting with the Coreish after this date, yet the prayer is evidently an afterthought. For at the time it was quite uncertain whether Medina might not again be besieged by the Coreish, in proof of which see Sura xxxiii. 20.

When they reached the spot, four men descended into the grave, and lowered the body into its place. Just then Mahomet changed colour, and his countenance betrayed strong emotion. But he immediately recovered himself, and gave praise to God. Then he three times uttered the *Takbir*, 'Great is the Lord!' and the whole concourse, which filled the burial-ground to overflowing, took up the words, until the place re-echoed with the shout. Some of the people asked him concerning his change of colour, and he explained it thus:—'At that moment the grave became strait for your comrade, and the sides thereof closed in upon him. Verily, if any one could have escaped the straitening of the tomb it had been Sad. Then the Lord gave him expansion therein.' The mother of Sad drew near, desiring to look into the grave, and they forbade her. But Mahomet said: 'Suffer her to look.' So she looked in, before the body was covered over. As she gazed on the remains of her son, she said: 'I commit thee unto the Lord;' and Mahomet comforted her. Then he went aside and sat down near the grave, while they built it over with bricks, and filled in the earth. When the whole was levelled, and the tomb sprinkled with water, the Prophet again drew near, and, standing over the grave, prayed once more for the departed chief. Then he turned, and retired to his home.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE SEVENTEENTH AND PRECEDING CHAPTERS

SURAS REVEALED DURING THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF MAHOMET'S RESIDENCE AT MEDINA

WE have now reached a stage at which it may be useful once more to pause, review the Revelations given forth by Mahomet during the early years of the Hegira, and consider the points in which they illustrate his life and the principles of Islam.

Review of portions of Coran revealed at Medina

The people most prominently addressed in the first Medina Suras are the Jews. Like the closing Suras at Mecca, these abound in Jewish fable and legend, based upon the Old Testament and rabbinical tradition. The marvellous interpositions of the Almighty in behalf of His people of old are recounted with the object of stirring up the neighbouring Jewish tribes to gratitude, and of inciting them to publish unreservedly the evidence which their Scriptures contained in substantiation of his claims. They are appealed to in language such as this :—

Mahomet calls on Jews to bear evidence in his favour

Ye children of Israel! Remember my favour wherewith I have favoured you, and have preferred you above all the world. And fear the day whereon no soul shall at all make satisfaction for another soul; nor shall intercession be accepted therefrom: neither shall compensation be received from it,—and they shall not be helped. * * * O children of Israel! Fulfil my Covenant: so will I fulfil your Covenant. And believe in that (i.e. the Coran) which I reveal attesting the Revelation which is with you; and be not the first unbelievers therein; and sell not my signs for a small price: and let Me be your fear. And clothe not the Truth with falsehood; neither conceal the Truth while ye know it. Set ye up prayer, and give alms; and bow down (in prayer) with them that bow themselves down. What! will ye command men to do justice, and forget your own selves, while yet ye read the Scripture? What! do ye not understand?

Sura ii

But, excepting a few, the Jews, as we have seen, refused to acknowledge the Arabian prophet; he had none of the signs of

On their refusal he changes style of address to rebuke and reproach

the Messiah, who was to come of the seed of Jacob and David, and not from amongst a strange people the progeny of Ishmael. They did not object to enter into a treaty with him of amity and good neighbourhood, but they scorned to bow to his spiritual pretensions. Their refusal was set down to envy and malice. The Jews could not brook that the prophetic dignity should pass from themselves to another people; they well knew the prophecies regarding Islam; but they stifled their convictions, suppressed the plain declarations of their Scriptures, and perverted their meaning by 'dislocating' the context, or producing false glosses of the rabbins. Their hearts were hardened, and every avenue to conviction closed. It was in vain to seek for their conversion to Islam, for they had already shown themselves proof against the Word of God as revealed in the Old Testament. They were following in the steps of their stiff-necked forefathers who slew the prophets, departed from the true God, and sought out inventions of their own creation. As an example of such passages which abound at this period, take the following:—

Sura ii

And verily WE gave Moses the Scriptures, and WE made Apostles to follow after him; and WE gave JESUS son of Mary evident miracles, and WE strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. Wherefore is it that so often as an Apostle cometh unto you with that which ye desire not, ye are puffed up; and some ye reject as liars, and some ye put to death? * * * And when a Book (i.e. the Coran) cometh unto them from God, attesting that Scripture which is with them,—and truly they had aforetime been praying for assistance against the Unbelievers,¹—yet when there came unto them that which they recognized, they disbelieved the same. Wherefore the curse of God is on the Unbelievers. Evil is that for which they have sold themselves, to reject what God hath revealed, out of rebellion against God for sending down a portion of His favour upon such of His servants as He pleaseth.² Wherefore they have incurred wrath upon wrath; and for the Unbelievers there is prepared an ignominious punishment. And when it is said unto them, *Believe in that which is sent down*, they say, *We believe in that which God hath sent down to us*; and they disbelieve in that which came after it, although it be the Truth attesting that Scripture which is with them. Say,—Why, therefore, have ye killed the Prophets of God aforetime, if ye are Believers? And verily Moses came with evident Signs; then ye took the Calf thereupon, and became transgressors, &c.

Jews thus stirred up to hatred of Mahomet

This denunciation of the Jews' malice, unbelief, and perversion of the truth, naturally aroused their hatred. They no longer put faith in the assertion of Mahomet that he was come to 'attest their Scripture,' and re-establish the divine doctrines it contained.

¹ That is when oppressed by the Aus and Khazraj they used to pray for the coming of Messiah to vanquish them.

² I.e. envious at the gift of prophecy being shared by an Arab people.

The hope, once fondly cherished, that, through their holy Oracles which he professed to revere and follow, he would be guided towards the Truth, they now saw to be fallacious. Political inferiority, indeed, compelled them to disguise their hatred; but their real feelings transpired in various ways, and among others in expressions of double meaning, which greatly displeased and affronted Mahomet:—

Of the Jews there are that pervert words from their places, saying, *We have heard and disobeyed, and Hear without hearing,* and (RAINA) *Look upon us,* twisting their tongues and reviling the Faith.¹ But if they had said, *We have heard and obeyed, and Harken,* and (ANTZORNA) *Look upon us,* it had been better for them; but God hath cursed them for their Unbelief; wherefore they shall not believe, excepting a few. O ye to whom the Scripture hath been given, believe in what We have sent down, attesting that (i.e. the Old Testament) which is with you,—before We deface your countenances, turning the face backwards; or curse them as We cursed those that broke the Sabbath.

And two or three years later:—

O ye that believe! Take not as your friends those who make a laughing-stock and a sport of your Religion, from amongst the people of the former Scripture and the Infidels: and fear God, if ye be Believers. Say,—Ye people of the Book! Do ye keep aloof from us otherwise than because we believe in God, and in that which hath been sent down to us, and in that which hath been sent down before, and because the greater part of you are evil? Say,—Shall I announce unto you what is worse than that, as to the reward which is with God? He whom God hath cursed, and against whom He is wroth, and hath made of them Apes and Swine,² these, and the worshippers of Idols, are in an evil case. * * * Thou shalt see multitudes of them running greedily after wickedness and injustice, and eating what is forbidden. Alas for that which they work! Wherefore do their Rabbins and their Priests restrain them not from uttering wickedness, and eating that which is forbidden? Alas for that which they commit! The Jews say, *The hand of God is tied up.* Nay, their own hands are tied up, and they are cursed for what they say. But His hands are both stretched out. That which hath been revealed to thee from thy Lord shall but increase rebellion and impiety in many of them. We have cast among them enmity and hatred, until the day of Judgment. So often as they shall kindle the fire of war, God shall extinguish the same; and they shall set themselves to do wickedness in the Earth. And God loveth not the wicked doers.

In another passage the Jews are even accused of encouraging

¹ Terms of contumely in Hebrew, but so pronounced as to appear innocent in Arabic.

² Alluding to the legendary punishment inflicted on the Israelites who broke the Sabbath day, in turning their faces backwards, and making monkeys and swine of them.

Jews
accused of
encouraging
idolatry
at Mecca
Sura iv

the Coreish to continue in idolatry by representing that it was preferable to the doctrine of Mahomet :—

Hast thou not seen those to whom a portion of the Scripture hath been given? They believe in false gods and idols. They say to the Unbelievers,—*These are better directed in the right way than those that believe.* These are they whom God hath cursed; and for him that God curseth, thou shalt find no helper. Shall *they*, indeed, have any portion in the Kingdom, since, if they had, they would not part unto men with the least iota thereof? Do they envy men that which God hath given them of His bounty? And verily We gave unto the house of Abraham the Scripture, and Wisdom; and We gave them a great Kingdom. And there is amongst them such as believe in him (Mahomet); and there is that sturneth aside from him. But the raging fire of hell will suffice for such. Verily, they that reject our Signs, We will surely cast them into the fire. So often as their skins are burned, We will change for them other skins, that they may fully taste the torment. For God is mighty and wise. They that believe and do good works, We shall introduce them into gardens with rivers running beneath them; they shall abide therein for ever. And there shall they have pure Wives; and We shall lead them into grateful shades.

Removal of
Jews from
the scene

Eventually, as we have seen, Mahomet did not confine his communications with the Jewish tribes of Medina to simple threats of divine wrath, but himself inflicted condign punishment upon them, till by exile and slaughter they were all removed from the scene. Such was fast becoming the spirit of Islam. Judaism would not yield to its pretensions. And Mahomet, notwithstanding his respect for other creeds, the still reiterated assurance that 'he was only a public preacher,' and his guarantee that 'there should be no constraint in Religion,' could not brook the profession of any tenets opposed to his claims. The first step had now been taken for sweeping from the Peninsula every creed but that of the Coran.

Followed
by discon-
tinuance in
Coran of
Jewish
legends and
reference to
Scriptures

The disappearance of the Jews is followed by a corresponding change in the material of the Coran. The Revelations of Mahomet formed in no respect an abstract and systematic compilation. The Coran is purely concrete in its origin and progress. It grew up and formed itself, both as regards its dogmas and its social code, out of the circumstances and sentiments of the day. Hence, the necessity for referring to Jewish Scripture and history having passed away with the disappearance of the Jews themselves, we have no longer in the later Suras those allusions to the Old Testament and repetition of Biblical stories and legends which so teemed throughout the Oracle's middle stage. The few notices which hereafter occur bear as much upon the Christian as upon the Jewish record. Both are still spoken of, though with extreme

infrequency, yet with veneration and respect. And, as already stated, there is nowhere to be found throughout the Coran any imputation whatever against either the authority or the genuineness of the one or of the other. The occasion for their mention having died out, they pass into oblivion.

But Scriptures still referred to with reverence.

I have drawn attention to the Coran as a medium for the publication of what we might call *General orders*, such as passages which touch on victory or defeat, rebuke backwardness and cowardice, or applaud constancy and courage. But it was not merely in respect of military affairs, as the reader will have observed, that the Revelation contains comments and commands. Scattered throughout its Suras, we have, to some extent, the archives of a theocratic government in all its departments. The conduct of the Disaffected, the treatment of Allies, the formation of treaties, the acceptance of terms, and other political matters, not infrequently find a place among the heavenly messages. Liberality in contributing towards the expenses of war, the only object as yet requiring a public purse, is continually inculcated. The elements also of a code both civil and criminal are introduced. Punishments are specified, and legislation laid down for the tutelage of orphans, marriage, divorce, sales, bargains, wills, evidence, usury, and other similar concerns. Further, there are copious instructions for the guidance of the Believer in his private life; and special provisions, some of which I have quoted at length, regulating the intercourse of Mahomet with his people, and with his own family. These all partake of the essential character of the Coran, being in the form of a Revelation; and they ordinarily end with some such phrase as, 'God is knowing and wise'—'God is forgiving and merciful'—'Evil is the fate of the Transgressors,' &c., thus completing the rhythm, and investing the record with an inspired and oracular character. Throughout this, which may be styled the *administrative* portion of the Coran, are interspersed as heretofore passages inculcating piety and virtue, denouncing infidelity and vice, and containing directions for social duties and religious ceremonies. In the exhortations and denunciations, the main change is that at first the Jews, and subsequently the Disaffected, now usurp almost entirely the place before occupied by the Idolaters of Mecca.

Coran contains orders in all departments of theocratic government

The advancing power and dignity of Mahomet may be traced in the reverence and submission prescribed in the Coran as due to him. A kingly court was not in accord with the customs of the people, nor with the tastes and habits of Mahomet himself. The artless life and simple dress and surroundings of an Arab chieftain were not departed from at Medina; and it is this which, in vivid contrast with the state and luxury of his Suc-

Though simple in habits, Mahomet assumed regal power and dignity

cessors, has induced tradition to cast around the Prophet's life an air of hardship and privation.¹ The misconception is manifest ; for Mahomet and his Companions enjoyed all that the resources of the land and plunder of their enemies could yield ; and if they maintained plain and frugal habits, it was not from necessity, but because magnificence and pomp were foreign and distasteful. A row of modest houses, built of sun-dried brick, and covered in with rough palm-branches, the inner walls hung about with water-bags of leather for domestic use, formed a habitation for the Prophet and his wives far more desirable than the most splendid seraglio 'ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion.' A mattress of date-fibre covered with leather was a luxury to the Arab incomparably greater than any stately 'bed of the wood of Lebanon, decked with tapestry.' The trappings of a royal camp would have ill comported with the grave simplicity of Mahomet, while an ordinary nomad tent afforded him ample accommodation ; and

¹ For example, we have stories such as the following. Mahomet having hurt his hand, they carried him into his house, and placed him on a bed plaited with ropes of palm-fibre, and put under his head a pillow of leather stuffed with the same material. Omar, seeing the marks of the corded bedding on his side, wept aloud. On Mahomet asking why he wept, he replied : 'Verily, I called to mind how the Chosroes and the Kaiser sit upon thrones of gold, and wear garments of silk and brocade ; and thou art in this sad condition !' 'What, Omar !' said the Prophet, 'art thou not content that *we* should have the portion of Futurity, and *they* the portion of this Life ?' On another occasion, Mahomet having risen from sleep with the marks of the matting on his side, Abdallah, his attendant, rubbed the place, and said : 'Let me, I pray thee, spread a soft covering for thee over this mat.' 'Not so,' replied Mahomet ; 'what have I to do with the comforts of this life ? The world and I, what connection is there between us ? Verily, the world is no otherwise than as a tree unto me ; when the traveller hath rested under its shade, he passeth on.'

Notwithstanding anecdotes like these, exaggerated by strong contrast with the subsequent luxury of the Moslems, it is evident that Mahomet had everything in abundance which he really desired, and which wealth or authority could procure. He would give a large price for his clothes. once he exchanged nineteen (others say seventeen) camels for a single dress, and he bought a mantle for eight golden pieces. He had a collyrium box, from which at bedtime he used to apply antimony to his eyelids, saying that it made the sight more piercing, and caused the hair to grow. The Governor of Egypt sent him a crystal goblet ; and either this, or another jug from which he drank, was set in silver. He had also a copper vase, which he used in bathing. He was very fond of perfumes, and indulged, as Ayeaha tells us, in 'men's scents,' *i.e.* in musk and ambergris ; he used also to burn camphor on odoriferous wood, and enjoy the fragrant smell. Anis, his servant, says : 'We always used to know when Mahomet had issued forth from his chamber by the sweet perfume that filled the air.'

Such were perhaps the only luxuries which, from his simple habits, he was able to appreciate.

his bag, with ivory comb, tooth-pick, oil for his hair and antimony for his eyes, supplied all the comforts within the compass of an Arab's imagination. The luxurious and pampered courtiers of Damascus and Baghdad marvelled at the tales of their Prophet having mended his sandals, and of Omar having tended his own flock of goats, not reflecting that a more artificial state would have been at variance with everything around, and that the habits of three-score years had become a second life.

Nevertheless, in whatever constitutes real dignity and power, Mahomet was not behind the most absolute Dictator, or pompous Sovereign. To him every dispute must be referred, and his word was law. On his appearance the assembly rose, and gave place to him and his chief Companions; the people were required to approach him reverently, to speak softly in his presence, and not to crowd around or throng him. They were not to visit his house unasked; and even when invited they must not linger long, or indulge familiarly in discourse with him. 'The calling of the Apostle was not to be as the calling of one Believer to the other;' it was to be implicitly heard and promptly obeyed. Those in attendance were not to leave without permission first received. His wives were withdrawn from the vulgar gaze; none might communicate directly or familiarly with them excepting their near relatives and domestic servants. The Prophet was the favourite of Heaven; the true Believer but followed the example of the heavenly hosts, and of God himself, when he invoked blessings upon him:—

Honour and reverence paid to Mahomet. His prerogatives

Verily, God and His angels invoke blessings upon the Prophet. O ye that believe! do ye also invoke blessings upon him, and salute him with a reverential salutation. Verily, they that trouble God and His Apostle, God hath cursed them in this world, and in that which is to come: He hath prepared for them an ignominious punishment.

Sura xxxiii

The idea that he was *the Favourite of Heaven* may be the key to the peculiar privileges which he claimed, especially in his conjugal relations. Still, no supernatural character was assumed by Mahomet. He did not differ from the former Prophets. Like other men he was mortal; and equally with them needed to pray to God for the pardon of his sins.

Special prerogatives; but no supernatural character asserted

I have before observed that Mahomet did not consecrate any day, like the Seventh, to religious Worship. On Friday, the day appointed for public prayer, business and merchandise might, after its conclusion, be transacted as much as on any other day. The weekly service, indeed, appears at first to have been treated with little respect. On a certain Friday, while Mahomet discoursed from the Pulpit to a crowded assembly in the Mosque, the sound of drums announced the arrival of a Syrian caravan, when the

Irrelevant manner in which weekly service at first observed

greater part of his audience hurried forth to meet it, and left Mahomet standing in the Pulpit nearly alone. Hence this passage :—

Sura lxii

O ye that believe! When the call to Prayer is raised on the day of Assembly, then hasten to the commemoration of God, and leave off trafficking—that will be better for you, if ye knew it. And when the Prayers are ended, then disperse abroad, and seek (gain) from the favour of God, and make frequent mention of God, that ye may prosper. When they see Merchandising or Sport, they break away, flocking thereto, and leave thee standing; say, That which is with God is better than sport or merchandise; and God is the best Supporter.

Drunkenness common, till wine was forbidden

Elsewhere we find Mahomet forbidding his followers to be present at prayer in a state of drunkenness: 'O ye that believe; draw not nigh unto Prayers, while ye are drunken, until ye can understand that which ye say.' This injunction, being connected with another of a general nature,¹ may be viewed as additional evidence of the lax manner in which the devotions of the Moslems were at the first performed, as well as of the prevalence of intemperance. In a previous passage the use of Wine had been discouraged, though not prohibited, on the ground that it was productive of greater injury than good :—

Sura ii

They will ask thee concerning Wine, and Casting of lots. Say,—In both there is great evil, and also advantages, to Mankind; but the evil of them is greater than the advantages of them.

But Mahomet at last perceived that the sanctions of Islam were too weak to enforce a middle course, and that the imposition of entire abstinence was the only means by which he could check intemperance. The command against the use of wine was issued in the fourth year of the Hegira, during the siege (it is said) of the Beni Nadhir, and is as follows :—

Sura v

O ye that believe! Verily Wine, and the Casting of lots, and Images, and Divining-arrows, are an abomination from amongst the works of Satan: Shun them, therefore, that ye may prosper. Verily, Satan seeketh that he may cast amongst you enmity and hatred through Wine and Games of chance, and hinder you from the remembrance of God and from Prayer. Will ye not, then, refrain? Obey God, and obey the Apostle; and beware! For if ye turn back,—Verily, our Apostle's duty is but to deliver his Message publicly.

Influence of Judaism still maintained in moulding institutions

Jewish influence may still be traced in moulding the institutions of Mahomet. Usury is forbidden. The criminal code follows largely the Law of retaliation. Ceremonial purification before prayer is enjoined, and in the absence of water sand may be used as a substitute. An oath something resembling the curse of jealousy is permitted to a wife suspected by her husband of

¹ *I.e.* ceremonial ablution.

infidelity. And generally in the relations established between the sexes, a considerable degree of similarity may be traced to the injunctions of the Pentateuch.

As in other matters, so in those referring to Marriage and Divorce, instead of general principles, we have particular and detailed instruction. Apart altogether from the tenor of these precepts, the language in which they are expressed is offensive to the European ear. Making every allowance for the rudeness of speech and sentiment current in Arabia, much remains that cannot be so excused. Further, the legislation of the Coran on relations between the sexes has given birth to endless volumes, by Jurists and Theologians, of interpretation, illustration, construction, corollary, supplement, which cannot but have a deteriorating effect upon Mahometan students of the law. To define the line between the forbidden and the lawful, ingenuity and labour have been expended lavishly in describing and solving cases the very mention of which is repugnant to modesty, in drawing elaborate distinctions and demonstrating points of casuistry within a domain of thought which cannot even be approached without moral injury and contamination. The Arabic language, as moulded by the system which grew out of the precepts of Islam, is itself evidence of this evil,¹ for which, at the first remove, the Coran itself is responsible.

Rules regarding marriage, divorce, and sexual relations

Evil engendered thereby in Moslem literature

The number of lawful wives is restricted to four ; but these may at any moment be divorced at the caprice and by the simple word of the husband, and others substituted in their stead. As regards female slaves with whom (irrespective of his four wives) a Moslem may, without antecedent ceremony or any guarantee of continuance, cohabit, there is no limit. Female slavery, being a condition necessary to the legality of this indulgence, will hardly ever be put down, without alien pressure, by any Mussulman community. As a general rule slaves are in Moslem families maintained in comfort ; but this is by indulgence, and not of right.² They are liable to be treated as an inferior and degraded class. Under the same restrictions as married wives, the female slave is expressly excluded from any title to conjugal privilege. She is the toy of her master, sported with at his pleasure, or cast unheeded

Four wives allowed, and any number of slave-girls

¹ This will be painfully evident from a glance into some of our Arabic dictionaries. As to the 'Hadeeth,' I altogether fail to understand how any translator can justify himself in rendering into English much that is contained in the Sections on marriage, purification, divorce, and female slavery.

² At the Farewell pilgrimage, as we shall see, Mahomet enjoined that slaves should be fed and clothed as their masters ; and if they misbehave, they are to be sold and not tormented.

aside. The one redeeming feature is that, when once a slave-girl has borne a child to her master, she cannot be sold, and at his death obtains her freedom.¹ The child of the slave is also as legitimate as that of her married sister.²

Unmarried women, how affected by this system

It has been asserted that the institutions of Mahomet have tended to elevate and improve the state of Woman. Yet, excepting in so far as she necessarily shares in the general elevation and improvement introduced by a purer religion and more spiritual worship,³ it is very doubtful whether, in married life, her position has not been rendered more dependent than in Arab life it was before. I do not speak of unmarried and widowed females; for, if we put aside the Veil and the depressing influence which the constraint and thralldom of the married state has exercised upon *the sex at large*, the unmarried free woman has nothing to complain of. And, in one particular, viz. the inheritance by the son of his father's wives, she was delivered by Mahomet from a gross and intolerable abuse. No free woman can be forced, under the code of Islam, to marry against her will; and, so long as single, she is mistress of her actions.

Married women and female slaves occupy inferior position

But in respect of the married state (which in the East embraces practically the whole sex during the greater part of their lives), the condition of woman is that of a dependent, destined for the service of her lord, liable to be cast off without the assignment of any reason and without the notice of a single hour. While the husband possesses the power of divorce, absolute, immediate, unquestioned, no privilege of a corresponding

¹ This is not provided for in the Coran, but rests on the precedent of Mahomet, who freed his own slave-girl Mary, on her bearing a son to him. Such a slave is called *Omm al Walad*, or 'Mother of the child.'

² On the laxity of morals in connection with female slavery, I quote again from the Mahometan Princess who lately visited Mecca. Speaking of the great numbers of African and Georgian slaves, the Begum of Bhopal wrote: 'Some of the women are taken in marriage, and after that on being sold again, they receive from their masters a divorce, and are sold in their houses; that is to say, they are sent to the purchaser from their master's house on receipt of payment, and are not exposed for sale in the Dakkah (slave market); they are only *married* when purchased for the first time. * * * When the poorer people buy slaves, they keep them for themselves, and change them every year as one would replace old things by new.'—(*Pilgrimage to Mecca*. Translated by Mrs. W. Osborne, 1870.) Such, according to a shrewd observer, are the results of female slavery in the holiest city of Islam.

³ The notion that the female sex is overlooked in the rewards of the future life arose, apparently, from their not having been provided with indulgences similar to those promised to the other sex. Not only is the idea of their exclusion from Paradise at variance with the whole tenor of the Coran, but it is contradicted by express passages.

nature has been reserved for the Wife.¹ She hangs on, however unwilling, neglected or superseded, the slave of her lord,—if such be his will. When divorced, she can, indeed, claim her dower,—her *hire*, as in too plain language it is called ; this, however, is but a poor security against capricious taste, and in the case of female slaves, even that is wanting. The power of divorce is not the only power that may be arbitrarily exercised by the tyrannical husband : authority to confine and to beat his wives is vested in his discretion :—

Men stand above Women, because of the superiority which God hath conferred on one of them over the other, and because of that which they expend of their wealth. Wherefore let the good Women be obedient, preserving their purity in secret, in that wherein God preserveth them. But such as ye may fear disobedience or provocation from, rebuke them, and put them away in separate apartments, and chastise them. But, if they be obedient unto you, seek not against them an excuse for severity ; verily God is lofty and great.

Sura iv

The ‘exchanging of one wife for another’ (that is, the divorcing of one in order to marry another) is recognised in the Coran, with only this caution, that the dower stipulated at marriage be given in full to her that is put away.² Thus restrained and secluded, liable at the caprice or passion of the moment to be turned adrift, it would be hard to say that the position of a wife was improved by the code of Mahomet. Indeed, it may be doubted whether she was not possessed of more freedom, and exercised a healthier, and more legitimate influence, under the pre-existing institutions of Arabia.

Position of married women impaired by Islam

In the conditions of Divorce, there is one which (much as I might desire) cannot be passed over in silence. A husband may twice divorce his wife, and each time receive her back again. But when it has been thrice repeated, the divorce is, with a hateful exception, irreversible. However unjust or injurious the action, how much soever the result of passion or caprice, however it may affect the interests not only of an innocent wife, but also of her innocent children, however desirous the husband may be of undoing the

Divorce thrice repeated irrevocable. Revolting condition on which alone original marriage can be reverted to

¹ The Coran does not contemplate anywhere the contingency of divorce being claimed by the wife. The idea of any independent right of the kind was foreign to Mahomet's notions of the position of the sex. The Mahometan doctors have, indeed, determined that under a few rare contingencies divorce may be demanded ; but they are so exceptional as hardly to deserve notice.

² ‘ And if ye be desirous to exchange one wife in place of another wife, and ye have given one of them a talent, then take not away anything therefrom. What ! will ye take it away falsely, and commit an open sin ? And how can ye take it away, seeing that one of you hath gone in unto the other, and they have received from you a firm covenant ? ’—Sura iv.

wrong,—the decision cannot be recalled ; the divorced wife can return to her husband but on one condition, and that is that she shall first be married to another, and after cohabitation be again divorced.¹ The tone of Mahometan manners may be imagined from the functions of the *temporary* husband hired to legalise re-marriage with a thrice-divorced wife, having passed into a proverb.² Such flagrant breach of decency, such cruel violation of the modesty of an unoffending wife, may be an abuse the full extent of which was not at the time contemplated by Mahomet ; but it is not the less an abuse for which, as a direct result of the unnatural and revolting provision framed by him, Mahomet is responsible.³

¹ ' And if he (a third time) divorce her, she shall not be lawful unto him after that, until she shall have married a husband other than he ; and if the latter divorce her, then there shall be no sin in the two that they again return to each other, if they think that they can observe the limits appointed by God. These are the ordinances of God, which He manifesteth to people that understand.'—Sura ii.

² I quote from Burckhardt:—'*A thousand lovers, rather than one Mostahil*; i.e. many lovers or gallants cause less shame to a woman than one Mostahil (i.e. husband procured for the occasion). According to the Moslem law, a person who has (thrice) divorced his wife cannot re-marry her until she has been married to some other man, who becomes her legitimate husband, cohabits with her for one night, and divorces her next morning ; after which the first husband may again possess her as his wife. Such cases are of frequent occurrence—as men in the haste of anger often divorce their wives by the simple expression (*I divorce thee*), which (thrice repeated) cannot be retracted. In order to regain his wife a man hires (at no inconsiderable rate) some peasant, whom he chooses from the ugliest that can be found in the streets. A temporary husband of this kind is called Mostahil, and is generally most disgusting to the wife,' &c.—(*Arabic Proverbs*, p. 21.) Some commentators hold the practice to be illegal ; whether legal or not, I gladly believe that it is far from being so frequent as here represented. But its existence is undoubted ; and it has existed, in a more or less revolting form, ever since the verse was revealed. A case is mentioned by tradition in which Mahomet himself insisted on cohabitation with another husband, before married life could be returned to, and that in language which, one may hope, prurient tradition has fabricated for him. Tradition and law books abound with fetid commentaries illustrative of this subject, and with checks against the intermediate marriage and cohabitation being merely nominal.

It must not be forgotten that all the immorality of speech and action connected with this shameful institution, and the outrage done to female virtue (not necessarily for any fault of the wretched wife, but the passion and thoughtlessness of the husband himself), has arisen solely out of the verse quoted above. It is a sorry excuse that Mahomet wished thereby to check inconsiderate divorce : a good object is not to be sought for by such evil means.

³ See Deut. xxiv. 4 : ' Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife after that she is defiled ; for that is an abomination before the Lord.'

The warlike spirit of the Suras of this period has been perhaps sufficiently illustrated in the preceding chapters. I may here just refer to one passage which is peculiarly demonstrative of the lust of plunder which had been stirred up, and which (so natural was it to the Arab) the Prophet soon found it difficult to restrain within expedient bounds. Only those could be lawfully slain and plundered who were *disbelievers* in his mission; but so insatiable had the thirst for spoil become, that cases now occurred of Moslems slaying others who had made profession of the Mahometan faith, on pretext that they were insincere Believers. Stringent prohibition was required to guard against this abuse. Whoever trifled with the life of any one professing Islam, did so at the peril of his soul. After prescribing the penalty or penance for killing a Moslem unintentionally, the ordinance proceeds:—

Warlike spirit of Coran

But whosoever killeth a Believer wilfully, his reward shall be Hell,— for ever therein. God shall be wroth with him, and shall curse him: He hath prepared for him a great punishment. O ye that believe! When ye go forth fighting in the way of God, rightly discriminate, and say not to him that saluteth you,¹ *Thou art not a Believer*,—seeking the transitory things of this present life,—whilst with God there is great spoil. And such were ye yourselves aforetime, but God had favour towards you. Wherefore carefully discriminate, for God is attentive to that which ye do.

Sura iv

Though Mecca with its heathen inhabitants has now faded in the distance, and the Coreish are hardly ever referred to but for their hostile inroads, still we find occasional passages, after the old Meccan style, in reprobation of Idolatry, and menace of the city 'which had cast its Prophet out.' Polytheism and Idolatry are denounced as the only unpardonable sins. The tone of defiance becomes bolder and at times exulting. Mahomet and his people are 'to fight till opposition shall cease, and the Religion becometh God's alone.' Until this glorious consummation, 'they are not to faint, neither invite to peace.' A complete and speedy victory is promised. God is the stronger, and will prevail: Islam shall shortly be established triumphantly. Such as withdraw from Mecca, and rally around the standard of Mahomet while the struggle yet impends, shall have a merit superior far to the merit of those who join it after opposition shall have been beaten down. The waverers, who, though persuaded of the truth, cannot make up their minds to abandon Mecca, are told that

References to Coreish and to idolatry

Waverers threatened

¹ *I.e.* with the salutation peculiar to Islam (*salam aleikum*), which was held equivalent to professing oneself a Moslem. Abu Bekr, in sending forth expeditions against the rebel tribes, on the same principle, made it a strict injunction that wherever the Adzân for prayer was heard, attack was to be suspended.—*Caliphate*, p. 17.

their excuse of inability will not be accepted of God ;—‘ their habitation shall be Hell, an evil journey thither !’ But a word of comfort is added for ‘ the weak,’ withheld by real helplessness from leaving Mecca. The rescue of such from their unhappy position is adduced as a powerful motive why their more fortunate brethren at Medina should fight bravely in the cause :—

Weak
believers
at Mecca
comforted

Sura iv Fight in the way of God, ye that sell the present Life for that which is to come. Whosoever fighteth in the way of God, whether he be slain or be victorious, We shall surely give him a great Reward. And what aileth you that ye fight not in the way of God, and for the Weak amongst the men and women and children, who say, ‘ O Lord ! Deliver us out of this City, whose people are oppressors ; and grant us from thyself a Protector, and grant us from thyself a Defender.’

Style tame,
but with
occasional
touches of
poetic fire

From these numerous quotations (so numerous, I fear, as to have been irksome to the reader) it will be evident that the style of the Coran, though varying greatly in force and vigour, has for the most part lost the stamp of vivid imagination and poetic fire which marks the earlier Suras. It becomes, as a rule, tame and ordinary both in thought and language. Occasionally, indeed, we still find traces of the former spirit. Here for instance the Deity is described in a passage of which the followers of Mahomet are justly proud :—

Sura ii

God ! There is no God but He : the Living, the Eternal. Slumber doth not overtake Him, neither Sleep. To Him belongeth all that is in the Heavens and in the Earth. Who is he that shall intercede before Him, excepting by His permission ? He knoweth that which is before them, and that which is behind them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledge, saving in so far as He pleaseth. His throne stretcheth over Heaven and Earth, and the protection of them both is no burden unto Him. He is the Lofty and the Great.

In the following extract, the verses in which Infidelity is compared to a tempestuous Sea, of which the crested waves below mingle with the lowering clouds above,—a scene of impenetrable darkness and despair, are to my apprehension amongst the grandest and most powerful in the whole Coran. The Sura belongs to the Fifth year of the Hegira ; but part of it is in the best style of the Meccan period.

Sura xxiv

God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth. The likeness of His light is as the niche wherein is a Lamp inclosed in glass ;—the glass is as a refulgent Star. It is lighted from a blessed tree, an Olive neither of the East nor of the West. Its Oil is near unto giving light, even if the fire did not touch it ;—light upon light. God directeth towards His light whom He pleaseth. (Here follows a description of the worship and good works of Believers.) And those that disbelieve ;—their works are as the *Seraḥ* in the plain ; the thirsty man thinketh it to be water,

until, when he cometh thereto, he doth not find it anything; but he findeth God to be about Him, and He will fulfil unto him his account; for God is swift in taking account:—

Or as the Darkness in a bottomless Sea, covered by wave riding upon wave. Above them are clouds. Darkness of one kind over another kind. When one stretcheth forth his hand, he hardly seeth it. And to whomsoever God doth not grant light, he shall have no light.

What! seest thou not that unto God giveth praise everything that is in the Heavens and in the Earth, and the Birds with expanded wing. Truly every one knoweth his prayer and his hymn of praise; and God knoweth whatsoever they do. . . . Seest thou not that God driveth the clouds along, then gathereth them together, then setteth them in layers; and thou seest the rain issuing forth from between them. And He sendeth down from the heavens as it were mountains wherein is hail. He striketh therewith whom He pleaseth, and averteth the same from whom He pleaseth. The brightness of His lightning well-nigh taketh the sight away.

CHAPTER XVIII

SIXTH YEAR OF THE HEGIRA

A.D. 627, 628

ÆTAT. 59

Numerous
minor ex-
peditions in
Sixth year
of the
Hegira

THE Sixth year of the Hegira was one of considerable activity at Medina. No important battle indeed was fought, nor any great expedition undertaken. But small parties were constantly in motion, either for the chastisement of hostile tribes, for the capture of caravans, or for the repulse of robbers and marauders. We read of as many as seventeen such affairs during the year. They generally resulted in the dispersion of the enemy and the capture of flocks and herds, which enriched the Prophet's followers, and stimulated their zeal for active service; they also served to spread terror of his name. But few of them were otherwise attended with marked results; and it will not therefore be necessary to narrate them all.¹

Expedition
by Maho-
met against
Beni
Lahyan.
A.H. VI.
June,
A.D. 627

Two of the expeditions were led by Mahomet himself. One was against the Beni Lahyan, whom he had long been desirous of chastising for their treacherous attack, two years before, on the little band of his followers at Raji. During the summer he set out with a selected body of two hundred men on camels, and twenty horse. That he might the more surely fall upon his enemy unawares, he first took the road N.W. towards Syria. After two or three marches, he sud-

¹ Weil regards the comparative insignificance of these expeditions, and especially the smallness of Mahomet's following on the pilgrimage to Hodeibia, as a proof how low his authority had sunk. But there was no object on these occasions for any great exertion or extensive following. The authority of Mahomet, which had been materially increased by his successful resistance to the grand confederation at the siege of Medina, was steadily advancing.

denly turned south, and travelled rapidly along the sea-shore by the way to Mecca. But the stratagem was of no avail, for the Beni Lahyan had notice of his approach, and, taking their cattle with them, retired to heights where they were safe from attack. At the spot where his followers had been slaughtered, he halted, and invoked pardon and mercy on them. Small parties were sent to scour the vicinity, but no traces of the tribe were anywhere to be found. Being now within two marches of Mecca, he advanced to Ofsan with the view of alarming the Coreish. From thence Abu Bekr was sent with ten horsemen, as it were the vanguard, to approach still nearer. Satisfied with this demonstration, the force retraced its steps to Medina. On his way back from this fruitless journey, the Prophet, who had been greatly incommoded by the heat, is said to have prayed thus: '*Returning and repentant, yet if it please the Lord, praising His name and serving Him, I seek refuge in God from the troubles of the way, the vexation of return, and the evil eye which affecteth family and wealth.*'

Not many days after, Medina was early one morning startled by a cry of alarm from the adjoining height of Sila. The chieftain Oyeina, with a troop of Fezâra horse, came down upon the plain of Al Ghâba, within a few miles of Medina, fell upon the milch camels of Mahomet which were grazing there, drove off the whole herd, and having killed the keeper carried off his wife. A Citizen, early on his way to the pasture lands, saw the marauding band and gave the alarm. The call to arms was ordered by Mahomet. A troop of horse was shortly at the gate of the Mosque.¹ A flag was mounted for them, and they were despatched at once in pursuit, Mahomet himself with some 600 men following shortly after. Sad ibn Obâda, with 300 armed

Pursuit of
Oyeina,
who at-
tacked
camels at
Al Ghâba.
A.H. VI.
July,
A.D. 627

¹ Micdâd being the first to come up, Mahomet mounted the flag on his spear, which occasioned some to say that he was the leader of the expedition, while that honour belonged in reality to Sad ibn Zeid. There is a curious anecdote on this point, which shows that Hassân's poetry sometimes originated errors in tradition. In his piece on this expedition, the poet speaks of *the horsemen of Micdâd*, as if he had been the leader. On hearing the poetry recited, Sad repaired in great wrath to Hassân, and required amends for the misrepresentation. The poet quietly replied that his name did not suit the rhythm so well as Micdâd's. And yet, says Wakidy, the verses remained in circulation and gave rise to the erroneous tradition that Micdâd was leader.

followers, remained behind, to guard the city. The advanced party hung daringly upon the rear of the marauders, slew several of them, and recovered half of the plundered camels. On the side of the Mussulmans only one man was killed. Mahomet, with the main body, marched onwards as far as Dzu Carad, in the direction of Kheibar; but by this time the robbers were safe away in the desert. The captive female effected her escape on one of the plundered camels which she vowed on reaching her home in safety to offer up as a sacrifice of thanksgiving. On acquainting Mahomet with her vow, he rallied her on the ingratitude of seeking to slay the animal which had saved her life, and which moreover was not hers to offer up. He bade her go to her home in peace. Finding that hostile tribes were gathering around them in dangerous numbers, the force returned, having been five days absent from Medina.

Affair at
Dzul Cassa:
party of
Moslems
cut up.
A.H. VI.
August,
A.D. 627

Scarcity still prevailing in Nejd, and rain having fallen plentifully towards Medina, the Ghatafân tribes were tempted in their search for pasture to advance beyond their usual limits. The herds of camels belonging to the Moslems, greatly increased by the plunder of late years, had been sent out to graze in the same direction. They offered a tempting prize for a foray, and the neighbouring tribes were suspected to be gathering for the purpose. Mohammed ibn Maslama was deputed with ten followers to visit the locality and ascertain how matters stood. At Dzul Cassa, two or three days' distance, he was surrounded in the night-time by overpowering numbers. After a short resistance, his men were all slain, and he himself left on the field as dead. A friend, happening to pass that way, assisted him on his journey back to Medina. A body of forty well-mounted soldiers was despatched to chastise the offenders; but they had dispersed among the neighbouring heights, and, excepting the plunder of some flocks and household stuff, no reprisals were effected.

A Meccan
caravan
plundered
at Al Is.
A.H. VI.
September,
A.D. 627

During the autumn an interesting episode occurred. A well-freighted caravan from Mecca, venturing to resume the sea-shore route to Syria, was overpowered at Al Is and carried into Medina with a large store of silver and some of those who guarded it as prisoners. Among these was Abul Aas, son-in-law of Mahomet. His romantic story deserves

recital, as well for its own interest, as for the share which the Prophet himself bore therein. The reader will remember that Mahomet, at Khadija's desire, gave his daughter Zeinab in marriage to her nephew Abul Aas, a prosperous trader in Mecca. While declining to embrace Islam, Abul Aas equally resisted the bidding of the Coreish to abandon Zeinab and choose one of their own daughters in her stead. 'I will not separate from my wife,' he said; 'neither do I desire any other woman from amongst your daughters.' Mahomet was much pleased at the faithfulness of Abul Aas to his daughter. The attachment was mutual, for when the family emigrated to Medina, Zeinab remained behind at Mecca with her husband.

Abul Aas,
and Zeinab
Mahomet's
daughter

In the battle of Bedr, Abul Aas had been amongst the captives; and when the Coreish deputed men to ransom their prisoners, Zeinab sent by their hands such property as she had for her husband's freedom. Among other things was a necklace, which Khadija had given her on her marriage. The Prophet, seeing this touching memorial of his former wife, was overcome and said to the people: 'If it seem right in your eyes, let my daughter's husband go free, and send these trinkets back.' All agreed; but as the condition of his freedom, Mahomet required of Abul Aas that he should at once send Zeinab to Medina. Accordingly, on his return to Mecca, he sent her away mounted on a camel-litter, under charge of his brother Kinâna. Certain of the baser sort, however, from amongst the Coreish went in pursuit, determined to bring her back. The first that appeared was Habbâr, who struck the camel with his spear, and so affrighted Zeinab as to bring on a miscarriage. Kinâna at once made the camel sit down, and, by the mere sight of his bow and well-filled quiver, kept the pursuers at bay. Just then Abu Sofian came up and held parley with Kinâna: 'Ye should not,' he said, 'have gone forth thus publicly, knowing the disaster we have so lately sustained at the hands of Mahomet. The open departure of his daughter would be regarded proof of our weakness and humiliation. But it is no object of ours to keep back this woman from her father, or to retaliate our wrongs upon her. Return, therefore, for a little while to Mecca, and when this excitement shall have died away, then set out secretly.' They followed his advice, and some days after,

Abul Aas,
when taken
at Bedr,
had been
freed on
condition of
sending
Zeinab to
Medina

Zeinab, escorted by Zeid, who had been sent to fetch her, reached Mahomet in safety.

Abul Aas, taken prisoner, is converted. A.H. VI.

It was three or four years after this that Abul Aas was now again made prisoner with the caravan at Al Is. As the party carrying him captive approached Medina, he contrived by night to have an interview with Zeinab, who gave him the guarantee of her protection, on which he rejoined the other prisoners. At morning prayer she called aloud from her apartment that she had passed her word to Abul Aas. When prayers were ended, Mahomet thus addressed the assembly : ' Ye have heard, as I have, the voice of my daughter. I swear by Him in whose hands is my life, that I knew nothing of her guarantee until this moment. But the pledge even of the least of my followers must needs be kept.' Thus saying, he retired to his daughter, and desired her to treat Abul Aas with honour, as a guest, but not recognise him as her husband. Then sending for the captors of the caravan, he reminded them of his connection with Abul Aas and said : ' If ye treat him well, and return his property unto him, it would be pleasing to me ; but if not, the booty is yours which the Lord hath given into your hands, and it is your right to keep it.' They all with one consent agreed to let the prisoner go free, and return to him his property. This generosity, and the continued attachment of Zeinab, so wrought on Abul Aas, that, when he had adjusted his affairs at Mecca, he made profession of Islam and rejoined her at Medina. Their domestic happiness, however, was not of long continuance ; for Zeinab died the following year from the illness caused by the attack of Habbâr at Mecca.¹ The treatment of his daughter on that occasion had greatly incensed Mahomet. Once, when a party was setting out on an expedition towards Mecca, he commanded that if Habbâr, and another who had joined him in the pursuit of Zeinab, fell into their hands, they should both be burned alive ; but the same night he countermanded it in these words : ' It is not fitting for any

Mahomet commands that his daughter's pursuers be put to death

¹ They had a daughter, whom Aly married after the death of Fatima. It is satisfactory to find that at Mecca, the cruelty of Habbâr was scouted as unmanly. Even Hind, wife of Abu Sofian, gave vent to her indignation ; meeting the party as it returned, she extemporised some severe verses against them : ' Ah ! in time of peace ye are very brave and fierce against the weak and unprotected, but in battle ye are like women with gentle speeches,' &c.

of His creatures to punish by fire but God only. Wherefore if ye seize them put them to death simply by the sword.'

About this time we read of Mahomet's first communication with the Roman Empire. One of his followers, named Dihya, was sent on a mission to the Emperor, or rather perhaps to one of the Governors of Syria. He was graciously received, and presented with a dress of honour. On his way home, he was plundered of everything near Wadi al Cora, by the Beni Judzâm. A neighbouring tribe, however, under treaty with Mahomet, attacked the robbers, recovered the spoil, and restored his property to Dihya. On the robbery reaching the ears of Mahomet, he despatched Zeid (now a favourite commander) with 500 men, to chastise the delinquents. Marching by night, and concealing themselves by day, they fell unexpectedly on the Judzâm, killed their leader and several others, and carried off one hundred women and children, with all their herds and flocks. Unfortunately, the branch thus punished had just tendered submission to Mahomet. The chief therefore hastened to Medina and appealed against these proceedings. He produced the letter of terms which the Prophet had made with his people, and demanded justice. 'But,' said Mahomet, 'how can I compensate thee for those that have been slain?' 'Release to us the living,' was the reply; 'as for the dead, they are beneath our feet.' Mahomet acknowledged the justice of his demand, and despatched Aly to order restoration. He met Zeid returning to Medina, and the prisoners and booty were immediately surrendered to the chief.

Soon after, Abd al Rahmân set out with 700 men, on a second expedition to Dumah. Mahomet bound a black turban, in token of command, about his head. He was first to gain over, if possible, the people of Dumah, and fight only in the last resort:—'but in no case,' said the Prophet, 'shalt thou use deceit or perfidy, nor kill any child.' On reaching Dumah, Abd al Rahmân summoned the tribes around to embrace Islam, and allowed them three days' grace. Within that period, Asbagh, a Christian chief of the Beni Kalb, gave in his adhesion, and many followed his example. Others preferred to be tributaries, with the condition of being allowed to retain profession of the Christian faith. Abd al Rahmân sent tidings of this success to Mahomet, who, in reply, desired

Beni Judzâm chastised for robbing Dihya, sent by Mahomet on an embassy to Syria.
A.H. VI.
October,
A.D. 627

Second expedition to Dumah.
A.H. V.
November,
627

him to marry Tamadhir, daughter of the chief. Abd al Rahmán accordingly brought this lady with him to Medina, where she bore him Abu Salma (the famous jurisconsult of after days) and, amid many rivals, maintained her position as one of his wives, till her husband's death.¹

Beni Fezâra chastised.
A.H. VI.
December,
A.D. 627

Zeid having set out upon a mercantile expedition to Syria, with ventures from many of the Citizens, was waylaid near Wadi al Cora, and maltreated and plundered by the Fezâra. This occasioned much exasperation at Medina. When he was sufficiently recovered from the injuries inflicted by the robbers, Zeid was deputed with a strong force to execute vengeance upon them. Approaching stealthily, he surprised and captured the marauders' stronghold. Omm Kirfa, aunt of Oyeina, a lady who had gained celebrity as mistress of this nest of robbers, was taken prisoner with her daughter. Neither the sex, nor great age of Omm Kirfa, saved her from a death of extreme barbarity. Her legs were tied each to a separate camel. The camels were driven asunder, and thus she was torn in pieces. Two young brothers were also put to death. Zeid, on his return, hastened to Mahomet, who hurried forth to meet him with dress ungirded; and, learning the success of the expedition, embraced and kissed him. We do not read of disapprobation at the inhuman treatment of the aged female. The daughter was given to Ayesha as her waiting-maid; but the brigand spirit survived in her, and a few years after we find her slain in a similar encounter with Khalid.²

Barbarous execution of Omm Kirfa

Assassination of Abul Huceik, a Jewish chief.
A.H. VI.
December,
A.D. 627

His old enemies, the Jews, were still the cause of annoyance. A party of the Beni Nadhîr, after their exile, settled down among their brethren at Kheibar. Abul Huceik their chief,³ having taken a prominent part in the Confederate force which besieged Medina, was now suspected of

¹ For some account of Abd al Rahmán's conjugal relations, see *ante*, p. 168. Besides slave-girls, he had issue by sixteen wives. There were several unimportant raids this year hardly requiring mention; but I must not omit one for the cruel deed that closed it.

² Wakidy says she was given by Mahomet to one of his followers. But we find in the Caliphate of Abu Bekr, A.H. XI., that a daughter of Omm Kirfa, called Omm Siml, who had waited on Ayesha as her maid, afterwards having escaped, raised a rebellion, and like her mother was slain in battle by Khalid. I presume it must have been the same. See the *Caliphate*, p. 23.

³ Called also Abu Râfi.

encouraging certain Bedouin tribes in their depredations. An expedition was therefore undertaken by Aly against the Jews of Kheibar, but besides the capture of their camels and flocks, it produced no other result. As a surer means of stopping these attacks, Mahomet resolved on ridding himself of their supposed author, the Jewish chief. The Beni Khazraj, emulous of the distinction which their brethren gained some years before by the assassination of Kab, had long offered themselves for like service. Mahomet therefore, having chosen five, gave them command to make away with Abul Huceik. On approaching Kheibar, they concealed themselves till nightfall, when they repaired to their victim's house. The leader, who was familiar with the tribe and with their language, called out at the door to the chief's wife, and thus gained admittance on a false pretext. When she perceived that his companions were armed, she screamed aloud; but they pointed their weapons at her, and forced her to be silent. Then, rushing in, they despatched Abul Huceik with their swords; and hastily retiring, hid themselves in an adjacent cave till the pursuit was over. Mahomet, meeting them as they returned, exclaimed: 'Success attend you!' 'And thee, O Prophet!' they replied. They recounted to him all that had happened; and, as each one claimed the honour of the deed, Mahomet examined their weapons, and, from the marks on the sword of Abdallah ibn Oneis, assigned to him the merit of the fatal blow.¹

The assassination of Abul Huceik did not relieve Mahomet of his apprehensions from the Jews of Kheibar; for Oseir, elected in his room, maintained the same relations with the Ghatafân, and was even reported to be designing fresh movements against Medina. Mahomet deputed a Citizen, Ibn Rawâha, to Kheibar, with three followers, to make inquiries as to how Oseir also might be taken unawares. But he found the Jews too much on the alert to admit of a second successful attempt. On his return, therefore, a new plan was devised. Ibn Rawâha was now sent openly with thirty men to persuade Oseir to visit Medina. They assured him that Mahomet would make him ruler over Kheibar and treat him with distinction; and gave him a

Oseir and party of Jews slain. A.H. VI. January, A.D. 628

¹ It is the same Abdallah who assassinated Sofian, chief of the Beni Lahyan. See *ante*, p. 267.

solemn guarantee of safety. Oseir consented, and set out with thirty followers, each Moslem taking one of the Jewish party behind him on his camel. The unfortunate chief was mounted on the camel of Abdallah ibn Oneis, who relates that, after they had travelled some distance, he perceived Oseir stretching out his hand towards his sword. Urging forward his camel till he was well beyond the rest of the party, Abdallah called out: 'Enemy of the Lord! Treachery! Twice hath he done this thing.' As he spoke, he leaped from the camel, and aimed a deadly blow at Oseir, which took effect on the hip joint. 'The chief fell mortally wounded to the ground, but in his descent succeeded in wounding Abdallah's head with the camel staff, the only weapon within his reach. Upon this, each of the Mussulmans turned upon his man, and they were all murdered, excepting one who eluded pursuit. The party continued their journey to Medina, and reported the tragedy to Mahomet, who gave thanks and said: 'Verily, the Lord hath delivered you from an unrighteous people.'¹

Certain robbers executed barbarously, for plunder and murder

A party of eight Bedouin Arabs had some time previously visited Medina and embraced Islam. The damp of the climate affected their spleen, and for a cure Mahomet bade them join his herd of milch camels grazing in the plain south of Coba, and drink of their milk. Following his advice they soon recovered; but with returning strength there revived also the lust of plunder. They drove off the herd, and attempted to escape. The herdsman pursued the plunderers, but was seized and barbarously handled; his hands and legs were cut off, and thorny spikes thrust into his tongue and eyes, till he died. When tidings of this outrage reached Mahomet, he despatched twenty horsemen in pursuit.² They surrounded and seized the robbers, and recovered the camels excepting one, which had been slaughtered by them. The captives were conducted to Mahomet, who was justly exasperated at their ingratitude and savage treat-

¹ The reader will judge for himself on which side treachery is likeliest to have occurred, on that of the unarmed Oseir, or of Ibn Oneis, already known as an assassin. But I have given the narrative as I find it.

² They were commanded by Kurz ibn Jâbir, whom we have seen, *ante*, p. 200, as engaged in one of the first raids against Medina. At what period he was converted and came to Medina is not mentioned.

ment of his servant. They had merited death; but the mode in which he inflicted it was unworthy of Islam. Their arms and legs were cut off, and their eyes put out. The mutilated sightless trunks were then impaled upon the plain of Al Ghâba (where Mahomet chanced himself to be), until life was extinct. But, on reflection, Mahomet felt that the punishment exceeded the bounds of humanity. He accordingly promulgated a law by which capital sentence is limited to simple death or crucifixion. Amputation of the hands and feet is, however, sanctioned as a penal measure; and amputation of the hands even enjoined as the proper penalty for theft. Such is the cruel law throughout Islam to the present day, as sanctioned by the following passage:—

Mutilation
recognised
as a legal
punishment

Verily the recompense of those that fight against God and his Prophet, and haste to commit wickedness in the land, is that they shall be slain or crucified; or that their hands and feet of the opposite sides be cut off; or that they be banished from the land. That shall be their punishment in this life, and in the life to come they shall have great torment. * * *

Sura v

As regards the robber, male and female, cut off the hands of both.¹

Wakidy assigns to this period an attempt, under the orders of Mahomet, to assassinate Abu Sofian. As its cause, we are told that a Bedouin had been commissioned by Abu Sofian on a similar errand against Mahomet; but that he emissary was discovered, and confessed the object of his mission. According to Ibn Hisham (who makes no mention of this latter circumstance) the attempted assassination was ordered by Mahomet in the *Fourth* year of the Hegira, in revenge for the execution of the two captives taken at Raji. Whatever the inciting cause, there seems no reasonable doubt that a commission was given by the Prophet to Amr ibn Omeyya to proceed to Mecca, and compass the death of Abu Sofian. Amr was recognised as he lurked near the Kaaba before he could carry his design into effect, and was obliged to flee for his life. True, however, to his profession, he claims the credit of having assassinated three of the

Attempt
to assassi-
nate Abu
Sofian

¹ For repeated robberies, the hands and feet may all, one after another, be cut off, rendering the criminal a helpless cripple. It may be noticed that putting out of the eyes is not recognised among the legal punishments.

Coreish by the way, and a fourth he brought prisoner to Medina.¹

Bedouin
tribes
gained
over

During this year and the following, Mahomet made an important advance in gaining over certain Bedouin tribes lying between Medina and Mecca. These did not, indeed, as yet make profession of Islam, but they entered into friendly relations; and the assistance, or at least neutrality, of all the tribes upon the road might now be counted on.

'The ten'
of the Beni
Abs

About this time, ten men of the Beni Abs, a small but warlike clan in Nejd, joined the faith and settled at Medina. They distinguished themselves in battle under the title of 'the Ten,' and Mahomet gave them a banner, which in the Syrian conquests became famous as the Absite ensign.

Thus steadily did the influence of Mahomet, partly through religious motives, and partly from motives of rapine and conquest, extend and become consolidated.

¹ He is the same who, escaping from the massacre at Bir Mauna, assassinated the two travellers for whom Mahomet paid compensation (p. 271). He is stated by Wakidy to have been before Islam a '*professional* assassin;' so that the people of Mecca, recognising him, immediately understood what his errand was.

CHAPTER XIX

PILGRIMAGE TO HODEIBIA

Dzul Cada, A.H. VI.—March, A.D. 628

SIX years had now passed since Mahomet, and those who emigrated with him, had seen their native city; worshipped at the Holy house; or joined in the yearly pilgrimage, which from childhood they had regarded as an essential part of their social and religious life. They longed to revisit these scenes, and once more join in the solemn rites of the Kaaba.

Anxiety to perform pilgrimage to Mecca

No one shared these feelings more earnestly than the Prophet himself. It was, moreover, of great importance that he should show practically his attachment to the ancient faith of Mecca. He had, indeed, in the Coran, insisted upon that faith as an indispensable element of Islam; upbraided the Coreish for obstructing the approach of pious worshippers to the House of God; and denounced them, because of their idolatrous practices, as not its rightful guardians, in such words as these:—

Political considerations

And what have they to urge that God should not chastise them, seeing that they have hindered His servants from the sacred Temple; and they are not the Guardians thereof,—verily, none are its guardians save the pious. But the greater part of them do not consider. And their prayers at the Temple are nought but whistling through their fingers, and clapping of their hands. Taste, therefore, the punishment of your unbelief.

Sura viii

Yet something more than this was needed to show his attachment to the ancestral faith and observances of the Coreish. If he made no effort to visit the Holy places, and fulfil the sacred rites, he would lay himself justly open to the charge of lukewarmness and neglect. Precept must needs be supported by example.

Musing thus, Mahomet had a vision in the night. Followed by his people, he dreamed that he entered Mecca in

Inducements for making Lesser pilgrimage in Dzul Cada, A.D. VI.

security, and having made the circuit of the Kaaba, and slain the victims, completed thus the ceremonies of the pilgrimage. The dream was communicated to his followers, and every one longed for its realisation. It foretold nothing of fighting or contest; the entrance was to be quiet and unopposed. Now the sacred month of Dzul Cada was at hand, in which observance of the Lesser pilgrimage was specially meritorious. There would, moreover, be less chance of collision with hostile tribes, than at the Greater pilgrimage in the succeeding month. Furthermore, in the month of Dzul Cada, war was unlawful throughout Arabia, much more within the inviolate precincts of Mecca. If Mahomet and his followers, therefore, should at this time approach the Kaaba in the peaceful garb of pilgrims, the Coreish would be bound by every pledge of national faith to leave them unmolested. On the other hand, should the Coreish oppose their entrance, the blame would rest with them; and even so, the strength of the pilgrim band would secure its safety,—if not the victory. So soon as this was resolved upon, the Citizens as well as Refugees responded to the call, and made haste to prepare themselves for pilgrimage. To swell the camp and render it more imposing, the Arab tribes around, who had entered into friendly relations with Mahomet, were also summoned. But few responded to the call; there was, in fact, little inducement for them on the score of booty, and most part alleged that their occupations and families prevented them from leaving home.¹

Surrounding tribes invited to join, but most decline

Mahomet and his followers set out from Medina. A.H. VI. February, A.D. 628

Early in Dzul Cada, therefore, arrangements for the journey being now completed, Mahomet entered his house, bathed himself, and put on the two pieces of cloth which constitute the pilgrim garb. He then mounted Al Caswa, and led the cavalcade of 1,500 pilgrims to Dzul Huleifa, the first stage on the road to Mecca. There they halted, and Mahomet with the rest consecrated themselves to the service by repeatedly uttering the cry, *Labbeik! Labbeik!* which signifies, 'Here am I, O Lord! Here am I!' The victims were then set apart for sacrifice; their heads having been turned towards Mecca, ornaments were hung about their necks, and a mark affixed upon their right sides. Seventy camels were thus 'devoted'; amongst them was the camel of Abu Jahl,

¹ A few of the Beni Aslam joined, and they are consequently reckoned among the 'Refugees.'

taken on the field of Bedr. This done, the pilgrims moved forward by the ordinary stages. A troop of twenty horse marched in advance to give notice of danger. The pilgrims carried no arms but such as allowed by custom to the traveller, namely, each a sheathed sword, a bow and well-filled quiver. The Prophet took his wife Omm Salma with him.

Tidings of Mahomet's approach soon reached Mecca; and, notwithstanding the pious object and unwarlike attitude of the pilgrims, filled the Coreish with apprehension. They did not credit their peaceful professions; and suspected treachery. The citizens of Mecca, joined by the surrounding tribes, were quickly under arms, and took up ground on the Medina road, resolved to perish rather than allow Mahomet to enter. A body of 200 horse, under Khalid and Ikrima son of Abu Jahl, was pushed forward in advance.

Coreish
oppose
advance of
Mahomet

Mahomet had nearly reached Osfan, the second stage from Mecca, when a scout returned with this intelligence: 'The Coreish,' he said, 'are encamped at Dzu Towa, clothed in panthers' skins;¹ their wives and little ones are with them; and they have sworn to die rather than let thee pass.' Shortly after, the Meccan cavalry came in sight, and Mahomet's horse went forward to hold them in check. Further advance on the high road was now impossible without a battle, and for this Mahomet was not yet prepared. He halted, and, having procured a guide, turned to the right by a route safe from the enemy's horse, and, after a fatiguing march through devious and rugged pathways, reached Hodeibia, an open space on the verge of the sacred territory encircling Mecca. Here his camel stopped, and, planting her fore legs firmly on the ground, refused to stir another step. 'She is weary,' said the people, as they urged her forward. 'Nay,' exclaimed Mahomet, 'Al Caswa is not weary; but the same hand restraineth her as aforesaid held back the Elephant,'—alluding to the invasion of Abraha. 'By the Lord!' he continued, 'no request of the Coreish this day, for the honour of the Holy place, shall be denied by me.' So he alighted, and all the people with him, at Hodeibia. Some wells were on the spot, but, being choked with sand, there was little or no water in them. Mahomet, taking an arrow from

Mahomet
leaves road,
and en-
camps at
Hodeibia

¹ Expressive symbolically of the fixed resolution of the Coreish to fight to the last, like beasts of prey.

his quiver (the only implement at hand), made one of his followers descend a well, and with it scrape away the obstructing sand. Abundance of water soon accumulated.¹

Negotiations
between
Coreish and
Mahomet

The road from Hodeibia led by a circuitous route to Lower Mecca.² The Coreish no sooner learned that the pilgrims had taken this direction, than they fell back on the city for its defence, and began sending deputations to ascertain the real intentions of Mahomet. Hodeibia being only a short stage distant, the communications were rapid and frequent. Bodeil, a Khozsaite chief, with a party of his tribe, was the first to approach. He acquainted Mahomet with the excited state of the Coreish, and their resolve to defend the city to the last. The Prophet replied, that it was not for war he had come forth: 'I have no other design,' he said, 'but to perform the pilgrimage of the Holy house: and whosoever hindereth us therefrom, we shall fight against them.' Orwa, a chief from Tayif, and son-in-law of Abu Soflan, was the next ambassador. He came, saying 'that the people of Mecca were desperate. They will not suffer this rabble of thine to approach the city; I swear that even now I see thee as it were, by the morrow, deserted by them all.' At this Abu Bekr started up and warmly resented the imputation. Orwa, not heeding him, became still more earnest in his speech, and (according to the familiar Bedouin custom) stretched forth his hand to take hold of Mahomet's beard. 'Back!' cried a bystander, striking his arm. 'Hold thy hands from off the Prophet of God!' 'And who is this?' said Orwa, surprised at the interposition of a red-haired ungainly youth. 'It is thy brother's son, Moghira.' 'O ungrateful!' he exclaimed (alluding to his having paid compensation for certain murders committed by his nephew), 'it is but as yesterday that I redeemed thy life.' These and other scenes at the interview struck Orwa with a deep sense

¹ This has been magnified into a miracle. As soon as the arrow was *planted* in the hitherto empty well, the fountain gushed up so rapidly that the people sitting on the brink could draw water at ease. By another account, Mahomet spat into the well, on which a spring immediately bubbled up. According to a third tradition, he thrust his hand into a vessel, on which the water poured forth as it were from between his fingers, and all drank therefrom: 'The stream would have sufficed for a hundred thousand people.'

² It probably joined the Jedda road, some little distance from the city.

of the reverence and devotion of the Moslems towards their Prophet; and this he endeavoured to impress upon the Coreish, when he carried back to them a message resembling that taken by Bodeil. But the Coreish were firm. Whatever his intentions, Mahomet should not approach the city with any show of force, and thus humble them in the eyes of all Arabia. 'Tell him,' they said, 'that this year he must go back; but in the year following he may come, and having entered Mecca then perform the pilgrimage.' One of their messengers was chief of the Bedouin tribes around Mecca. The goodly row of victims, with their sacrificial ornaments, and the marks of having been long tied up for this pious object, at once convinced him of the sincerity of Mahomet's peaceful professions. But the Coreish, on his return, refused to listen. 'Thou art a simple Arab of the desert,' they said, 'and knowest not the devices of other men.' The Bedouin chief was enraged at the slight, and swore that, if they continued to oppose the advance of Mahomet, he would retire with all his Arabs. The threat alarmed the Coreish. 'Have patience for a little while,' they said, 'until we can make such terms as are needful for our security.' Negotiations were then in earnest opened.

The first messenger from the Moslem camp the Coreish had seized and treated roughly; they maimed the camel on which he rode, and even threatened his life. But the feeling being now more pacific, Mahomet desired Omar to go as his ambassador. Omar excused himself on account of the personal enmity of the Coreish; he had, moreover, no influential relatives in the city who could shield him from danger; and he pointed to Othman, who belonged to one of the most powerful families in Mecca, as a fitter envoy. Othman consented, and was at once despatched. On entering the city, he received the protection of a cousin, and went straightway to Abu Sofian and the other chiefs. 'We come,' said Othman, 'to visit the Holy house, to honour it, and to perform worship there. We have brought victims with us, and after slaying them we shall depart in peace.' They replied that Othman, if he chose, might visit the Kaaba and worship there; but as for Mahomet, they had sworn that this year he should not enter the precincts of their city. Othman declined the offer, and retired carrying their message to the camp.

Deputation
of Othman
to Coreish

*The Pledge
of the Tree,
on report of
Othman's
murder*

During his absence, there was great excitement at Hodeibia. Some considerable delay having occurred, a report gained currency that he had been murdered at Mecca. Anxiety and alarm overspread the camp. Mahomet himself began to suspect treachery; taking his stand under the thick shade of an acacia tree, and surrounded by the whole body of the pilgrims, he required a pledge from them of faithful service, and that they would stand by Othman to the death. When all had taken thus the solemn oath, striking each one the palm of his hand on that of the Prophet, he himself struck his own right hand upon his left in token that he would stand by his absent Son-in-law. While war and revenge thus breathed throughout the pilgrim camp, their fears were suddenly relieved by the reappearance of Othman. But 'the Pledge of the Tree' is a scene to which the Prophet ever after loved to revert; for here the strong feelings of devotion and sympathy between him and his followers had found fitting and ardent expression. Their martial spirit and religious fervour had been excited to the highest pitch; and they were prepared at once to rush upon the enemy with resistless onset. It was one of those romantic occasions so congenial to an Arab's spirit, and which survives for ever in his memory.

*Treaty
between
Mahomet
and Co-
reish*

After some further interchange of messages, the Coreish deputed Suheil,¹ and other representatives, with power to conclude a treaty of peace. The conference was long, and the discussion, especially on the part of Omar, warm. But at last the terms were settled. A ten years' truce, on the one hand, secured the safety of the Syrian caravans; while, on the other, it gave free liberty to converts passing over to the Moslem side. Mahomet summoned Aly to write from his dictation. And thus he began:—

'IN THE NAME OF GOD, MOST GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL!' —'Stop!' said Suheil. 'As for God, we know Him; but this new name, we know it not. Say, as we have always said, *In thy name, O God!*' Mahomet yielded. 'Write,' he said—

'IN THY NAME, O GOD! *These are the conditions of peace between Mahomet the Prophet of God and*'—'Stop again!'

¹ See the incident regarding him after the battle of Bedr, p. 225.

interposed Suheil. 'If thou wert what thou sayest, I had not taken up arms against thee. Write, as the custom is, thine own name and thy father's name.' 'Write, then,' continued Mahomet, calmly,—'*between Mahomet son of Abdallah, and Suheil son of Amr.* War shall be suspended for ten years. Whosoever wisheth to join Mahomet, or enter into treaty with him, shall have liberty to do so; and likewise whosoever wisheth to join the Coreish, or enter into treaty with them. If one goeth over to Mahomet without the permission of his guardian, he shall be sent back to his guardian; but should any of the followers of Mahomet return to the Coreish, they shall not be sent back. Mahomet shall retire this year without entering the City. In the coming year, Mahomet may visit Mecca, he and his followers, for three days, during which the Coreish shall retire and leave the City to them. But they may not enter it with any weapons, save those of the traveller, namely, to each a sheathed sword. *The witnesses hereof are Abu Bekr, &c.*¹ A copy, duly attested, was made over to Suheil and his comrades, who, taking it, departed. The original was kept by Mahomet.

Deputies of Coreish depart

Though unable to enter Mecca, Mahomet resolved to complete such ceremonies of the pilgrimage as the nature of the spot admitted. So he sacrificed the victims, and concluded the solemnities by shaving his head. The rest of the pilgrims having followed his example,² the assembly broke up, and, after a stay at Hodeibia of ten or fifteen days, began their homeward march.

Mahomet and his followers sacrifice their victims

The people, led by the Vision to anticipate an unopposed visit to the Kaaba, were crestfallen at the abortive result of their long journey. But, in truth, a great step had been gained by Mahomet. His political status, as an equal and

Although people disappointed, treaty gave Mahomet great advantages

¹ Here follow eight other names, viz.—Omar, Abd al Rahmân, Sad ibn Abu Wakkas, Othman, Abu Obeida, Mohammed ibn Maslama, Huweitib ibn Abd al Ozza, and Mukriz ibn Hafaz (the last two Coreish), and below the signatures these words: 'The upper part of this was written by Aly' (meaning probably the text of the treaty above the signatures).

² Some *cut* their hair instead of shaving it. There is a great array of tradition to prove that Mahomet blessed the 'Cutters,' as well as the 'Shavers,' of their hair. Among the miracles mentioned on the occasion is this, 'that the Lord sent a strong wind which swept the hair of the Pilgrims into the sacred Territory,' within a stone's throw of the camp;—thus signifying acceptance of the rite, notwithstanding its performance on common ground.

independent Power, was acknowledged by the treaty: the ten years' truce would afford opportunity and time for the new religion to expand, and to force its claims upon the conviction of the Coreish; while conquest, material as well as spiritual, might be pursued on every other side. The stipulation that no one under the protection of a guardian should leave the Coreish without his guardian's consent, though unpopular at Medina, was in accordance with the principles of Arabian society; and the Prophet had sufficient confidence in the loyalty of his own people and the superior attractions of Islam, to fear no ill effect from the counter clause that none should be delivered up who might desert his standard. Above all, it was a great and manifest success that free permission was conceded to visit Mecca in the following year, and for three days occupy the city undisturbed. A Revelation appeared accordingly, to place in a clear light this view of the treaty, and raise the drooping spirits of the pilgrims. At the close of the first march, the pilgrims might be seen hurrying across the plain, urging their camels from all directions, and crowding round the Prophet. 'Inspiration hath descended on him,' passed from mouth to mouth throughout the camp. Standing upright upon his camel, Mahomet recited the Sura entitled 'The Victory,' which opens thus:—

In Coran
it is styled
a *Victory*

Sura xlvii

Verily We have given unto thee an evident Victory;—

That God may pardon thee the Sin that is past and that which is to come, and fulfil His favour upon thee, and lead thee in the right way; and that God may assist thee with a glorious assistance.

Bedouins
denounced
for not
joining
pilgrimage

After this opening pæan, and reference to future recompense in heaven and hell, Mahomet proceeds with a scathing denunciation of the Arabs of the desert, who by false pretences had excused themselves from the pilgrimage. Their brave words would shortly be tested in battle with 'a people terrible in war.'¹ Meanwhile, as the penalty for malingering (a penalty hateful to the Bedouin), they are forbidden to join,

¹ The meaning apparently is that these Arabs would first have to prove themselves in real and severe fighting (perhaps in Syria or elsewhere) before they were again allowed to join in easy expeditions for booty.

or share in the plunder of any marauding excursion whatsoever:—

The Arabs who stayed behind will say to thee,—*Our Possessions and our Families engaged us ; wherefore ask thou Pardon for us.* They say that with their tongues which is not in their hearts ;—Say ;—And who could procure for you any other thing from God, if He intended against you Evil,—or if He intended for you Good. Verily God is acquainted with that which ye do. Truly ye thought that the Apostle and the Believers would not return to their Families again for ever ; this thought was decked out in your hearts ; ye imagined an evil Imagination ; and ye are a corrupt people. * * * Those that stayed behind will say when ye go forth again for the Spoil, *Suffer us to follow you.* They seek to change the word of God. Say ;—*Ye shall not follow us !* for thus hath God already spoken. And they will say ;—*Nay but ye grudge us* (a share in the booty). By no means. They are a People that understandeth little. Say unto the Bedouins that stayed behind, Ye shall hereafter be called out against a People of great might in war, with whom ye shall fight, or else they shall profess Islam. Then if ye obey, God will give you a fair reward ; but if ye turn back as ye have turned back heretofore, He shall chastise you with a grievous chastisement. Sura xlviii

The pilgrims who took the solemn oath under the Acacia tree are then applauded for their faithfulness. It was the hand of God himself, not the hand of His Apostle merely, which then was struck.¹ Victory and great spoil should be their reward :— Further notices of this expedition in the Coran

Verily God was well pleased with the Believers, when they pledged themselves to Thee under the Tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He caused Tranquillity² to descend upon them, and granted them a speedy Victory ;—And Spoils in abundance, which they shall take.³ God hath promised you great Spoil, which ye shall seize ; and He hath sent this (truce) beforehand. He hath restrained the hands of men from you, that it may be a sign unto the Believers, and that He may guide you into the right way. And yet other (Spoils are prepared for you), over which ye have as yet no power. But God hath Sura xlviii

¹ The hand of God is upon their hands, v. 10.

² Sekina (Shechina), Divine influence overshadowing the heart. According to Sprenger, the tree having been mentioned in the Coran, Omar had it cut down, lest it should become an object of worship.

³ Mahomet had no doubt Kheibar, and other expeditions northward, in his mind's eye at the moment: the prospect also would no doubt aggravate the chagrin of the Bedouins at the loss of so fine a prize.

encompassed them ; for God is over all things powerful. If the Unbelievers had fought against you, verily they had turned their backs. * * * It is God that restrained their hands from you, and your hands from them, in the valley of Mecca, after that He had already made you superior to them ; and God observed that which ye did. These are they which disbelieve, which hindered you from visiting the holy Temple ; and the Victims also, which were kept back, so that they reached not their destination. And had it not been for believing men, and believing women, whom ye know not, and whom ye might have trampled upon, and blame might on their account unwittingly have fallen upon you (God had not held thee back from entering Mecca ; but he did so) that God might cause such as He pleaseth to enter into His Mercy. If these had been separable, verily We had punished those of them (the inhabitants of Mecca) that disbelieve,¹ with a grievous punishment. When the Unbelievers raised scruples in their own hearts,—the scruples of Ignorance,—then God sent down Tranquillity upon His Apostle, and upon the Believers, and fixed in them the word of Piety ;² and they were the best entitled to it, and worthy of the same ;—for God comprehendeth all things.

Now hath God verified unto His Apostle the Vision in truth ;—Ye shall surely enter the Holy Temple, if it please God, in security, having your heads shaven and your hair cut. Fear ye not : for He knoweth that which ye know not. And He hath appointed for you after this a speedy Victory besides. It is He who hath sent His Apostle with Guidance, and the true Religion,—that He may exalt it above every other.

Nature and effects of the 'Victory.'

The 'evident Victory,' with which the Sura opens, has puzzled many of the commentators, who apply it to other occasions ; but their applications are all far-fetched. When the passage was ended, a bystander inquired : 'What ! is *this* the Victory ?' 'Yea,' Mahomet replied, 'by Him in whose hand is my breath, it is a Victory.' Another reminded him of the promise that they should enter Mecca unmolested. 'True ; the Lord indeed hath promised this,' said the

¹ That is, the unbelieving Coreish. Mahomet thus makes it appear that there were numerous Believers at Mecca unknown to him, and that God had held him back from attacking Mecca lest these should have been involved in the common destruction.

² This refers to the words in the preamble of the treaty objected to by the Coreish, and is in effect an apology for having yielded to Suheil in respect of the epithets there used.

Prophet ; ' but did He ever promise it for the present year ? ' The comments of Zohri, though somewhat exaggerated, are much to the purpose. ' There was no previous Victory,' he says, ' in Islam, greater than this. On all other occasions there was fighting : but here war was laid aside, tranquillity and peace restored ; the one party henceforward met and conversed freely with the other, and there was no man of sense or judgment amongst the idolaters who was not led thereby to join Islam. And truly in the two years that followed, as many persons entered the Faith as there belonged to it altogether before, or even a greater number.' ' And the proof of this,' adds Ibn Hisham, ' is that, whereas Mahomet went forth to Hodeibia with only fifteen hundred men, he was followed two years later, in the attack on Mecca, by ten thousand.'¹

One of the first effects of the treaty was that the Khozáa, who had long shown favour to the new faith, entered immediately into alliance with Mahomet. The Beni Bekr, another tribe resident in the vicinity of Mecca, on the other hand, adhered to the Coreish. The stipulation for the surrender of converts at the instance of their guardians soon gave rise to one or two peculiar incidents. The son of Suheil, the representative of the Coreish who had just concluded the treaty, rushed into the Moslem camp at Hodeibia, and desired to follow Mahomet. But his father claimed him under the compact already ratified, and, although the lad earnestly remonstrated, the claim was admitted. ' Have patience, Abu Jandal ! ' said Mahomet to him as he was dragged away,— ' put thy trust in the Lord. He will work out for thee,

Beni
Khozáa
enter into
alliance
with
Mahomet

Suheil's son
given up by
Mahomet

¹ The truth is, that tradition depreciates the treaty in the light of subsequent events. It appeared strange in after days that he, who within two years was supreme at Mecca, could now be suing for permission to enter it, and that he was not only satisfied with the scanty terms obtained, but could even call them a ' Victory.' His present weakness was overlooked in the consideration of later triumphs. Hence the vaunting speech at Hodeibia put into Omar's mouth, that ' had these terms been settled by any other than by Mahomet himself,—even by a commander of his appointment, he had scorned to listen to them ; ' and the indignant conversation he is said to have held with Abu Bekr : ' What ! Is not Mahomet the Prophet of God ? Are we not Moslems ? Are not they Infidels ? Why then is our divine religion to be thus lowered ? ' Hence also the alleged unwillingness of the people to kill their victims at Hodeibia ; for, says Ibn Hisham, they were like men dying of vexation.

and for others like-minded with thee, a way of deliverance.'¹

Abu Basir
gathers
band of
marauders,
and
harasses
Coreish

Some little time after Mahomet had returned home, Abu Basir, a young convert, effected his escape from Mecca, and appeared at Medina. His guardians sent two servants with a letter to bring the deserter back. The obligation of surrender was at once admitted, and Abu Basir was led away. But he had travelled only a few miles, when he seized the sword of one of the servants and slew him. The other fled back to Medina; Abu Basir himself followed, the naked sword in his hand still reeking with blood. Both soon reached the presence of Mahomet; the servant to complain of the murder, Abu Basir to plead for his freedom. The youth contended that as the Prophet had once for all fulfilled the letter of the treaty in delivering him up, he was now free to remain behind. Mahomet gave no direct reply. His answer was enigmatical; but after an exclamation in praise of his bravery,² he added aside: '*What a kindler of war, if he had but with him a body of adherents!*' Thus encouraged, Abu Basir quitted Medina and, accompanied by five other Meccan youths, took up his position by the sea-shore on the caravan road to Syria. The words of Mahomet were not long in becoming known at Mecca, and the restless youth of the Coreish, receiving them as a suggestion to follow the same example, set out to join Abu Basir, who was soon surrounded with about seventy followers desperate as himself. They waylaid every caravan from Mecca (for since the truce, traffic with Syria had again sprung up) and spared the life of no one. The Coreish were at length so harassed by these attacks, that they solicited the interference of Mahomet, and, on condition that the outrages were stopped, waived their right to have the deserters delivered up. Mahomet acceded to the request, and summoned

¹ The story is told with much over-colouring. Abu Jandal came up just as the treaty was completed, having escaped from Mecca *in his chains*. His father beat him and dragged him away. He screamed aloud to the Moslems to save him: but Mahomet said that he could not diverge from the terms of the treaty just concluded. Omar walked by the lad as he was being led back, and comforted him with such words as these: '*The blood of these infidels is no better than the blood of dogs.*' The whole story is so exaggerated, that it is difficult to say what degree of truth there is in it. But it must have had *some* foundation in fact.

² '*Alas for his mother!*' signifying that his bravery would surely lead him to be killed in some daring conflict.

the marauders to desist. Abu Basir was on his death-bed when he received the order; but the rest returned and took up their abode at Medina.¹

The stipulation for the surrender of deserters made no distinction as to sex. A female having fled to Medina, her brothers followed and demanded her restoration under the terms of truce. Mahomet demurred. The Oracle was called in, and it gave judgment in favour of the woman. Women who came over to Medina were to be 'tried,' and, if their profession was found sincere, to be retained. The unbelief of their husbands had, in fact, dissolved their marriage; they now might legally contract fresh nuptials with Believers, provided only that restitution were made of any sums expended by their former husbands as dower upon them. The marriage bond was similarly annulled between Believers and their wives who had remained behind at Mecca;—their dowers, moreover, might be reckoned in adjusting the payments due to the Coreish on account of the women retained at Medina. Though the rule is thus laid down at length in the Coran, few instances are cited by tradition.²

Rule as to women who fled from Mecca to Medina

¹ The whole story is probably exaggerated; for Mahomet, though within the letter of the treaty, was bound by its spirit to promote amity and peace.

² The woman here mentioned as coming over to Medina was daughter of Ooba, so cruelly executed by Mahomet after Bedr. Another similar refugee is noticed by C. de Perceval as married to Omar. On the other hand, Omar divorced Coreina, his wife, who remained at Mecca, and thereafter was married by Abu Sofian. Another similar case is cited by Ibn Hisham.

The rule is given in the 60th Sura, which opens with strong remonstrances against making friends of unbelievers; and proceeds thus:—

'O ye that believe! When believing women come over unto you as Refugees, then try them; God well knoweth their faith. And if ye know them to be Believers, return them not again unto the infidels; they are not lawful (as wives) unto the infidels; neither are the infidels lawful (as husbands) unto them. But give unto them (the infidels) what they may have expended (on their dowers). It is no sin for you that ye marry them, after that ye shall have given them (the women) their dowers. And retain not the patronage of the unbelieving women; but demand back that which ye have spent (in their dowers); and let the infidels demand back what they have spent (on the women which come over to you). This is the judgment of God, which He establisheth between you; and God is knowing and wise.

'And if any of your wives escape from you unto the infidels, and ye have your turn (by the elopement of their wives unto you), then give to those whose wives have gone (out of the dowers of the latter) a sum equal to that which they have expended (on the dowers of the former); and fear

A A

Mahomet's
dream of
universal
conformity
to Islam

The pilgrimage to Hodeibia is the last event of importance during the Sixth year of Mahomet's residence at Medina. But towards its close a new and singular project occupied his attention. It was nothing less than to summon the sovereigns of the surrounding States and Empires to listen to his teaching. The principles of Mahomet had been slowly but surely tending towards this end. Wherever his arms had reached, the recognition of his Mission had been peremptorily demanded. Throughout the Peninsula it was his object that there should be no other religion than Islam. An exception indeed was made in favour of Jews and Christians; but even these, if they retained their faith, must pay tribute, as an admission of inferiority. He now dreamed of something even beyond Arabia. It may seem a chimerical and wild design in the Prophet of Medina,—scarcely able as yet to maintain his own position, helplessly besieged twelve months before, and forced but lately to retire from Mecca with the purpose of pilgrimage unfulfilled,—that he should seek to extend his Mission to Egypt, Abyssinia, and Syria, nay even to the Roman and Persian Empires. But so it was. Apart from the steadfast and lofty conviction which he had of his duty as the Apostle of God, it is not to be supposed that one so sagacious and discerning should have failed to perceive an ominous disintegration in the signs of the times. The Roman Empire, broken and wearied by successive shocks of barbarous invasion, was now wasted by a long and devastating war with Persia. Schism had rent and paralysed the Christian Church. The Melchites and the

God in whom ye believe. O Prophet! when believing women come unto thee, and plight their faith unto thee that they will not associate any with God, that they will not steal, neither commit adultery, that they will not kill their children, nor promulgate a calumny forged between their hands and their feet, and that they will not be disobedient unto thee in that which is reasonable,—then pledge thy faith unto them, and seek pardon of God for them. For God is gracious and merciful.'

Stanley (on 1 Cor. vii. 1-40) quotes the above passage, and says that the rule it contains 'resembles that of the Apostle.' But there is really no analogy between them; the Christian inculcation differs *toto celo* from that of Mahomet: 'If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away';—and similarly the case of a believing wife with an unbelieving husband (1 Cor. vii. 12-16). Whereas Mahomet declares the marriage bond *ipso facto* annulled by the unbelief of either party, which indeed was only to be expected from the ideas he entertained regarding the marriage contract.

Jacobites, the Monothelites and the Nestorians, regarded each other with a deadly hatred, and were ready to welcome any intruder who would rid them of their adversaries. The new faith would sweep away all the sophistries about which they vainly contended: still holding fast the groundwork of previous Revelations, it would substitute a reformed and universal religion for the effete and erring systems which man had overlaid them with. Superstition, Mariolatry, and every form of Polytheism would fall, and the claims of truth in the end prevail. Such probably were the thoughts of Mahomet, when he determined to send embassies to the Kaiser and the Chosroes, to Abyssinia, Egypt, Syria, and Yemama.

It was suggested by one of his followers that the kings of the earth accepted no communication unless attested by a seal. Accordingly Mahomet had one made of silver, and engraved with the words MAHOMET THE APOSTLE OF GOD.¹ Letters were written and sealed, and six messengers simultaneously despatched to their various destinations on the opening of the new year, as shall be further related in the following chapter.

Seal engraved; and despatches prepared for foreign princes

¹ We are told that his messengers, 'like the Apostles of Jesus,' were immediately endowed with the faculty of speaking the language of the country to which they were deputed. But Mahomet evidently selected for the purpose men who, as travellers, merchants, or otherwise, had before visited the respective countries. Thus Dihya was sent to Syria. (See *ante*, p. 335.) Less trustworthy authorities make these embassies to have started from Medina, on various dates. But Wakidy's secretary states distinctly that all set out *on the same day*, in Moharram, A.H. VII.

CHAPTER XX

EMBASSIES TO VARIOUS SOVEREIGNS AND PRINCES

A.H. VII.—A.D. 627

Struggle
between
the two
empires,
A.D. 609—
627

A.H. I
A.D. 622

A.H. II.—IV.
A.D. 628—
625

July,
A.D. 626

March,
A.D. 627

A.H. VI.
A.D. 627

February,
March,
A.D. 628

FROM a period as far back as the assumption by Mahomet of the prophetic office, the Roman and Persian kingdoms had been waging with each other a ceaseless deadly warfare. Until the year A.D. 621 unvarying success attended the Persian arms. Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor were overrun. Constantinople itself was threatened. At last, Heraclius awoke from his inglorious lethargy; and, about the time of Mahomet's flight from Mecca, was driving his invaders from their fastnesses in Asia Minor. In the second campaign he carried the war into the heart of Persia. During the three years in which the Kaiser was by this brilliant stroke retrieving the fortunes of the Empire, Mahomet was engaged in his doubtful struggle with the Coreish. Then came the critical siege of Constantinople by the Avars and Persians which preceded by little more than half a year the siege of Medina known as the battle of the Ditch. It is curious to remark that while the Moslems attributed the sudden departure of Abu Sofian and his Arab hosts to the interposition of the Almighty, the Greeks equally ascribed their signal deliverance from the hordes of the Chagan to the favour of the Virgin. In the third campaign, 627 A.D., Heraclius followed up his previous success, and at the close of the year achieved the decisive victory of Nineveh. In this action the forces of Persia were irretrievably broken; the Chosroes fled from his capital; and, early in the following year, was murdered by his son Siroes, who ascended the throne and concluded a treaty of peace with the Emperor. About the same period Mahomet was at Hodeibia, ratifying his truce with the chiefs of Mecca.

During the autumn, Heraclius, in fulfilment of his vow for the splendid success which had just crowned his arms, performed on foot the pilgrimage from Edessa to Jerusalem, where the 'True cross,' recovered from the Persians, was with solemn pomp restored to the Holy sepulchre. While preparing for this journey, or during the journey itself, an uncouth despatch, in the Arabic character, was laid before him. It was forwarded by the Governor of Bostra, into whose hands it had been delivered by an Arab envoy. The epistle was addressed to the Emperor himself, from 'Mahomet the Apostle of God,' the rude impression of whose seal could be deciphered at the foot. In strange and simple accents, like those of the Prophets of old, it summoned Heraclius to acknowledge the mission of Mahomet, to cast aside the idolatrous worship of Jesus and his Mother, and to return to the Catholic faith of the one only God.¹ The letter was probably cast aside, or preserved, it may be, as a strange curiosity, the effusion of some harmless fanatic.²

Not long after, another despatch, bearing the same seal, and couched in similar terms, reached the court of Heraclius. It was addressed to Hârith VII., prince of the Beni Ghassân, who forwarded it to the Emperor, with an address from him-

I. Despatch of Mahomet to Heraclius. A.H. VII. A.D. 628

II. Despatch to Ghassanide Prince.

¹ The terms of this and the other despatches are altogether uncertain. The drafts given by tradition, with the replies, are apocryphal, and tinged with the idea of universal conquest, as yet existing (if at all) only in embryo. The ordinary copy of the letter to Heraclius contains a passage from the Coran which, as shown by Well, was not revealed till the 9th year of the Hegira. Dihya was desired by Mahomet to forward this despatch through the Governor of Bostra.

² Here is another tradition. 'Now the Emperor was at this time at Hims, performing a pedestrian journey, in fulfilment of the vow which he had made that, if the Romans overcame the Persians, he would travel on foot from Constantinople to Ælia (Jerusalem). So having read the letter, he commanded his chief men to meet him in the royal camp at Hims. And thus he addressed them: "Ye chiefs of Rome! Do ye desire safety and guidance, so that your kingdom shall be firmly established, and that ye may follow the commands of Jesus son of Mary?" "And what, O King! shall secure us this?" "Even that ye follow the Arabian Prophet," said Heraclius. Hearing this they all started aside like wild asses of the desert, each raising his cross and waving it aloft in the air. Whereupon, Heraclius, despairing of their conversion, and unwilling to lose his kingdom, desisted, saying that he had only wished to test their constancy and faith, and that he was now satisfied by this display of firmness and devotion. The courtiers bowed their heads; and so the Prophet's despatch was rejected.'

self, soliciting permission to chastise the audacious impostor.¹ But Heraclius, regarding the ominous voice from Arabia beneath his notice, forbade the expedition, and desired that Hârith should be in attendance at Jerusalem, to swell the imperial train at the approaching visitation of the Temple. Little did the Emperor imagine that the kingdom which, unperceived by the world, this obscure Pretender was founding in Arabia, would in a few short years wrest from his grasp that Holy city, and the fair provinces which, with so much toil and so much glory, he had just recovered from the Persians!

III. Despatch to King of Persia

The despatch for the King of Persia reached the court probably some months after the accession of Siroes. It was delivered to the Monarch, who, on hearing the contents, tore it in pieces. When this was reported to Mahomet, he prayed and said: 'Even thus, O Lord! rend thou his kingdom from him!'

Conversion of Badzân, Governor of Yemen.
A.H. VI.
A.D. 628

An incident of date somewhat earlier, in connection with the Court of Persia, was followed by results of considerable importance. A few months before his overthrow, the Chosroes, receiving strange reports of the prophetic claims of Mahomet, and of the depredations committed on the Syrian border by his marauding bands, had sent orders to Badzân, the Persian Governor of Yemen, to despatch two envoys to Medina, and thus procure trustworthy information regarding the Pretender. Badzân obeyed, and with the messengers sent a courteous

¹ In the account of these events, it is difficult to say what grains of truth mingle with fiction. The messenger of Mahomet found Hârith in the gardens of Damascus, busied with preparations for the reception of the Emperor shortly expected on his way to Jerusalem. He waited at the gate of Hârith three or four days, audience being granted at certain intervals. During this delay, the Porter having been instructed about Mahomet and his doctrine, wept and said: 'I read the Gospel, and I find therein the description of this Prophet exactly as thou tellest me:' thereupon he embraced Islam, and desired his salutation to be given to the Prophet. On a set day, Hârith, sitting in state, called for the messenger, and had the despatch read. Then he cast it aside and said: 'Who is he that will snatch my kingdom from me? I will march against him, were he even in Yemen.' He became very angry, and, having called out his army in battle array, said to the messenger: 'Go, tell thy Master that which thou seest.' The messenger, however, was afterwards permitted to wait for the reply of Heraclius: on its receipt, Hârith dismissed him with a present of one hundred mithcals of gold. When it was reported to the Prophet, he said that the kingdom had departed from Hârith; and so Hârith died the following year.

despatch to Mahomet. By this time, however, tidings had reached the Prophet of the deposition and death of the Persian Monarch. When the letter, therefore, was read before him, Mahomet smiled at its contents, and summoned the envoys to embrace Islam. He apprised them of the murder of the Chosroes, and accession of his son: 'Go,' said he, 'inform your master of this, and require him to tender his submission to the Prophet of the Lord.' The glory of Persia had now departed. Long ago she had relaxed her grasp upon Arabia; and the Governor of Yemen was now free to choose a protectorate more congenial to his people. Badzân therefore gladly recognised the rising fortunes of Islam, and signified his adhesion to the Prophet. From the distance, however, his allegiance was at the first little more than nominal; but the accession served as a point for further action, and meanwhile added fresh prestige to the Prophet's name.

The envoy sent by Mahomet to Egypt was courteously received by Muckoukas, the Roman Governor, but dismissed with a gentle and evasive answer. While declining to admit the claims of the Prophet, he gave substantial proof of friendly feeling in valuable presents which he forwarded with this reply;—'I am aware that a Prophet is yet to arise; but I am of opinion that he will appear in Syria. Thy messenger hath been received with honour. I send for thine acceptance two sisters, such as are prized among the Copts, a present of raiment, and a mule for thee to ride upon.' Though Mahomet ascribed the unbelief of Muckoukas to fear lest the government should slip from his hands, yet he willingly accepted the gifts. The two slave girls, indeed (strange present from a Christian prince), were well suited to his tastes. Mary, the fairest, was retained for his own harem; Shirin, the other, was presented to Hassân, the Poet, who, since his reconciliation with Ayesha, had regained the Prophet's favour. The mule was white,—a rarity in Arabia; it was greatly prized, and was constantly ridden by Mahomet.

The court of Abyssinia stood in a different relation to Mahomet from that of the other kingdoms to which he addressed his apostolic summons. There his followers had long ago found a secure and hospitable retreat from the persecutions of the Coreish; and although about forty had rejoined the

IV. Despatch to Governor of Egypt

V. Despatch to King of Abyssinia

Prophet after his flight to Medina, there still remained fifty or sixty enjoying the protection of the Abyssinian Prince. Amr ibn Omeyya was now the bearer of two despatches to him.¹ One was couched in language like that addressed to the other Christian kings; and to this the Negus replied in terms of humble acquiescence,—embracing the new faith, and mourning over his inability to join in person the standard of the Prophet.² In the second despatch, the Prophet begged that his remaining followers might now be sent to Medina; and the request was added that, before their departure, the Prince would betroth to him Omm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sofian, whose early charms, though she was now five-and-thirty years of age, still held a place in his imagination. Her former husband Obeidallah, one of the ‘Four Inquirers,’ after emigrating a Moslem to Abyssinia, had there embraced Christianity, and died in its profession. By this alliance Mahomet at once gratified his desire for fresh nuptials (he had been now a whole year without adding any new inmate to his harem); and, perhaps, further hoped to make Abu Sofian, the father of Omm Habiba, more favourable to his cause.³ The Prince performed with readiness the part assigned him in the ceremony. He also provided two ships for the exiles, in which they all embarked, and in the autumn reached Medina safely.

Omm
Habiba
betrothed
to Mahomet

Abyssinian
refugees
reach
Medina.
August,
A.D. 628.

VI. De-
spatch to
Chief of
Yemama

The sixth messenger was sent to Haudha, chief of the Beni Hanifa, a Christian tribe, in Yemama. He was hospitably entertained; and the chief, having presented him with change of raiment and provisions for the journey home, dismissed him with this reply for his master: ‘How excellent is that Revelation to which thou invitest me, and how beau-

¹ Mentioned above, p. 339.

² I have before, p. 90, given grounds for doubting the conversion of the Negus. It was quite possible for a Christian Prince, more especially if he held Arian or Nestorian views, and had seen only certain portions of the Coran (those for example containing attestations of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and exhortations against idolatry), to have expressed an assent to the terms of Mahomet’s epistle. For the efforts of the various Christian sects to gain over the Abyssinians, see Gibbon, chapter xivii.

³ Sprenger questions this view and thinks that, with the Arab sentiments regarding women, Mahomet’s marriage with his daughter must, so long as he was unconverted, have been a mortification to Abu Sofian, rather than a satisfaction. Omm Habiba survived Mahomet some thirty years, and died during the Caliphate of her brother Muavia.

tiful! Know that I am the Poet of my tribe, and an Orator. The Arabs revere my dignity. Grant unto me, therefore, a share in the rule, and I will follow thee.' When Mahomet had read the answer, he said: 'Had this man asked of me but an unripe date, as his share in the land, I would not have given it. Let him perish, and his vainglory with him!' Thus cursed, Haudha died, we are told, in the following year.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONQUEST OF KHEIBAR

A.H. VII.—*August and September*, A.D. 628

ÆTAT. 60

Expedition
against
Kheibar

ON his way back from Hodeibia, in the spring of the year, Mahomet, as we have seen, had foretold 'a speedy victory and spoils in abundance elsewhere.' The summer passed quietly, and it was autumn before measures were taken to fulfil the promise. The destined prey was the Jewish settlement of Kheibar on the way to Syria.

Army
marches.
A.H. VII.
August,
A.D. 628

The army marched from Medina, 1,600 strong; being about the same number as had followed the Prophet on his pilgrimage to Hodeibia. But the force was greatly more powerful in cavalry, the number being estimated at above a hundred; while it had never before exceeded thirty. Many of the Citizens and the Bedonins who had neglected the former summons, would gladly now have joined the tempting expedition; but, according to the divine injunction, they were not permitted, and their mortification was great at being left behind. Omm Salma was again the favoured companion of the Prophet.

Kheibar
surprised

The distance, about a hundred miles, was accomplished in three forced marches. So quick was the movement and the surprise so complete, that the cultivators of Kheibar, issuing forth in the morning to their fields, suddenly found themselves confronted by a great army, and rushed back to the city in dismay. The rapidity of the approach cut off all hope of timely aid from the Beni Ghatafân.¹

¹ According to Ibn Hisham, Mahomet took up a position so as to cut off their assistance, and adds that the Ghatafân did go forth to aid their allies, but returned on a rumour that their own homes were being attacked. The fact, however, is that Mahomet's advent was totally unexpected. 'When the Moslem army alighted before Kheibar, they did not stir that

The rich vale of Kheibar was studded with villages and fortresses rudely built but posted strongly on the rocks or eminences which here and there rose from amidst the luxuriant date-groves and fields of corn. One by one, before any opposition could be organised, these forts were attacked and carried. 'Kharabat Kheibar,' cried Mahomet, with a jubilant play upon the name, as he passed from one stronghold triumphantly to another; 'Kheibar is undone. Allah Akbar! Great is the Lord! Truly when I light upon the coasts of any People, woe unto them in that day!' From the villages first attacked, which were gained with little loss, Mahomet proceeded to the strong fortress of Camuss. Here the Jews, who now had time to rally round their chief Kinána (the successor of his grandfather Abul Huckleik, assassinated some months before), posted themselves in front of the citadel, resolved on a desperate struggle. After some vain attempts to dislodge them, Mahomet planned a general attack: 'I will give the Eagle,' he said,—the great black Flag,—into the hands of one that loveth the Lord and His Apostle, even as he is beloved of them; he shall gain the victory.'¹ Next morning the flag was placed in Aly's hands, and the troops advanced. At this moment, a soldier stepped forth from the Jewish line, and challenged his adversaries to single combat: 'I am Marhab,' he cried, 'as all Kheibar knoweth, a warrior bristling with arms when the war fiercely burneth.' The first Moslem who answered the challenge, aimed a blow at the Jewish champion with deadly force, but the sword recoiled upon himself, and he fell fatally wounded.² Marhab repeat-

The fortresses one by one fall before Mahomet

General action before the fort of Camuss

night, nor did a fowl cackle at them, till the sun arose. At dawn, the inhabitants opened their fortresses as usual, and went forth with their cattle, their spades, hoes, and other instruments of husbandry; suddenly perceiving the army in front they fled back into their forts, screaming: "*It is Mahomet and his hosts!*"

¹ There had been no great standard like this before. It is said to have been made out of a black mantle worn by Ayesha,—a gallant device, and was called *Uoáb*, the 'Black Eagle.' There were two other smaller banners of white, held, one by Hobáb, the other by Sad ibn Obáda, both Citizens.

² The people cried out 'He hath killed himself: his works are vain' (because of his suicidal death). 'Nay,' said Mahomet, 'he shall have a double reward!' On the road to Kheibar, this man had recited some martial verses before Mahomet, who thanked him, saying: 'The Lord have mercy on thee!' It is said that this mode of blessing from Mahomet, invariably portended impending martyrdom. The verses, by the way, are the same as those ascribed to Mahomet at the battle of the Ditch.

ing his vainglorious challenge, Aly advanced saying: 'I am he whom my mother named *the Lion*; like a lion of the howling wilderness, I weigh my foes in the giant's balance.' The combatants closed, and Aly cleft the head of Marhab in two. Marhab's brother having rashly renewed the challenge, Zobeir went forth and slew him.¹ The Moslem line now made a general advance, and, after a sharp conflict, drove back the enemy. In this battle, Aly performed great feats of prowess. Having lost his shield, he seized the lintel of a door, which he wielded effectually in its stead. Tradition has magnified the shield into a gigantic beam, and the hero into a second Samson.² The victory was decisive, for the Jews lost 93 men; while of the Moslems, only 19 were killed throughout the whole campaign.

Jews
beaten
back with
loss

After this defeat, the citadel of Camuss surrendered, on condition that the inhabitants were free to leave the country, but that they should give up all their property to the conqueror. With the rest, came forth Kinâna, chief of Kheibar, and his cousin. Mahomet accused them of keeping back, in contravention of the compact, some part of the treasure, and notably the marriage portion Kinâna had obtained with his bride Safia, whose father perished in the slaughter of the Coreitza. 'Where are the vessels of gold,' he asked further, 'the vessels ye used to lend to the people of Mecca?' They protested that they no longer possessed them. 'If ye conceal anything from me,' said Mahomet, 'and I should gain knowledge of it, then your lives and the lives of your families shall be at my disposal.' They answered that it should be so. A recreant Jew, having divulged to Mahomet the place in which some of the valuables lay hid, he sent and fetched them. On their appearance, Kinâna was subjected to cruel torture,—fire being placed upon his breast till his breath

Kinâna
tortured
and put to
death

¹ As Zobeir walked forth to the combat, his mother Safia ran up to Mahomet in alarm, crying out that her son would be killed: 'Not so, my Aunt!' replied Mahomet; 'he will slay his fellow, if the Lord will!' Many women went from Medina on this campaign to minister to the wounded. A story, very illustrative of the combined simplicity and coarseness of Arab manners, is given in the conversation of Mahomet with a young woman of the Beni Ghifâr, who rode on the same camel, and confided to him certain of her ailments.

² The story is in the ordinary cast of exaggerated tradition. Abu Râfi, Mahomet's servant, went after the battle to see the beam, in company with seven others, who together tried to *turn it over*, and were unable.

had almost departed,'—in the hope that he would confess where the remainder was concealed. Mahomet then gave command, and the heads of both chief and cousin were severed from their bodies.

On this, Bilâl was sent to fetch Kinâna's bride, Safia, a damsel some seventeen years of age, whose beauty was probably well known at Medina.¹ He speedily performed his errand, and finding her with her cousin, brought them both across the battlefield strewed with the dead, and close by the corpses of Kinâna and his cousin. At the ghastly sight, Safia's companion screamed wildly, beating her face, and casting dust upon her head. 'Take that she-devil hence,' said Mahomet, angrily: but aside he chided Bilâl for his want of consideration in taking them by the bodies of their relatives. 'Truly,' said the heartless negro, 'I did it of purpose, to see their anger and their fright.' But Mahomet was moved by tenderer feelings; turning to Safia, he cast his mantle over her, in token that she was to be his own, and then made her over to the care of Bilâl. One of his followers had coveted this Jewish beauty; but Mahomet contented him with her cousin.

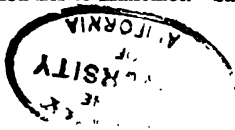
Marriage of
Mahomet
with Safia,
Kinâna's
bride,

Safia, nothing loth, transferred her affections to the conqueror, who tarried not to take her to himself.² The wedding was celebrated by an abundant feast of dates, curdled milk, and butter. Earth was heaped up into the shape of tables; on these the viands were spread, and the guests ate and made merry. Meanwhile the Prophet had charged a female attendant suitably to array the bride, and make her ready for him. When the repast was ended, the people pre-

Consum-
mated at
Kheibar

¹ No doubt this was the case, because (1) she was the daughter of a chief who had long lived at Medina, and was well known there; and (2), because Mahomet, immediately upon Kinâna's execution, sent for her and cast his mantle over her.

² The interval is not stated anywhere, but it could not have been of long duration. Ibn Hisham says the marriage took place at Kheibar, or on the way returning from it, and other traditions imply no delay. I have met no credible tradition intimating Safia's conversion, as is commonly supposed, before her marriage. Anyhow, it is clear that the period before marrying a woman previously the wife of another was not observed. Either such ordinance had not yet been imposed, or Mahomet exempted himself from its operation. Omm Salim (mother of the Prophet's servant Anis) bathed Safia, dressed her hair, and, having arrayed her in bridal attire, carried her to Mahomet. Safia's dower was her freedom.



pared for the march; and they watched Mahomet, saying: 'We shall see now whether he hath taken her for his wife or as a slave girl.' So when he called for a screen to hide her from the public gaze, they knew that he had taken her as his wife. Mahomet lowered his knee to help her to ascend the camel: and she, after some coy demur, placed her foot upon his bended knee, while he (a bridegroom now of sixty years of age) raised her into the litter, and seating himself thus before her, guided the camel in the evening to the bridal tent. In the morning he heard the noise of one rustling at the curtain of the tent. It was Abu Ayub, who had kept watch there all night with his drawn sword. 'What has brought thee here?' asked Mahomet, surprised at the inopportune presence of his friend: 'O Prophet!' he replied, 'I bethought me that the damsel is young; it is but as yesterday that she was married to Kinâna, whom thou hast slain. And thus, distrusting her, I said to myself, *I will watch by the tent and be close at hand, in case she attempt anything against thee.*' Mahomet blessed him for his careful though ill-timed vigilance, and desired him to withdraw in peace. The precaution was unnecessary; for while Mahomet was evidently enamoured of his bride, she not the less readily accommodated herself to the new alliance. It is related that she bore the mark of a bruise upon her eye; when the Prophet asked her tenderly the cause, she told him that, being yet Kinâna's bride, she saw in a dream as if the moon had fallen from the heavens into her lap; and that when she told it to Kinâna, he struck her violently, saying: 'What is this thy dream but that thou covetest the new king of the Hejaz, the Prophet, for thy husband!' The mark of the blow was the same which Mahomet saw.¹

Safia's
dream

Mahomet
partakes
a poisoned
kid

But all the fair sex of Kheibar were not so fickle and so faithless. The nuptials of Mahomet were damped by the revenge of Zeinab, sister of the warrior Marhab, who had lost her husband, as well as father and brothers, in the battle. She dressed a kid with dainty garnishing, and, having steeped it in poison, placed the dish with fair words before Mahomet at his evening repast. Graciously accepting the gift, he took for himself the shoulder, his favourite piece, and distributed

¹ Safia survived Mahomet forty years, and died A.H. 52.

portions to Abu Bekr and other friends, including one called Bishr, who sat next him. 'Hold!' cried Mahomet, as he swallowed the first mouthful, 'surely this shoulder hath been poisoned;' and he spat forth what remained in his mouth.¹ Bishr, who had eaten more than Mahomet, at once changed colour, and stirred neither hand nor foot until he died. Mahomet was seized with excruciating pain, and caused himself, and all those who had with him partaken of the dish, to be freely cupped between the shoulders. Zeinab, when put upon her defence, answered bravely;—'Thou hast inflicted grievous injuries on my people; thou hast slain my father, and my uncle, and my husband. Therefore I said within myself, if he be a Prophet he will reject the gift knowing that the kid is poisoned; but if a mere pretender, then we shall be rid of him, and the Jews again will prosper.' She was put to death.² The effect of the poison was felt by Mahomet to his dying day.³

After the victory of Camuss, the only remaining strongholds, Wath and Salalim, were invested, and, seeing no prospect of relief, capitulated. Both were thus saved from being sacked; but, like the rest of Kheibar, their lands were subjected to a tax of half the produce. Fadak, a Jewish town, not far from Kheibar, profited by the example, and, having tendered a timely submission, was admitted on the same terms. On his march homeward, Mahomet laid siege to the Jewish settlement of Wadi al Cora, which, after a resistance of one or two days, surrendered upon like conditions. The authority of Mahomet was thus established over all the Jewish tribes north of Medina.

The plunder of Kheibar was rich beyond experience. Besides vast stores of dates, oil, honey and barley, flocks of sheep and herds of camels, the spoil in treasure and jewels

Remaining fortresses, with Fadak, capitulate

Siege of Wadi al Cora.
A.H. VII.
September,
A.D. 628

Division of the rich plunder

¹ Mahomet, according to the favourite tradition, cried out, 'The shoulder tells me' (lit. '*lets me know*') that it is poisoned.' But, however this story may have grown up, the statement is clear that he 'swallowed' the first mouthful before he perceived the evil taste.

² Some say that she was set free upon making this exculpatory statement. But the balance of tradition is according to the text. Certain traditions state that she was made over to the relatives of Bishr, to be put to death judicially for having poisoned him.

³ Hence, the conceit that Mahomet had the merit of a 'martyr;' and the same is also said of Abu Bekr.

was very large.¹ A fifth was as usual set apart for the Prophet's use and for distribution at will among his family and the destitute poor. The remaining four-fifths were sold by outcry, and the proceeds, according to the prescribed rule, divided into 1,800 shares, being one for a foot soldier, and three for a horseman.

Territory,
how dis-
posed of

The villages and lands were disposed of in another way. One half, embracing all the places which surrendered without fighting, was reserved for Mahomet, and constituted thereafter a species of Crown domain. The other moiety was allotted in freehold plots, by the same rule as the personal booty. A large and permanent reward was thus secured for all who had given proof of their faith and loyalty by accompanying Mahomet to Hodeibia, and the promise made on that expedition thus amply redeemed. The Prophet, too, had now an ample revenue at his disposal. From this he made liberal assignment for the maintenance of his wives in so many measures yearly to each of dates and barley. The poor also were not forgotten. The remainder formed a reserve for the entertainment of visitors, support of auxiliaries, and other purposes of State. The power of Mahomet no longer rested on spiritual resource alone, but on the more substantial basis also of the thews and sinews of war.

Jewish
cultivators
left in occu-
pation

Even where the lands having been gained by storm were apportioned as private property, it was found expedient, in the absence of other cultivators, to leave the Jews in possession, on the same condition as with the public lands, namely, surrendering half the produce. An appraiser was deputed yearly to assess the amount, to realise the rents, and bring them to Medina.² This arrangement continued till the Caliphate of Omar, when, there being no longer any scarcity of

¹ Ibn Hisham says that, from the time of Kheibar, *slaves* became very plentiful among the Moslems. I do not, however, find that, excepting the family of Kināna, any mention is made of slaves taken at Kheibar. But money, which the victors obtained plentifully at Kheibar, could purchase them cheaply in any part of Arabia.

² Abdallah ibn Rawāha first performed this duty, being a sort of arbiter between the Jewish cultivators and the Moslem proprietors. Whenever the former charged him with exceeding in his estimate, he would say: 'If it seem good unto you, take ye the estimated sum and give us the crop, or give us the estimated sum, and keep ye the crop.' The Jews greatly esteemed his justice. He was killed the year following at Muta.

Moslem husbandmen, the Jews were expatriated, and entire possession taken of the land.¹

Some special ordinances were promulgated in this campaign. The flesh of the domestic ass (which the army on their first approach to Kheibar were driven by want of other food to eat) was forbidden, as well as that of all carnivorous animals.² Some restrictions were laid upon the immediate liberty of cohabitation heretofore enjoyed in respect of female captives; but, of whatever nature, it is clear that they did not fetter Mahomet in his marriage with the captive Safia.³ The most stringent rules were issued to prevent fraudulent appropriation from the common stock of booty. 'No Believer shall sell aught of the spoil, until it has been divided; nor shall he take a beast therefrom and, after riding upon it until it become lean, return it to the common stock; nor shall he take and wear a garment, and then send it back threadbare.' A follower was convicted of plundering two sandal-straps;

Special
ordinances
promul-
gated at
Kheibar

¹ Such is the reason assigned by Wakidy. Advantage was naturally taken by Omar, when he decided on the expatriation of the Jews, of the fact that his son Abdallah had been wounded in his possessions at Kheibar; but it is admitted that there was no proof as to who committed the outrage. Omar concluded that it must have been the Jews, simply because it was the second instance of the kind. The previous case was one of murder; but the perpetrator was not discovered, and therefore Mahomet justly paid the blood-money as a public charge.

Two other grounds to justify Omar's expulsion of the Jews are given by tradition, (1) Mahomet had stipulated that the Jews were to hold possession, pending his pleasure,—they were mere tenants-at-will. (2) Mahomet said on his death-bed that no religion but Islam was to be permitted throughout the peninsula. According to Sprenger, Omar paid the Jews of Kheibar half the value of their lands as compensation. See the *Caliphate*, p. 156.

² See similar prohibitions in the Coran as to what is torn, or dieth of itself, &c. (Sura v.). There are some curious traditions on this part of the narrative; the soldiers were everywhere boiling asses' flesh in their pots throughout the camp, when the order was given, and forthwith they all overturned their pots. Horseflesh is allowed.

³ The subject is one into which, from its nature, I cannot enter with much detail. Some traditions hold that Mahomet now prescribed that the '*istibra*,' or interval required of a woman before re-marriage, was to be equally observed with respect to women taken in war. The Sunna has fixed this period for female slaves at half the interval required for free women,—that is, two months (or possibly a month and a half), before the lapse of which, consorting with slave girls so captured (supposing the restriction to apply to such) would be unlawful. Some traditions make the prohibition delivered on the present occasion to apply to pregnant women only. Certainly, in the campaigns of the Caliphate, female captives were immediately consorted with by their captors even on the field of battle.

the articles in themselves were insignificant; yet, said the Prophet to the thief: 'Verily there shall be cut out for thee hereafter two thongs like unto them of fire.' When the army alighted before Wadi al Cora, one of Mahomet's servants was shot by an arrow while in the act of taking the litter down from one of the camels. 'Welcome to Paradise!' exclaimed the by-standers. 'Never,' said Mahomet, 'by Him in whose hand my life is! Even now his vestment is burning upon him in the fire of Hell; for he pilfered it before Kheibar from amongst the booty.'¹

A martyr gains Paradise who had never prayed

As a counterfoil, the following tradition assumes the certainty of Paradise by the mere profession of Islam. Al Aswad, shepherd of one of the Jews of Kheibar, came over to Mahomet, and declared himself a believer. Abandoning his flock, he straightway joined the Moslem army and fought in its ranks.² He was struck by a stone and killed, before he had as yet offered up a single prayer. But he died fighting for the faith, and had secured the Martyr's crown. Surrounded by a company of his followers, Mahomet visited the corpse, which had been laid out for him to pray over. When he drew close to the spot, he stopped and modestly looked aside. 'Why dost thou thus avert thy face?' asked those about him. 'Because,' said Mahomet, 'two black-eyed Houries of Paradise are with the Martyr now; they wipe the dust from off his face, and fondly solace him.'³

On the way home, Mahomet had the pleasure of welcoming his cousin Jafar, who, with some of the exiles just re-

¹ The story is very possibly exaggerated, it being an object among the Mussulmans to make the general right of the army in all the booty taken by it as sacred as possible. But it shows the tendency and spirit of the system, under which a tradition of this nature could be put into the mouth of the Prophet, and, as such, gain currency.

² It is said that he asked Mahomet what he was to do with his flock. On the principle that a believer must first discharge all his trusts and obligations, even those contracted with idolaters, before joining the standard of Islam, the Prophet desired him to throw a handful of gravel in the face of his sheep and goats, and they all ran off forthwith to their owner in the fortress. On the same principle, it is said that Aly and other converts first scrupulously discharged the trusts which the Coreish had committed to them, before leaving Mecca to join Mahomet at Medina.

³ 'Whenever a martyr is slain in battle,' so runs the tradition, 'his two black-eyed Houries embrace him, wipe the dust from his face, and say,—*"The Lord cast dust on the face of him who hath cast dust on thine, and slay him who slew thee!"*'

turned from Abyssinia, went out to meet him. 'I know not,' said Mahomet on this occasion, 'which of the two delighteth me the most, the conquest of Kheibar or the return of Jafar.' The army, no less pleased, acceded cheerfully to his proposal that Jafar and his companions should share equally with them in the spoil of Kheibar.

Mahomet
welcomes
Jafar and
other
Abyssinian
exiles.
Autumn.
A.H. VII.
A.D. 628

On his return to Medina, Mahomet took to wife Omm Habĭba, daughter of Abu Sofĭan, thus consummating the marriage which the Negus had contracted for him in Abyssinia. There were now nine wives, besides two female slaves, in the harem of the Prophet.

And
marries
Omm
Habĭba

Before closing this chapter, which contains the last notice of the Jews, I ought to mention the tale of Mahomet's having been bewitched by a Jewish spell. On his return from Hodeibia, the Jews still remaining at Medina (ostensibly converted but hypocrites at heart) bribed the sorcerer Labid and his daughters to bewitch Mahomet. This they did by secretly procuring hairs combed from the Prophet's head, and tying eleven knots with them on a palm-branch, which was then sunk in a well and covered with a large stone. The enchantment took effect. Mahomet began to pine away, to fancy he had done things which in reality he never had done, to lose his appetite and neglect his wives. At last, Gabriel having told him the secret, the well was emptied, and the knots untied. Immediately the spell broke, and the Prophet was relieved.

Mahomet
bewitched
by Jews

I confess myself unable to say what portion of the tale is likely to be true, or whether it has any foundation in fact at all. The common tradition is, that the last two Suras in the Coran were revealed on this occasion, containing a charm (still used as such) against spells and incantations; and that, during the recitation of the eleven verses which they contain, the knots unravelled themselves one by one till the whole were unloosed, and the charm dissolved. One of these Suras is as follows:—

Suras
cxiii and
cxiv

Say;—I flee for Refuge to the Lord of the Daybreak,—from the evil of that which he hath created; and from the evil of the darkness when it overshadoweth; and from the evil of the Women that blow upon the knots; and from the evil of the Envious man when he envieth.

Sura cxiii

The story may possibly have grown out of the penulti-

Considerations as to credibility of the tale

Its credibility partly sustained

mate verse of this Sura, in which Mahomet prays to be delivered 'from the evil of women blowing upon knots.' Or, on the other hand, it may be founded on suspicions actually entertained by Mahomet against the Jews, of sorcery by the tying of knots and other forms of incantation; and these suspicions may have led to the composition of the Sura. The latter alternative is the more likely, as Mahomet had already suspected the Jews of bewitching the Moslem women into barrenness.¹ On the present occasion, he is said to have caused the well into which the mysterious knots were cast to be dug up, and another sunk in its place. After visiting the garden watered by the well, he told Ayesha that 'the date-trees in it were like devils' heads, and the water dark as a decoction of Henna.' She inquired whether the incident might with propriety be spoken of; he replied that it would be better not to divulge it, lest the evil of witchcraft should spread amongst his people. The well was filled up.²

¹ Vide *supra*, p. 193.

² Some traditions say that the sorcerer was put to death; but the more reliable account is, that Mahomet let him go free, but turned with aversion from him. Wakidy has a profusion of traditions on the episode. Some say it was Labid's *sisters* who aided him; and that it was *two angels* that revealed the plot to the Prophet.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FULFILLED PILGRIMAGE

A.H. VII.—*February*, A.D. 629

THE remainder of the Seventh year of the Hegira, that is, the autumn and winter of 628 A.D., was passed by Mahomet at Medina. Several expeditions were, during this period, despatched, under different leaders, in various directions. Beyond the chastisement and plunder of some offending tribes, and an occasional reverse, they were not attended by any important results. But they served to extend the influence of Mahomet and bring him gradually into relations, hostile or friendly, with surrounding and even distant tribes.¹

Expeditions in autumn and winter
A.H. VII.
A.D. 628

The month at length came round when Mahomet, according to treaty, might visit Mecca and fulfil the Omra or Lesser pilgrimage, from the rites of which he had been in the previous year debarred. Besides those who had made the unsuccessful pilgrimage to Hodeibia, many others accompanied him, so that the cavalcade numbered now about 2,000 men. Each was armed, according to stipulation, only with a sword; but, as a precaution against treachery, a heavy reserve of armour was carried separately. Mohammed, son of Maslama, with a hundred horse, marched in advance of the pilgrims. Sixty camels for sacrifice were also driven in

Mahomet sets out on Lesser pilgrimage.
A.H. VII.
February,
A.D. 629

¹ Abu Bekr and Omar were among the commanders, and the expeditions were to distant parts; one beyond Mecca towards Najran, the others to Nejd in the east, and towards Kheibar in the north. One of the parties consisting of thirty men was cut to pieces, the leader only escaping. On another occasion many prisoners were taken, and among them (according to Sprenger) a female of great beauty who was sent to Mecca in ransom for certain prisoners; it seems doubtful, however, whether there were now any Moslem prisoners there. In another expedition, Mahomet chided Osâma son of Zeid, for killing an antagonist who shouted aloud the Moslem creed: 'What! didst thou split open his breast to see whether he told the truth or not?' Osâma promised not to do the like again.

Precautionary arrangements before entering Mecca

front. At Marr al Tzabran, a stage from Mecca, Mahomet sent forward the store of armour to a valley outside the sacred territory, where it remained guarded by 200 men, while the rest advanced to the Kaaba. The victims were also sent forward to a spot in the immediate vicinity of Mecca.

Mahomet enters Mecca ; performs circuit of Kaaba ;

Meanwhile, the Coreish, apprised of Mahomet's approach, according to agreement evacuated the city in a body ; and, ascending the adjacent hills, expected with curious eye the Exile so long the troubler of their city. At last the cavalcade was seen emerging from the northern valley. At its head was Mahomet, seated on Al Caswa ; Abdallah ibn Rawâha, on foot in front, held the bridle ; around on every side crowded the chief Companions ; and behind, in a long extended line, the rest of the pilgrims on camels and on foot. Seven years had passed since Mahomet and the Refugees last saw their native valley, and now with quickened step and long-repressed desire, they hastened forward and, as the Holy temple came in view, raised high the pilgrim cry, *Labbeik ! Labbeik !* Still mounted on his camel, the pilgrim mantle drawn under his right arm and thrown over the left shoulder, Mahomet approached the Kaaba, touched the Black stone reverentially with his staff, and made the seven circuits of the Sacred spot. The people followed, and, at the bidding of Mahomet, to show the Coreish they were not weakened (as their enemies pretended) by the climate of Medina, they ran the first three circuits at a rapid pace. Just then Abdallah, as he led the Prophet's camel, shouted at the pitch of his voice warlike and defiant verse. But Omar checked him ; and Mahomet said :—' Gently ! son of Rawâha ! Recite not this. Say rather, *There is no God but the Lord alone ! It is He that hath upholden His servant, and exalted His people ! Alone hath He put to flight the hosts of the Confederates.*' Abdallah proclaimed the words accordingly : and the people taking them up shouted the cry aloud as they encircled the Kaaba, till the mighty sound rang round the valley.

And slays the victims

The circuits completed, Mahomet, still upon his camel, proceeded to the adjoining eminences of Safa and Marwa, and rode seven times from one to the other, according to ancient custom. The victims having then been placed in line at

Marwa, were sacrificed; Mahomet calling aloud: 'This is the place of sacrifice, and so is every open valley of Mecca.' Then he shaved his head, and thus ended the ceremonies of the Lesser pilgrimage. His next care was to relieve his followers on guard over the weapons at Yajâj, who then fulfilled their pilgrimage after the same example.

Guard over
weapons do
the same

On the morrow, Mahomet ascended the inner chamber of the Kaaba and remained there till the hour of prayer. Notwithstanding that the Temple was still garnished with the emblems of idolatry, Bilâl, mounting its roof, summoned the pilgrims with the usual cry to midday prayer. They crowded round from every quarter; and so under the shadow of the Holy house the service was led by the Prophet in the same form as in the Mosque of Medina.

Public
prayer per-
formed at
the Kaaba

It was surely a strange sight which at this time presented itself in the vale of Mecca—a sight, one might almost say, unique in history. The ancient city is for three days evacuated altogether by its inhabitants, and every house deserted. As they retire, the exiles, many years banished from their birthplace, accompanied by their allies, fill the valley, revisit the empty homes of their childhood, and within the short allotted period fulfil the rites of pilgrimage. The ousted citizens with their families, climbing the heights around, take refuge under tents or rocks amongst the hills and glens; and, clustering on the overhanging peak of Abu Cobeis, thence watch the movements of the visitors beneath, as with the Prophet at their head they perform the sacred rites—anxiously scanning every figure, if perchance to recognise among the worshippers some long-lost friend or relative.¹ It was a scene rendered possible only by the throes that gave birth to Islam.

Singular
sight pre-
sented at
Mecca

While at Mecca, Mahomet entered none of the houses there, but lived in a tent of leather pitched for him near the Kaaba. Yet he held friendly converse with several of the citizens. Nor was he deterred either by his sacred errand, his advancing years, or having lately welcomed three new

Mahomet
takes Mei-
mûna to
wife

¹ Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal thus describes the hill Abu Cobeis: 'The ascent of this hill is only about one mile from the base. The view from its summit of the house of God, its enclosure, and of the whole district comprised within the sacred boundary, is very distinct and picturesque. It is possible even to see distinctly the worshippers employed at their devotions within the holy shrine.'—*Pilgrimage to Mecca*, p. 204.

inmates to his harem, from negotiating another marriage. Meimúna, the favoured lady, six-and-twenty years of age, was sister-in-law of his uncle Abbas, into whose keeping since her widowhood she had committed the disposal of her hand. Mahomet must have listened to the overtures of marriage the more readily as two of her sisters had already married into his family; but in truth the proposal of the young and charming widow who now offered herself as his bride was too congenial to the Prophet's tastes to require much pressure on the uncle's part.

Mahomet
warned to
leave
Mecca

Mahomet endeavoured to turn the present opportunity for conciliating the citizens of Mecca to the best effect, and, as the sequel will show, not without success. But the time was short. Already the stipulated three days were ended, and he had entered on a fourth, when Suheil and Huweitiab, chief men of the Coreish, appeared before him and said: 'The period allowed thee hath elapsed: depart now therefore from amongst us.' To which the Prophet courteously replied: 'And what harm if ye allowed me to stay a little longer, celebrate my nuptials in your midst, and make for the guests a feast at which ye too might all sit down?' 'Nay,' they roughly answered; 'of any food of thine we have no need. Withdraw from hence!' Mahomet gave immediate orders for departure: and by night not one of the pilgrims was left behind. Placing his bride in charge of his servant Abu Ráfi, he himself proceeded at once to Sarif, distant from the city eight or ten Arabian miles. In the evening, Meimúna having come up, the marriage was there consummated. Early next morning, the march was resumed, and the *cortège* returned to Medina. Meimúna survived the Prophet fifty years, and was, by her desire, buried on the spot on which she had celebrated her marriage with him.¹

Consum-
mates his
marriage
with Mei-
múna

¹ She died A.H. LXI., aged eighty. Burton states that her tomb is still visited at this place in the Wadi Fatima. The following anecdote may be of interest to the reader: A deputation from a certain tribe came to Medina, asking Mahomet for help to discharge a debt which he promised to give when the tithes came in. A nephew of Meimúna, being with this party, went to see his aunt. Mahomet, coming suddenly into the place, was disconcerted at the sight of a young man in such a place; his visage showed marks of wrath, and he turned to go away. 'It is only my sister's son,' cried Meimúna after him. So he returned. Then he took the young man into the Mosque for the mid-day prayer; and dismissed him with a

The harem of Mahomet had now reached its limit; for this was the last marriage⁴ contracted by him. There were in it at this time ten wives, besides two servile concubines. But Zeinab daughter of Khozeima died before him; so that the number was then reduced to nine, or, including concubines, eleven. Some other women are mentioned by tradition, whose intended marriage was at the last stage broken off. The details in most instances are obscure. Of one case, at any rate, there can be no doubt; for a few years afterwards Ikrima, having married the lady in question, was subjected to grave animadversion by his troops, as if a slight had thereby been cast on the Prophet's memory. Abu Bekr, however, relieved him of all blame, on the ground that the marriage had been broken off by the Prophet before it was consummated.¹

Number of his harem now complete

Mahomet carried with him his bride's sister, Salma, widow of Hamza (who, apparently, had not accompanied her husband to Medina), and Omárah, her unmarried daughter. Jafar, Aly, and Zeid, each contending for the honour of receiving the damsel into his family, Mahomet decided in favour of Jafar, because he was married to her aunt.

Sister and niece of his bride accompany him to Medina

Another sister of Meimûna was the mother of Khalid, the famous warrior who had turned the tide of the battle at Ohod against the Moslems. Not long after the marriage of his aunt to the Prophet, Khalid repaired to Medina, and gave in his adhesion to the cause of Islam. Two others followed him. One, his friend the equally famous Amru, whose poetic talents had often been used for the annoyance and injury of Mahomet. Of versatile ability and weighty in council, he had been employed by the Coreish in their embassy to Abyssinia.² The other was Othman son of Talha, blessing, placing both hands upon his head, and drawing them over his nose.

Khalid, Amru, and Othman ibn Talha go over to Mahomet

¹ See *Caliphate*, p. 40. The details regarding these unfulfilled marriages are not very edifying; neither, since they are in none of our early biographies, are they very trustworthy. A paper will be found with details of the wives, concubines, and broken-off marriages, by J. D. Bate, *Indian Antiquary*, April 1878.

² His name is properly Amr, the *u* at its close being added by Arab scribes to distinguish it from that of Omar, which it otherwise resembles, when written. But *Amru* (or Amrou), the conqueror of Egypt, is a name familiar to the European reader, and the confusion from changing it would

a chief of some note, and custodian of the Kaaba. He had, no doubt, in that capacity, attended with the keys of office to give Mahomet admittance to the Holy house; and, perhaps, like many others, who gazed from a respectful distance on that memorable scene, was gained over by the devotion of the Prophet to the national shrine, and the elevation and beauty of the services which he there performed.

Mahomet's
position at
Mecca im-
proving

The position of Mahomet at Mecca was greatly strengthened by the accession of such leading men. The balance was already wavering: it required little now to throw it entirely on the side of Islam. To what extent persons of less note and influence about this time came over to Medina, or remaining at Mecca declared in favour of Mahomet, is not told to us. But there can be no doubt that the movement was not confined to those just mentioned, but was wide and general; and that the cause of Islam was gaining popularity day by day.

Coup d'état
becoming
possible

His visit to Mecca enabled Mahomet thus to see and estimate the growth of his own influence there, as well as the waning power and spirit of the Coreish. The citizens of Mecca were weary of intestine war and bloodshed. The advocates of peace and compromise were growing in numbers and in confidence. Among the Coreish there were no chiefs of marked ability or commanding influence. A bold and rapid stroke might put an end to the struggle which for so many years had depressed and agitated Mecca. A *coup d'état* was fast becoming possible.

not be counterbalanced by the benefits of orthography. He was one of the envoys sent by the Coreish to Abyssinia; vide *supra*, p. 89.

CHAPTER XXIII

BATTLE OF MUTA, AND OTHER EVENTS IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF A.H. VIII.—A.D. 629

ÆTAT. 61

DURING the spring and summer of the Eighth year of the Hegira, several military excursions were undertaken, some of which ended disastrously. About a month after returning from pilgrimage, Mahomet despatched a party of fifty men to the Beni Suleim, under a converted chief of their own, with the view apparently of winning them over to the faith. But, suspicious of their designs, they received the strangers with a cloud of arrows. Most of them were slain, and the leader with difficulty escaped. The tribe, however, must have seen cause to change their views, for we find them amongst those who shortly after sent embassies of submission to the Prophet, and also contributed an important contingent in the coming attack on Mecca.

Unfortunate expedition against the Suleim. A.H. VII. April, A.D. 629

A month or two later an expedition was planned against a petty branch of the Beni Leith, on the road to Mecca, the object of which is not stated. The encampment was surprised, and their camels plundered. But the marauders were in their turn pursued, and only saved by rapid flight. In the preceding winter, a small party, sent by Mahomet towards Fadak, had been cut to pieces by the Beni Murra. A detachment of 200 men was now despatched to inflict chastisement upon them: 'If the Lord deliver them into thy hands,' said Mahomet to the leader, 'let not a soul of them escape.' The commission was executed with success. All who fell within reach of the avenging force were slain, and their camels carried off in triumph to Medina.

Marauding party sent against Beni Leith. A.H. VIII. June, A.D. 629

Beni Murra chastised

Soon after, a party of fifteen men was sent to Dzât Atlah on the borders of Syria. There they found a great multitude

Mishap at
Dzât Adlah.
A.H. VIII.
July,
A.D. 629

assembled, who were called upon to embrace Islam. A shower of arrows was the decisive answer. The Mussulmans fought desperately; one man alone survived to tell the tale. Mahomet was much afflicted by this calamity, and planned an expedition to avenge it. But tidings reached him that the place had been deserted, and he relinquished the idea for the moment. As in the case of similar mishaps, this reverse is described by tradition with enigmatical brevity, so that it is difficult to determine the object of the expedition. It may have been an embassy to certain tribes; or a secret mission to spy out the cause of rumoured gatherings on the Syrian frontier.

Perhaps
the cause
of the
attack on
Muta

Army
marches
from
Medina
upon Muta.
A.H. VIII.
September,
A.D. 629

This disaster not improbably paved the way for the grand attack directed shortly after against the border-districts of Syria. The cause, however, ordinarily assigned for this invasion of the Roman territory was the murder by the chieftain Sharahbil, at Maab or Muta, of a messenger on his way with a despatch from Mahomet, to the Ghassanide prince at Bostra. It was immediately resolved to punish the offending chief. A general call of all the fighting men was made, and a camp of 3,000 soldiers formed outside the city at Jorf. A white banner was mounted; and the Prophet, placing it in the hands of his adopted son Zeid, bade him march to the spot where his messenger had been slain, summon the inhabitants to embrace Islam, and, should they refuse, then in the name of the Lord to draw the sword against them. If Zeid were cut down, then Jafar was to command; if Jafar, then Abdallah ibn Rawâha; and if he too were disabled, then the army should choose their own commander. Mahomet accompanied them as far as the *Mount of Farewell*, a rising ground some little distance from Medina; and, as they passed onwards, blessed them thus: 'The Lord shield you from every evil, and bring you back in peace, laden with spoil!'

Prepara-
tions made
by Syrian
tribes for
its repulse

Tidings of the coming army reached Sharahbil, who forthwith summoned to his aid the tribes of the vicinity. The hostile incursions from time to time against the Syrian border, the repeated attacks on Dumah, the conquest of Kheibar, and the generally aggressive attitude of Mahomet towards the north, had no doubt led to precautionary measures along the frontier. Thus, upon the alarm of invasion, there quickly rallied round Sharahbil a large and (compared with the troops

of Medina) a well-appointed army.¹ Zeid first received the startling intelligence on reaching Maan. The enemy, he heard, was encamped at Maab; and his apprehension was increased by the rumour that cohorts were with the force, and that the Kaiser himself was at their head. He halted. A council of war was called, and for two days the Moslem chiefs discussed the difficulties of their position. Many advised that a letter should be sent to Mahomet; he had not contemplated an encounter with the Imperial forces; they were sent only to avenge the treachery of a petty chief, and ought not to risk battle with an enemy so vastly their superior: at least, the Prophet should be apprised of the new aspect of affairs, and fresh instructions asked. Abdallah, on the contrary, urged an immediate advance: 'What have we marched thus far for,' he cried indignantly, 'but for this? Is it in our numbers, or in the help of the Lord, that we put our trust? Victory or the martyr's crown, one or other, is secure. *Then forward!*' Overcome by the fervid appeal, they all responded: 'By the Lord! The son of Rawâha speaketh truth. Let us hasten onwards!' And so the camp advanced.

Council of
war held by
Moslems at
Maan

On entering Belcaa, by the southern shore of the Dead Sea, they suddenly found themselves confronted by an enemy in numbers and equipment surpassing anything they had ever seen before.² Alarmed at the glittering array, they fell back on the village of Muta. There, finding advantageous ground, they halted, and forming front resolved to offer battle. The Roman phalanx, with its cloud of Arabs on either flank, moved steadily down upon them. Zeid, seizing the white flag, led his columns forward, till, fighting bravely at their head, he fell. Then Jafar leaped from his horse, and, maiming it in token of either death or victory, raised aloft the banner, and urged forward the attack. Soon covered with wounds, he yet fought on, till a Roman closing with him dealt the fatal blow.³ Seeing Jafar fall, Abdallah seized the standard,

Battle of
Muta

¹ A passage in Theophanes makes it probable that this great army was brought together by Theodorus, brother of Heraclius, which may account for the rumour reaching the Moslem camp that the Kaiser himself was in the field with 200,000 men.

² The Syrian army was composed partly of Greek troops, partly of the semi-Christian tribes of the desert—the Bahra, Bali, Wail, Bekr, Lakhm, and Judzâm.

³ The song with which Jafar led the attack is no doubt apocryphal, but

but he, too, speedily met the same fate. Then a Citizen rescuing the ensign planted it in the ground, and cried aloud,—*Hither, ye Moslems, hither!* and there was a temporary rally. The leadership being now vacant, a council hastily called together fixed their choice on Khalid, who forthwith assumed the command. But the chance of victory had passed away. The ranks were broken; and the Romans in full pursuit were already making havoc amongst the fugitives. It remained for Khalid but to save the dispersed columns from destruction, and even this taxed his skill and prowess to the utmost. By a series of ingenious and rapid movements, he drew off the shattered remains of the army to a safe retreat. But he dared not linger longer in the dangerous vicinity, and so, without further attempt to retrieve the day, he marched back straightway to Medina. As they drew nigh the city, the people came out hooting at them, cast dust in their faces, crying out: ‘Ah ye runaways, who flee before the enemy when fighting for the Lord!’ ‘Nay,’ cried Mahomet, who had ridden out to meet them on his mule, carrying the little son of Jafar before him, ‘Nay, these are not runaways; they are men who will yet again return to battle, if the Lord will.’

Khalid
saves the
broken
force

The loss of Jafar, brother of Aly, and of Zeid the faithful and beloved friend of five and thirty years, affected Mahomet deeply. On the first intelligence of the reverse, and of their death, which he received early in the day, through a confidential messenger, he went to the house of Jafar. His widow Asma had just bathed and dressed her little ones when the Prophet entered, embraced the children tenderly, and burst into tears. Asma guessed the truth, and sobbed aloud. A crowd of women soon gathering round her, Mahomet silently left the place, and returning home, desired them to send provisions to Jafar’s house. ‘No food,’ he said, ‘will be prepared there this day; for they are sunk in grief at the loss of their master.’¹ He then went to the house of Zeid;

Mahomet’s
grief at
death of
Jafar and
Zeid

it strongly illustrates the fanatical feeling now rapidly growing up: ‘*Paradise!*’ he cried, amid the glare and heat of the dusty battlefield,—‘*Oh Paradise! how fair a resting-place! Cold is the water there, and sweet the shade. Rome, Rome! thine hour of tribulation draweth nigh. When I close with her, I will hurl her to the ground.*’

¹ Asma afterwards married Abu Bekr, and on his death Aly, and bore sons to both.

and Zeid's little daughter rushed into his arms, crying bitterly. Mahomet was overcome, and wept with her. A by-stander, thinking to check his grief, said to him: 'Why thus, O Prophet?' 'This,' he replied, 'is not forbidden grief; it is but the fond yearning in the heart of friend for friend.'¹

In connection with Muta, may be mentioned here the story of the Arab Farwa, Governor of Amman, represented by tradition (though upon imperfect evidence) as one of the early martyrs. He sent a despatch announcing his conversion to Mahomet, with several presents,—a white mule, a horse, an ass, and raiment inwrought with gold. The presents were graciously acknowledged in a letter from the Prophet, which contained directions for the spiritual guidance of the convert. The Roman government, hearing of his defection, sought, by offers of promotion, to bribe his return to the Christian faith. He refused, and was put to death.²

The repulse at Muta affected the prestige of Mahomet among the northern tribes. There were rumours that the Bedouins of the neighbourhood had assembled in great force, and even threatened a descent upon Medina. Amru, the late convert, was therefore placed at the head of 300 men, including 30 horse, with instructions to subjugate the hostile tribes and incite those whom he found friendly, to harass the Syrian border. The name of Amru justified the

Martyrdom
of Farwa

Amru and
Abu
Obeida re-
store pre-
stige on
Syrian
border.
A.H. VIII.
October,
A.D. 629

¹ Next morning, he entered smiling into the Mosque, and when the people accosted him he said: 'That which ye saw in me yesterday was because of sorrow for the slaughter of my Companions, until I saw them in Paradise, seated as brethren, opposite one another, upon couches. And in some I perceived marks, as it were wounds of the sword. And I saw Jafar as an angel with two wings, covered with blood,—his limbs stained therewith.' Hence Jafar is known as 'the winged Martyr.'

² The tradition which is given both by Wakidy and Ibn Hisham is surrounded by much that is marvellous; but there must have been some foundation of fact for the story. Farwa's reply is in the usual style;—'I will not quit the faith of Mahomet. Thou knowest well that Jesus prophesied before of him. But as for thee, the fear of losing thy kingdom deterreth thee.' And so he was crucified.

Theophanes mentions about this period the secession of the Arabs employed in guarding the Syrian frontier, as occasioned by the refusal of a Greek officer to pay them their perquisites, on which they are said to have organised an attack on Gaza. Such a movement may have occurred in connection with the numerous accessions to Mahomet's cause about this time, and the expedition to Tebuk the following year.

selection; connected, moreover, with the Beni Bali, a powerful tribe in the vicinity, he was possessed of personal influence which might aid in effecting the objects of the campaign. In the event of serious opposition, he was to call upon the Arabs in that quarter who had already tendered their submission to come to his aid. After a ten days' march he encamped at a spring near the Syrian confines. There he found that the enemy were assembled in great numbers, and that he could look for little aid from the local tribes. He halted and despatched a messenger for reinforcements. Mahomet at once complied, and sent 200 men (among whom were both Abu Bekr and Omar) under command of Abu Obeida. On joining Amru, Abu Obeida wished to assume the leadership of the whole force, or at least retain the chief authority over his own detachment; but Amru, giving promise of the decision which characterised him in after days, insisted on retaining the sole command. Abu Obeida, a man of mild and pliant temper, succumbed. 'If thou refusest to acknowledge my authority,' he said, 'I have no resource but to obey thee; for the Prophet charged me to suffer no alteration, nor any division of command.' Amru replied imperiously: 'I am the chief over thee. Thou hast only brought a reinforcement to my army.' 'Be it so,' said Abu Obeida. Amru then assumed command of the united troops, and led their prayers; for thus early were the spiritual functions in Islam blended with the political and military.¹ Thus strengthened, Amru again advanced, dispersed the hostile gatherings and confirmed the friendly tribes. He had then the satisfaction of despatching a messenger to announce the complete success of his first campaign, and the re-establishment of the Prophet's influence on the frontier of Syria. Having accomplished this important object, he returned to Medina.

Expedition
of the Fish.
A.H. VIII.
November,
A.D. 629

In the month following, to compensate Abu Obeida for his disappointment in giving up the command to Amru, Mahomet sent him at the head of 300 men to chastise a refractory branch of the Joheina on the sea-coast. There

¹ It is interesting to notice in each of these commanders the same character already showing itself at this early period as after the death of Mahomet marked their career in the Syrian wars. The same may be said of Khalid and other Companions, and is a satisfactory confirmation of the credibility of our authorities.

was no fighting in this expedition, but it has become famous from the occurrence of a curious incident. Provisions failed, and the troops were already well-nigh famished, when to their joy a prodigious fish was cast opportunely on the shore, so large that it sufficed amply to relieve their hunger.¹ One other petty expedition during the winter, against a tribe of the Ghatafân in Nejd, yielded large plunder in camels, flocks, and prisoners. The object is not stated. A fair damsel fell to the lot of the leader. He presented her to Mahomet, who again gave her to one of his followers.

Raid on
Nejd.
December,
A.D. 629

Besides the Syrian tribes gained over by the success of Amru, several others, as the Beni Abs, Murra, and Dzobian, now gave in their adhesion; and the Fezâra with their chief Oyeina, who had so long caused anxiety and alarm at Medina, at last tendered submission. The Suleim also, who had taken part in the siege of Medina, joined the cause about this time, and engaged to bring, when called on, a thousand men into the field. Most of the tribes in the vicinity of Medina had already recognised the supremacy of Mahomet.² The courteous treatment which the deputations which now began to come in from all directions experienced from the Prophet, his ready attention to their grievances, the wisdom with which he composed their disputes, and the politic assignments of territory by which he rewarded early declaration in favour

Various
tribes
tender
their sub-
mission

¹ So Wakidy. Ibn Hisham deals in extravagancies; the whole army, which had been reduced to a famishing state, fed for twenty days upon it, and from being lean and famished became strong and fat. One of its bones, being set up as an arch, a camel with its rider passed under without touching it, &c.

² The Beni Ashja, who had joined in the siege of Medina, gave in their adhesion shortly after the massacre of the Coreitza; they told Mahomet that they were so pressed by his warring against them, that they could stand out no longer. In the Secretary's chapter of 'Deputations from the Tribes' &c., we learn that the Beni Ashar from Jeddâ, the Khushain, and the Dous, came to Mahomet during the campaign of Kheibar, the latter with sixty or seventy followers, to whom were assigned shares in the booty. The Beni Sad ibn Bekr came over, A.H. v.; and the Beni Thalaba, A.H. viii. The Beni Abd al Keis (partly at least Christian) from Bahrein, in the same year. The Beni Judzâm (see *ante*, p. 335) also in that year. The chief of the latter tribe carried back a letter from Mahomet, of this tenor: 'Whoever accepteth the call to Islam, he is amongst the confederates of the Lord: whoever refuseth the same, a truce of two months is allowed him for consideration.' The tribes of the vicinity all accepted the invitation.

of Islam, made his name to be popular, and his fame as a great and generous Prince to spread throughout the Peninsula. The accession of so many tribes, moreover, enabled him, whenever occasion might arise, to call into the field a far more imposing force than he had ever before aspired to command.



VIEW OF MODERN MKCCA.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONQUEST OF MECCA

Ramadhan, A.H. VIII.—January, A.D. 630

ÆTAT. 61

THE truce of Hodeibia had been now nearly two years in force, when the alleged infraction of its terms afforded Mahomet a plausible reason for the grand object of his ambition, the conquest of Mecca. Acting on the discretion allowed by the treaty, the Khozâa and Beni Bekr tribes, inhabiting Mecca and its neighbourhood, declared their adhesion, the former to Mahomet, the latter to the Coreish. There had been sanguinary feuds of old standing between them, and, though these paled before the excitement of the war with Mahomet, the blood which had been shed on either side caused hatred still to rankle in their breasts. The peace of Hodeibia allowed the Beni Bekr again to brood over their wrongs, and they sought opportunity to make reprisals. Aided by a party of the Coreish in disguise, they attacked by night an unsuspecting encampment of the Khozâa, and slew several of them.¹ A deputation of forty men from the injured tribe, mounted on camels, hastened to Medina, spread their wrongs before the Prophet, and pleaded that the treacherous murders might be avenged. Entreaty was little needed. The opportunity long expected had at last arrived. Starting up, with raiment yet ungirded, he thus pledged himself to the suppliants;—‘ If I help you not in like wise as if the wrong were mine own, then let me never more be helped by the Lord! See ye not

Pretext
arises for
advance
upon
Mecca

Beni Bekr
attack Beni
Khozâa.
A.H. VIII.
December,
A.D. 629

Khozâa
appeal to
Mahomet,
who pro-
mises aid

¹ Weil thinks the outrage to have been in consequence of the defeat at Muta, which emboldened the enemies of Islam.—*Einleitung*, p. 27. Beladzori gives other instances of the Coreish having abused Mahomet and encouraged his enemies, p. 30.

yonder cloud? As the rain now poureth from it, even so shall help descend upon you speedily from above.'

Unsuccessful mission of Abu Sofian to Medina

The Coreish, hearing of this deputation, were thrown into great alarm. They despatched Abu Sofian to protest against the imputed breach, and maintain the compact of peace. On his way, he met Bodeil, chief of the Khozâa, returning from Medina after his interview with Mahomet.¹ The mission of Abu Sofian was not followed by any satisfactory result. He could gain from Mahomet no promise, nor any assurance of pacific designs. Foiled in his endeavours, he took the only course open to him of expressing the desire of the Coreish to maintain friendly relations. Standing up in the court of the Mosque, he cried aloud: 'Hearken unto me, ye people! Peace and protection I guarantee for all.' To which Mahomet answered: 'It is thou that sayest this, not we, O Abu Sofian!' Thereupon he departed home, and reported the affair to the Coreish. They perceived that they were in evil plight, but did not suspect how imminent the hostile designs of their enemy at the moment were;² for Mahomet had

¹ It will be seen below that there is reason for suspecting collusion between Abu Sofian and Bodeil; it may possibly have begun at this interview.

² Abbasside tradition, in its hatred of the Omeyyads, delights to cast contempt on Abu Sofian. On the present occasion it turns him into a laughing-stock; but, from what follows, there is room for conjecturing that communications of a less unfriendly character than those here represented passed between him and the Prophet.

The following narrative is strongly tinged with Alyite tendencies: Arrived at Medina, Abu Sofian entered the house of his daughter Omm Habiba, Mahomet's wife. He was about to seat himself on the carpet or rug spread upon the floor, when she hastily drew it away and folded it up. 'My daughter!' he said, 'whether is it that thou thinkest the carpet is too good for me, or that I am too good for the carpet?' 'Nay, but it is the carpet of the Prophet,' she replied; 'and I choose not that thou, an impure idolater, shouldst sit upon the Prophet's carpet.' 'Truly, my daughter, thou art changed for the worse since thou ledest me.' So saying, he went to Mahomet, but could get nothing satisfactory from his lips. Omar, to whom he next addressed himself, received him with indignation. Aly was more cordial: 'Let me not go back unsuccessful as I came,' urged Abu Sofian; 'intercede for me with the Prophet.' 'Alas for thee!' said Aly; 'truly, the Prophet hath resolved on a thing concerning which we may not speak with thee.' Then Abu Sofian adjured Fatima (Aly's wife) to let her little son Hasan take him under his protection, 'and he will be the lord of the Arabs till the end of time.' But she told him that no one could be his protector against Mahomet. On this, he besought Aly for his advice. Aly said that he saw no other course for him but to arise and call aloud that

already resolved on an immediate and grand attack upon his native city. But the design was kept secret even from his closest friends as long as it was possible.¹ Meanwhile he summoned his allies from amongst the Bedouin tribes to join him at Medina, or at certain convenient points upon the road. But he held their destination hid, and, to divert attention, despatched a small body of men in another direction. At the last moment he ordered his followers in the city to arm themselves, announced his project, and enjoined on all the urgent command that no hint regarding it should by any possible way reach Mecca. To this effect he prayed;—*O Lord! Let not any spy carry tidings to the Coreish: blind their eyes and take their sight away until that I come suddenly upon them and seize them unawares!* Such was the petition daily offered up by him in the Mosque.

Preparations for attacking Mecca

Notwithstanding this injunction, Hatib, one of Mahomet's most trusted followers, secretly despatched a female messenger with a letter to Mecca containing intimation of the intended assault. Information of this coming to the Prophet's ear, he sent Aly with Zobeir in pursuit. They overtook the messenger, and after a long search discovered the letter carefully hidden in her locks. Hatib excused himself by the natural desire he had to save his unprotected family at Mecca; and the plea, in view of his former services, was graciously accepted.

Hatib's endeavour to communicate intelligence frustrated

On January 1, A.D. 630, the army commenced its march. It was the largest force Medina had ever seen. The tents of the Bedouin auxiliaries darkened the plain for miles around, and heavy contingents joined the Prophet on the line of march. Two of these, the Mozeina and Suleim, contributed as many as 1,000 soldiers each. Mahomet now

Army marches. A.H. VIII. January, A.D. 630

he took all parties under the guarantee of his protection: 'But will this benefit me at all?' 'Nay, I do not say so, but I see nothing else for thee.' Having followed this advice, Abu Sofian returned to Mecca, and told the Coreish what he had done. 'But did Mahomet sanction thy guarantee?' asked they. He replied in the negative. 'Out upon thee!' they cried; 'this will not benefit us at all; the man meant only to make sport of thee.' 'I know it,' said Abu Sofian, 'but I could think of nothing else that I could do.'

¹ Even Abu Bekr was kept in ignorance. Entering Ayeshah's house, he found her busy preparing the accoutrements of the Prophet; and, inquiring the cause, was told that an expedition had been resolved on, but she did not know in what direction.

found himself at the head of between eight and ten thousand men. Zobeir with two hundred men led the van. Zeinab and Omm Salma were the Prophet's companions on the march,¹ which was made with such rapidity that within a week the army encamped at Marr al Tzahran, but a single stage from Mecca.

Abbas joins
Mahomet

Abbas, secretly apprised, had already quitted Mecca and joined Mahomet on the road. The Abbassides claim him as having been long a true Believer, and indeed number him among the Refugees, whose favoured ranks were now about to close. But Abbas was only worldly wise. He had waited till the supremacy of his nephew was beyond a doubt; and now, at the last moment, when there was no merit in the act, openly espoused his cause. Nevertheless, he was welcomed by the Prophet with favour and affection.²

Abu Sofian
visits camp
of Mahomet

And now we come to a curious and somewhat mysterious passage. Mahomet commanded his followers to kindle every one a fire that night on the heights above the camp. The Prophet trusted that this first intimation of his approach would burst upon the city with alarming grandeur, and prove the hopelessness of opposition. No certain information of the march from Medina had yet reached the Coreish, so carefully had all sources of intelligence been cut off. At last the chief men, uneasy at the portentous calm, broken only by vague reports of the coming storm, sent forth Abu Sofian to reconnoitre. In the evening, accompanied by Hakim (Khadija's nephew, who had shown kindness to Mahomet

¹ Omm Salma seems to have been the favourite companion of Mahomet on his marches. Ayesha is not mentioned as accompanying him after the affair in the expedition against the Beni Mustalik.

² He is said to have joined Mahomet near Rabigh, about half way between Medina and Mecca. It is possible that he came by previous appointment. Abbasside tradition naturally makes everything as favourable as possible. The truth is that he always sailed with wind and tide. It is, indeed, quite possible that ever since the Treaty, and especially since the Pilgrimage, he may have been in correspondence with Mahomet, and secretly forwarding his cause at Mecca.

Two others appeared on the march to tender allegiance: Abu Sofian, son of Mahomet's uncle Hârith; and Abdallah, brother of his wife Omm Salma. Omm Salma interceded for them; but Mahomet at first refused to receive them. Both had incurred his severe displeasure,—the former for his satires; and the latter as a keen opponent. Abu Sofian, being repulsed, declared that he would go forth into the desert with his little son, and that there they would both die of hunger; whereat Mahomet relented.

when shut up with Abu Tâlib) and Bodeil the Khozâite chief, Abu Sofian sallied forth on the Medina road. Ten thousand fires were by this time blazing on the mountain tops, and appearing in full sight engaged their speculations, when suddenly, in the dark, a stranger approaching thus accosted Abu Sofian: 'Abu Hantzala!' is that thy voice I hear?' 'Yes, I am he,' said Abu Sofian, 'but what hast thou left behind thee?' 'Yonder,' replied the stranger, 'is Mahomet encamped with 10,000 followers. See ye not the myriad fires which they have kindled above their camp? Believe; cast in thy lot with us, else thy mother and thy house shall weep for thee!' It was Abbas who spoke. Mounted on the Prophet's white mule, he had issued forth, hoping that he might meet some wayfarer on the road, and send him to the Coreish, if haply they might come and sue for peace, and thus save Mecca from destruction. 'Seat thee upon the mule behind me,' continued Abbas; 'I will conduct thee to the Prophet, and thou shalt seek for quarter from him.' They were soon at the tent of Mahomet. Abbas entered, and announced the welcome news of the arrival of his distinguished friend: 'Take him to thy tent, Abbas,' replied the Prophet; 'and in the morning come to me with him again.' In the morning accordingly they sought the Prophet's tent: '*Out upon thee, Abu Sofian!*' exclaimed Mahomet as the Coreishite chief drew near; '*hast thou not yet discovered that there is no God but the Lord alone?*' 'Noble and generous Sire! Had there been any God beside, verily he had been of some avail to me.' '*And dost thou not acknowledge that I am the Prophet of the Lord?*' continued Mahomet. 'Noble Sire! As to this thing, there is yet in my heart some hesitancy.' 'Woe is thee!' exclaimed Abbas; 'it is no time for hesitancy, this. Believe and testify forthwith the creed of Islam, or else thy neck shall be in danger!' It was, indeed, no time for idle pride or scruple; and so Abu Sofian, finding no alternative, repeated the formula of belief in God and in Mahomet as his Prophet. What a moment of exultation when the conqueror saw his great antagonist a suppliant Believer at his feet! 'Haste thee to Mecca!' he said; for he knew well when to show

¹ Abu Sofian, so called after his son, Hantzala. Beladzori represents him as having been now taken prisoner, and Omar as threatening to kill him.

forbearance and generosity;—‘haste thee to the city: no one that taketh refuge in the house of Abu Sofian shall be harmed this day. And hearken! speak unto the people, that whoever closeth the door of his house, the inmates thereof shall be in safety.’ Abu Sofian hastened to retire. But before he could quit the camp, the forces were already under arms, and were being marshalled in their respective columns. Standing by Abbas, he watched in amazement the various tribes, each defiling with the banner given to it by Mahomet, into its proper place. One by one the different clans were pointed out by name, and recognised. ‘And what is that black mass,’ asked Abu Sofian, ‘with dark mail and shining lances?’ ‘It is the chivalry of Mecca and Medina,’ replied Abbas—‘the favoured band that guards the person of the Prophet.’ ‘Truly,’ exclaimed the astonished chief, ‘this kingdom of thy Nephew’s is a mighty kingdom.’ ‘Nay, Abu Sofian! he is more than a King—he is a mighty Prophet!’ ‘Yes, thou sayest truly; now let me go.’ ‘Away!’ said Abbas; ‘and speed thee to thy people!’ Abu Sofian hurried back to Mecca, and, as he entered, shouted at the pitch of his voice: ‘Ye Coreish! Mahomet is close upon us. He hath an army which ye are not able to withstand. Whoever entereth the house of Abu Sofian shall be safe this day; and whoever shutteth his door upon him shall be safe; and whosoever entereth the Holy house he shall be safe!’ So the people fled in all directions to their homes, and to the Kaaba.

Abu Sofian carries message of quarter to Mecca

Was there collusion between Abu Sofian and Mahomet?

Such is the tradition. But, beneath it, there are symptoms of a previous understanding between Mahomet and Abu Sofian. Whether there was any collusion so early as the visit of Abu Sofian to Medina, whether Abbas was charged by the chiefs of Mecca with the conduct of negotiations with the Prophet, and from which side the overtures first came, can be matter for conjecture only. But there seems reason to believe that the meeting by night of Abu Sofian with Abbas was a concerted measure, and not mere accident. That Abu Sofian, wearied with the long struggle about to be renewed with all the prospects of internecine strife, assured also that the chances of victory lay on Mahomet’s side, and anxious to avert bloodshed, should now have conspired to lull alarm and prevent Mecca rising

against the invader, seems perhaps hardly less probable. As hereditary leader he possessed more influence for that object than any other chief at Mecca, and of his influence Mahomet willingly availed himself. To the treason, or one might rather say the patriotism, of Abu Sofian, it is mainly due that the submission of Mecca was thus peaceably secured. Such at least is the conclusion which may be drawn from the uncertain tale of tradition.

We return to the camp. The army was now in full march on Mecca. The anxieties of a lifetime crowded into the moment. But as the city opened on the Prophet's view it became evident that his precautions had been effectual. Had any general opposition been organised, it was here that a stand would have been made; yet no army appeared in sight. In token of his gratitude, he bowed low upon his camel, and offered up thanksgiving to the Lord. The troops were told off in four divisions, and to each was assigned a different road, by which simultaneously to advance. From Dzu Towa they separated to perform their several parts, with strict injunctions not to fight excepting in the last extremity, nor offer violence to any one. Zobeir, leading the left battalion, was to enter from the north. Khalid, with the Bedouins marshalled on the right, was to make his way into the southern or lower suburb. The men of Medina under Sad ibn Obâda were to force their way into the western quarter. The mild but vigilant Abu Obeida, commanding the Refugees and followed by Mahomet himself, took the nearest road skirting Jebel Hind. This disposition of his forces was wisely made: if opposition were offered anywhere, one of the other divisions would be at hand to take the enemy in the rear. As Sad led on the citizens of Medina, he sang: 'To-day is the day of slaughter; there is no safety this day for Mecca!' Hearing these martial and threatening words, and fearing evil from the fiery temper of Sad, Mahomet took the Medina banner from his hands, and gave it to his son Cays—a man of towering stature, but of gentler disposition than his father.

Just then, an old man, blind and decrepit, might be seen climbing, with the help of his daughter, over the heights of Abu Cobeis which overhang the city. It was Abu Cuhâfa, the aged parent of Abu Bekr. To his frequent inquiry

The army
moves for-
ward upon
Mecca

Abu
Cuhâfa
watches
advance of
Moslem
army

whether anything was yet in sight, the maiden at last replied: 'A dark moving mass has just emerged from yonder valley.' 'It is the army!' said the aged man. 'And now I see a figure hastening to and fro amid the columns of that mass.' 'This is the leader marshalling the force.' 'But the blackness is dispersing rapidly. It spreads'—continued the girl. 'Ah! then the army is advancing! Haste thee, my daughter, and lead me home.' It was full time, for the troops were already sweeping along the approaches to the town on every side; and a rude assailant snatched the maiden's silver necklace from her neck while she was yet guiding her father's tottering steps toward their house.

Khalid encounters opposition

The several columns entered peaceably, excepting that of Khalid. The southern quarter, assigned to him, was inhabited by Mahomet's bitterest enemies and those most deeply implicated in the attack upon the Beni Khozáa; these had now taken up a defensive position, or perhaps in despair were preparing for hasty flight. They were led by Safwán, Suheil, and Ikrima son of Abu Jahl. As the battalion composed of Bedouins, difficult at any time to hold in hand, appeared in view, it was saluted by a shower of arrows. But Khalid, ready to receive his opponents, soon put them all to flight. Flushed with success, and unmindful of the Prophet's order, he pursued with his wild troops the fugitive Coreish into the streets of Mecca. The leaders escaped; but eight and twenty Citizens were killed in the conflict. Khalid lost only two men, and those because they missed their way. While this encounter was going forward, Mahomet, following the column of the Refugees, crossed an eminence from whence the full view of the vale and city burst upon him. But his pleasure at the grateful prospect was turned into concern as his eye caught the gleaming of swords on the farther side of the city, and the troops of Khalid in pursuit. 'What!' he cried in surprise and anger, 'did I not strictly command that there should be no fighting?' The cause was soon explained, and Mahomet said: 'That which the Lord decreeth is the best.'

Mahomet's concern at the encounter

Mahomet reposes in his tent

From the pass, Mahomet descended into the valley at a spot not far from the tombs of Abu Tâlib and Khadija. He was there joined by the division of Zobeir, and, having assured himself that Mecca was now wholly at his will,

directed his tent of leather to be pitched in the open space to the north of the city.¹ 'Wilt thou not alight at thine own house?' inquired his followers. 'Not so,' he said, 'for have they left me yet any house within the city?' The great banner was planted at the door of his tent, and he retired to repose therein, and to reflect on the accomplishment of his life's dream. The abused, rejected, exiled Prophet now had the rebellious city at his feet. Mahomet was lord of Mecca.

But he did not long repose. Again mounting Al Caswa, he proceeded to the Kaaba, reverently saluted with his staff the Sacred stone, and made the seven circuits of the temple. Then, pointing with his staff to the idols one by one that stood around, he commanded them to be hewn down. '*Truth hath come,*' he cried in the words of the Coran, as the great image of Hobal, reared in front of the Kaaba, fell with a crash;—'*Truth hath come, and falsehood gone; for falsehood verily vanisheth away.*'² Advancing now to the *Station of Abraham*, twenty or thirty paces from the Kaaba, he bowed himself in worship; and, sitting down, sent Bilâl to summon Othman ibn Talha with the key of the temple. Ascending the steps of the threshold, and unlocking the door, he entered the sacred hall, and there again performed devout prostrations. He then returned to the doorway, and, standing upon its elevated step, caught hold of the two rings attached to the door, and gazed in thankfulness on the thronging multitude below. 'Othman ibn Talha!' he cried, naming the hereditary Guardian of the Temple,—'Here, take

Worships
at the
Kaaba, and
destroys its
idols

¹ See map facing Chapter I. The pathway north of Jebel Hind brought him into the valley near the burying-ground; a little below this he pitched his tent, and in the same vicinity the two northern divisions of the army encamped. The two other divisions probably occupied ground to the south of the city. The tradition of the Prophet's route is still retained, though loose and inaccurate. 'Mounting our animals,' says Burton, 'we followed the road to the Jannat al Maala, the sacred cemetery of Mecca. A rough wall, with a poor gateway, encloses a patch of barren and grim-looking ground, at the foot of the chain which bounds the city's western suburb; and below Al Akaba, the gap through which Khalid entered Mecca with the triumphant Prophet.' As regards Khalid, this is a mistake.

² Sura xvii. 82. Tradition says there were 360 idols ranged round the Kaaba, and that as Mahomet pointed to each in succession with his staff, reciting this verse, the idol of its own accord fell forwards on its face. The use of metaphorical language in describing the actual scene would easily give rise to such tales.

back the key to be kept a perpetual charge by thee and thy posterity. None shall take it from thee save the unjust. And thou Abbas,' turning to his uncle, 'I confirm thee in the giving drink from out of the well Zemzem to the pilgrims: it is no mean office this that I give now unto thee.'

Mahomet's
attachment
to Mecca

Having destroyed the images and obliterated the pictures of Abraham and the angels painted on the walls of the Kaaba, Mahomet desired Bilâl to sound the call for prayer from the top of the Kaaba, and worship was performed by the surrounding multitude, as it has been ever since, according to the ritual of the Mosque of Medina. A crier was then sent through the city with this proclamation;—'Whoever believeth in God and in the day of Judgment, let him not leave in his house any image whatever that he doth not break in pieces.' The Prophet likewise deputed a party of the Khozáa to repair the boundary pillars around the sacred territory.¹ Thus he gave practical proof that, while determined to uproot idolatry from the land, he was equally resolved to uphold the sanctity of Mecca, and the obligation of its worship. He won the hearts of the inhabitants by his ardent declaration of attachment to their city: 'Thou art the choicest spot on the earth unto me,' he said, 'and the most delectable. If thy people had not cast me forth, I never had forsaken thee!' The Citizens of Medina now began to express their fear that, as the Lord had given him the victory over his native city, he would not return to Medina as his home. He overheard it, and, calling them around him, assured them he would never quit Medina: 'God forbid it,' he said; 'where ye live, there will I live, and there too shall I die.'

Abu Bekr
brings his
father to
visit Ma-
homet

He now retired again into his tent. Soon after, Abu Bekr approached the door leading his father, Abu Cuhâfa, now bowed down with great age, and his locks 'white as the flower of the mountain grass.'² Mahomet accosted him

¹ Pillars were then, as at the present day, placed at the limits of the sacred territory on either side of all the main roads leading to Mecca. They had probably become neglected or injured, as Mahomet must have observed in passing. The distance of these landmarks from Mecca varies in different directions. On the Jedda road they are nine miles from Mecca; towards Al Omra, only three.

² The fine image is spoiled by the addition that Mahomet desired him to dye his snow-white hair. He lived to see his son Caliph, and died A.H. XIV., aged 97.

kindly : 'Why didst thou not leave thine aged father in his house, Abu Bekr? and I would have gone and seen him there.' 'It was more fitting that he should visit thee, O Prophet, than that thou shouldst visit him.' Mahomet seated the aged man beside him, and, affectionately pressing his hand upon his bosom, invited him to make profession of the Moslem faith, which he readily did.

From the amnesty extended to the Citizens of Mecca, Mahomet excluded ten or twelve persons. Of these, however, only four were actually put to death. Huweirith and Habbâr were proscribed for their ruffianly attack on his daughter Zeinab, when she escaped from Mecca. The former was put to death by Aly. The latter concealed himself; and some months later, appearing at Medina, a repentant convert, was forgiven. The next two were renegade Moslems who, having shed blood at Medina, had fled to Mecca and abjured Islam. They were both slain, one as he clung to the curtain of the Kaaba; and also a singing girl belonging to them, who had been in the habit of annoying the Prophet with her satires.

The rest escaped. Among these was another apostate, Abdallah Abu Sarh, whom Mahomet had employed at Medina in writing down passages of the Coran from his dictation. His foster brother sheltered him till quiet was restored, then brought him forward and implored forgiveness. The Prophet, unwilling to pardon so great an offender, for some time held his peace; but at last granted him quarter. When Abdallah retired, Mahomet thus addressed the Companions about him : 'Why did not one of you arise and smite Abdallah on the neck. I remained silent expecting this.' 'But thou gavest no sign unto us,' replied one. 'To give signs,' said Mahomet, 'is treachery; it is not fitting for a Prophet in such fashion to ordain the death of any.'¹ Safwân and Ikrima, after eluding the pursuit of Khalid, fled towards the seashore; they were on the point of embarking, when the assurance of forgiveness reached them and they were persuaded to return.² Hind the wife of Abu Sofian, and Sarah a sing-

Citizens
proscribed

Huweirith
and Hab-
bâr : the
former
executed

Two mur-
derers and a
singing
girl put to
death

Abu Sarh,
an apostate,
escapes

Safwân,
Ikrima,
Hind, and
Sarah
escape

¹ He was foster brother to Othman, and we hear more of him in connection with his Caliphate.—*Caliphate*, p. 203.

² Ikrima was brought back by his wife, who, having obtained pardon from Mahomet, hurried after him to Jedda. C. de Perceval tells a romantic

ing girl who had in the discharge of her profession given offence to Mahomet, escaped the sentence of death by opportune submission.¹

Treatment
of Mecca
magnani-
mous and
forbearing

The proscriptions were thus comparatively few; and capital sentence, where actually carried into effect, was (with perhaps the exception of the singing girl) justified probably by other crimes than mere political antagonism. The magnanimity with which Mahomet treated a people who had so long hated and rejected him is worthy of all admiration. It was indeed for his own interest to forgive the past, and cast into oblivion its slights and injuries. But this did not the less require a large and generous heart.² And Mahomet had his reward, for the whole population of his native city at once gave in their adhesion, and espoused his cause with alacrity and apparent devotion. Whatever the strength or weakness of religious conviction, there were no 'disaffected' inhabitants at Mecca nor any relapse even in the rebellion that followed the Prophet's death. Within a few weeks we find two thousand of the citizens fighting faithfully by his side.

Bloodshed
prohibited

On the night after the occupation of Mecca, certain of the Khozâa, to gratify an old-standing enmity, rose upon a neighbouring tribe, and put one of them to death. The day following, Mahomet took advantage of the incident to address the congregation assembled in front of the Kaaba for mid-day prayer: 'Verily the Lord hallowed Mecca in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Nor was it common unto me but for a single watch of the day; then it re-

story of her reaching the shore just as he had embarked, and waving her scarf to bring him back. Omeir, a Meccan chief, sought out Safwân, taking as a pledge the red striped turban worn by Mahomet around his head as he entered Mecca. He asked for two months' quarter; Mahomet gave him four.

¹ Wahshi, the Abyssinian slave who slew Hamza, fled to Tayif, and eventually obtained pardon in company with its inhabitants. Omm Hâni, daughter of Abu Tâlib, gave refuge to two men of her husband's tribe whom her brother Aly wished to kill. She asked quarter for them of Mahomet, who received her graciously, saying: 'I give protection to whomsoever thou dost give protection.' A curious scene is here described of Mahomet's camp life; the Prophet, wearied and covered with dust, had retired to a corner of the tent across which Fatima held a screen; thus veiled, he bathed himself, and then came forth to meet the persons waiting for him.

² Mahomet is said to have compared himself in his treatment of Mecca to Joseph forgiving the injuries of his brethren.

turned to its sacredness as before. Neither was the plunder thereof lawful unto me. Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Ye Beni Khozáa! withdraw your hands from shedding blood. The man whom ye have killed, I will myself pay compensation for him; but whoso slayeth any man after this, verily the blood of him that is murdered shall be required at the murderer's hands.'

During the succeeding fortnight, while occupied in the arrangement of public affairs at Mecca, Mahomet sent forth several armed parties to destroy the idolatrous shrines in the vicinity, and secure the submission of surrounding tribes. Khalid demolished the fane of Al Ozza at Nakhla, the famous goddess of the Meccan tribes; Amru broke in pieces Suwa, an image adored by the Hodzeil; and Manât, the divinity worshipped at Codeid, was destroyed by a band of the citizens of Medina who had formerly been especially devoted to its service.¹

Parties sent out to destroy images

On his return from Nakhla, Khalid was sent with a detachment to require the adhesion of the Jadzĭma, a tribe which dwelt a day's march south of Mecca. They tendered immediate submission, professed themselves converts, and, at the bidding of Khalid, laid down their arms. But Khalid, actuated by an ancient enmity, and thus giving early proof of the sanguinary temper which afterwards gained for him the title of *The Sword of God*, made them all prisoners and gave command for their execution. A portion were put to death by his Bedouin followers, but fortunately there were also present some Citizens of Medina and Refugees, who interposed and saved the rest. Mahomet, grieved at the intelligence, raised his hands to heaven, and said: 'O Lord! I am innocent in thy sight of that which Khalid hath done.' To prove the sincerity of his displeasure, he sent forth Aly with money to make compensation for the slain, and for the plunder.

Cruelty of Khalid to Beni Jadzima

¹ Curious stories are told about these deities. When Khalid returned from Nakhla, Mahomet asked him what he had seen. He replied, 'Nothing.' 'Then thou hast not yet destroyed the goddess? Return and do so.' On his going back, a naked female, black, and with dishevelled hair, rushed out, and Khalid cut her in pieces. 'That was Ozza,' said the Prophet, when it was reported to him. A similar tale is told of Manât.

The servitor of one of these images, after suspending his sword about its neck, retired to an adjoining hill, and cried out to the image to wield the sword and save itself.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BATTLE OF HONEIN AND SIEGE OF TAYIF

Beni Ha-
wázin
assemble
against
Mahomet ;

A STORM that lowered in the east cut short the Prophet's stay at Mecca. The great Hawázin tribe occupied (as they still occupy) the ranges and slopes of the hill country south-east of Mecca ; and, with their numerous branches and affiliated clans, spread themselves over the wide steppes beyond Tayif. That city, inhabited by the Beni Thackif of the same descent, was their centre ; and its inhabitants, devoted to idol worship, and closely connected with Mecca, feared not unnaturally that the iconoclastic conqueror would strike his next blow at their faith and liberties. Accordingly they sent an urgent summons to all the branches of the Hawázin stock to assemble, with the view effectively to check the arrogant assumptions of Mahomet, now too plainly developing his scheme of conquest and universal supremacy. Having appointed a rendezvous at Antás, a valley in the mountain range north-east of Tayif, they began rapidly to assemble there.

Who is
therefore
obliged to
leave
Mecca

This movement obliged Mahomet to cut short his stay at Mecca. Although the city had cheerfully accepted his authority, all its inhabitants had not yet embraced the new religion, nor formally acknowledged his prophetic claim. Perhaps he intended to follow the course he had pursued at Medina, and leave their conversion to be gradually accomplished without compulsion. However this may have been, the threatening intelligence called him suddenly away from Mecca. Muádh ibn Jábál, a young citizen of Medina, well skilled in the Coran and all questions of religious practice, was left behind to instruct the people of Mecca in the tenets and requirements of Islam ; and Attáb, a youthful Coreishite, of the house of Abd Shams, placed over the secular administration of the city.

Four weeks had just elapsed since quitting Medina, when Mahomet marched forth from Mecca at the head of all his forces, swelled now, by the addition of 2,000 auxiliaries from the Coreish, to the number of 12,000 men. Safwân, at his request, made over to him one hundred suits of mail and stand of arms complete, and as many camels. The array of tribes, each with a banner waving at its head, was so imposing that Abu Bekr broke forth in admiration as they passed:—‘We shall not this day be worsted by reason of the smallness of our numbers!’ Mahomet smiled with a complacent assent. His vainglorious attitude was remembered by the Prophet afterwards with self-reproach. In three or four marches the army arrived near the entrance of the valley of Honein.

Mahomet sets out for Honein. A.H. VIII. January 28, A.D. 680

The Hawâzin, gathered in great force at Autâs under their chief Mâlik, had meanwhile also been advancing upon the same valley. The women and children of the tribe, with their herds and flocks, followed in the rear. Mâlik hoped thus to nerve his troops to victory. Doreid, an aged warrior who accompanied the army in his litter, protested against the fatal measure. But the youthful leader derided his advice. During the night of Mahomet’s arrival at Honein, Mâlik drew up his men in a masked recess, commanding the steep and narrow defile which formed the entrance to the valley, and awaited there in silence the enemy’s approach.¹

Hawâzin also advancing on Honein

At early dawn, while it was yet dark, the sky being overcast with clouds, the Moslem army was in motion. Mounted on his white mule and clad in panoply as on the day of Ohod, Mahomet followed in the rear. The vanguard of the Beni Suleim, led by Khalid, were defiling leisurely up the steep and narrow pass, when on a sudden the Hawâzin sprang from their ambushade, and charged impetuously down

Battle of Honein, February 1, A.D. 680

¹ Mâlik was only thirty years of age. Doreid was a famous chief in his day. After the battle, he was cruelly put to death by a youth of the Suleim, who captured him as he was endeavouring to escape in his camel-litter. The first cut of the youth’s sword took no effect. ‘How badly has thy mother furnished thee!’ said the old man, cold and unmoved at the prospect of death. ‘There, take that sword hung up behind my litter, and strike just between the spine and the head. It was thus I used to slay the adversary in my day. Then go and tell thy mother that thou hast killed Doreid. Many are the days in which I have saved the lives of the women of thy tribe.’ He had, in fact, saved the lad’s mother, and his two grandmothers. The skin of his legs resembled paper, from constant riding on the bare backs of horses.

Mahomet's
army sur-
prised and
driven
back, but
eventually
rallied

upon them. Staggered by the unexpected onslaught, column after column fell back and choked the narrow pass. Aggravated by the obscurity of the hour, and the straitness of the rugged road, panic seized the army. They all turned and fled. 'Whither away?' cried Mahomet, as troop after troop they hurried past him; 'Whither away? The Prophet of the Lord is here! Return! return!' But his words had no effect, excepting that a band of devoted followers gathered round him.¹ The confusion increased, the multitude of camels jostling wildly one against the other; all was noise and clamour, and the Prophet's voice was lost amid the din. At last, seeing the Medina column hurrying down in the common flight, he bade Abbas, who held his mule, to cry aloud:—'Citizens of Medina! Ye men of the Pledge of the Tree of Fealty! Men of the Sura *Bacr*!'² Abbas forthwith shouted these words over and over again at the pitch of his stentorian voice, till they reached far and near. At once they touched a chord in the heart of the Citizens. Arrested in their flight, 'like she camels whose bowels are stirred over their young,' they flew to Mahomet, crying aloud, '*Ya Labbeik!* Here we are, ready at thy call!' A hundred of these devoted followers, disengaged with difficulty from the camels that jammed the road, threw themselves across the gorge, and stayed the downward rush. Relieved of the pressure from above, the army rallied gradually, and returned to the battle. The conflict was severe; and the issue, from the nature of the ground and the impetuosity of the Bedouin foe, for some time doubtful. Mahomet from an eminence watched the struggle. Excited by the spectacle, he began loudly to cry out:—'*Now is the furnace heated: I am the Prophet that lieth not; the seed of Abd al Muttalib!*' Then bidding Abbas pick him up a handful of gravel, he cast it at the enemy. '*Ruin seize them! I swear they are discomfited,*' he shouted eagerly, as he saw them wavering. 'By the Lord of the Kaaba, they yield! God hath cast fear into their hearts.' The moment was

The Beni
Hawázin
beaten
back

¹ The following stood firmly by Mahomet:—Abbas and his son Fadhl, Aly, Abu Bekr, Omar, Osáma, Ayman. The latter (son of Zeid and Mahomet's nurse) was among the slain.

² Alluding to those who took the oath of fealty under the Acacia tree at Hodeibia; and to Sura *Bacr*, the chapter of the Coran first revealed at Medina. The double allusion would thus remind them at once of their conversion, and of their oath to defend Mahomet to the death.

critical, but in the end the steadiness of the Medina band, and the enthusiasm of the rest when once recalled, had won the day. The enemy fled; and the rout was so complete, and so fierce the pursuit, that some even of the women and children were killed, an atrocity strictly forbidden by the Prophet.

Mâlik, taking his stand, with the flower of his army, at the upper end of the valley, covered the escape of his broken forces; but he was unable to rescue the women and children, who fell into the conqueror's hands, with the camp and all that it contained. The spoil included 24,000 camels, 40,000 sheep and goats, and 4,000 ounces of silver. The prisoners, 6,000 in number, with the booty, were removed to the neighbouring valley of Jierrâna, and sheltered there, awaiting the return of the army from Tayif. Mahomet knew that the Hawâzin would seek to regain their families, and an opportunity was skilfully left thus open for negotiation. The fugitive army was pursued with slaughter as far as Nakhla; from thence part fled back to Autâs, and part to Tayif. The former entrenched themselves in their previous camp. A strong detachment was sent to dislodge them, which after severe fighting was accomplished. The dispersed fragments found refuge in the surrounding hills.

Their families and camp captured

Pursuit of fugitive columns

The victory was thus complete, but not without some considerable loss on the part of Mahomet. Only a few of his immediate followers are named among the slain.¹ But some of the auxiliaries, who being in the van bore the brunt of the enemy's onset, suffered severely, and two tribes are spoken of as almost annihilated. For these Mahomet offered up a special prayer, and said: 'O Lord! recompense them because of their calamities!'

Loss on Mahomet's side

In the passages which treat of this battle, the reverse sustained at the outset is attributed to the vainglorious trust in their numbers with which the army set out from Mecca, while the eventual success is ascribed to the invisible hosts which fought against the enemy;—

Victory ascribed to angelic aid

Verily God hath assisted you in many battlefields; and notably on the day of Honein, when ye rejoiced in the multitude of your host. But the multitude did not in any wise benefit you: the earth with all its spaciousness became too strait for you.²

Sura ix

¹ Wakidy names only five; others ten.

² That is to say, in the narrow and precipitous pass, their great num-

And so ye turned your backs and fled. Then after that the Lord caused His peace to descend upon His Prophet and on the Faithful, and sent down Hosts which ye saw not, and thereby punished the Unbelievers. And such is the end of them that disbelieve. Then God will be turned hereafter unto whom He pleaseth ; for God is gracious and merciful.¹

Siege of
Tayif.
February,
A.D. 630

As soon as the detachment had returned from Autás, Mahomet pushed forward his army by way of Nakhla, and laid siege to Tayif. But the battlements were strong, the city well provisioned, and a plentiful supply of water within the walls. The besiegers were received with showers of arrows, so thick and well sustained that they darkened the sky like a flight of locusts. Twelve men were killed, and many wounded, among whom was a son of Abu Bekr. The camp was therefore speedily withdrawn out of range ; and tents of red leather were pitched by it for Omm Salma and Zeinab, who both had followed their lord through all the dangers of the way. On a spot between the two Mahomet performed the daily prayers ; and here eventually was built the great Mosque of Tayif.

Testudos
and cata-
pults tried
without
success

The siege did not advance, for no one dared expose himself before the galling archery from the walls. This had been anticipated, and a novel remedy already sought. The Beni Dous, a tribe one or two days south of Mecca, were famous for the use of the testudo and catapult. Tufeil, one of their chiefs, having joined Mahomet at Kheibar, was despatched to secure the allegiance of his people, and seek their aid. They accepted the summons ; and Tufeil, having burned their famous tutelary image, joined Mahomet four days after siege had been laid to Tayif.² Besieging engines were speedily prepared, and parties pushed forward to undermine the walls. But the citizens, prepared for the stratagem, cast down balls of heated iron from the battlements, and set the bers, of which they had been vaingloriously proud, only added to the difficulty.

¹ The last verse is generally construed as referring to the mercy afterwards shown to the Beni Hawázin ; but it more probably means forgiveness for the vainglory and cowardice just described. As usual, the angels are a favourite subject of tradition. On this occasion they wore *red uniform*. A cloud was seen to fill the valley as it were a swarm of ants : this was the angelic troop.

Tufeil, but on doubtful authority, is said to have been converted at Mecca, before the Hégira.

machines on fire. The party under their shelter fled in alarm, and a discharge of archery opened on them. Some were killed and many wounded before they got beyond the range. The testudo and catapult were not tried again.

Seeing no other way of bringing the city to terms, Mahomet gave command to cut down and burn to their roots the far-famed vineyards which surrounded it.¹ This was being done, as the unfortunate citizens could descry, with merciless vigour, when they succeeded in conveying to Mahomet an earnest expostulation that he would, 'for the sake of mercy and of God,' desist. He listened to the appeal, and stayed further destruction. But in place of it he caused a proclamation to reach the garrison which grievously displeased them, that if any slaves came forth from the city, they would receive their freedom. Some twenty escaped, and became eventually valiant followers of their liberator.

Vineyards cut down and liberty offered to slaves of garrison

Half a month passed thus without effect. The army became impatient to share the spoil in store for them at Jierrâna. Mahomet took counsel with the principal men. 'What thinkest thou,' said he to a Bedouin leader, 'of this stubborn city?' 'A fox in its hole,' replied the astute sententious chief;—'sit long enough and ye will catch it: leave it alone, and it will not harm you.' A dream of the Prophet ratified the adage.² It was not the divine will that operations should be continued. The siege was raised, and the army marched back to Jierrâna, which it reached about the end of February.

Siege raised, army returns to Jierrâna, end of February A.D. 680

Here occurred the interesting incident, already noticed

¹ These charming gardens, with their rills of running water, lie at the foot of the low mountains encircling the sandy plain in the middle of which Tayif stands. They are still as famous as they were 1,200 years ago. The nearest is 'now about a half or three quarters of an hour from the city.' Vide *supra*, p. 106.

² Mahomet dreamed that a bowl of cream was presented to him, which a hen pecked at and spilled. Abu Bekr interpreted the dream to mean that he would not at this time obtain his desire against Tayif, and Mahomet thought so too. A story told of Oyeina, chief of the Fezâra, illustrates the feelings and motives of Mahomet's Bedouin auxiliaries. Oyeina was lauding the garrison for their brave and determined resistance. 'Out upon thee, Oyeina!' said his neighbour; 'dost thou praise the enemies of the Prophet,—the very people whom thou hast come to aid him in destroying?' 'Verily,' said the Bedouin chief, 'I had another object in coming hither. I hoped that, if Mahomet gained the victory, I should obtain one of the damsels of Tayif; then should I have had worthy issue; for truly the tribe of Thackif are a warlike, noble race.'

Scene
between
Mahomet
and his
foster sister

in the opening chapter. An aged female among the captives, roughly treated like the rest, warned the rude soldiery to beware,—‘For,’ said she, ‘I am the foster sister of your Chief.’ Hearing this, they carried her to Mahomet, who recognised in the complainant the little girl Shima, who used, when he was nurtured by Halîma among the Beni Sad, to tend and carry him. He seated her affectionately beside him, and offered to take her to Medina. But as she preferred remaining with her tribe, he dismissed her with a handsome present.¹

Prisoners
of Beni
Hawâzin
given up

Encouraged by the kind treatment of their kinswoman, a deputation from the various tribes of the Hawâzin presented themselves before the Prophet, among whom was an aged man who claimed to be his foster uncle. They professed submission to their conqueror, recounted the calamities that had befallen them, and thus urged their claim upon his favour;—‘There, in these huts among the prisoners, are thy foster mothers and foster sisters,—they that have nursed thee and fondled thee in their bosoms. We have known thee a suckling, a weaned child, a youth generous and noble: and now thou hast risen to this dignity. Be gracious therefore unto us, even as the Lord hath been gracious unto thee!’ Mahomet could not withstand the appeal. Turning kindly to them, he said: ‘Whether of the two, your families or your property, is the dearer to you?’ ‘Our women and our children,’ they replied; ‘we would not take anything in exchange for them.’ ‘Then,’ continued the Prophet, ‘whatsoever prisoners fall to my portion and that of my family, I give them up unto you; and I will presently speak unto the people concerning the rest. Come again at the mid-day prayer when the congregation is assembled, and ask of me to make intercession with them for you.’ At the appointed time they appeared and made their petition. The citizens of Medina, and those of Mecca also, cheerfully followed the example of Mahomet; but some of the allied tribes, as the Fezâra, with Oyeina at their head, declined to do so. Mahomet urged the claims of his new converts, and promised that such of the allies as were unwilling to part with their share of the

¹ See *ante*, p. 7. The mark of the bite, recognised by Mahomet as having been inflicted by himself when a child on Shima’s back, may be a traditional embellishment.

prisoners should be recompensed hereafter from the first booty the Lord might give into their hands, at the rate of six camels for every captive. To this they agreed, and the prisoners were all released.

Among the captives were three beautiful women, who were brought to Mahomet. One was presented by him to Aly, another to Othman, and the third to Omar. Omar transferred the one allotted him to his son Abdallah, who returned her as she was, with the rest of the prisoners.¹ Whether the other two were restored likewise is not stated: but, be this as it may, it throws a curious light on the domestic history of Mahomet, that he should have presented such gifts as slave girls to the father of one of his wives, and the husbands of two of his own daughters.

Mahomet presents slave girls to Aly, Othman, and Omar

Having arranged for the restoration of the prisoners, Mahomet had already mounted his camel and was proceeding to his tent, when the people, fearing lest the spoil, as well as the prisoners, should slip from their grasp, crowded round him;—‘Distribute to us the spoil,’ they cried, ‘the camels and the flocks!’ So rudely did they jostle, that he was driven to seek refuge under a tree, and his mantle torn from his shoulders. ‘Return to me my mantle, O man!’ cried Mahomet, who had now secured a more free position, extricating himself with some difficulty from the crush;—‘Return my mantle: for I swear by the Lord that if the sheep and the camels were as many as the trees of the forest in number, I would divide them all amongst you. Ye have not heretofore found me niggardly or false.’ Then plucking from his camel’s hump a hair, he held it aloft and said;—‘Even to a hair like this, I would keep back nought but the Fifth; and even that I will divide amongst you.’ They were pacified, and Mahomet went on his way.

Mahomet is mobbed on account of the booty

He took an early opportunity of making good his promise, and at the same time of gaining, by a princely liberality, the hearts of the leading chiefs of Mecca and of the Bedouin tribes. To the most powerful he presented each one hundred camels. Among them we find Abu Sofian, with his two sons, Yezid and Muavia; Hakim ibn Hizâm, Safwân, Suheil, Huweitib, Oyeina, and others who but a few weeks before were his

Present made to Meccan and Bedouin chiefs

¹ Abdallah had sent the girl to be kept in readiness for him after he had visited the Kaaba; but meanwhile the prisoners were surrendered.

deadly enemies. To the lesser chiefs he gave fifty camels each. And so liberal was he that in some cases where discontent was expressed, the gift was without hesitation doubled.

Discontent
among
older fol-
lowers

Although taken from the Prophet's Fifth, these largesses to new and doubtful converts gave umbrage to his veteran followers. Thus one complained that such Bedouin chieftains as Acra and Oyeina received each one hundred camels, while a faithful believer like Jueil got nothing at all. 'And what of that?' replied the Prophet; 'I swear that Jueil is the best man that ever stepped on earth, were it filled never so full of Acras and Oyeinas; but I wished to gain over the hearts of these men to Islam, while Jueil hath no need of any such inducement.' A Bedouin follower, who watched the proceeding, openly impugned its equity. Mahomet became angry, and said: 'Out upon thee! If justice and equity be not with me, where will ye find them?' But what concerned Mahomet the most, were the murmurs of the Citizens of Medina. 'Truly (thus they spake among themselves) he hath now joined his own people and forsaken us.' The discontent became so serious that Sad ibn Obâda thought right to represent it to the Prophet, who bade him call the murmurers together. He then addressed them thus;—'Ye men of Medina,¹ it hath been reported to me that ye are discontented, because I have given unto these Chiefs largesses, and have given nothing unto you. Now speak unto me. Did I not come unto you whilst ye were wandering, and the Lord gave you the right direction?—needy, and He enriched you;—at enmity amongst yourselves, and He hath filled your hearts with love and unity?' He paused for a reply. 'Indeed, it is even as thou sayest,' they answered; 'to the Lord and to his Prophet belong benevolence and grace.' 'Nay, by the Lord!' continued Mahomet; 'but ye might have answered (and answered truly, for I would have vouched for it myself,)—*Thou camest to Medina rejected, and we bare thee witness: a fugitive and we took thee in; an outcast, and we gave thee an asylum; destitute, and we fed thee.* Why are ye disturbed in mind because of the things of this life wherewith I have sought to incline these men unto the faith in

¹ *Ansâr*, 'Helpers,' as before explained; and so throughout this address.

which ye are already stablished? Are ye not satisfied that others should have the flocks and herds, while ye carry back with you the Prophet of the Lord? Nay, I will never leave you. If all mankind went one way, and the men of Medina another way, verily I would go the way of the men of Medina. The Lord be favourable unto them, and bless them, and their sons and their sons' sons for ever!' At these words they wept, till the tears ran down upon their beards; and they cried out with one voice: 'Yea, we are well satisfied, O Prophet, with our lot!'

Notwithstanding this touching return of kindly feeling, a grave misdemeanour had been committed by those who had found fault with the distribution, and a passage was revealed bearing a divine reprimand accordingly. The legitimate recipients of public charity had already been laid down as the 'poor and needy and the wayfarer,' and certain other deserving classes. It was needful now for the Prophet to justify his stepping beyond these limits; and so a new class is added as proper recipients of public gifts;—

Subject
noticed in
Coran

There are that blame thee in thy (distribution of the) alms; ¹ Sura ix if they receive therefrom they are well pleased, but if they do not receive a part they are angry. Now, if they had been well pleased with whatever God and his Apostle gave unto them, and had said,—'God will suffice for us; God will give unto us of his bounty, and his Prophet also,—verily unto God is our desire,'—(it had been better for them). Verily, Alms are for the poor and the needy, and for the collectors of the same, *and for them whose hearts are to be gained over*, and for captives, and for debtors, and for the service of God, and for the wayfarer. It is an ordinance from God; and God is knowing and wise.

Thus Mahomet made no attempt to hide the motive which dictated these munificent gifts, and the chiefs who received them were ever known as 'those *whose hearts had been gained over*.' Mâlik, the chief who had led the Hawâzin, was still in Tayif. Mahomet, desiring to gain him over also, directed his tribe to make it known that if he embraced Islam his family and property would be restored, and a present of one hundred camels besides bestowed upon him. He soon joined Mahomet

Mâlik, the
Hawâzinite
chief,
gained over

¹ That is, they complained that the Prophet's Fifth destined for charity, &c., along with the tithes, had been diverted by Mahomet from its proper use.

and became an exemplary Believer. Confirmed in his chiefship, he entered on a constant warfare with the citizens of Tayif, cut off their cattle whenever they were sent away to graze, and reduced them to great straits.

Booty distributed,
February,
March,
680

Mahomet performs
Lesser pilgrimage

Mahomet spent about a fortnight at Jierrâna, during which period the booty captured at Honein was all distributed. Four camels, and forty sheep or goats, fell to the lot of each foot soldier, and three times that amount to every horseman. The distribution ended, Mahomet, having taken upon him the pilgrim vows, started for Mecca, where he fulfilled the rites of the Lesser pilgrimage. But he made no stay there. He returned to Jierrâna that same night; and thence, striking through the valleys, took the direct route homewards to Medina.

Attâb left
in the
government
of
Mecca

The youthful Attâb was confirmed in the government of Mecca, and an allowance assigned him of one dirhem a day.¹ The Annual pilgrimage followed shortly afterwards, but Mahomet did not go up to it. Attâb presided; and Idolaters were still permitted to mingle freely with Believers in performance of its ceremonies. Muâdh was left behind to complete the spiritual instruction of the city.

Despatches
to Bahrein,
&c.

On his return to Medina, Mahomet despatched letters to the Chiefs of Bahrein, Oman, and Yemen, the result of which will be told in the narrative of the following year.

¹ Attâb was content with this moderate allowance. He said: 'Let the Lord make hungry that man's liver, who is hungry upon a dirhem a day. The Prophet hath appointed that as my sustenance. I have no further claim on any one.'

CHAPTER XXVI

MARY, THE COPTIC MAID, AND HER SON IBRAHIM

A.H. VIII.—X.—A.D. 630, 631

ÆTAT. 61, 62

IN the Ninth year of the Hegira, Mahomet lost his daughter Zeinab, who had never recovered the ill treatment which she suffered on her escape from Mecca. Omm Kolthum, whom Othman married after Rockeya's death, had also died, so that of his family Fatima alone was left. His heart was now for a brief space to be solaced by another child.

Death of
Zeinab,
Mahomet's
daughter

We have already seen that Muckoukas sent two Coptic maids, Shirin and Mary, as a gift to Mahomet. They were both comely; but it was not lawful, according to his own strict precept, for the Prophet to place two sisters in his harem. The beauty of Mary, whose fair complexion and delicate features were adorned by a profusion of black curling hair, fascinated Mahomet. So he kept Mary, and gave her sister to another. Omm Salim, the wife of his servant Abu Râfi (the same that adorned Safia for him at Kheibar), was entrusted with the new charge. Mary was not at once placed in the harem at the Mosque, but a garden house was prepared for her in Upper Medina, where, in the heat of the summer and the date harvest, she used to receive the visits of the Prophet.¹ Originally a Christian, she had no doubt by this time gone over to Islam.

Mary, the
Coptic
maid,

¹ According to Beladzori (p. 18), it was one of seven properties escheated from the Beni Nadhir, and given to Mukheirik the Jew, and on his death left by him to Mahomet. Burton tells us it is shown to the present day. It lies in the quarter called Ambariya, on the S.E. side of the city, where the road emerges to Yenbo and Mecca; it is separated from the rest of the town by the stream and low intervening land. A Mosque called Masjid Mashrabat Omm Ibrahim, 'the Mosque of the summer house of the mother of Ibrahim,' still marks the spot. At

Presents
Mahomet
with a son.
A.H. VIII.
April,
A.D. 630

A singular fortune elevated Mary to a dignity which her charms alone could not have secured. In course of time she gave promise of becoming a mother; and the aged Salma, who had long ago attended the birth of Khadija's children, was now engaged to perform the same office for Mary. Shortly after the return from Tayif, a son was born, and Omm Burda was selected from amongst many candidates to be the infant's nurse. His name was called Ibrahim.¹ More than five-and-twenty years had elapsed since the birth of Mahomet's last child, and his numerous marriages at Medina had not given promise of any progeny. His joy, therefore, at the birth of a son in his old age was very great. On the seventh day, following the example of Khadija, he sacrificed a kid; and, having shaved his head, he distributed silver among the poor to the weight of the hair, which then was buried.² He used daily to visit the house of the nurse (where according to custom Ibrahim was brought up), and calling for the little child would embrace him in his arms and kiss him fondly.

Jealousy
of Ma-
homet's
wives

The wives of Mahomet were envious of Mary, who as the mother of Ibrahim was now advanced beyond the position of a slave, and enjoyed peculiar favour. As the infant grew and throve, Mahomet one day carried him to Ayesha, and with pride exclaimed: 'Look, what a likeness it is to me!' 'I do not see it,' said Ayesha, who would gladly have put Mahomet out of conceit with the little Ibrahim. 'What!' rejoined he; 'canst thou not see the likeness, and how fair and fat he is?' 'Yes,' she replied; 'and so would be any other child that drank as much milk as he.' A flock of milch goats was kept for the especial service of the child.

But the jealousy of Mary's 'Sisters' showed itself in a more serious way, and led to an incident in the Prophet's life what period Mahomet provided this garden for her is not certain: possibly *after* the birth of Ibrahim, or on her becoming *enconcinte*. Certainly it was an honour one would not have expected to be conferred on a slave-girl, without some special cause. Sprenger thinks that Mahomet kept her in a neighbour's house at first, and transferred her to the garden only after the affair of Haphsa.

¹ The name, I need hardly say, is the Arabian form of *Abraham*. Another tradition says that the child was given to be nursed by the wife of a blacksmith, who used to be blowing his forge when Mahomet came to see the child, and the house was consequently full of smoke.

² The weight must have been trifling, as he had only shaved his head a month or six weeks before, at the Lesser pilgrimage.

which the biographers pass over in decent silence; and I should gladly have followed their example if the Coran itself had not accredited the facts and stamped them with unavoidable notoriety.

It once happened that Haphsa paid a visit to her father on the day which, in due course, Mahomet was passing in her house.¹ Returning unexpectedly, she surprised the Prophet in her own private room with Mary. She was indignant at the wrong. The affront was the more intolerable from the servile position of her rival. She reproached her lord bitterly, and threatened to make the occurrence known to the whole sisterhood. Afraid of the exposure, and anxious to appease his offended wife, Mahomet begged of her to keep the matter quiet, and promised to forego the company of Mary altogether. Haphsa, however, did not care to hide her wrong. She told it all to Ayesha, who boiled with indignation at the tale. The scandal throughout the harem spread apace, and Mahomet soon found himself received by his wives with coldness and reserve.

Affair with Mary creates scandal in Mahomet's harem

As in the affair of Zeinab, a heavenly message interposed, which disallowed the promise to refrain from Mary's company, chided the chief offenders for their insubordination, and hinted at the possibility of the whole harem being divorced in favour of other consorts more loyal and complacent. Having delivered this warning, the Prophet withdrew from the society of his wives, and for a whole month lived alone with Mary. Omar and Abu Bekr were mortified at the scandal and at the desertion of their daughters for a menial concubine. At length Mahomet, unwilling longer to continue the disgrace of his wives, or impatient at his self-imposed seclusion from them, listened to their prayer. Gabriel, he said, had spoken well of Haphsa, the chief offender, and desired that he should take her back again. So he forgave them all and returned to their apartments as before.

Mahomet's displeasure with his wives

The passage in the Coran relating to the affair is as follows:—

Notice of affair in Coran

O Prophet! Why hast thou forbidden thyself that which God hath made lawful unto thee, out of desire to please thy

Sura lxvi

¹ As before explained, Mahomet divided his time equally among his wives. He would say: '*This* (i.e. living in rotation with each) I have power to do; but Thou, O Lord, art the master over that in respect of which I have no power' (meaning love in the heart).

Wives ; for God is forgiving and merciful ? Verily God hath sanctioned the revocation of your oaths ; and God is your Master. He is knowing and wise.

The Prophet had entrusted as a secret to one of his wives a certain affair ; and when she disclosed it (to another), and God made known the same unto him, he acquainted (her) with a part thereof, and withheld a part.¹ And when he had acquainted her (Haphsa) therewith, she said, *Who told thee this?* He replied, *He told it to me, the Knowing and the Wise.*

If ye both turn with repentance unto God (for verily the hearts of you both have swerved)—Well. But if ye combine with each other against him, surely God is his Master ; and Gabriel and (every) good man of the Believers, and the Angels, will thereafter be his supporters.

Haply, his Lord, if he divorce you,² will give him in your stead Wives better than ye are, submissive unto God, believers, pious, repentant, devout, fasting ;—both Women married previously, and Virgins.³

There is surely no grotesquer utterance than this in the 'Sacred Books of the East' ; and yet it has been gravely read all these ages, and is still read, by the Moslem, both in public and private, as part of the 'eternal' Coran. It is equally remarkable that the affair did not in any perceptible degree affect either the reputation and influence of the Prophet, or the credit of his revelation.

Sickness of
Ibrahim

I turn gladly to a more edifying scene. A year and more had passed ; and the child Ibrahim was now advanced

¹ The passage is enigmatical. The meaning is apparently this : Mahomet told a part,—that is, a part of what he had supernaturally learned that Haphsa had said to Ayesha ; and withheld a part, *i.e.* refrained from upbraiding her with a part of what he had thus learned :—the one part perhaps relating to Mahomet's affair in Haphsa's room ; the other, to his promise that he would not consort with Mary again. According to another tradition, Mahomet, with the view of appeasing Haphsa, told her that Abu Bekr, and after him her father Omar, were to succeed him ; this being the part which, from fear of its getting abroad, he did not mention ; but such an interpretation is altogether unlikely.

² 'You' in the plural, not as before in the dual number,—implying that all his wives were involved in his displeasure.

³ The Sura, a short one of only thirteen verses, is a curiosity from beginning to end. It ends with a warning allusion to two wicked women, who, though the wives of Noah and Lot, were yet condemned to hell,—signifying that his own wives, unless they repented, might possibly find themselves in the same category ; and to two good women, the wife of Pharaoh, and the Virgin Mary, examples of virtue and piety.

to an age at which the innocent prattle and winning ways of infancy stole away the heart of Mahomet. His hopes and affections centred for awhile in his little son. There is, indeed, no ground for supposing that Mahomet ever contemplated the succession of princely office in his own family. The prophetic dignity was personal, and his political authority exercised solely in virtue of it. But he regarded his children with a loving and partial eye; he no doubt also rejoiced in the prospect, dear to every Arab, of having his name and memory perpetuated by male issue; and he might naturally expect that his son would be cherished and honoured by all followers of Islam. But his expectations, of whatever nature, were doomed to an early blight. When but fifteen or sixteen months old, Ibrahim fell sick, and it was soon seen that he would not survive. He was laid in a palm-grove near the house of his nurse. There Mary, with her sister Shirin, tended his dying bed; and there too was Mahomet in deep and bitter grief. Seeing that the child was soon to breathe his last, he folded him in his arms and sobbed. The by-standers tried to comfort him. They reminded him that he had counselled others to moderate their grief. 'Nay,' said Mahomet, calming himself as he hung over the expiring child;—'It is not this that I forbade, but wailing and fulsome laudation of the dead. This that ye see in me is but the working of love and pity in the heart: he that showeth no pity, unto him no pity shall be shown. We grieve for the child: the eye runneth down with tears, and the heart swelleth inwardly; yet we say not aught that would offend our Lord. Ibrahim! O Ibrahim! if it were not that the promise is faithful, and hope of Resurrection sure, if it were not that this is the way to be trodden by all, and that the last of us shall rejoin the first, I would grieve for thee with a grief sorer even than this!' But the spirit had already passed away, and the last fond words of Mahomet fell on ears that could no longer hear. So he laid down the little body, saying: 'The remainder of the days of his nursing shall be fulfilled in Paradise.'¹ Then he comforted Mary and Shirin, and bade them, now that the child was gone, to be silent and resigned.

His death,
A.H. X.
June or
July,
A.D. 681

¹ Mahomet held *two years* as the proper period for the suckling of a child.

Burial of
the child

Mahomet, with his uncle Abbas, sat by while Fadhl, son of the latter, washed and laid out the body. It was then carried forth upon its little bier. The Prophet, as was his wont, prayed over it, and then followed the procession to the graveyard. He lingered at the grave after it was filled up; and calling for a skin of water, caused it to be sprinkled over the spot. Then, observing some unevenness, he smoothed it with his hand, saying to the by-standers: 'When ye do this thing, do it carefully, for it giveth ease to the afflicted heart. It cannot injure the dead, neither can it profit him; but it giveth comfort to the living.'

Eclipse

An eclipse of the sun occurred on the same day, and the people spoke of it as a tribute to the death of the Prophet's son. A vulgar impostor would have accepted and confirmed the delusion; but Mahomet rejected the idea. 'The sun and the moon,' he taught them, 'are amongst the signs appointed by the Lord. They are not eclipsed on the death of any one. Whensoever ye see an eclipse, then betake yourselves to prayer until it passeth away.'

The nurse
rewarded

In gratitude for her services he gave Omm Burda, the nurse, a parcel of ground planted as an orchard with palm-trees.

General
history an-
ticipated

In this chapter I have anticipated the march of events by about a year, in order to bring under one view the story of Mary, the Coptic maid, and of her little son.

CHAPTER XXVII

EMBASSIES TO MEDINA

FIRST HALF OF THE NINTH YEAR OF THE HEGIRA.

April 20 to September, A.D. 630

THE conquest of Mecca opened a new era in Islam. It practically decided the struggle for supremacy in Arabia. Followed by the victory of Honein, it not only removed apprehension of future attack upon Medina, but elevated Mahomet to a position in which it was natural for him to assert an authority paramount over the whole Peninsula. It is true that no such authority had ever vested in the chiefs of Mecca. Neither had the Byzantine empire pretended to any influence beyond the confines of the Syrian desert. The suzerainty of Arabia, enjoyed in remote times by the Kings of Himyar, had it is true been transferred to the dynasty of Hira as representing the court of Persia. But Hira had fallen to the rank of an ordinary Satrapy; and the Chosroes, long before discomfited in a decisive battle by the Arabs themselves, and humbled now by the Roman arms, no longer commanded respect.¹ There was thus at the moment no power even nominally paramount throughout the Peninsula. Besides Mahomet himself, no one could lay claim to the dignity, or even dream of aspiring to it. The possession of Mecca now imparted a colour of right; for Mecca was the spiritual centre of Arabia, and to Mecca the tribes from every quarter yielded a reverential homage. The conduct of the Annual pilgrimage, the custody of the Holy house, the intercalation of the year, and the commutation at will of the sacred months,—

Political
supremacy
attained by
conquest of
Mecca

¹ In the battle of *Dra Car*, fought A.D. 611, just before Mahomet assumed the prophetic office, the Persians were completely routed by the great tribe of the Beni Bekr, inhabiting the N.E. of the Peninsula; and thereafter Hira sank in importance. See *Introd.* p. lxxxiv and p. 358.

institutions affecting all Arabia, belonged by ancient privilege to the Coreish, and were now in the hands of Mahomet. Throughout Arabia, who could advance pretensions to the supreme authority beside the Prophet of Medina and Conqueror of Mecca ?

Possession of Mecca increased Mahomet's spiritual power ;

Moreover, it had been the special care of Mahomet to interweave with the reformed faith all essential parts of the ancient ceremonial. The one had become an inseparable portion of the other. It was not, indeed, till the expiry of another year that full advantage was taken of this, by admitting none but adherents of Islam to the Kaaba and its rites. Yet the spiritual power which the Prophet gained by combining the Pilgrimage with the new faith was felt throughout from the moment that Mecca submitted to his arms. There remained but one religion for Arabia, and that was Islam.

Which, in its turn, involved absolute secular authority

Again, the new creed was so deftly bound up with the civil polity, that the recognition of Mahomet's spiritual power necessarily involved a simultaneous submission to his secular jurisdiction. It lay at the root of Islam that the convert should not only submit to its teaching, its ritual and its code of ethics, but also that he should render an implicit obedience in all things 'to the Lord *and to his Prophet,*' and that he should pay Tithes annually (not indeed as a tribute, but as a religious offering that sanctified the rest of his wealth) towards the charities and expenses of Mahomet and his growing empire.¹ It was the privilege of believing tribes alone, to pay the tithe : from Jews, Christians, and heathen tribes, it was not tithe but *Tribute* that was taken, and that in token of their servitude.

Collectors deputed to gather tithes. A.H. IX. April 20, A.D. 630

It was under these circumstances that, on his return from Jierrána, at the opening of the Ninth year of the Hegira, the Prophet demanded from the tribes which had tendered their adhesion, the prescribed offerings or Tithes. Collectors

¹ Tithes and voluntary almsgiving are called by two names of Jewish derivation, *Zakát* and *Sadakát* ; the former signifying 'purification' (see Luke xi. 41), the latter 'righteousness' as in Matt. vi. 1. The tribute from unbelievers is called *Khiráj*.

For the purposes to which Mahomet applied the tithes, see the passage quoted at p. 409. Mahomet assisted debtors from the fund. A debtor once applied for aid : 'Wait,' said Mahomet, 'till the tithes come in, and then I will help thee.'

were deputed by him in every direction to assess a tenth part of the increase, and bring it in as tithe to Medina.¹ They were well received, and accomplished their mission without obstruction, excepting only one or two cases.

A branch of the Beni Temīm chanced to be encamped close at hand when the tax-gatherer arrived to gather the tithes of an adjoining tribe. While the herds and flocks of their neighbours were being collected for the tenth, the Temīm, anticipating a like demand, came forward armed with bows and swords and drove the tax-gatherer away. Mahomet resolved on a prompt example of the offenders. Oyeina, with fifty of his Arab horsemen, travelling with haste and secrecy, fell unexpectedly upon them, and making above fifty captives,—men, women, and children,—carried them off to Medina, where they were kept by Mahomet in confinement. The Temīm, some of whom had fought by the side of Mahomet at Mecca and Honein, and been munificently rewarded at Jierrāna, lost no time in sending a deputation, of eighty or ninety chief men, to beg for their brethren's release. As they passed through the streets of Medina, the captive women and children, recognising their friends, raised a loud cry of distress. Moved by the sight, the party hastened onwards to the Mosque. After waiting impatiently for a little in its spacious court, they at last called out (for they were rude children of the desert) in a loud and familiar voice to Mahomet, who was in one of his wives' apartments adjoining the hall of audience:—'O Mahomet, come forth unto us!' The Prophet was displeased at their roughness and importunity, for he loved to be addressed in low and submissive accents. But, as the mid-day prayer was at hand, he came forth; and while Bilāl was summoning the people, entered into discourse with the strangers and listened to their application.

Beni Temīm attacked for driving away tax-gatherer

Beni Temīm send deputation for release of prisoners

The prayers ended, Mahomet seated himself in the court of the Mosque, when a scene occurred illustrative at once of Arab manners and of the successful readiness with which Mahomet adapted himself to the circumstances of the day. The Chiefs sought leave to contend for the palm of victory

Their poet and orator worsted by Thābit and Hassān

¹ Nine such parties are mentioned as having started on the first day of the new year to various tribes. They were instructed to take only the best and unblemished part of the increase, but not to interfere with the capital.

in rhetoric and poetry with the orators and poets of Medina.¹ It was hardly the proper issue for Mahomet on which to place his cause; but to have refused would have injured him in the eyes of these wild Bedouins; and the Prophet was confident in the superior eloquence of his followers. So he gave permission. First arose Otârid, the orator of his tribe, and, in an harangue of the ordinary boastful style, lauded his own people for their prowess and nobility. When he had ended, Mahomet motioned to Thâbit ibn Cays that he should reply. Thâbit descanted on the glory of Mahomet as a messenger from Heaven, on the devotion of the Refugees, and on the faithful and generous friendship of the Citizens; and wound up by threatening destruction against the enemies of Islam. Then Zibricân the Bedouin bard arose, and recited poetry, in which he dilated on the greatness and unequalled hospitality of the Temîm. When he sat down, Hassân the son of Thâbit, by Mahomet's command, followed in glowing and well-measured verse. After the more ordinary topics, he ended thus:—

Children of Dârim ! strive not with us ; Your boasting will
turn to your shame.

Ye lie when ye contend with us for Glory. What are ye but
our Servants, our Nurses, and our Attendants ?

If ye be come to save your lives, and your property, that it
may not be distributed as booty ;—

Then make not unto God an equal, embrace Islam, and abandon
the wild manners of the Heathen.

The strangers were astonished at the beauty of Hassân's poetry, and abashed at the force and point of his concluding verses. 'By the Lord!' they said, 'how rich is this man's fortune! His poet, as well as his orator, surpasseth ours in eloquence. Mahomet liberated the prisoners, and, having entertained his visitors hospitably, dismissed their Chief with rich presents and provisions for the way. All the branches of the tribe which had not yet given in their adhesion were now converted.² But the Prophet did not forget the first rude

Mahomet
liberates
their
prisoner

¹ Al Acra said: 'Give us permission to speak; for, verily, from me praise is an ornament and reproach a disgrace.' 'Nay,' replied the Prophet, 'thou speakest falsely; that may be said of the Great and Almighty God alone.'

² Sprenger gives an anecdote which, though of doubtful authority, illustrates the spirit of the times. One of the prisoners was a beautiful female, to whom Mahomet offered terms of marriage, which, however, she

and impatient address of the deputation. To guard against such familiarity for the future, the following passage was revealed :—

Notice of
deputation
in the
Coran

O ye that believe ! Go not in advance (in any matter) before the Lord and his Prophet ; and fear God, for God heareth and knoweth. O ye that believe ! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet ; nor speak loudly in discourse with him as the loud speech of one of you with another, lest your works become vain, and ye perceive it not. Truly, they that lower their voices in the presence of the Apostle of God, are those whose hearts God hath disposed unto piety ; these shall have pardon and an abundant reward. Verily as to those that call unto thee from outside of the private apartments, the most part of them understand not. If they had waited patiently, until thou wentest forth unto them, it had been better for them. But God is forgiving and merciful.

Sura xlix

The tax-gatherer deputed to gather the tithes of the Beni Mustalik, on approaching their encampment, was encountered by an assemblage who went forth on camels to meet him. Apprehending violence, he fled back to Medina ; and Mahomet was preparing a party to avenge the affront, when a deputation appeared to explain the circumstance. They had in reality held steadily to the profession of Islam, and what had been mistaken for hostile preparations were, they said, marks of joy and welcome. The deputation was received with courtesy. The tax-gatherer was reprehended, and his misconduct deemed not unworthy of a special revelation. Another of his followers was then deputed by Mahomet to levy the tithes and to instruct the people in their religious duties.¹

Deputation
from Beni
Mustalik
May,
A.D. 630

During the summer several lesser expeditions were undertaken for the chastisement of rebellious or recusant tribes. Marked only by the ordinary features of surprise and capture

Expeditions
during
summer of
A.H. IX.

declined. When her husband came with the deputation, he turned out to be a black and ill-favoured person ; whereupon the Moslems were so displeased at her refusal of the Prophet, that they began to abuse and curse her. But Mahomet interfered to excuse her, and bade them refrain.

¹ The passage relating to this incident is in continuation of that just quoted, and runs as follows : ' O ye that believe ! if an evil man come unto you with intelligence, make careful inquiry, lest ye injure a people through inadvertence, and afterwards repent of what ye have done. And know that, verily, the Apostle of God is amongst you. If he were to listen to you in many matters, ye would surely fall into sin (by leading him into a misunderstanding).'

A.D. 630

of prisoners and plunder, it is unnecessary to burden the page with their details. The largest was directed against a combination of the Abyssinians with the people of Jedda, the nature of which is not clearly explained. It was, however, regarded by the Prophet as of sufficient importance to require the services of an army of 300 men. The force reached an island on the shore of the Red Sea which the enemy had made their rendezvous, and forced them to retire.¹

Abyssinians
attacked
at Jedda.
July.

Campaign
against
Beni Tay

About the same time, Aly was sent, in command of two hundred horse, to destroy the temple of the Beni Tay, a tribe divided between the profession of Idolatry and the Christian faith. He performed his mission effectually, and returned laden with plunder and with many prisoners. Amongst these prisoners was the daughter of Hatim Tay, the Arab Chieftain so famous for his generosity, but now for some time dead. His son Adi, having on the first alarm of Aly's approach, fled to Syria, his sister now prostrated herself at the Prophet's feet, and told her plaintive tale. She was at once released, and presented with a change of raiment and a camel, on which, joining the first Syrian caravan, she went in quest of her brother. At her solicitation, Adi made his way to the Prophet's presence, and, having embraced Islam, and been confirmed in the chiefship of his tribe, distinguished himself hereafter in the Moslem wars.

Conversion
of son of
Hatim Tay.
July.

Conversion
of the poet
Kab ibn
Zoheir

The submission of the poet, Kab son of Zoheir, took place about the same time. His father was one of the most distinguished poets of Arabia; and the poetical mantle descended on several members of his family. After the capture of Mecca his brother wrote from thence to warn Kab of the fate which had overtaken certain of the poets there, and urged him either to sue for terms at Medina, or else seek for himself secure asylum elsewhere. Kab was imprudent enough to reply in verses significant of displeasure at his brother's conversion. Mahomet, highly incensed, gave utterance to threats ominous for the safety of Kab. Again the poet was warned, and urged by his brother to delay no longer. At

¹ The circumstance is remarkable, and not the less so on account of the brevity of the Secretary and the silence of the other biographers. *Apparently*, a body of Abyssinians had crossed the Red Sea to join the Arabs of Jedda in opposing Mahomet. Was the Negus now disappointed to find that Mahomet no longer supported Christianity?

last, in despair, he resolved to present himself before Mahomet and seek for pardon. As a stranger appearing one day unexpectedly in the Mosque, he thus addressed the Prophet;—
 'Kab son of Zoheir cometh unto thee repentant and believing; wilt thou give him quarter if I bring him to thee?'
 The promise having been vouchsafed, the speaker made known that he himself was Kab. To signalise his gratitude, Kab composed the famous 'Poem of the Mantle,' in which he lauded the generosity and glory of his benefactor. When reciting it in the assembly, he came to this verse,—

Poem of
the Mantle

Verily, the Prophet is a light to illuminate the world,
 A naked sword from out of the armoury of God,—

Mahomet, unable to restrain his admiration and delight, threw his mantle from off his shoulders upon the poet. The precious gift (from which the poem derived its name) was treasured up with care. It passed into the hands of the Caliphs, and was by them preserved, as one of the regalia of the empire, until Baghdad was sacked by the Tartars; and, under the name of the *Khirca Sharifa*,¹ a relic is even now exhibited at Constantinople as from the self-same mantle. To gain over such a poet was no empty triumph, for Kab wielded a real power which was now thrown as a fresh weight into the scale of Islam.

The Mosque of Mahomet was now the scene of frequent embassies from all quarters of Arabia. His supremacy was everywhere recognised; and from the most distant parts of the Peninsula, from Yemen and Hadhramaut, from Mahra, Oman, and Bahrein, from the borders of Syria and the outskirts of Persia, the tribes hastened to prostrate themselves before the rising potentate, and by an early submission secure his favour. They were uniformly treated with consideration and courtesy. Their representations were heard publicly in the court of the Mosque, which formed the hall of audience; and there whatever matters required the commands of Mahomet, such as the collection and transmission of tithes and tribute, grant of lands, recognition or conferment of authority and office, or adjustment of international disputes,

Deputations from Arab tribes.
A.H. IX., X.
A.D. 630,
631

¹ The *Noble Remnant*. The poem was published by Freytag with Latin translation (*Hala*, 1823). The mantle was bought by one of the Caliphs from Kab's heirs for 40,000 pieces.

were discussed and settled. Simple though its exterior, and unpretending its forms and usages, more absolute power was exercised, and affairs of greater importance transacted, in the court-yard of the Mosque of Mahomet, than in many an Imperial palace.

Mode in
which they
were
treated

The messengers and embassies were quartered by Mahomet in the houses of the chief Citizens, by whom they were hospitably entertained. On departure they received an ample sum for the expenses of the road, and generally some further present corresponding with their rank. A written treaty often guaranteed certain privileges to the tribe, and not unfrequently a 'Reader' was sent back with the embassy to instruct the people in the duties of Islam, and to see that every remnant of idolatry was obliterated. A large amount of independence was left to the rulers of powerful tribes, and to such distant provinces as Bahrein and Oman; but, though allowed themselves to collect the tithes, the amount must nevertheless, as a rule, be remitted to Medina. In some cases this demand created discontent; but before the Prophet's death the irresistible combination of temporal with spiritual power had overcome all opposition.

The Ninth
year of the
Hegira,
called Year
of Depu-
tations

These embassies having commenced in the Ninth year of the Hegira, it is styled in tradition 'the Year of deputations;' but they were almost equally numerous in the Tenth year, under which they will be further mentioned.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CAMPAIGN OF TEBUK; AND OTHER EVENTS IN THE SECOND
HALF OF THE NINTH YEAR OF THE HEGIRA*October, A.D. 630, to April, A.D. 631.*

DURING the summer of the year A.D. 630, an expedition was despatched towards the Syrian frontier, directed, apparently, against certain disaffected clans of the Beni Odzra and Bali, who since the operations of Khalid in that quarter were now, at least nominally, adherents of Mahomet. Whether to guard against the recurrence of such marauding inroads, or in consequence of Mahomet's growing power and pretensions, the Emperor, said to have been then at Hims, directed the feudatory tribes of the border to assemble for its protection. Rumours of this movement were magnified by travellers and traders from Syria into the assemblage of a great and threatening army; a year's pay (they said) had been advanced by the Kaiser, for the necessities of a long campaign; the Syrian tribes, Lakhm, Judzâm, and Ghassân, were flocking around the Roman eagles, and the vanguard was already at Belcaa. Mahomet resolved to meet the danger with the largest force he could collect. His custom at other times had been to conceal to the very last the object of an intended march, or by seeming preparations for a campaign in some other direction, to lull the suspicions of his enemy. But the journey now in contemplation was so distant, and the heat of the season so excessive, that timely warning was deemed necessary in order that the necessities of the way might be foreseen and provided for.

Gathering
of Roman
feudatories
on Syrian
border

Mahomet
projects
counter-
expedition.
Autumn,
A.H. IX.
A.D. 630

All his adherents and allies, the inhabitants of Mecca as well as the Bedouin tribes, received from Mahomet an urgent call to join the army. But the Arabs of the desert, ever loose and fickle in their loyalty, and even Citizens of Medina,

Backward-
ness of
Bedouins
and some
Citizens

showed little alacrity in obeying the command. Anticipated hardships of the journey, long-continued drought and overpowering heat, and perhaps memory of the Roman phalanx at Muta, made them loth to quit the ease and shelter of their homes. Multitudes pleaded inability and other frivolous excuses. The plea was generally accepted when tendered with colourable ground by the men of Medina; for Mahomet, conscious of the debt he owed their city, always treated them with tenderness. But coming from the Bedouins it was altogether disallowed.

Exemplary
zeal of true
Believers

On the other hand, extraordinary eagerness pervaded the ranks of loyal and earnest Moslems. Tithes and free-will offerings poured in from every quarter, while the leading Companions vied with one another in the costliness of their gifts. The contribution of Othman surpassed all others, and amounted to a thousand golden pieces. From these sources carriage and supplies were provided for the poorer soldiers; but they did not suffice for all who longed to share in the merit, haply also in the spoils, of the campaign. A party for whom, after every effort, Mahomet could make no provision, retired in tears, and their names are embalmed in tradition under the title of *The Weepers*.¹

Arrange-
ments at
Medina on
Mahomet's
departure

At last the army was marshalled in the outskirts of the city, and Abu Bekr appointed to conduct prayers in the encampment until the Prophet himself should assume command. Mohammed son of Maslama was placed in charge of the city; Aly also was left behind to take care of the Prophet's family, as well as to check any rising of disaffection. Abdallah ibn Obey pitched a separate camp for his numerous adherents hard by the main army; but eventually, as it would appear with the consent of Mahomet,² he remained behind.

March for
Tebuk.
September,
October,
A.D. 630

The army, with all these drawbacks, was probably the largest force ever before put in motion in Arabia. Its numbers are given, though probably with some exaggeration, at 30,000, of whom no less than 10,000 were cavalry. After a hot and thirsty march, the force reached the valley

¹ *Bakkâ-un*. See Judges ii. 1, 5, where a place is named *Bochim*, or 'Weepers,' because the children of Israel wept there; also Ps. lxxxiv. 6, 'the valley of *Baa*,' or weeping. *The Weepers* are specially noticed in Sura ix. 94, in allusion to the present occasion.

² Weil doubts this. *Einleitung*, p. 32.

of Hejer, whose rocky sides were hewn out (according to local tradition) into dwellings, by the rebellious and impious Thamudites. Having alighted there, drawn supplies from the refreshing fountains, and already begun to prepare their food, suddenly proclamation ran through the ranks that none should drink of the water or use it for their ablutions, that the dough which had been kneaded should be given to the camels, and that no one should go forth alone by night. And the reason assigned was because of the ominous surroundings of the fateful valley;—'Enter not the houses of the Transgressors, except with lamentation, lest that overtake you which happened unto them.' On the morrow, a plentiful shower of rain, ascribed to the miraculous intervention of the Prophet, compensated for the loss of the wells of Hejer.¹

Valley of Hejer

Having reached Tebuk, where was plenty of shade and water, the army halted. The rumours of invasion had by this time melted away. There was nothing at the moment to threaten the border. So Mahomet contented himself with sending a strong detachment under Khalid to Dumah, and with receiving the adhesion of the Jewish and Christian tribes on the shores of the Ælanitic Gulf, towards the east of which he was now encamped. To the chief of these, John, Prince of Ayla, Mahomet addressed a letter, summoning him to submit on pain of being attacked.² The Prince, with a cross

Halt at Tebuk : communications with surrounding tribes

Treaty with John, Christian Prince of Ayla

¹ The story, however, is not confirmed by Wakidy, and Ibn Hisham deals greatly in the marvellous. Two men, neglecting Mahomet's caution, went out by night alone, and were maltreated by the evil spirits,—one having his neck wrenched, and the other being carried away by the wind to the hills of the Beni Tay. Again: By the way, they came to a trickling fountain, at which hardly two or three men could have slaked their thirst. Mahomet bade none to touch it before himself. But the prohibition was not attended to. Coming up, he found it empty, and cursed the men who had disobeyed him. Then he took up a little of the water, and, sprinkling the rock, wiped it with his hand and prayed over it. Floods immediately gushed forth, with a noise as it had been thunder, and all drank thereof. Mahomet said: 'Whosoever of you shall survive the longest, will hear of this valley being greener with trees and verdure than any other round about;—meaning that the great stream now created would be permanent.

² I have no reason to doubt the genuineness of this letter; its purport is as follows: 'To John ibn Rubah and the Chiefs of Ayla (or Acaba). Peace be on you! I praise God for you, beside whom there is no Lord. I will not fight against you until I have written thus unto you. Believe, or else pay tribute. And be obedient unto the Lord and his Prophet, and unto the messengers of his Prophet. Honour them and clothe them,

of gold upon his forehead, hastened to the camp, and, offering the present of a mule and a shawl, bowed himself reverentially in the Prophet's presence. He was received with kindness, and Bilál commanded to entertain him hospitably. The following treaty was concluded with him:—

*'In the name of God the Gracious and Merciful: A compact of peace from God, and from Mahomet the Prophet and Apostle of God, granted unto Yuhanna son of Rubah, and unto the people of Ayla. For them who remain at home, and for those that travel by sea or by land, there is the guarantee of God and of Mahomet the Apostle of God, and for all that are with them, whether of Syria or of Yemen or of the sea-coast. Whoso contraveneth this treaty, his wealth shall not save him; it shall be the fair prize of him that taketh it. Now it shall not be lawful to hinder the men of Ayla from any springs which they have been in the habit of frequenting, nor from any journey they desire to make, whether by sea or by land. The writing of Juheim and Sharahbil, by command of the Apostle of God.'*¹ In token of approbation, Mahomet presented the Christian Prince with a mantle of striped Yemen stuff, and dismissed him honour-

He is dismissed
honour

specially Zeid, with excellent vestments, not with inferior raiment. As long as my messengers are pleased, so likewise am I. Ye know the tribute. If ye desire to have security by sea and by land, obey the Lord and His Apostle, and he will defend you from every demand, whether by Arab or foreigner, saving the demand of the Lord and his Apostle. But if ye oppose and displease them, I will accept nothing from you, until I have fought against you and taken captive your little ones and slain the elder; for I am the Apostle of the Lord in truth. Believe in the Lord and in his Prophets. And believe in the Messiah son of Mary; verily he is the Word of God: I believe in him that he was a Messenger of God. Come then, before trouble reach you. I commend my messengers to you. Give to Harmala three measures of barley; and indeed Harmala hath interceded for you. As for me, if it were not for the Lord and for this (intercession of Harmala), I would not have sent any message at all unto you, until ye had seen the army. But now, if ye obey my messengers God will be your protector, and Mahomet, and whosoever belongeth unto him. Now my messengers are Sharahbil, &c. Unto you is the guarantee of God and of Mahomet his Apostle, and peace be unto you if ye submit. And convey the people of Macna back to their land.'

¹ The treaty is evidently genuine. The original was, no doubt, retained as a precious charter of right by the chiefs of Ayla. We are told that Omar II. refrained from raising the tribute, which was below the proper amount, in deference to the guarantee given in this treaty.



ably. The tribute was fixed at the yearly sum of a golden piece for every family, or 300 for the whole town of Ayla.

At the same time deputations from the Jewish settlements of Macna, Adzruh, and Jarba presented themselves with a tender of submission to the Prophet. To each was given a rescript, specifying the amount of their tribute, and binding them to afford refuge and aid to any Moslem travellers or merchants who might stand in need of their good offices.¹

Terms made with Jews of Macna, Adzruh, and Jarba

Having concluded these matters, Mahomet quitted Tebuk after having halted there for twenty days, and returned to Medina. He reached home, after a prolonged absence, in the beginning of Ramadhan, or December, A.D. 630.

Mahomet returns to Medina. A.H. IX. December, A.D. 630

Meanwhile Khalid had been travelling across the desert from Tebuk to Dumah, with 420 horse the flower of the army. So rapidly did he march, and so unexpectedly appear before Dumah, that Okeidar, the Christian chief, was surprised by him while hunting the wild cow. Khalid pursued the party, and after a short struggle, in which the chief's brother was killed, took Okeidar captive. His life was spared on condition that the gates of Dumah should at once be thrown open. The city was ransomed at 2,000 camels, 800 sheep, 400 suits of mail, and as many stand of arms. With this booty, and carrying with him Okeidar and a brother, Khalid returned to Medina. The Christian chief, wearing a golden cross, and clad in brocade, inwrought with gold, to the admiration of the simple Citizens, was brought to the Prophet, who pressed him to embrace Islam. The inducements of the new religion proved too strong for his faith.

Khalid conquers Dumah, and takes Chief prisoner to Medina

The Chief embraces Islam

¹ These treaties are genuine and interesting. The following was copied by Wakidy, apparently from the original: 'In the name of God, &c. This writing is from Mahomet the Prophet to the people of Adzruh. They are included in the truce of God and in the truce of Mahomet. They are to pay one hundred dinars every year, in Rajab, full weight and good money. And God is their guarantee that they shall behave towards the Moslems with probity and kindness. Whoever of the Moslems taketh refuge with them from danger and in quest of assistance, in case there should be ground of fear for such Moslems, and they are themselves in security, they are to protect them until they hear that Mahomet is preparing to set out for their aid.' A proof of the authenticity of this document is that Mahomet is mentioned throughout by his simple name *Mohammed* without either the affix *Prophet* or *Apostle*, or the reverential addition, 'Prayers and blessings be on him.' Such affixes are, in general, later additions by the pious transcriber.

He surrendered the Gospel for the Coran and was admitted to the terms of a favoured ally.¹

Maling-
gerers
chided in
Coran

When Mahomet returned to Medina, many who had remained behind without permission came forward to exculpate themselves from the heavy charge of malingering. Mahomet reserved his reproaches for a special revelation. He thus avoided the odium attaching to a personal rebuke, while the admonition came with all the force of a message from Heaven. In the 9th Sura, the latest of all in chronological order, the vials of wrath are discharged against the Disaffected generally still lingering in Medina, and against those in particular who had neglected to join in the late expedition. The following passages will suffice as examples :—

Sura ix

O ye that believe ! What ailed you that when it was said unto you, *Go forth to war in the ways of God*, ye inclined heavily towards the earth ? What ! do ye prefer the present life before that which is to come ? If ye go not forth to war, He will punish you with a grievous punishment, and He will substitute another people for you : and ye shall not hurt Him at all ; for God is over all things powerful. * * *

If it had been plunder near at hand, and an easy journey, they had surely followed thee. But the way seemed long unto them. They will swear unto thee by God, *If we had been able we had surely gone forth with you*. They destroy their own souls, for God knoweth they are liars. The Lord pardon thee ! Wherefore didst thou give them leave, until thou hadst

¹ Wakidy says he took the following copy *from the original at Dumak* : ' In the name of God, &c. ;—from Mahomet the Prophet of God to Keidar (when he accepted Islam and put away from him the images and idols, by the hand of Khalid, the Sword of God), regarding Duma of the waters of Jandal and its environs : to Mahomet belongeth the unoccupied land with its streams and fountains, its unenclosed and fallow ground, and the armour, weapons, camels, and forts ; and to you belongeth the occupied land with the fruit-bearing date-trees, and springs of water, after payment of the fifth. Your cattle shall not be molested in grazing on the waste lands ; that which is ordinarily exempt from tithe shall not be taxed ; the old date-trees shall not be taxed,—excepting the tenth thereof : so as they observe prayer regularly, and pay the tithes faithfully. A true and faithful treaty. God is witness thereto, and all that are present of the Moslems.' This may be taken as a type of the treaties made with converted tribes. Okeidar revolted after Mahomet's death. The 'images and idols' may have been either those in use amongst the heathen part of the community, or such as belonged to the worship of Jesus and the Virgin. The title 'Sword of God' was no doubt added later on.

distinguished those that speak the truth, and known the liars? ¹ * * *

If they had gone forth with thee, they had only added weakness to you, and had run to and fro amongst you, stirring up sedition. And amongst you, some had listened to them; for God knoweth the unjust. Verily they thought to stir up sedition aforetime; and they disturbed thine affairs until the Truth came, and the command of God was made manifest, although they were averse therefrom.² Among them there is that saith, *Give me leave to remain, and throw me not into temptation.* What! have they not fallen into temptation already? Verily, Hell shall compass the Unbelievers round about.³

The hypocrites who privately scoffed and jested at the Faith and at those who spent their money in its propagation, are reprobated bitterly. Mahomet might pray for them seventy times; it would avail nothing with God for their pardon:—

The hypocrites also chided

They said, *Go not forth to war in the heat.* Say, the fire of Hell is a fiercer heat, if they understood. Wherefore they shall laugh little and weep much, for that which they have wrought.

Nevermore shall these unfaithful and stiffnecked followers be allowed the opportunity of going forth to fight. 'Neither do thou ever (so runs the heavenly Oracle) pray over any of them that shall die, nor stand over his grave; for they do reject God and his Prophet, and they shall die transgressors.'

Mahomet not to pray for them on their death

The Arabs of the desert, who were the chief offenders, because they had stayed away notwithstanding the distinct refusal of leave, are censured unsparingly for their disobedience;—ignorant, stubborn, unbelieving, fickle,—'they watched but the changes of fortune.' 'Turn from them.

Bedouins specially reprobated

¹ From this it would appear that Mahomet repented (or appeared to repent) afterwards that he had so easily and indiscriminately accepted the excuses of those to whom he did give permission to remain behind.

² Alluding to the conduct of the 'Disaffected' at the battle of Ohod, or perhaps to the affair at the Mustalik expedition.

³ Tradition assigns this last verse to the case of a man who begged Mahomet to excuse him from the campaign, as he feared the attractions of the Greek women. But a great number of the stories belonging to this campaign may be suspected (on the analogy of similar traditions regarding other texts) to have been fabricated for the purpose of illustrating the text of the Coran.

They are an abomination. Their resting-place shall be Hell-fire, the reward of that which they have wrought.'

Such as
confessed,
more
leniently
treated
Sura ix

Those Believers who had not dissembled their fault, but honestly confessed it, were the most leniently dealt with:—

And others have acknowledged their offences; they have mingled a good action with another that is evil. Haply God will be turned unto them, for God is forgiving and merciful. Take offerings of their substance, that thou mayst cleanse them and purify them thereby; and pray for them, for thy prayers will restore tranquillity unto them. And there are others waiting the command of God, whether He will punish them, or whether He will be turned unto them, for God is knowing and wise.

Kab and
his two
com-
panions:
ban put
upon them

The last verse refers to Kab ibn Mâlik, the poet, who had done good service to Mahomet, and to two other Believers who had incurred his special displeasure. They had no pretext to offer for their absence, and their bad example had encouraged the hesitating and disaffected in their neglect of the Prophet's summons; the latter could not with any show of justice be reprimanded or punished, if the far more serious offence of these his professed followers were passed over. A ban was therefore placed upon them. They were cut off from all intercourse with the people, and even with their own wives and families. Fifty days passed thus miserably, and the lives of the three men became a burden to them. At length Mahomet relented; and, by the delivery of the following revelation, received them back into his favour:—

Sura ix

Verily, God is reconciled unto the Prophet, and unto the Refugees and Citizens who followed him in the hour of difficulty, after that the hearts of a part of them had nearly swerved. Thereafter He turned to them, for He is compassionate unto them and merciful. And He is likewise reconciled unto the Three;—they that stayed behind, until that the earth with all its spaciousness became straitened unto them, and their souls became straitened within them, and they saw no refuge from God otherwise than by fleeing unto Him;—then He turned unto them, for God is easy to be reconciled, and merciful.

Kab re-
ceived
back into
favour

After the promulgation of this passage, Kab was again treated by Mahomet as before with kindness and consideration.

The displeasure of the Prophet was also at this time kindled against a party at Coba, who had built a Mosque

there, and desired Mahomet that he would come and consecrate it by praying in it himself. As he was at the moment about to start for Tebuk, he deferred their request until his return. Meanwhile he received information that the new Mosque was built with a sectarian bias, to draw off men from the original Mosque at Coba, and even afford shelter to certain of the Disaffected. On his return, therefore, he not only sent a party to destroy the new edifice, but promulgated this severe denunciation :—

Mahomet destroys a Mosque at Coba

There are men who have builded a Mosque with evil purpose, out of unbelief, to make divisions among the Unbelievers, and as a lurking-place for him that hath fought against God and his Apostle aforetime.¹ Yet they will swear, *Verily we intended nothing but good.* God beareth witness that they are Liars. Stand not up (for prayer) therein for ever. There is a Mosque which from the first day hath been founded upon Piety.² It is more just that thou shouldest stand up therein ;—Therein are men that love to be purified : and God loveth the Pure. What, therefore ? Whether is he better that hath builded his foundations upon the fear of God and His good pleasure, or he that hath built his foundations upon the brink of a crumbling bank, to be swept away with him into the fire of Hell : for God doth not guide the race of transgressors. The building which they have built shall not cease to be a cause of doubting in their hearts, until their hearts be cut in pieces. And God is knowing and wise.

Sura ix

About two months after the return of the army from Tebuk, Abdallah ibn Obey, the leader of the disaffected party, died. Mahomet had throughout followed the advice given him on his first arrival, to deal tenderly with this chief. Excepting the rupture which occurred in the affair of the Beni Mustalik, and one or two other occasions when Abdallah openly took part with his Jewish confederates, the Prophet was careful to avoid any harsh or humiliating treatment which might have driven him, with his numerous adherents, into open and active opposition. This forbearance he observed to the last. He even followed the bier, and prayed over the grave, thus recognising his once powerful antagonist

Death of Abdallah ibn Obey

¹ The biographers do not mention who is here alluded to. The *Commentators* specify Abu Aamir the hermit, who, after the battle of Honein, is said to have fled to Syria ; but this is doubtful.

² The ' Mosque of *Godly fear*,' *vide* p. 168.

Faction of
the disaf-
fected dies
with him

as having been a true believer. After Abdallah's death there was no one left in the ranks of the Disaffected possessing power or influence. There was none whom Mahomet needed longer to treat with delicacy or caution. The faction had died out. Those who had hitherto been lukewarm or disloyal soon embraced, heart and soul, the cause of Islam, and the power of Mahomet became fully and finally consolidated in Medina.

War to be
carried on
by Islam
till Anti-
christ
appear

The campaign to Tebuk was the last undertaken during the Prophet's lifetime. His authority was now unquestioned northwards to the Syrian confine, equally as it was to the south as far as the still recusant Tayif. It seemed almost as if the need of fighting had gone by. The following tradition shows how little the real spirit of Islam, aggressive and tending necessarily to universal conquest, had yet dawned upon the people;—although indeed the principles from which such a conclusion was legitimately to be deduced had long been inculcated by Mahomet. Looking around them, and seeing no enemy remain,—the Greeks even having retired and left them alone in their deserts,—the followers of the Prophet, we are told, began to sell their arms, saying: 'The wars for religion now are ended.' But Mahomet saw better into the future. When it was told him, he forbade the sale, saying: 'There shall not cease from the midst of my people a party engaged in fighting for the truth, until Antichrist appear.' At the same time it is interesting to note that, though warfare was recognised as the normal state, provision was yet made for the maintenance of students and teachers of religion, as we learn from the following verse:—

Provision
made for
study of
theology

Sura ix

It is not necessary that the whole body of Believers should go forth to war. If a certain number from every party go forth to war, it is that they may give themselves to study in religion, and may admonish their people when they return unto them (from the wars), so that they may take heed unto their ways.

CHAPTER XXIX

EMBASSY FROM TAYIF; AND PILGRIMAGE OF ABU BEKR

A.H. IX.—*December*, A.D. 630, to *March*, A.D. 631

IT was now ten months since Mahomet had raised the siege of Tayif. The citizens, still wedded to idolatry, maintained a sullen isolation.

Tayif still hostile

Orwa, the chief already noticed as one of those sent by the Coreish to the Moslem camp at Hodeibia, was absent during the siege of his native city, having gone to Yemen to learn the use of warlike engines for its defence. On his return, finding that all Mecca and the surrounding tribes, excepting Tayif, had submitted to Mahomet, and being himself favourably impressed with what he had seen at the truce of Hodeibia, Orwa went in quest of the Prophet to Medina, and there embraced Islam. His first generous impulse was to return to Tayif, and invite his fellow-citizens to share in the blessings of the new faith. Mahomet, well knowing their bigotry and ignorance, warned him of the danger he would incur; but, presuming on his popularity at Tayif, he persisted in the design. Arriving in the evening, he made public his conversion, and called upon the people to join him. They retired to consult upon the matter. In the morning, ascending his roof, he cried out at the pitch of his voice the call to prayer, on which the rabble surrounded the house, and shot arrows at him, by which he was mortally wounded. His family and friends rallied around him, but it was too late. He had offered up, he said, his blood to its Master for the sake of his people; he blessed God, with his dying breath, for the honour of martyrdom, and prayed his people to bury him by the side of the Moslems who had fallen at Honein. When the tidings reached Mahomet, he lauded the memory of the martyr: 'He may be compared,' was his exclamation, 'to

Martyrdom of Orwa. A.H. IX. A.D. 630

the prophet Yasfn, who summoned his people to believe in the Lord, and they slew him.'

Tayif sends
embassy to
Mahomet.
A.H. IX.
December,
A.D. 630

The martyrdom of Orwa compromised the inhabitants of Tayif, and forced them to continue the hostile course they had been pursuing. But they began to suffer severely from the marauding attacks of the Hawázin under Málik, who, according to his promise, had maintained an unceasing warfare against them. The cattle were cut off in their pasture lands, and at their watering places; and at last no man's life was safe beyond the walls of the city. 'We have not strength,' they said among themselves, 'to fight against the Arab tribes all round who have plighted their faith to Mahomet, and bound themselves to fight in his cause.' So they sent a deputation of six chiefs with some twenty followers, who reached their destination a fortnight after the return of the army from Tebuk. Moghira (nephew of the martyr Orwa), meeting the embassy in the outskirts of the city, hastened to announce their approach to the Prophet, who received them gladly, and pitched a tent for their accommodation close by the Mosque. Every evening after supper he visited and instructed them in the faith, till it was dark. They freely communicated their apprehensions to him. As for themselves, they were quite ready at once to destroy their great idol, Tâghia (or Lât); but the ignorant amongst them, and especially the women, were devoted to the worship, and would be alarmed at its demolition. If the fane were left but for three years, and the people meanwhile familiarised with the requirements of Islam, the wishes of the Prophet might then without difficulty be carried into effect. But Mahomet would not consent. Two years,—one year,—six months,—were asked successively, and successively refused. 'The grace of one month might surely be conceded;' but Mahomet was firm. Islam and the idol could not co-exist. The idol must fall without a single day's delay. They then begged to be excused performance of the daily prayers, and that some one else might be deputed to destroy the image. 'As for the demolition of the idol with your own hands,' replied Mahomet, 'I will dispense with that; but prayer is indispensable. Without prayer religion were naught.' 'In that case,' said they, 'we shall perform it, though it be a degradation.' They also pleaded hard that

the forest of Wajj, a famous preserve for the chase in the vicinity of Tayif, should be declared inviolate. To this Mahomet acceded; and the embassy, having finally tendered their allegiance, were dismissed with a rescript to the effect 'that neither the trees nor the wild animals of Wajj should be meddled with. Whoever was found transgressing should be scourged, and his garments seized. If he transgressed again, he should be sent to the Prophet. This was the command of Mahomet the Apostle of God.'

Abu Sofian and Moghira, both friends of the tribe, were deputed by Mahomet to accompany the strangers, and destroy their idol. Moghira, wielding a pickaxe, and surrounded by a guard of his relatives, attacked the great image, and, amid the cries and wailing of the women, with his own hand hewed it to the ground. The debts of the martyr were defrayed from the jewels and spoil of the temple. Tayif was the last stronghold that held out against the authority of Mahomet. It is remarkable also as the only place where the fate of an idol excited the sympathy of the people. Everywhere else the images seem to have been destroyed by the people themselves without a pang.

The closing month of the Arabian year, the month of Pilgrimage, again drew near. Mahomet had hitherto abstained from being present at its ceremonies because the great mass of the pilgrims still were heathens, and idolatrous practices mingled with the holy rites. The same cause kept him away in the present year. But he resolved that it should be the last in which the Pilgrimage was desecrated by unworthy customs, and the Holy places by the presence of unbelievers. He was now strong enough to banish heathenism for ever from the Sanctuary. When thus purged, but not till then, without compromising his prophetic office, the sacred ceremonies might be presided over by himself.

The caravan of pilgrims from Medina was therefore limited to 300 men, with Abu Bekr as their chief. Shortly after its departure the Oracle spoke, and a passage was promulgated to carry out the object which Mahomet had in view. It is called the Discharge or Release, because the Prophet is therein discharged, after the lapse of four months, from his obligations towards the heathen Arabs. This important declaration was committed to Aly, who was despatched after

Their idol
is de-
stroyed by
Moghira

Mahomet
stays away
from yearly
pilgrimage.
A.H. IX.
March,
A.D. 631

Abu Bekr's
pilgrim-
age. The
'Release'
committed
to Aly for
publica-
tion

the caravan. On coming up with it, and communicating the nature of his errand, Abu Bekr inquired whether the Prophet had put him in command over the pilgrimage. 'No,' replied Aly; 'but he hath directed me to recite the divine behest in the hearing of all the people.'

The
Release.
10th Dzul
Hijj, A.H.
IX. March
20, A.D. 631

Towards the close of the pilgrimage, therefore, on the great day of sacrifice, at the place of casting stones near Mina,¹ Aly read aloud, to the multitudes that crowded in the narrow pass around him, the heavenly command, as follows:—

Sura ix

A DISCHARGE by God and his Apostle, in respect of the Heathen with whom ye have entered into treaty. Go to and fro in the earth securely in the four months to come. And know that ye cannot hinder God, and that verily God will bring disgrace upon the Unbelievers;—

And an ANNOUNCEMENT from God and his Apostle unto the People, on the day of Pilgrimage, that God is discharged from (liability to) the Heathen,—and his Prophet likewise. Now, if ye repent, that will be better for you; but if ye turn your backs, know that ye cannot hinder God; and acquaint those who disbelieve with the tidings of a grievous punishment;—Excepting those of the Heathen with whom ye have entered into treaty, and who thereafter have not failed you in any thing, and have not helped any one against you. Fulfil unto these their engagements, until the expiration of their term; for God loveth the pious.

And when the forbidden months are over, then fight against the Heathen, wheresoever ye find them; take them captive, besiege them, and lay in wait for them in every ambush; but if they repent, and establish Prayer, and give the Tithes, leave them alone, for God is gracious and merciful. And if any of the Heathen ask a guarantee of thee, give it unto him, until he shall have heard the Word of God; then convey him back unto his place of security. This because they are a people that do not understand. * * *

O ye that believe! Verily the Unbelievers are unclean. Wherefore, let them not approach the Holy Temple after this year. And if ye fear poverty, God will enrich you of His abundance, if He pleaseth, for God is knowing and wise.

Aly an-
nounces
Prophet's
commands

Having finished the recitation of this passage, Aly expounded the edict thus;—'I am ordered to declare unto you that no Unbeliever shall enter Paradise. No idolater

¹ See the picture of the spot facing page 457.

shall after this year perform the pilgrimage; nor shall any make the circuit of the Holy house unclothed. Whosoever hath a treaty with the Prophet, it shall be respected till its term expire. Four months are given to the tribes that they may return to their homes in security. After that the obligations of the Prophet cease.'

The vast concourse listened peaceably. Then they broke up and departed every man to his home, publishing throughout the Peninsula the inexorable ordinance which they had heard from the lips of Aly. Thus was completed the system of Mahomet so far as concerned its relations with idolatrous tribes and races. The few cases of truce excepted, uncompromising warfare was declared against them all. To the utmost bounds of Arabia, and wheresoever prevailed the worship of the Kaaba, idolatry was doomed, and Islam was to be henceforth the nation's faith.

Side by side with this deliverance (though revealed on a different occasion) is another affecting Jews and Christians. For some years, the Oracle which used to teem with testimonies to the faith of both, had ceased to mention either, or make quotations, as had so constantly been done before, from their Sacred books. After long neglect and silence, the Jewish and Christian tribes of the Peninsula are noticed now, only to be condemned to a perpetual vassalage :—

Fight against those who do not believe in God nor in the last day, and who forbid not that which God hath forbidden, and profess not the true religion,—those, namely, who have received the Scriptures (that is both Jews and Christians) until they pay tribute with the hand, and are humbled. The Jews say that Ezra is the Son of God, and the Christians that the Messiah is the Son of God. This is their saying, with their mouths. They imitate the saying of the Unbelievers before them. God destroy them! How have they devised lying vanities! They take their Priests and their Monks for lords besides God,—and also the Messiah, son of Mary. Yet they were not bidden but to worship the one God alone ;—There is no God but He, far exalted above that with which they associate Him! They seek to extinguish the light of God with their mouths. But God refuseth to do otherwise than make His light perfect, even though the Unbelievers be averse therefrom. He it is that hath sent His Apostle with the true guidance, and the religion of truth, that He may make it superior to all other religions, even though the Idolaters

Concourse breaks up quietly

Annihilation of idolatry now the declared mission of Islam :—

And reduction of Judaism and Christianity to dependent position

Sura ix

be averse therefrom. O ye Faithful ! Verily many of the Priests and Monks devour the substance of men in vanity, and obstruct the way of God. They that treasure up gold and silver, and spend it not in the way of God, announce unto them a grievous punishment ;—On the day on which it (their gold and silver) shall be heated in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be seared therewith (while it is said unto them),—This is that which ye have treasured up for yourselves, wherefore taste ye of the same !

Judaism
and Chris-
tianity
cast con-
temp-
tuously
aside

Thus, with threats of abasement and cruel words, Mahomet parted finally from both Jews and Christians, whom he had so long entertained with professions of attachment to their Scriptures, and from whose teaching he had borrowed that which was most valuable in his own. Having reached the pinnacle of his ambition, he now cast contemptuously aside the means by which he reached it. Yet even here a broad distinction is drawn between their treatment and that of the Heathen. These are not tolerated even on submission. Failing to embrace Islam, Idolaters must be fought with to the death. But Jews and Christians are permitted to continue such. They are, indeed, to be warred against ; but, on submission and ‘ payment of tribute with their hand,’ they are to be left, though humbled, in the undisturbed profession of their faith.¹

¹ It is important, however, to note that the passage quoted, as combined with the ‘ Discharge,’ is like it, applicable, in its original intention, only to the peoples of Arabia. But after Islam had burst the borders of the Peninsula, it was held to be of universal application. Consequently all over the world the followers of the Prophet, adopting the precedent set in Arabia, while holding themselves bound, by his example and precept, utterly to destroy idolatry root and branch, hold themselves equally bound to tolerate the Jewish and Christian religions, even when they fall before their arms, on condition that their professors submit and become tributary.

CHAPTER XXX

EMBASSIES OF SUBMISSION RECEIVED AT MEDINA

A.H. IX. AND X.—A.D. 630, 631

ÆTAT. 62, 63

THE life of Mahomet was drawing to a close ; but his work was also near completion. The proof is amply seen in the stream of submissive embassies which from all quarters of Arabia now flowed uninterruptedly towards Medina.

Numerous embassies during tenth year of Hegira

The adhesion of Tayif and destruction of its famous idol enhanced the Prophet's fame throughout the south and east of the Peninsula. Before the close of the Ninth year of the Hegira, many chiefs and princes of Yemen and Mahra, of Oman, Bahrein, and Yemama, had signified by letter or by embassy their conversion to Islam and submission to the Prophet.

Embassies from south and east. A.H. IX. and X. December, A.D. 630, to March, A.D. 631

Some of them had been converted even earlier. On his return from Tayif, towards the close of the Eighth year of the Hegira, Mahomet sent Amru with a despatch to Jeyfar king of Oman, summoning him to make profession of the faith. At first the king and his advisers gave answer 'that they would be the weakest among the Arabs, if by paying tithe they made another man possessor of their property.' But as Amru was about to depart, they repented, and, calling him back, embraced Islam. The people followed their lead, and without demur paid tithe to Amru, who continued till the Prophet's death to be his representative in Oman. He was supported by a 'Reader,' who instructed the people in the Coran and superintended the assessment of the tithes. This province, which had hitherto been under the suzerainty of Persia, was so distant that Mahomet allowed the Prince to distribute the tithes among his own poor—a concession which, no doubt, facilitated the introduction of the new faith.

Conversion of Oman; A.H. VIII. February, A.D. 630

Conversion of Himyarite princes of Mahra and Yemen ;

At the same time, another legate was deputed to the Himyarite princes professing the Christian faith in Yemen. He carried with him a letter in which Mahomet expressed his belief in Moses and Jesus, but denied the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Their reply, accepting the new religion with all its conditions, reached the Prophet after his return from Tebuk ; and he acknowledged it in a despatch, praising the alacrity of their faith, setting forth the legal demands of Islam, and commending his tithe collectors to their favour.¹

¹ The instructions given to the envoy are curious. He was to be specially careful in his purification and prayers on reaching the country. He was to take the Prophet's despatch in his right hand and place it in the right hand of the princes. He was to recite Sura xcvi. and then call upon them to submit, saying that he was able to refute every argument and book they could adduce against Islam. Then he was to repeat the passage in Sura xliii. in which it is asserted that there is no real controversy between Mahomet and Christians. A strange part of the instructions was, to call upon the people, after they believed, to produce three sticks,—two gilded white and yellow, and one a black knotted cane,—which they used to worship. These he was to burn publicly in the marketplace. The people, who spoke the Himyar tongue, were to translate their creed, &c., into Arabic. Mahomet's despatch is as follows : ' *From Mahomet the Apostle of God to Hārith, &c.* I praise God on your behalf,—that God beside whom there is no other. Now, your messenger hath reached me at Medina, on my return from the land of Greece ; and he hath conveyed to me your letter, and given me intelligence regarding your conversion and your fighting against the Idolaters. Now, verily hath the Lord guided you with the right direction, that ye should amend your lives, obey God and his Apostles, set up prayer, pay the tithes, and from your booty set aside a Fifth as the share of God and his Apostle.' Then follows a detail of the tithes. ' This is what is obligatory, and whoever exceedeth it will be for his merit. Every one that shall fulfil this, and believe in Islam, and assist the Believers against the Idolaters, verily he is one of the Faithful : he shall share in what they share, and be responsible for that for which they are responsible. Thus it shall be with all Jews and Christians who embrace Islam. But such as will not abandon Judaism and Christianity shall pay tribute, every adult male and female, whether bond or free, a full golden dinar, or its equivalent in cloth. Whosoever payeth this, shall be embraced in the guarantee of God and his Apostle : whoever refuseth shall be their enemy.'

Then he commends his messengers, readers, and tithe collectors, to the Princes' good offices,—specifying Muádh as their chief, and desiring that the tithe and tribute should be made over to him. He forbids oppression, ' for Mahomet is the protector of the poor as well as of the rich amongst you.' The tithe is not for Mahomet or his family : it is a means of purifying the rest of the giver's property, and is to be devoted to the poor and the wayfarer.

The deputation from Hamadan sang as they approached Mahomet :

Simultaneously with the mission of Amru, or a little later, Mahomet sent Ala 'the Hadhramite' towards the Persian Gulf with a letter to Mundzir, chief of Bahrein. Mundzir at once embraced Islam, and forwarded a reply to Mahomet saying, 'that of the people of Hejer to whom he had read the Prophet's letter, some were delighted with the new religion, others displeased with it; and that among his subjects there were Jews and Magians, regarding whom he solicited instructions.' A rescript was granted by Mahomet securing Mundzir in the government of his province so long as he administered it well, and directing that tribute should be levied from the Jews and Magians. To the Magians he dictated a separate despatch, inviting them to believe in the Coran: 'If they declined, toleration would be extended to them on the payment of tribute; but in such case, their women would not be taken in marriage by Believers, nor would that which they killed be lawful as food to any Moslem.'¹ Ala remained in Bahrein as the representative of Mahomet at the court of Mundzir.

And of
Bahrein
and Hejer

Among the peoples of the same region which sent embassies to Medina before the close of the ninth year of the Hegira, were the Beni Bekr, who had so gloriously overthrown the forces of Persia about twenty years before; and the Hanīfa, a Christian branch of the same, inhabiting Yemama. One of the Hanifa party was Moseilama, who, from what he then saw, conceived the idea that he too might successfully set up pretensions to be a Prophet. When the customary presents were distributed amongst them, the deputies solicited a share for him, saying that he had been left behind in charge of the baggage. Mahomet commanded that he should have the same as the rest,—'for his position,' he said, 'is none the worse among you because of his present duty.' These words were afterwards converted by Moseilama to his own ends. On the departure of the Hanīfa, the Prophet gave them a vessel

Embassies
from
Hanifa
and other
Christian
tribes.
End of
A.H. IX.
Beginning
of A.D. 651

'We have come to thee from the plains of Al Rif; in the hot whirlwinds of summer and Kharif' (i.e. 'autumnal harvest,' a word, *Kharreef*, familiar to the Indian administrator). Mahomet's reply secured to them their hills and dales, &c.

¹ This passage refers to the distinction made by Mahomet in favour of the Jews and Christians, whose women may be taken in marriage, and also what is killed and cooked by them eaten, by the Moslems. These privileges are refused to the Magians.

Christian
tribe de-
sired to
demolish
its church

with some water in it remaining over from his ablutions, and said to them: 'When ye reach your country, break down your church, sprinkle its site with this water, and in place of it build up a Mosque.' These commands they carried into effect, and abandoned Christianity without compunction.

Beni
Taghlib
not to bap-
tise

Another embassy, partly Christian, came from the Beni Taghlib. It was composed of sixteen men, some Moslems and some Christians. The latter wore crosses of gold. The Prophet made terms with them, stipulating that they might themselves continue in the profession of their religion, but that they should not baptise their children into the Christian faith.¹

Rescript to
Church of
Najran

The ancient Church of Najran,² in the centre of Arabia, was granted more favourable terms. Among the despatches of the year we find one addressed to the Bishop, Priests, and Monks of Najran guaranteeing that everything small and great should continue as it then stood in their Churches, their Services, and their Monasteries. 'The pledge of God and of his Prophet' (such are the terms of another Rescript) 'is given that no Bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any Monk from his monastery, nor any Priest from his priesthood; their authority and rights shall not be interfered with, nor anything that is customary amongst them;—so long as they conduct themselves peaceably and uprightly. They shall not be oppressed, neither shall they themselves oppress.'³

Embassy
from
Najran.
A.H. X

The embassy of this people to Medina is in itself curious, and has an additional interest from being referred to in the Coran. A deputation of fourteen chief men from Najran repaired to Mahomet in the Tenth year of the Hegira. Among them was Abd al Masih of the Beni Kinda, their chief, and

¹ We find the Caliph Omar, A.H. XVII., making a similar stipulation with another branch of the same tribe.—*Caliphate*, p. 151.

² See reference to them in the *Introduction*, p. lxxxi.

³ The Rescript is signed by Moghira. Wakidy gives still another treaty, probably the final one. Their tribute of fruit and captives was generously commuted to a half-yearly contribution of 1,000 suits of raiment worth each an ounce of silver, in lieu of all claims; the collectors to be entertained for three weeks. When there was war in Yemen, 30 suits of armour, 30 horses, and 30 camels were to be lent by them,—any of which lost in the war to be made good. It ends with this curious condition: 'Whosoever taketh interest shall be excluded from the guarantee of Mahomet.' Signed by Abu Sofian and five others.

Abd al Hârith, Bishop of the Beni Hârith. On reaching Medina, they entered the Mosque, and prayed turning towards the east. Then Mahomet called them; but when they came, the Prophet turned away and would not speak with them, because of the silken lining of their garments. So they departed, and in the morning appeared in their monastic dress. The Prophet now returned their salutation, and invited them to accept Islam, but they refused; on which words and disputation increased between them. Then Mahomet recited to them passages from the Coran, and said: 'If ye deny that which I say unto you, *Come let us curse each the other*;' so they went away to consider the matter. On the morrow Abd al Masih, with two of the chief men, came to Mahomet and said: 'We have determined that we shall not curse with thee; wherefore command regarding us whatsoever thou wilt, and we shall give it, and enter into treaty with thee.' So he made a treaty with them and they returned to Najran.¹ Such is the tradition regarding the interview, the purport of which is thus alluded to in the Coran:—

Mahomet challenges them to curse

Verily, the analogy of Jesus is, with God, like unto the analogy of Adam. HĒ created him out of the dust; then HĒ said unto him BĒ, and he was. This is the truth from thy Lord: wherefore be not thou amongst the Doubters. And whosoever shall dispute with thee therein, after that the true knowledge hath come unto thee; say—*Come let us call out (the names) of our sons and your sons, of our wives and your wives, of ourselves and yourselves; then let us curse one the other, and lay the curse of God upon those that lie!* Verily this is a true exposition.

Affair described in the Coran. Sura iii

¹ Their subsequent history is thus traced by Wakidy. They continued in possession of their lands and rights under the above treaty, during the rest of Mahomet's life and the whole of Abu Bekr's Caliphate. Then they were accused of taking usury, and Omar expelled them from the land, and wrote as follows:—

'The despatch of OMAE, the Commander of the Faithful, to the people of Najran. Whosoever of them emigrates is under the guarantee of God. No Moslem shall injure them;—to fulfil that which Mahomet and Abu Bekr wrote unto them. Now to whomsoever of the chiefs of Syria and Irac they may repair, let such chiefs allot them lands, and whatever they cultivate therefrom shall be theirs; it is an exchange for their own lands. None shall injure or maltreat them; Moslems shall assist them against oppressors. Their tribute is remitted for two years. They will not be troubled except for evil deeds.'

Some of them alighted in Irac, and settled at Najrania (so called after them) near to Cufa. As they decreased in number, their tribute of raiment was correspondingly lightened.—See *Caliphate*, p. 155.

There is no God but the Lord, and verily God is mighty and wise. And if they turn back, verily God is acquainted with the evil doers. SAY:—Oh ye people of the Book! come unto a just judgment between us and yourselves, *That we shall not worship aught but God, and that we shall not associate any with Him, nor shall we take any of us the other for lords besides God.* And if they turn back, then bear witness, saying;—Verily, we are the true Believers.

Proof of
Mahomet's
earnestness

It was surely a strange manner of settling the question between Islam and the Christian faith, which the Arabian Prophet here proposed, and we have no reason to be ashamed of the Christian embassy for declining it. Still we cannot but see throughout the earnestness of Mahomet's belief, and his conviction that a spiritual illumination had been vouchsafed to him, bringing with it knowledge and certainty where to the Christian, as he conceived, all was speculation and conjecture.

Christian-
ity allowed
to exist on
sufferance

These narratives confirm the conclusion of the preceding chapter, that the conditions upon which Mahomet permitted Christianity to exist were those of sufferance. Christianity, indeed, was less obnoxious to him than Judaism because he did not experience from it such persevering and active hostility. The clergy and monks are even spoken of in expressions of comparative praise.¹ But, not the less, the object of Mahomet was entirely to *supersede* Christianity as well as Judaism.

It is no wonder that Christianity, which never had obtained in Arabia a firm and satisfactory footing, now threatened, and, where her adherents remained faithful, reduced to tribute, her distinctive rite prohibited wherever the professors were passive and careless, her churches demolished and their sites purified before they could be used again for worship by the Moslem converts;—it is no wonder that Christianity, thus, at the closing stage of the Prophet's

¹ 'And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to succeed them, and We put into the hearts of those that followed him compassion and mercy; and the monastic state,—they framed it for themselves (We did not command it unto them) simply out of a desire to please God.'—Sura lvii.

So also Sura v.: 'And thou wilt find the most inclined amongst them to the Believers, those who profess Christianity;—This because there are amongst them Clergy and Monks, and they are not proud; and when they hear that which hath been revealed unto the Prophet, thou shalt see their eyes flow with tears, because of what they recognise therein of the truth,' &c.

mission, insulted and trampled under foot, should have languished, and soon altogether disappeared.¹

The Tenth year opened with fresh deputations from the south. Among the earliest were embassies from the sea-coast of Yemen, from the Beni Khaulan who lived in the hilly country of that name, from the Beni Bajila, and many others. The Bajila at Mahomet's command, and, with the aid of an armed party deputed by Mahomet, destroyed the famous image of Dzul Kholasa, of which the Temple, from the popularity of its worship, was called the 'Kaaba of Yemen.' About the same time, some twenty men of the Beni Azd from Yemen presented themselves, with their chief Surad, to whom, as ruler of his clan, Mahomet gave a commission to war against the heathen of his neighbourhood. After besieging Jorsh, the chief city of the idolaters, for more than a month without success, Surad made the feint of retiring to a hill. The enemy falling into the snare pursued him, and in a pitched battle sustained a signal defeat. The people of Jorsh immediately sent an embassy of submission to Medina.

Deputations from south.
A.H. X.
April and May,
A.D. 682

Submission of Beni Azd and people of Jorsh

From Hadhramaut, two princes of the Beni Kinda, Wail chief of the coast, and Ashath chief of the interior, visited the Prophet at the head of a brilliant cavalcade, arrayed in garments of Yemen stuff lined with silk. 'Will ye embrace Islam?' said Mahomet to them, after he had received their salutations in the Mosque. 'Yea; it is for that end that we have come.' 'Then why all this silk about your necks?' The silken lining was forthwith torn off and cast aside.² To mark his delight at the arrival of the embassy, Mahomet desired Bilal to call aloud the summons for general prayer.³ When all were assembled, the Prophet introduced the strangers to the congregation: 'O

Chiefs of Beni Kinda from Hadhramaut visit Medina

¹ The following tradition is illustrative of Mahomet's relations with our faith at this period. Among the Beni Abd al Keis was a Christian named Jarud. He said: 'O Prophet, I have hitherto followed the Christian faith, and I am now called on to change it. Wilt thou be *Surety* for me in the matter of my religion!' 'Yea,' replied Mahomet, 'I am thy surety that God hath guided thee to a better faith than it.' On this Jarud and his comrades embraced Islam.

² Mahomet disapproved of silk and velvet for men's attire.

³ *I.e.* the same as for the Friday service, at which all attended, joined in the 'common' prayer, and heard the address.

Wâil

People!' he said; 'this is Wâil ibn Hejr, who hath come unto you from the region of Hadhramaut, out of desire to embrace Islam.' He then presented Wâil with a patent securing him in his rights, in terms as follows: 'Since thou hast believed, I confirm thee in possession of all thy lands and fortresses. One part in every ten shall be taken from thee: a just collector shall see to it. I guarantee that thou shalt not be injured in this respect so long as the faith endureth. The Prophet, and all Believers, shall be thine allies.' Muavia, son of Abu Sofian, was desired to escort Wâil to his house and entertain him there. On his way, the haughty Prince displayed what Mahomet styled 'a remnant of heathenism.' He would not allow Muavia to mount behind him: the ground was scorching from the mid-day sun, yet he refused to let him have the use even of his sandals, so that he was obliged to walk barefooted by the camel: 'What would my subjects in Yemen say,' he exclaimed in disdain, 'if they heard that a common man had worn the sandals of the king! Nay, but I will drive the camel gently, and thou shalt walk in my shade.' Such insolent demeanour was altogether foreign to the *brotherhood* of Islam; and was only tolerated by Mahomet since the accession of such a chief was too valuable to be imperilled.

Ashath
marries
Abu Bekr's
sister

The other visitor, Ashath, sealed his adhesion to the cause of Mahomet by entering into a contract of marriage with Omm Farwa, Abu Bekr's sister. The marriage was not at the time consummated, her parents declining that the bride should leave them for so distant a home as Hadhramaut.¹

Muâdh sent
forth with
band of
collectors

The supremacy of Islam being thus widely recognised in the south of Arabia, Mahomet sent forth a band of officers charged with the instruction of the people, and the collection

¹ Ashath joined the rebellion which broke out upon the death of Mahomet, but subsequently returned to his allegiance, was pardoned, and then received Omm Farwa, the Caliph's sister, for his wife.—See *Caliphate*, p. 40.

A member of the royal family in the deputation besought Mahomet to pray that his stammer might be removed. This the Prophet did, and appointed him a portion from the tithes of Hadhramaut. Another tradition relates that this man was seized with a paralytic affection on his way home. His followers came and told Mahomet, who desired them to heat a needle and pierce his eyelid with it; and this remedy healed him. Mahomet attributed the illness to something wrong which the chief must have said after leaving Medina.

of the public dues. Over them he placed Muádh, who had by this time fulfilled his mission at Mecca. 'Deal gently with the people,' said the Prophet to Muádh, as he dismissed him to his new scene of labour, 'and be not harsh. Scare them not, but rather cheer. Thou wilt meet with Jews and Christians who will ask thee: What is the key of Paradise? Reply: *Verily the key of Paradise is to testify that there is no God but the Lord alone. With Him there is no partner.*'¹ These Envoys were invested to some extent with a judicial authority. Acceptance of the new faith implied of necessity the simultaneous recognition of its civil institutions. Every dispute must be brought to the test of the Coran or of the instructions given by Mahomet; and the exponents of these became, therefore, the judges of the land.²

Towards the close of the Prophet's life, the sound of war had almost died away. During this Tenth year, only two expeditions of a hostile character were undertaken. The first, under command of Khalid, was directed against the Beni Hárith of Najran, during summer. A section of these, as we have seen, had already obtained terms of security on payment of tribute. Khalid was now instructed to call on the rest to embrace Islam; if they declined he was, after three days, to attack and force them to submit. Having reached his destination, he sent mounted parties in all directions, with this proclamation: 'Ye people! embrace Islam, and ye shall be safe.' They all submitted, and professed their

and teachers to southern Arabia

Najran submits to Khalid. A.H. X. June, A.D. 681

¹ Muádh was inextricably involved in debt, and his creditors had been clamorous before Mahomet for payment. Muádh surrendered all his property, but it fell far short of the claims. When Mahomet therefore sent him away, he said: 'Go, and perchance the Lord will relieve thy wants.' Muádh would appear to have made good use of his position, for Omar, when shortly after he met him at Mecca performing the pilgrimage, reprimanded him for the state in which he appeared, followed by a retinue of slaves &c. He is said to have been very particular in following the practice of Mahomet, and never spat on his right side. He was lame, and obliged to stretch out his legs at prayer. The people (as they always imitated the Imam in all his postures) did the same, till he forbade them.

² Mahomet asked Muádh, before he left, how he would adjudicate causes: 'By the book,' he replied. *But if not in the Book?* 'Then by thy precedent.' *But if there be no precedent?* 'Then I will diligently frame my own judgment; and I shall not fail therein.' Thereupon Mahomet clapped him on the breast and said: 'Praise be to God, who hath fulfilled in the messenger sent forth by his Apostle, that which is well pleasing to the Apostle of the Lord!'

belief in the new faith.¹ Mahomet, delighted with Khalid's report, summoned him to return along with a deputation from the tribe, which accordingly visited Medina, and were received with courtesy.

Campaign
of Aly in
Yemen
against
Beni
Nakha, &c.
A.H. X.
December,
A.D. 631

As the Beni Nakha and some other tribes in Yemen still held out, Aly was sent in the winter at the head of 300 horse, to reduce them to submission. Yemen had repeatedly sent forth armies to subdue the Hejaz; this was the first army the Hejaz had ever sent forth to conquer Yemen. Aly met with but feeble opposition. His detachments ravaged the country all around, and returned with spoil of every kind,—women, children, camels, and flocks. Driven to despair, the people drew together, and attacked Aly with a general discharge of stones and arrows. The Moslem line put them to flight with slaughter. Aly held back his troop from pursuit, and again summoned the fugitives to accept his terms. This they now hastened to do. The chiefs did homage, and pledged that the people would follow their example. Aly accepted their promise; he then retraced his steps with the booty, and, reaching Mecca in the spring, joined Mahomet in the Farewell pilgrimage. The Beni Nakha fulfilled their pledge, and submitted themselves to Muâdh, the Prophet's envoy in Yemen. Two hundred of them set out to tender a personal allegiance to Mahomet. It was the last deputation received by him. They reached Medina at the beginning of the Eleventh year of the Hegira.

Numerous
embassies
and de-
spatches

Numerous other embassies are described by the Secretary of Wakidy, who has devoted a long chapter to the subject, as well as a chapter to the despatches and rescripts of the Prophet. Those which I have already described will afford a sufficient idea of the whole; further detail would be tedious and unprofitable. But one or two incidents of interest connected with them may be mentioned.

Beni
Aamir

The part played by the Beni Aamir at the massacre of Bir Mauna will be in the memory of the reader.² This tribe had taken little share with the rest of the Hawâzin

¹ Hishami tells this naïvely: 'So they, being worsted, believed, and embraced the invitation to profess the new faith. Thereupon Khalid began to teach them the nature of Islam, and the word of God, and the regulations of the Prophet.'

² *Ante*, p. 269.

(of which they formed a branch) in the battle of Honein. It maintained, under its haughty chieftain Aamir, an independent neutrality. The aged chief of the tribe, Abu Bera, still exhibited friendly feelings towards Mahomet, but with advancing years his influence had passed away. Labouring under an internal ailment, he sent his nephew Labid, the poet of the tribe, to the Prophet, with the present of a beautiful horse, and an urgent request that he would point out a cure for his disease. Mahomet declined the gift, saying courteously: 'If I could ever accept the offering of an idolater, it would be that of Abu Bera.' Then taking up a clod of earth, he spat upon it, and directed that Abu Bera should dissolve it in water, and drink the mixture. When he had done this, we are told, he recovered from his sickness.¹

Abu Bera applies to Mahomet for a cure

The following year Aamir, at the solicitation of his tribe, presented himself before Mahomet and sought to obtain from him advantageous terms. 'What shall I have,' he asked, 'if I believe?' 'That which other Believers have,' replied Mahomet, 'with the same responsibilities.' 'Wilt thou not give me the rule after thee?' 'Nay, that is not for thee nor for thy tribe.' 'Then assign unto me the Bedouin tribes; and do thou retain the rest.' 'This,' said Mahomet, 'I cannot do; but I will give thee the command over the cavalry, for thou excellest as a horseman.' Aamir turned away in disdain: 'Doth this man not know,' he cried, 'that I can fill his land from one end to the other with troops, both footmen and horse?' Mahomet, alarmed at the threat, for the Beni Aamir were a formidable tribe, prayed thus for deliverance: 'O Lord! defend me against Aamir son of Tofail. O Lord! guide his people unto the truth; and save Islam from his stratagems!' The haughty chieftain never reached his home; he sickened by the way, and died miserably in a deserted hut. The Beni Aamir shortly after gave in their adhesion to the Prophet.

Interview of Aamir ibn Tofail with Mahomet. Conversion of the Beni Aamir. A.H. X. A.D. 681, 682

The Beni Jufi, a tribe inhabiting Yemen, had a deeply-rooted prejudice against eating the heart of any animal. Cays, one of their chief men, came to Mahomet with his

Prejudices of Beni Jufi

¹ Labid is famous for his Moallaca, or 'Suspended' poem. According to another tradition, Mahomet gave Labid a leather bottle of honey, of which Abu Bera ate, and so recovered.

Two of
their chiefs
cursed

brother, and professed belief in the Coran. They were told that their faith was imperfect until they broke through their heathenish scruples, and a roasted heart was placed before them. Cays took it up and ate it, trembling violently. Mahomet, satisfied with the test of his sincerity, presented him with a patent, which secured him in the rule over his people. But before Cays and his brother left the presence of Mahomet, the conversation turned upon the guilt of infanticide: 'Our mother Muleika,' said they, 'was full of good deeds and charity; but she buried a little daughter alive. What is her condition now?' 'The burier and the buried both in hell,' replied the Prophet. The brothers turned away in wrath. 'Come back,' Mahomet cried; 'mine own mother, too, is there with yours.' They would not listen. 'This man,' they said, as they departed, 'hath not only made us to eat the heart of animals, but saith that our mother is in hell: who would follow him?' On their way home, they met one of Mahomet's followers returning to Medina with a herd of camels which had been collected as tithes. They seized the man, left him bound, and carried off the camels. Mahomet was greatly offended; and he entered the names of the robbers in the commination already mentioned (the repetition of which seems still to have been kept up) against the perpetrators of the massacre at Bir Mauna. A second deputation from the same tribe visited Mahomet, and was well received. We do not hear more of Cays.¹

¹ Mahomet is said to have healed the hand of the leader from a protuberance which had prevented him holding his camel's rein, by striking an arrow on it and then stroking it, when it disappeared. He changed the name of this chief's son from *Asts* (glorious) to Abd al Rahmân;—saying: 'There is none *glorious* but the Lord.'



MOUNT ARAPAT AT THE TIME OF FISHING.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

Dzul Hijj, A.H. X.—March, A.D. 630

ÆTAT. 63

THE month of Pilgrimage was again at hand, and nought remained to hinder Mahomet from going up to it. Nothing would now offend the eye, nor any pagan by his presence pollute the sacred precincts. Every vestige of an image or heathen rite had been swept away; and after the warning of the previous year, Believers alone might venture near. With nothing left to offend him, the Prophet, therefore, announced his intention of going up to the coming festival. It is called the *Farewell pilgrimage*, because it was the last. He had not performed the Greater pilgrimage since his Flight from Mecca, and now he was about to bid a last farewell to the city of his birth, and to the Holy house, over which and its surroundings a halo of blessedness rested in his soul.

Farewell
pilgrimage
A.H. X.
March,
A.D. 630

Five days before Dzul Hijj, the month of pilgrimage, the Prophet assumed the pilgrim's garb; and, followed by vast multitudes,¹ set out on the journey to Mecca. All his wives accompanied him. One hundred camels, marked by his own hands for sacrifice, were led in solemn order. Mosques had already sprung up at the various halting-places, and there the people daily prayed, Mahomet leading the devotions. On the tenth day, he reached Sarif, an easy stage from Mecca; there he rested for the night, and on the morning, having bathed, and mounted Al Caswa, proceeded towards Mecca. He entered the upper suburbs by the same route which he had taken two years before; and, passing down the main street, approached the Kaaba. As he passed through the Beni Sheyba gate, with the Holy temple full in view, he

Mahomet's
journey
from
Medina to
Mecca

¹ Weil says not less than 40,000.—*Einleitung*, p. 34.

raised his hands to heaven, and invoked a blessing on it : ' O Lord ! add unto this House in the dignity and glory, the honour and the reverence, which already thou hast bestowed upon it. And they that for the Greater pilgrimage, and the Lesser, frequent the same, increase them much in honour and dignity, in piety, goodness, and renown. Then, mounted as he was on his camel, he performed the prescribed circuits, with other preliminary rites, and afterwards retired to a tent pitched for him in the valley.

Most of his followers perform Lesser pilgrimage only

The greater part of the pilgrims had brought no victims with them. These were directed by Mahomet, after completing the customary forms of the Lesser pilgrimage, to divest themselves of the pilgrim garb. They accompanied the Prophet and the others who had brought victims in the farther procession to Mina and Arafât, but only as spectators. Aly, meanwhile, having returned from Yemen, received the same directions as those who had no victims : ' Go,' said Mahomet, ' encircle the Holy house ; then divest thyself of the pilgrim's garb as thy fellows have done.' But Aly was anxious to fulfil the full rites of the yearly festival ; ' for,' said he, ' I have taken upon me vows to perform the same pilgrimage as the Prophet shall perform, whatever that might be.' Mahomet yielded, and allowed him to fulfil the Greater pilgrimage, and for this end to share in the victims he had brought for himself.¹

On the 7th of Dzul Hijj, the day preceding the opening rites of the Greater pilgrimage, Mahomet, after the mid-day

¹ The sacrifice of victims is an essential part of the Greater pilgrimage, but not of the Lesser. The pilgrim must *resolve*, before he assumes the pilgrim's garb, which pilgrimage he will perform. In connection with this custom, there is a great mass of varying tradition as to whether Mahomet set out from Medina with the vows upon him of the Lesser pilgrimage, or the Greater, or of both together ; and the question is very warmly discussed.

When Mahomet desired those who had no victims to conclude their pilgrimage with the Omra, or Lesser festival, they objected, saying : ' How then can we go on with thee to Mina, after quitting the holy state of a pilgrim and returning to the impurities of the world ? ' Mahomet told them that there was no harm in doing so, for that, if similarly circumstanced, he would have done it himself ; and that if he had foreseen these objections, he would not have brought any victims. Perhaps it was Mahomet's wish to show that visiting Mecca at the time of the Greater pilgrimage did not necessarily involve participation in the pilgrimage, the observance of which was reserved for special occasions.

prayer, preached to the concourse assembled around the Kaaba. Next day, followed by myriads of devotees, and shaded from the sun's glare by Bilál, who walked at his side with a screen (a staff with a piece of cloth attached), he set out for Mina, where he performed the ordinary prayers, and slept in a tent. The following morning at sunrise, he moved onwards and, passing Mozdalifa, reached Arafát, an abrupt conical hill, a couple of hundred feet in height, in the middle of the valley, which, though elsewhere narrow, and on the farther side pent in by lofty granite peaks, here spreads out bare and stony to the breadth of nearly a mile.¹ On its summit, the Prophet, standing erect upon his camel, said: 'The entire valley of Arafát is the holy station for pilgrimage, excepting only the vale of Urana.' Then bowing low in prayer, he recited certain passages, regarding the ceremonies of pilgrimage, and concluded with the verse: '*This day have I perfected your Religion unto you, fulfilled my mercy upon you, and appointed for you Islam to be your faith.*'

Mahomet's pilgrimage to Arafát. 8th Dzul Hijj

Sura v

¹ Pictures of the hill are given by Ali Bey, Burton, and Dozy. The latter describes it thus: 'A mass of coarse granite split into large blocks, with a thin coat of withered thorns, about one mile in circumference, and rising abruptly from the low gravelly plain (a dwarf wall at the southern base forming the line of demarcation) to the height of one hundred and eighty or two hundred feet. It is separated by Batn Arna, a sandy vale, from the spurs of the Tayif hills. Nothing can be more picturesque than the view it affords of the blue peaks behind, and the vast encampment scattered over the barren yellow plain below.' So also Ali Bey;—'Arafát is a small mountain of granite rock, the same as those that surround it; it is about one hundred and fifty feet high, and is situated at the foot of a higher mountain to the E.S.E., in a plain about three quarters of a mile in diameter, surrounded by barren mountains.' The 'Hadji,' who has recently published an account of his pilgrimage in the *Bombay Times*, says: 'Round the foot of Arafát, which is completely detached from the adjoining mountains, are a number of trees, a thick growth of underwood, and a little grass, which are nourished by the water that escapes from the canal of Mecca which passes behind the hill.' But before the canal was made, the place must have been wild and bare of any growth but thorny bushes.

The popular tradition for the exclusion of the vale of Urana (or Arna) is given thus by Burton: 'This vale is not considered "standing ground" because Satan once appeared to the Prophet as he was traversing it.' The last pilgrimage is regarded as the type of all succeeding ones: there is accordingly a tendency to make Mahomet foresee that it was the last, and provide anticipatory instructions on all possible points. Such traditions must be received with caution: take, *e.g.*, the following: Mahomet, as he went through the various rites, said: 'Observe, and learn of me the ceremonies which ye should practise, for I know not whether after this I shall ever perform another pilgrimage.'

Mahomet
returns to
Mozdalifa.
9th Dzul
Hijj

As the sun was going down, Mahomet quitted the sacred mount on his way back; and with Osâma son of Zeid seated on the camel behind him, travelled hastily by the bright moonlight along the narrow valley to Mozdalifa, where he said the sunset and evening prayers both at once; in this, and every other point, his example has been closely imitated by pilgrims to the present day. He passed the night at Mozdalifa, and very early in the morning sent forward the women and the little children, lest the crowds that followed should impede their journey: ¹ but, touching one and another on the shoulder as they went, he said: 'My children, have a care that ye throw not the stones at the corner pass of Acaba until the sun arise.'

Mahomet
completes
the pil-
grimage at
Mina. 10th
Dzul Hijj

At the dawn he arose to perform the matin prayer; after which, mounted on his camel, he took his stand on a certain spot, saying: 'This, and the whole of Mozdalifa, is the station of pilgrimage, excepting only the vale of Muhassir.'² Then, with Fadhl son of Abbas seated behind him, he proceeded onwards amid a heavy fall of rain to Mina, shouting as he went the pilgrim's cry:—

Labbeik ! O Lord ! Labbeik ! Labbeik !
There is none other God but Thee. Labbeik !
Praise, blessing, and dominion be to Thee. Labbeik !
No one therein may share with Thee. Labbeik ! Labbeik !³

He ceased not to utter these ejaculations till he entered the valley of Mina, and there cast stones at the 'Devil's Corner,' a projecting rock at the entrance of the Station.⁴ Then he

¹ The 'Hadjj' gives a vivid description of the utter confusion which prevails on the hurried return of the multitude from Arafât to Mozdalifa; and it would seem that the same prevailed even in the time of Mahomet.

² I do not know the origin of the allusion here to this valley; it is according to Burton on the road to Mina. A picture of Mozdalifa will be found in Ali Bey.

³ For this expression, see *ante*, p. 342.

⁴ See pp. lxxxix and 438. There are two or three spots at which stones are thus cast, called the greater and lesser Shaitan, or *devils*. The tradition is that Abraham here met the Devil and repulsed him by similar means. There are minute traditions as to the kind of stone to be used on this occasion. Abdallah son of Abbas picked up some gravel for Mahomet to throw; and the Prophet said: 'Yes: just such as this is the kind to throw. Take care that ye increase not the size. Verily they that have gone before you have come to naught, because of thus adding to the rites of their religion.'



DEVIL'S CORNER (PLACE OF THROWING STONES).

slew the victims brought for sacrifice, and ended the pilgrimage by shaving the hair of his head, partly also of his face, and paring his nails. The hair and parings he ordered to be burned.¹ The *Ihrâm*, or scanty pilgrim garb, was now exchanged for his ordinary dress, perfumes were burned, the flesh of the victims and other cattle distributed for food; and Aly, riding the Prophet's white mule, made proclamation that, the restrictions of the pilgrim state being over, it was now a day for eating and enjoyment, and for the remembrance of God. Mahomet remained at Mina from the 10th to the 12th of the month, and every evening repairing as the sun declined to the prescribed spots at Acaba, repeated the rite of casting stones.

On the second of these days, the Prophet mounted his camel, and from the widening centre of the Mina valley² addressed the vast crowd of pilgrims in a memorable speech, which was looked upon by the people, and perhaps was felt by himself, to be his last farewell. He enjoined the sacredness of life and property and of domestic obligations thus:—

Parting exhortations at Mina. 11th Dzul Hijj

YE PEOPLE! Hearken to my words; for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you here again.³

Your Lives and Property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until the end of time.

The Lord hath ordained to every man the share of his inheritance: a Testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

The child belongeth to the Parent: and the violator of Wedlock shall be stoned. Whoever claimeth falsely another for his father, or another for his master, the curse of God and the Angels, and of all Mankind, shall rest upon him.

Ye People! Ye have rights demandable of your Wives, and they have rights demandable of you. Upon them it is incumbent

¹ According to another tradition the hair was all caught by his followers. This idea must have grown up in after days, when a single hair of the Prophet was treasured up as a relic and talisman.

² 'He stood between the two places for casting stones.' Burton mentions two such spots. Ali Bey's plan gives the chief one, or 'the Devil's house,' on the Mecca side of Mina, and 'two small columns raised by the Devil,' in the middle of the narrow street of the village of Mina. The position of Mahomet while delivering this famous discourse was thus within Mina itself, but somewhat on the side of Mecca.

³ So Ibn Hisham. The words, however, may be an afterthought of tradition. There is no other intimation that Mahomet felt his strength to be decaying at this time, or that either he or his followers anticipated the nearness of his end.

not to violate their conjugal faith, neither to commit any act of open impropriety ;—which things if they do, ye have authority to shut them up in separate apartments and to beat them with stripes, yet not severely. But if they refrain therefrom, clothe them and feed them suitably. And treat your Women well : for they are with you as captives and prisoners ; they have not power over anything as regards themselves. And ye have verily taken them on the security of God : and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.

And your Slaves ! See that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves ; and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.

Ye People ! hearken to my speech and comprehend the same. Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are on the same equality ; (as he pronounced these words, he raised his arms aloft and placed the forefinger of one hand, as an emblem of equality, on the forefinger of the other ¹) ; ye are one Brotherhood.

Know ye what month this is ?—What territory this is ?—What day ? To which the People answered,—‘The Sacred month,—the Sacred territory,—the Great day of pilgrimage.’ At each reply, Mahomet added : ‘*Even thus sacred and inviolable hath God made the life and the property of each of you unto the other, until ye meet your Lord.*’

Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Haply, he that shall be told may remember it better than he who hath heard it.

Next he recited the passage which abolishes the triennial intercalation of the year, declaring it to be an unhallowed innovation on the Divine arrangement of the months :—

Verily, the number of the months with God is twelve months, according to the Book of God, on the day in which He created the Heavens and the Earth. Of these, four are sacred :—this is the true Religion.

Verily, the changing of the months is an excess of infidelity, which causeth the Unbelievers to err. They make a month common in one year, and they make it sacred in another year, that they may equalise the number which God hath made sacred. Thus do they make common that which God hath hallowed.

¹ Intending thereby to teach that all were absolutely upon the same level.

Abolition
of the in-
tercalary
year

Sura ix,
37, 38

'And now,' continued Mahomet, 'on this very day hath time performed its cycle, and returned to the disposition thereof existing at the moment when God created the Heavens and the Earth. Ye People! Truly Satan despaireth of being worshipped in your land for ever. But if in some indifferent matter, which ye might be disposed to slight, he could secure obedience, verily he would be well pleased. Wherefore beware of him!

Verily, I have fulfilled my mission. I have left that amongst you,—a plain command, the Book of God, and manifest Ordinances—which, if ye hold fast, ye shall never go astray.'

Then, looking up to heaven, he said: '*O Lord! I have delivered my message and discharged my Ministry.*' 'Yea,' cried all the people crowding round him, 'yea, verily thou hast.' '*O Lord! I beseech Thee bear Thou witness unto it.*' And with these words, the Prophet, having concluded his address, dismissed the great assembly.

Mahomet takes God to witness that he has fulfilled his mission

After three days thus spent at Mina, the concourse broke up and returned to Mecca. Mahomet desired the mass of the pilgrims to travel thither by day. He himself accompanied his wives on the journey by night. On reaching Mecca, he went straightway to the Kaaba, and performed the seven circuits of it on his camel. He next visited the well Zemzem close by, and calling for a pitcher of its water, drank part of its contents; then rinsing his mouth with the rest, he desired that what remained in the pitcher should be thrown back into the well. After this, taking off his shoes, he ascended the doorway of the Holy temple, and prayed within its walls.¹ Having now ended all the ceremonies, and being fatigued with the journey, he stopped at the house of one who kept date-water for the pilgrims to drink, and desired the beverage to be furnished to him. The son of Abbas, who accompanied him, interposed: 'The hands of the passers-by,' he said, 'have been in this all day, and fouled it: come unto my father's

Returns to Mecca. Further ceremonies there

¹ Mahomet regretted that he had entered the Kaaba on this occasion, and when asked the reason said: 'I have this day done a thing which I wish I had left undone. I have entered the Holy house. And haply some of the people, when on pilgrimage, may not be able to enter therein, and may turn back grieved in heart (i.e. at not having completed the pilgrimage fully after their Prophet's example). And, in truth, the command given unto me was only to encircle the Kaaba: it is not incumbent on any one to enter it.' This appears to be founded upon the notion before explained, that Mahomet *intended* this pilgrimage to be the final type and exemplar for all future pilgrims.

house, where we have some that is clean and pure for thee.' But the Prophet, refusing to drink of any other, quenched his thirst upon the spot.¹

Returns to
Medina

Three days more were spent at Mecca, and then Mahomet with his followers returned to Medina.

¹ Water in which dates or raisins have been steeped or washed is called Nabidh. So accurately do the pilgrims follow their Prophet, that some regard the rites of the pilgrimage as not properly completed until Nabidh be drunk as it was by Mahomet.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE THREE PRETENDERS

Opening of A.H. XI.—April and May, A.D. 632

THE Eleventh year of Mahomet's residence at Medina opened peacefully. Already the greater part of the Peninsula acknowledged his authority. The loose autonomy of the Arab tribes made it easy for Mahomet to assert his suzerainty without interfering in their internal affairs. In the more distant provinces, also, the prerogative was vague, and as yet put to no sufficient test. Still, there was, almost everywhere, the outward form of submission to all that had been demanded. The days of the Prophet were now chiefly occupied in the reception of embassies, the issue of rescripts to his various delegates scattered over the land, and the consolidation of his power, secular as well as spiritual.

The year
A.H. XI,
opens
peacefully.
March 29,
A.D. 632

Badzân, the Persian governor who (as we have seen) had early submitted himself to Mahomet, died about this time. His son Shehr was continued in the government of Sana and the surrounding district. But the other provinces hitherto combined under his authority, as Mareb, Najran, and Hamadan, were divided by Mahomet among different governors, of whom some were natives of the several districts, while others were officers specially deputed from Medina.

Death of
Badzân
and divi-
sion of his
territories

But a new cause of danger began suddenly to darken the horizon. Three claimants of the prophetic office arose, in different quarters of Arabia, to dispute with Mahomet the supreme authority. Their assumptions were not, however, developed till near the close of his life, and the tidings which he received were hardly perhaps of so grave a nature as to raise serious uneasiness. Their history belongs to the Caliphate of Abu Bekr, and I shall not, therefore, do more in this place than very briefly notice these remarkable impostors.

Three im-
postors
arise,
claiming
prophetic
office

Moment propitious for such pretensions

Besides the temptation to follow in the steps of Mahomet arising from his marvellous success, the present moment was especially propitious for the assertion of such a claim. The Bedouin tribes, and distant peoples who had but lately succumbed to the new religion, began to find its rites irksome and its restraints unpalatable. How deep and general was the discontent, is evident from the rebellion which throughout Arabia followed immediately on the Prophet's death, and which probably never would have been effectually subdued had not the energies and passions of the Arabs been roused by foreign conquest. Mahomet was now well stricken in years, and strangers might perceive in him the marks of advancing infirmity. His death could not be far distant. No provision had been made for a successor nor for the permanent maintenance at Medina of a supreme control over the Peninsula. If one were bold enough to assert that he had received a divine commission like that of Mahomet, why should the claim not be crowned with similar success?

Tuleiha.
His rebellion crushed by Khalid

The least important of the three impostors who now started with such notions was Tuleiha, chief of the Beni Asad, and a warrior of note and influence in Nejd.¹ His tribe once journeying through the desert were overpowered by thirst, when Tuleiha announced to them that water would be found at a certain spot. The discovery confirmed the claims to inspiration, or at least to divination, which he had already made. When the news of this reached Mahomet, he sought, by aid of faithful converts in the tribe, to crush the Pretender. Subsequently, however, to the Prophet's death he broke out into open rebellion, and was defeated, after a severe engagement, by Khalid. On Omar's summoning the conquered tribe to join his standard, Tuleiha submitted, and afterwards with them fought bravely on the side of Islam.

Moseilama.
His advances indignantly rejected by Mahomet

Moseilama has already been noticed as having accompanied the deputation of the Hanifa to Medina. He was a man of small stature, in presence insignificant, but ready and powerful in speech. Following the example of Mahomet, he gave forth verses professed to have been received from heaven, and he pretended also to work miracles.² He claimed

¹ Vide p. 267.

² He had learned the art of sleight of hand, &c., from conjurers. One of his *miracles* was to slip an egg into a narrow-mouthed phial. None of

an authority and mission concurrent with that of the Prophet of Medina; and he deceived the people of Yemama by alleging that the claim had been admitted.¹ Mahomet, hearing the rumour of his insolent pretensions, sent him a summons to submit to Islam. Moseilama returned reply that he, too, was a prophet like Mahomet himself: 'I demand therefore that thou divide the earth with me; as for the Coreish, they are a people that have no respect for justice.' When this letter was read before him, Mahomet turned with indignation to the two envoys who ventured to urge their master's claim. '*By the Lord!*' he exclaimed, '*if it were not that Ambassadors are secure, and their lives inviolate, I would have beheaded both of you!*' Then he indited the following answer: 'Thine epistle, with its lies and its fabrications against the Lord, hath been read to me. Verily the earth is the Lord's, and He causeth such of His servants as He pleaseth to inherit the same. Peace be to him that followeth the true Direction!' The battle of Yemama, with its 'Garden of death,' in which Moseilama lost his life, was a perilous day for Islam, but the story belongs to the Caliphate of Abu Bekr.

Aswad, the 'Veiled Prophet' of Yemen, differed from the other impostors in not only advancing his pretensions, but in casting off the Moslem yoke, while Mahomet was yet alive. A prince of wealth and influence in the South, he assumed the garb of a magician, and gave out that he was in communication with the unseen world. He prosecuted his claims at the first secretly, and gained over the chieftains in the neighbourhood dissatisfied with the distribution of power upon the death of Badzân. About the close of the Tenth year of the Hegira, he openly raised the standard of rebellion, and drove out the officers of Mahomet, who fled for refuge to the nearest friendly country. Advancing on Najran, which rose in his favour, he suddenly fell upon Sana, where, having killed Shehr the son of Badzân, he put his army to flight, married his widow, and established himself in undisputed authority. The insurrection, fanned by this sudden success, spread like wild-fire, and the greater part of the

Rebellion
of Aswad

the verses attributed to him are worth quoting. Sprenger says that the name, signifying 'the little Moslem,' was given him in contempt.

¹ See the words of Mahomet which he is said to have drawn into this construction—*ante*, p. 448.

Peninsula lying between the provinces of Bahrein, Tayif, and the coast, was soon subject to the Usurper.

(Crushed
about the
time of
Mahomet's
death

At what period intimation of this rebellion reached Mahomet, and what the nature of the intelligence received, is not apparent. The accounts could not have been very alarming, for the Prophet contented himself with despatching letters to his officers on the spot, in which he desired them, according to their means, either to compass the death of the Pretender, or to attack him in the field. Fortunately for Islam, Aswad, in the pride of conquest, had already begun to slight the commanders to whose bravery he was indebted for success. The agents of Mahomet opened up secret negotiations with them; and, favoured by the tyrant's wife, who detested him, and burned to avenge her late husband's death, plotted his assassination. The Usurper was slain, according to tradition, on the very night preceding the death of Mahomet. The insurrection ceased; and peace would immediately have been restored had not the tidings that the Prophet had passed away again thrown the province into confusion. The campaign that followed belongs to the reign of Abu Bekr.

CHAPTER XXXIII

SICKNESS AND DEATH OF MAHOMET

Moharram, A.H. XI.—June, A.D. 632

ÆTAT. 63

ABOUT two months after his return from the Farewell pilgrimage, Mahomet, now sixty-three years of age, and to all appearance in his ordinary health, gave orders for an expedition to the Syrian frontier. The inroad upon Tebuk was the last occasion on which a general levy had been called. But the reverse at Muta had not yet been sufficiently avenged. The present campaign was accordingly intended to strike terror into the tribes of the border, and wipe out the memory of the disaster, which still rankled in the Prophet's heart. On the day following the command just mentioned, it was announced that Osâma, son of Zeid the beloved friend of Mahomet slain at Muta, was, notwithstanding his extreme youth (hardly yet twenty years of age) but the more clearly to mark the object of the expedition, appointed to lead the army. Having called him to the Mosque, the Prophet thus addressed him: 'March unto the place where thy father was killed, and let them destroy it utterly. Lo! I have made thee commander over this army. Fall suddenly at early dawn upon the men of Obna, and devour them with fire. Hasten thy march so that thine onset may precede the tidings of thee. If the Lord grant thee victory, then shorten thy stay amongst them. Take with thee guides, and send before thee scouts and spies.'

Expedition
to Syrian
frontier

Osâma ap-
pointed to
command.
A.H. XI.
May 25,
A.D. 632

On the following day, being Wednesday, Mahomet was seized with a violent headache and fever; but it passed off. The next morning he found himself sufficiently recovered to bind with his own hand the banner for the army; and

Banner
presented
to him,
and camp
formed at
Jorf

H H

May 27

thus he presented it to Osâma;—‘Fight thou beneath this banner in the name of the Lord, and for His cause. Thus shalt thou discomfit and slay the people that disbelieveth in the Lord!’ The camp was then formed at Jorf; and the whole body of the fighting men, not excepting Abu Bekr and Omar, were summoned to join it. But the attention of the city was soon occupied by a more engrossing subject, which suspended for a time the preparations of Osâma’s force.

Mahomet attributes illness to poisoned meat eaten at Kheibar

Mahomet had not hitherto suffered from any serious illness. About the close of the Sixth year of the Hegira (as has been already told), he ailed temporarily from loss of appetite and a pining depression of health and spirits, ascribed to the incantations of the Jews. Again, in the middle of the Seventh year, his system sustained a shock from partaking of poisoned meat at Kheibar, for which he was cupped, and the effects of which he complained of periodically ever after. Indeed, the present attack was attributed by Mahomet himself to this cause. When he had been now for several days sick, the mother of Bishr (who had died from the effects of the same poison) came to inquire after his health; she condoled with him on the violence of the fever, and remarked that the people said it was an attack of pleurisy. ‘Nay,’ answered Mahomet, ‘the Lord would never permit that sickness to seize his Apostle, for it cometh of Satan. This, verily, is the effect of that which I ate at Kheibar, I and thy son. The artery of my back feeleth as though it would just now burst asunder.’

Circumstances affecting strength of his constitution

Whether his constitution was really impaired by the poison, or whether it was merely the Prophet’s fancy, the frailties of age were now imperceptibly stealing upon him. His vigorous, well-knit frame had begun to stoop. Though frugal, if not abstemious in his habits, and in all things (the harem excepted) temperate, yet during the last twenty years of his life there had been much to tax both mind and body. At Mecca, hardship, rejection, persecution, confinement, exile; at Medina, the anxieties of a cause for some years doubtful, and now the cares of a daily extending empire, all pressed heavily upon him. Nor must we forget the excitement and agitation (possibly of an epileptic character) which occasionally overpowered him in the moments of supposed inspiration and intercourse with his unseen visitants. ‘Ah!

thou that art dearer to me than father or mother!' exclaimed Abu Bekr to Mahomet as he entered one day from his wives' apartments into the Mosque; 'alas! grey hairs are hastening upon thee;' and his eyes filled with tears as the Prophet raised his beard with his hand, and gazed upon it. 'Yes,' said Mahomet, 'it is the travail of inspiration that hath done this. The Suras *Hud*, and the *Inevitable*, and the *Striking*, with their fellows, these have made white my hair.' But Mahomet did not yield to the infirmities of old age. To the very last he maintained the severe simplicity of robust years. 'The people throng about thee in the Mosque,' said his uncle Abbas to him;—'what if we make for thee an elevated seat, that they may not trouble thee?' But Mahomet forbade it: 'Surely,' he said, 'I will not cease from being in the midst of them, dragging my mantle behind me thus,¹ and covered with their dust, until that the Lord give me rest from amongst them.'

Increasing
infirmity

Mahomet himself was latterly not unconscious (so we learn from Ayesha) of the premonitions of decay. He used frequently to repeat the 110th Sura, as follows:—

Conviction
that his end
was near

When the help of God shall come, and the Victory,
And thou shalt see men entering the religion of God in troops;
Then celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and ask pardon of Him,
for He is merciful.

'These expressions he would refer to the multitudes now flocking to the faith from Yemen and the farther coasts of Arabia. He would furthermore declare that the sign received from the Lord of the completion of his work was thus fulfilled, and that it remained for him now only 'to busy himself in the praises of his Lord and to seek for pardon.'²

¹ *I.e.* hurrying along and being jostled by the crowd.

² The traditions of this period abound in anticipations of Mahomet's decease. But few of these seem founded on fact. Take the following as a specimen. When the 110th Sura was revealed, Mahomet called Fatima, and said: 'My daughter! I have received intimation of my approaching end.' Fatima burst into tears. 'Why weepest thou, my child?' continued the Prophet; 'be comforted, for verily thou art the first of my people that shall rejoin me.' Whereupon Fatima dried her tears and smiled pleasantly. As Fatima died within six months after her father, it is easy to see how this tale grew up. Similar are the traditions in glorification of Fatima: *e.g.* where Mahomet calls her 'the Queen of the women of Paradise after Mary Mother of Jesus;' also the prediction of coming divisions, sects, intestine war, &c. A shade of the same tendency will be observed in the

Attacked
by illness,
Mahomet
visits the
burial-
ground

When attacked by his last illness, Mahomet, though probably feeling it to be serious, did not at the first succumb; for a day or two he still maintained the custom he had prescribed to himself of visiting his wives' apartments in rotation. One night lying restless on his bed, he arose softly, cast his clothes about him, and, followed only by a servant, walked to the burial-ground, in the outskirts of the city. There he rested long absorbed in meditation. At last winding up his thoughts, he prayed aloud for those who were buried there, apostrophising thus: '*Verily, both ye and I have received fulfilment of that which our Lord did promise us. Blessed are ye! for your lot is better than the lot of those that are left behind. Temptation and trial approach like portions of a dark night that follow one upon another, each darker than that preceding it. O Lord! have mercy upon them that lie buried here!*' With these words, he turned and departed to his house. By the way, he told his attendant that he too was himself hastening to the grave: 'The choice hath verily been offered me of continuance in this life, with Paradise thereafter, or to meet my Lord at once; and I have chosen to meet my Lord.'

Ayesha's
rallies
when he
seeks com-
miseration

In the morning, passing by the chamber of Ayesha, who was suffering from a headache, he heard her moaning: 'My head!—oh, my head!' He entered and said: 'Nay, Ayesha, it is rather I that have need to cry *My head, my head!*' Then in a tenderer strain: 'But wouldst thou not desire to be taken whilst I am yet alive; so that I might pray over thee, and wrapping thee, Ayesha, in thy winding-sheet, myself commit thee to the grave?' 'That happen to another,'

prayer (in the text above) at the burial-ground, which, notwithstanding, I have given entire.

¹ It may be necessary here to warn the reader that we have now reached a point in Mahomet's biography which has become specially the arena for contending traditions of party and faction. *First*, Ayesha, who had the closest opportunities by far of all others for watching the last moments of Mahomet, has made the most of her position; throughout her statements there is a patent endeavour to exclude even the mention of Aly and his partisans. There is, *secondly*, the party of Aly, who (with the view of strengthening their dogma that the divine right of succession was vested in him and his posterity) attribute to him every important part in the scene. And, *lastly*, there are the Abbassides (holding the right of succession to reside in their line), whose tendency is to magnify Abbas and his family. Every tradition is coloured more or less by these factions; and it is necessary to steer very cautiously between them.

exclaimed Ayesha, 'and not to me!' archly adding: 'Ah, that, I see, is what thou wishest for! Truly, I can behold thee, when all was over, returning straightway hither, and sporting with a new beauty in my chamber here!' The Prophet smiled at Ayesha's raillery, but was too ill for a rejoinder; and so, again with a sad complaint of the grievous ailment in his head, passed on to the apartment of Meimûna, whose day it was. The fever returning upon him shortly with increasing violence, he called his wives around him, and said: 'Ye see that I lie very sick: I am not able to visit you in turn; if it be pleasing unto you, I will remain in the house of Ayesha.' They agreed, and so, his clothes having been wrapped loosely about him, and his head bound round with a napkin, he walked with the support of Aly and Abbas to the apartment of Ayesha. Hardly yet twenty years of age, and never before used to such a duty, she tended with affectionate solicitude the death-bed of her aged husband.

Mahomet
retires to
Ayesha's
house

For seven or eight days the fever, although unchecked, did not confine Mahomet entirely to the house. He was able to move into the Mosque (the door of his apartment opening into its courts) and lead, though feebly, the public prayers. He had been ill about a week, when perceiving that the sickness gained ground, with occasional fits of swooning, he resolved upon an effort to address his followers, whose murmurs at the appointment of the youthful Osâma to the command of the army for Syria had reached his ears. 'Fetch me,' he said, 'seven skins of water from as many different wells, that I may bathe and then go forth unto them.' They procured the water, and, seating him in Haphsa's bathing vessel, poured it upon him from the skins till he held up his hand and cried 'Enough!' Meanwhile the people, both men and women, having assembled in the Mosque, it was told the Prophet that they had come together, and that many wept. Refreshed now by the bath, his head bandaged, and a sheet drawn loosely round him (for it was summer), he went forth at the hour of prayer into the Mosque; and, when the service was ended, seated himself upon the pulpit and proceeded thus:—'Ye people! What is this which hath reached my ears, that some amongst you murmur against my appointment of Osâma to command the Syrian expedition? Now, if ye blame my appointment of

He chides
the mur-
muring at
Osâma's
appoint-
ment

Osâma, verily heretofore ye blamed likewise my appointment of his father Zeid before him. And I swear by the Lord, that he verily was well fitted for the command, and that his son after him is well fitted also. Truly Osâma is one of the men most dearly beloved by me, even as his father was. Wherefore, do ye treat him well, for he is one of the best amongst you.'

Private doors leading into the Mosque, closed

Then after a pause; 'Verily, the Lord hath offered unto one of his servants the choice betwixt this life and that which is nigh unto Himself; and the servant hath chosen that which is nigh unto his Lord.' The people were slow to catch this his first expressed anticipation that the illness would prove his last.¹ But Abu Bekr saw it, and burst into tears. Mahomet bade him not to weep, and immediately added a touching proof of his affection; for, turning to the people, he said: 'Verily the chiefest among you all for love and devotion to me is Abu Bekr. If I were to choose a bosom friend it would be he: but Islam hath made a closer brotherhood amongst us all. Now let every door that leadeth into the Court be closed, excepting only the door of Abu Bekr.' Accordingly the relatives of Mahomet and Chief men whose houses skirted the quadrangle of the Mosque, closed their doors opening into it, that of Abu Bekr alone excepted. Thus the busy hum and tread were hushed as became the precincts of death, and the courts of the Mosque frequented only by worshippers at the hour of prayer, and by knots of whispering inquirers after the Prophet's health.

Mahomet commends Citizens to his Followers' care

As he was about to re-enter Ayesha's room, Mahomet turned again, and, in testimony of his gratitude to the people of Medina, thus addressed them;—'Ye that are Refugees from Mecca and elsewhere, hearken unto me! Ye increase,

¹ It is likely that the expression used by Mahomet regarding the *choice* of death or life was of a more general nature, such as 'that he preferred to depart and be near his Lord' (something, perhaps, in the manner of Paul's words, Philip. i. 21);—which would easily be converted into the mysterious phrase 'that he had *made election* of Paradise.' Against the text it might be urged that after such a declaration the people ought to have been more prepared for the Prophet's death when it did happen. But the scene after his death was justified by the immediate circumstances, and is to my apprehension quite consistent with even a more explicit statement by Mahomet than this, of his forebodings.

and throng into the city daily. But the men of Medina do not increase. They will remain ever as they are this day. And verily they are dear unto me, for amongst them it was that I found refuge. Wherefore honour their honourable men, and treat well their excellent ones.' Then, having urged the early departure of the Syrian expedition, he retired into the chamber of Ayesha.

The exertion and excitement of this address aggravated the Prophet's sickness. On the following day, when the hour of public prayer came round, he desired water for the customary ablutions; but, on attempting to rise, he found that his strength had failed, so he commanded that Abu Bekr should conduct the prayers in his stead; and having done so, fell back into a swoon. Quickly recovering, he inquired whether the commission had been conveyed to his friend. Ayesha replied: 'O Prophet! Truly Abu Bekr is a man of a tender heart, and weepeth readily. The people would with difficulty hear his voice.' 'Command that he lead the prayers,' repeated Mahomet in a loud and impatient tone. Ayesha, still clinging to the hope that Mahomet would be able himself to perform the duty, began again in a similar strain. Displeased and irritated, Mahomet exclaimed: 'Truly, ye resemble the foolish women in the story of Joseph:¹ give command forthwith as I desire.' The command was given, and Abu Bekr conducted the public prayers during the few remaining days of the Prophet's life.²

Abu Bekr
appointed
to lead
public
prayers

¹ See Sura xii. The Commentators refer this expression to the scene in which the women of Egypt cut their hands in astonishment at the beauty of Joseph.

² Tradition is quite unanimous as to the above account. The only point on which I have ventured to deviate from it, is the *motive* of Ayesha. She herself says that she objected simply from the fear that people would ever after dislike her father for having stood up in the Prophet's place, and would attribute any evil that might happen to ill-luck arising out of such usurpation. This I believe to be an afterthought. Ayesha was ambitious enough, and no doubt rejoiced greatly at this indication of her father to the chief command. But she was also overcome at the moment by concern for her husband, and could not bear the admission that he was so dangerously ill as the nomination appeared to imply. It seemed to her to be a foreboding of his end:—an inauspicious forestalling of the future. Hence she deprecated the idea.

One set of traditions makes her to propose that Omar should conduct the prayers in her father's stead. This is unlikely; but supposing it to be true, her proposal may have arisen from the same cause;—she knew well

Mahomet thus signified transfer to him as his deputy of ruling power

Closely joined together as is spiritual authority in Islam with temporal command, the right of presiding at public prayer was from the very first recognised as the mark of chief secular authority. There can be little doubt, I think, that Mahomet, by nominating Abu Bekr to this duty, intended the delegation of power to him while laid aside, if not to mark him also as successor after death. It is related that on one occasion Abu Bekr happened not to be present when the summons to prayer was sounded by Bilâl; and that Omar having received, as he erroneously believed, the command of Mahomet to officiate in his room, stood up in the Mosque, and in his powerful voice commenced the *Takbir*, 'Great is the Lord!' preparatory to the daily service. Mahomet, over-hearing it from his apartment, called aloud with energy: 'No! No! No! The Lord and the whole body of Believers forbid it! None but Abu Bekr! Let no one lead the prayers but only he!'

He urges despatch of Osâma's army

While thus unable to leave the room of Ayesha, Mahomet was too weak to attend to any public business. Yet the Syrian expedition weighed upon his mind; and he kept saying to those around him: 'Send off quickly the army of Osâma.' He also inquired about the embassies daily arriving at Medina, and enjoined the same hospitable treatment and gift of similar largesses as he had been wont to bestow.

Increase of illness. Saturday night, 11th Rabi 1. A.H. XI. June 6, A.D. 632

The sickness had now lasted nearly a fortnight when, on the night of Saturday, it began to assume a very serious aspect. The fever rose to such a pitch that the hand could hardly be kept upon him from the burning heat. His body was racked with pain; restless and moaning, he tossed about upon his bed. Alarmed at a severe paroxysm, Omm Salma screamed aloud. Mahomet rebuked her: 'Quiet!' he said; 'no one crieth out so but an unbeliever.' During the night, Ayesha sought to comfort him, and suggested that he should seek for consolation in the lessons he had so often taught to others when in sickness: 'O Prophet!' she said, 'if one of us had moaned thus, thou wouldst surely have found fault with her.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'but I burn with the fever-heat of any two of you together.' 'Then,' ex-

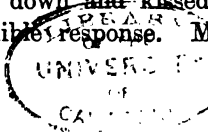
that Mahomet would not pass over Abu Bekr, and may from false modesty, or it may be real delicacy, have suggested that Omar, and not her father, should be nominated to the invidious post.

claimed another, 'thou shalt surely have a double reward.' 'Yea,' he answered,—'for I swear by Him in whose hands is my life, that there is not upon the earth a Believer, sore afflicted with calamity or disease, but the Lord thereby causeth his sins to fall off from him, even as the leaves from a tree in autumn.' At another time he said: 'Suffering is an expiation for sin. Verily, if the Believer suffer but the scratch of a thorn, the Lord raiseth his rank thereby, and wipeth away from him a sin.' And again, 'Believers are tried according to their faith. If a man's faith be strong, so are his sufferings; if he be weak, they are proportioned thereunto. Yet in any case, the suffering shall not be remitted until he walk upon earth without the guilt of a single transgression cleaving to him.' Omar, approaching the bed, placed his hand on the sufferer's forehead, and suddenly withdrew it from the great heat: 'O Prophet!' he said, 'how fierce is the fever upon thee!' 'Yea, verily,' replied Mahomet, 'but I have been during the night season repeating in praise of the Lord seventy Suras, and among them the seven long ones.' Omar answered: 'Why not rest and take thine ease, for hath not the Lord (and here he quoted the Coran) *forgiven thee all thy sins, the former and the latter?*' 'Nay,' replied Mahomet, 'for wherefore should I not yet be a faithful servant unto Him?' An attendant, while Mahomet lay covered up, put his hand below the sheet and, feeling the excessive heat, made a remark like that of Omar. On which the Prophet said;—'Just as this affliction prevailleth now against me, even so shall my reward hereafter be.' 'And who are they,' asked another, 'that suffer the severest trials?' 'The prophets and the righteous,' answered Mahomet; and then he made mention of one prophet having been destroyed by lice, and of another who was tried with poverty, so that he had but a rag to cover his nakedness withal; 'yet each of them rejoiced exceedingly in his affliction, even as one of you having found great spoil would rejoice and be glad.'

All Sunday he lay in a helpless and at times delirious state. Osâma, who had delayed his march to see what the issue might be, came in from Jorf to visit him. Removing the clothes, he stooped down and kissed the Prophet's face, but there was no audible response. Mahomet only raised

Sayings of
Mahomet
on his
death-bed

Osâma
visits him.
Sunday,
12th
Rabi i.
June 7



his hands in the attitude of blessing, and then placed them on the young Commander's head, who then returned to the camp.

Mahomet
physicked
by his
wives

During some part of this day, Mahomet complained of pain in his side, and the suffering became so great that he became unconscious. Omm Salma advised that physic should be given him. Asma,¹ sister of Meimûna, prepared a draught after an Abyssinian recipe, and they forced it into his mouth. Reviving from its effects he perceived the unpleasant taste, and cried: 'What is this that ye have done to me? Ye have even given me physic!' They confessed that they had done so, and enumerated the simples of which Asma had compounded it.² 'Out upon you!' he exclaimed angrily; 'this is a remedy for the pleurisy, which she hath learned in the land of Abyssinia; an evil disease is it which the Lord will not let attack me. Now shall ye all of you within this chamber partake of the same. Let not one remain without being physicked, even as ye have physicked me, excepting only my uncle Abbas.' So all the women arose, and they poured the physic, in presence of the dying Prophet, into each other's mouths.³

Mahomet
in fever
curses
Jews and
Christians

After this strange scene, the conversation turning upon Abyssinia, Omm Salma and Omm Habîba, who had both been exiles there, spoke of the beauty of the cathedral of *Maria* there, and of the wonderful pictures on its walls. Overhearing it, Mahomet was displeased, and said; 'These are the people who, when a saint among them dieth, build over his tomb a place of worship, and then adorn it with their pictures;—in the eyes of the Lord, the worst part of all creation.' Restless and apparently delirious, he kept now drawing the bed-clothes up over his face, now casting them off again;—and in the excitement and perhaps wanderings of the moment,

¹ See *ante*, p. 382.

² Indian wood and a little *Wars* seed mixed with some drops of olive oil.

³ This scene is well attested. How strangely it must have contrasted with the solemnity of the Prophet's death-bed! Meimûna pleaded that she was under a vow of fasting, and could not, therefore, allow anything, even medicine, to pass her lips; but the excuse was unavailing. Another tradition represents Mahomet as grounding his displeasure at being forced to take the physic, on the fact that 'he was then fasting.' He had, perhaps, made some vow to this effect in reference to his sickness.

cried out;—‘The Lord destroy the Jews and Christians!’¹ Let his anger be kindled against those that turn the tombs of their Prophets into places of worship! O Lord, let not my tomb be ever an object of worship! Let there not remain any faith but that of Islam throughout Arabia!’² About this time, recognising Omar, and some other chief Companions in the room, he called out: ‘Fetch me hither pen and ink, that I may make for you a writing which shall hinder you from going astray for ever.’ Omar said: ‘He wandereth in his mind. Is not the Coran sufficient for us?’ But the women wished that the writing materials should be brought; and a discussion ensued. ‘Come, let us ask him,’ said one, ‘and see whether he wandereth.’ So they asked him regarding the writing he had spoken of; but he no longer had any thought of it. ‘Leave me thus alone,’ he said, ‘for my present state is better than that which ye call me to.’³ In the course of the day he called Ayesha to him, and said: ‘Where is that gold which I gave unto thee to keep?’ On her replying that it was by her, he desired that she should spend it at once in charity. Then he dozed off in a half-conscious state, and some time after asked if she had done as he desired her. On her saying that she had not yet done so, he called for the money (apparently a portion of the tithe income); she placed it in his hand, and counted six golden

Mahomet calls for writing materials

He distributes alms

¹ Some authorities omit the *Christians* from this tradition.

² *Lit.*, ‘Let there not remain two Religions,’ &c. See *ante*, pp. 369, 440, 446. The facts there given prove that there was no *command* recognised by his people as such, given by the Prophet for the expulsion either of the Jews or Christians from Arabia. Had there been, Abu Bekr and Omar would no doubt have made it their first obligation to fulfil the order,—existing treaties and engagements notwithstanding. A command of Mahomet was never questioned during his life, much less after his death. The last sentence must therefore either be without foundation, or, what is more likely, having been uttered in delirium, was not felt to be binding. If uttered even in delirium, it is a significant index of the current of Mahomet’s thoughts.

According to some traditions Mahomet said that he had three injunctions to deliver; one concerned the treatment of the embassies arriving at Medina (see *ante*, p. 441); the second directed the ejection of Jews and Christians from Arabia; before he could explain the third, he became unconscious. Other injunctions are mentioned, as kindness to slaves; paying tithes; observing prayer, &c.

³ Either speaking incoherently, or meaning that he did not feel equal to the task. Abbas lamented the irreparable loss of what Mahomet intended to dictate through their quarrelling. But Mahomet was evidently

pieces. He directed that it should be divided among certain indigent families; and then lying down he said: 'Now I am at peace. Verily it would not have become me to meet my Lord, and this gold still in my hands.'¹

Improvement on Monday morning, 18th of Rabi i. June 8

All Sunday night the illness lay heavy upon him. He was overheard praying, in apparent anticipation of his approaching end;—'O my soul! Why seekest thou refuge elsewhere than in God alone?''² The morning brought relief. The fever and the pain abated; and there was some return of strength.

Mahomet comes out to morning prayer;

The dangerous accession of fever on the previous night having become known, the Mosque was crowded in the morning at the hour of prayer by anxious worshippers. Abu Bekr, as usual, led the devotions; as Imam he stood in the place of Mahomet before the congregation, his back turned towards them.³ He had ended the first *Rakaat* (or prostration), and the people had just stood up for the second, when the curtain of Ayesha's door (to the left, and a little way behind Abu Bekr) slowly moved aside, and Mahomet himself appeared. As he entered the assembly, he whispered in the ear of Fadhl son of Abbas, who with a servant supported him:—'The Lord verily hath granted unto me re-

wandering when he called for the writing materials. According to another tradition, when the women were about to bring the writing materials, Omar chided them: 'Quiet!' he said. 'Ye behave as women always do: when your master falleth sick ye burst into tears, and the moment he recovereth but a little, then ye begin embracing him.' Mahomet, jealous even on his death-bed of the good name of his wives, was roused by these words, and said: 'Verily, they are better than ye are;' which, if true, shows that Mahomet was only partially delirious.

¹ The story is told in various ways, but the version in the text is probably correct. Some traditions unite the incident with one of those strange tales of Ayesha, contrasting the Prophet's poverty with his benevolence; she was obliged (she says) to send to a neighbour to get oil for her lamp when Mahomet was on his death-bed. There are many traditions to show Mahomet's unwillingness to retain money in his possession. He used to give everything away in charity; and did not even like retaining money in his house over the night. But they are probably exaggerated.

² In all his previous illnesses, Mahomet had prayed for his recovery. This prayer, according to tradition, signified that now his expectation was to depart.

³ It will be remembered that in Mahometan prayers, the whole congregation, the Imam (leader) included, look towards Mecca. The people ranged in rows behind him follow all his movements.

freshment¹ in prayer; and he looked around him with a gladsome smile marked by such as at the moment caught a glimpse of his countenance.² That smile, no doubt, was the index of deep emotion in his heart. What doubts or fears may have crossed the mind of Mahomet as he lay on the bed of death, and felt that the time was drawing nigh when he must render an account to that God whose Messenger he professed to be,—tradition affords us no grounds even to conjecture. The rival pretensions of Tuleiha, Aswad, and Moseilama may haply have suggested misgivings such as those which, at the opening of his mission, had long ago distracted his soul. If any doubts and questionings had arisen in his mind, the sight of the great congregation, in attitude devout and earnest, may have caused him comfort and reassurance. That which brings forth good fruit (he may have said to himself) must itself be good. The mission which had transformed debased idolaters into spiritual worshippers such as these, and which, wherever accepted and believed in, was daily producing the same wonderful change, must surely be divine, and the voice from within which prompted him to undertake it must have been the voice of the Almighty revealed through His ministering spirit. Perhaps it was some thought like this which, passing at the moment through the Prophet's mind, lighted up his countenance with a smile of joy that diffused gladness over the crowded court.

Having paused thus for a moment at the door of his apartment, Mahomet, supported as before, walked softly to the front where Abu Bekr stood. The people made way for him, opening their ranks as he advanced. Abu Bekr heard the rustle (for he never turned at prayer or looked to the right hand or the left) and, guessing the cause, stepped backwards to vacate the leader's place. But Mahomet motioned him to go on, and, taking his hand, moved forward towards the pulpit. There on the ground he sat by the side of Abu Bekr, who resumed the service, and finished it in customary form.

And takes
his seat
beside Abu
Bekr

When the prayers were ended, Abu Bekr entered into

¹ *Lit.*, 'Cooling of the eyes.'

² That is by the portion of the congregation in a line with the door, who were standing sideways to it, and by all behind them. Those in front had their backs partly towards him; but some of them also may probably have turned round to see the cause of the general sensation

Abu Bekr goes to visit his wife at Al Sunh

conversation with Mahomet. He rejoiced to find him to all appearance convalescent. 'O Prophet,' he said, 'I perceive that by the grace of God thou art better to-day, even as we desire to see thee. Now this day is the turn of my wife, the daughter of Khârija; shall I go and visit her?'¹ Mahomet gave him permission. So he departed to her house at Al Sunh, a suburb of the upper city.

Mahomet speaks with the people around him

Mahomet then sat down for a little while in the courtyard of the Mosque near the door of Ayesha's apartment, and addressed the people who, overjoyed to find him again amongst them, crowded round. He spoke with emotion, and with a voice still so powerful as to reach beyond the outer doors of the Mosque. 'By the Lord!' he said, 'as for myself, verily, no man can lay hold of me in any matter; ² I have not made lawful anything excepting that which God hath made lawful; nor have I prohibited aught but that which God in his Book hath prohibited.' Osâma coming up to bid farewell, Mahomet said to him: 'Go forward with the army; and the blessing of the Lord be with thee!' Then turning to the women who sat close by: 'O Fatima my daughter!' he exclaimed, 'and thou Safia, my aunt! Work ye out that which shall gain acceptance for you with the Lord: for I verily have no power with Him to save you in anywise.' Having said this, he arose and was helped back into the chamber of Ayesha.

Mahomet retires exhausted to Ayesha's room

It was but the flicker of an expiring taper. Exhausted, he lay down upon the pallet stretched upon the floor; and Ayesha, seeing him to be very weak, raised his head from the pillow, and, as she sat by him on the ground, laid it tenderly upon her bosom. At that moment, one entered with a green toothpick in his hand.³ Seeing that his eye rested on it, and, knowing it to be such as he liked, Ayesha asked whether he would like to have it. He signified assent. Chewing it a

¹ This was the wife whom he had married at Medina, from amongst the Beni Hârith, see *ante*, p. 163. The Moslems all followed Mahomet's custom of giving a day in succession to each of their wives.

² In this expression probably originated the highly improbable traditions that Mahomet on this occasion called upon all claimants to state what demands they had against him; some creditors having claims of very trifling amount came forward, it is said, and he discharged their debts. The appeal somewhat resembles that of Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 3).

³ In the east, the fresh and tender wood of trees is used for this purpose, cut into thin and narrow pieces.

little to make it soft and pliable, she placed it in his hand. This pleased him ; he took it up and used it for the moment vigorously. Then he put it down again.

His strength now rapidly sank. He seemed to be aware that death was drawing near. Calling for a pitcher of water, and therewith wetting his face, he prayed thus : ‘ O Lord, I beseech thee assist me in the agonies of death ! ’ Then three times earnestly ;—‘ Gabriel, come close unto me ! ’

The hour
of death
draws near

He now began to blow upon himself, perhaps in the half-consciousness of delirium, ejaculating the while a petition which in the sick-room he used to repeat over persons who were very ill. When, from weakness, he ceased, Ayesha took up the task and continued to blow upon him and recite the same prayer. Then, seeing that he was very low, she took hold of his right hand and rubbed it (as he himself used to do with the sick), repeating all the while the earnest invocation.¹ But he could not now bear even this,

Mahomet
dies re-
clining on
Ayesha's
bosom

¹ The prayer was : ‘ *Take away evil and misfortune, O thou Lord of mankind ! Grant a cure, for thou art the best Physician. There is no cure besides thine ; it leaveth nought of the disease behind.* ’

I have omitted mention of Gabriel's incantation over the dying Prophet ; the story of the Angel of death asking permission to exercise his vocation upon him ; the voices of unseen visitants wailing, &c. But the following tradition is illustrative of Mahometan ideas on the subject :—‘ Three days before the death of Mahomet, Gabriel came down to visit him : “ O Ahmed ! ” he said, “ the Lord hath deputed me thus as an honour and peculiar favour unto thee, that He may inquire concerning that which indeed He knoweth better than thou thyself : He asketh, *How thou findest thyself this day ?* ” “ Gabriel ! ” replied the Prophet, “ I find myself in sore trouble and agony. ” Next day, Gabriel again visited Mahomet, and accosted him in the same words ; Mahomet replied as before. On the third day, Gabriel descended with the Angel of death ; and there also alighted with him another angel, Ismail, who inhabiteth the air, never ascending up to heaven, and never before having descended to the earth since its creation ; he came now in command of 70,000 angels, each in command of 70,000 more. Gabriel, preceding these, addressed Mahomet in the same words as before, and received the same reply. Then said Gabriel : “ This, O Mahomet ! is the Angel of death. He asketh of thee permission to enter. He hath asked permission of no man before, neither shall he ask it of any after thee. ” Mahomet gave permission ; so the Angel of death entered the room, and stood before Mahomet, and said : “ O Ahmed, Prophet of the Lord ! Verily God hath sent me unto thee, and hath commanded me to obey thee in all that thou mayest direct. Bid me to take thy soul, and I will take it ; bid me to leave it, and I will do accordingly. ” To which, Mahomet replied : “ Wilt thou, indeed, do so, O Angel of death ! ” The angel protested that his mission was even so, to do only that which Mahomet might command. On this, Gabriel interposed,

saying ;—‘Take thy hand from off me ; it cannot help me now.’ After a little, in a whisper : ‘Lord, grant me pardon ; and join me to the companionship on high.’ Then at intervals : ‘Eternity in Paradise !’ ‘Pardon !’ ‘The blessed companionship on high !’ He stretched himself gently. Then all was still. His head grew heavy on the breast of Ayesha. The Prophet of Arabia was no more.

Ayesha
replaces
his head on
the pillow

Softly removing his head from her bosom, Ayesha placed it on the pillow. Then she rose and joined the other women as they beat their faces in loud and bitter lamentation.

It was still
but a little
after mid-
day

It was yet little after mid-day. But a moment ago, as it were, Mahomet had entered the Mosque cheerful, and to all appearance convalescent. He now lay cold in death.

and said : “O Ahmed ! verily the Lord is desirous of thy company.” “Proceed, then,” said Mahomet, addressing the Angel of death, “and do thy work, even as thou art commanded.” Gabriel now bade adieu to Mahomet : “Peace be on thee,” he said, “O Prophet of the Lord ! This is the last time that I shall tread the earth ; with this world I have now concern no longer.” So the Prophet died ; and there arose a wailing of celestial voices (the sound was audible, but no form was seen) saying : “*Peace be on you, ye inhabitants of this house, and mercy from the Lord and his blessing ! Every soul shall taste death,*” —and so on.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE EVENTS WHICH FOLLOWED ON THE DEATH OF MAHOMET

13th and 14th of Rabi, A.H. XI.—June 8 and 9, A.D. 632

THE news of the Prophet's death, spreading rapidly over Medina, soon reached Abu Bekr in the suburb of Al Sunh. Immediately he mounted his horse, and rode back to the Mosque in haste.

News of
Mahomet's
death
reaches
Abu Bekr

Meanwhile, a strange scene was being enacted there. Shortly after Mahomet had breathed his last, Omar entered the apartment of Ayesha, and, lifting up the sheet which covered the body, gazed wistfully at the features of his departed master. All was so placid, so natural, so unlike death, that Omar could not believe the mournful truth. Starting up, he exclaimed wildly : 'The Prophet is not dead ; he hath but swooned away.' Moghira, standing by, vainly sought to convince him that he was mistaken. 'Thou liest !' cried Omar, as, quitting the chamber of death, they entered the courts of the Mosque ;—'the Apostle of God is not dead. Thine own seditious spirit hath suggested this imagination. The Prophet of the Lord shall not die until he have rooted out every hypocrite and unbeliever.' The crowd which, at the rumour of the Prophet's death, rapidly gathered in the Mosque, attracted now by the loud and passionate tones of Omar, flocked around him, and he went on haranguing them in similar strain ;—'The hypocrites would persuade you, O Believers ! that Mahomet is dead. Nay ! but he hath gone to his Lord, even as Moses son of Imran, who remained absent forty days, and then returned after his followers had said that he was dead. So, verily, by the Lord ! the Prophet shall return, and of a certainty shall cut off the hands and feet of them that dare say that he is dead.' Omar found a willing audience. It was but a little while before that the

Omar
wildly de-
clains that
Mahomet
had only
swooned
away

Prophet had been amongst them, had joined with them in prayer on that very spot, and had gladdened their hearts by hope of speedy convalescence. The echo of his voice was hardly yet silent in the courts of the Mosque. Sudden alternations of hope and despair disturb equilibrium of the mind, and unfit it for exercise of calm and dispassionate judgment. The events of the day had been pre-eminently calculated to produce such effect upon the people, who, now carried away by Omar's fervour, gladly persuaded themselves that he might be in the right.

Abu Bekr
visits scene
of death;

Just then appeared Abu Bekr. Passing through the Mosque, he listened for a moment to the frenzied words of Omar, and, without pausing further, walked onwards to the door of Ayesha's chamber. Drawing the curtain softly aside, he asked leave to enter. 'Come,' they replied from within, 'for this day, no permission needeth to be asked.' Then he entered, and, raising the striped sheet which covered the bed, stooped down and kissed the face of his departed friend, saying: 'Sweet wast thou in life, and sweet thou art in death.' After a moment, he took the head between his hands, and, slightly lifting it, gazed on the well-known features, now fixed in death, and exclaimed: 'Yes, thou art dead! Alas, my friend, my chosen one! Dearer than father or mother to me! Thou hast tasted the bitter pains of death; and (referring to Omar's wild words without) thou art too precious with the Lord, that he should give thee the bitter cup to drink a second time!' Gently putting down the head upon its pillow, he stooped again and kissed the face; then replaced the covering, and withdrew.

Convinces
Omar and
the people
that Ma-
homet is
really dead

Leaving the room, Abu Bekr went at once to the spot without, where Omar, in the same excited state, was haranguing the people. 'Silence!' cried Abu Bekr, as he drew near. 'Omar! sit thee down. Be quiet!' But Omar went on, not heeding the remonstrance. So Abu Bekr, turning from him, began himself to address the assembly; no sooner did they hear his voice open with the customary exordium, than they quitted Omar and gave attention to the words of Abu Bekr, who proceeded thus: 'Hath not the Almighty revealed this verse unto his Prophet saying,—"Verily thou shalt die, and they shall die"? And again, after the battle of Ohod,—"*Mahomet is no more than an Apostle; verily the other*

Apostles have deceased before him. What then! If he were to die, or be killed, would ye turn back upon your heels?" Let him then know, whosoever worshippeth Mahomet, that Mahomet indeed is dead: but whoso worshippeth God, let him know that the Lord liveth and doth not die.' The words of the Coran fell like a knell on the ears of Omar and all who with him had buoyed themselves with the delusive hope of Mahomet's return to life. The quiet and reflecting mind of Abu Bekr had no doubt of late dwelt upon these passages during the Prophet's illness. To the people in general they had not occurred, at least in connection with the present scene. When they heard them now repeated, 'it was as if they had not known till that moment that such words existed in the Coran;' and, the truth now bursting upon them, they sobbed aloud. Omar himself would relate: 'By the Lord! it was so that, when I heard Abu Bekr reciting those verses, I was horror-struck, my limbs trembled, I dropped down, and I knew of a certainty that the Prophet indeed was dead.'

The greater part of the army, when the Prophet died, was still at Jorf, three miles distant from Medina. Encouraged by his seeming convalescence that morning in the Mosque, they had rejoined their camp. Osâma, mindful of his master's strict injunction, had given the order for immediate march, and his foot was already in the stirrup, when a swift messenger from his mother Omm Ayman announced the Prophet's death. The army, stunned by the intelligence, at once broke up, and returned to Medina. Osâma, preceded by the standard-bearer, went direct to the Mosque, and planted the great banner there at the door of Ayesha's house.

Army at Jorf breaks up and returns to Medina

It was now towards the afternoon when one came running hastily towards the Mosque to say that the chief men of Medina, with Sad ibn Obâda at their head, had assembled in one of the halls of the city, and were proceeding to choose Sad for their leader: 'If ye, therefore (addressing Abu Bekr and others still in the Mosque), desire to have the command, come quickly thither before the matter shall have been settled, and opposition become dangerous.' On hearing this report, Abu Bekr, after arranging that the family of the Prophet should be undisturbed while they washed the corpse and laid it out, hurried, in company with Omar and Abu Obeida, to the hall

Citizens of Medina assemble

where the people had assembled. There was urgent necessity for their presence. The men of Medina, in anticipation of the Prophet's death, were brooding over their supersession by the once dependent strangers whom they had received as refugees from Mecca: 'Let them have their own chief,' was the general cry; 'but as for us, we shall have a chief for ourselves.' Sad, who lay sick and covered over in a corner of the hall, had already been proposed for the chiefship of the Citizens, when suddenly Abu Bekr and his party entered. Omar, still in a state of excitement, was on the point of giving vent to his feelings in a speech which he had in his mind, when Abu Bekr, afraid of his rashness and impetuosity, held him back, and himself addressed the people. Omar used in after days to say that Abu Bekr anticipated all his arguments, and expressed them in language the most eloquent and persuasive. 'Ye men of Medina!' he said, 'all that ye speak of your own excellence is true. There is no people upon earth deserving all this praise more than ye do. But the Arabs will not recognise the chief command elsewhere than in our tribe of the Coreish. We are the *Ameers*; ye are our *Wazeers*.'¹ 'Not so,' shouted the indignant Citizens, 'but there shall be an Ameer from amongst us, and an Ameer from amongst you.' 'That can never be,' said Abu Bekr; and he repeated in a firm commanding voice: '*We* are the *Ameers*; *you* are our *Wazeers*. We are the noblest of the Arabs by descent; and the foremost in the glory of our City. There! Choose ye whom ye will of these two (pointing to Omar and Abu Obeida) and do allegiance to him.'² 'Nay!' cried Omar, in words which rose high and clear above the growing tumult of the assembly; 'did not the Prophet himself command that *thou*, O Abu Bekr, shouldst lead the prayers? Thou art our Master, and to thee we pledge our allegiance—thou whom the Prophet loved the best amongst us all!' So saying he seized the hand of Abu Bekr, and, striking it, pledged faith to him. The words touched a cord that vibrated in every Believer's heart, and his example had the desired effect.

Abu Bekr
sworn
fealty to,
as Caliph

¹ *Ameer*, Chief. *Wazeer*, or *Vizier*, Deputy.

² There was nothing in the antecedents of Abu Obeida to sustain a claim to the Caliphate. He was simply named by Abu Bekr as being the only other Coreishite present. He subsequently bore a conspicuous part in the conquest of Syria.

Opposition vanished, and Abu Bekr was saluted *Caliph* (Successor) of the departed Prophet.¹

Meanwhile Aly, Osâma, and Fadhl the son of Abbas, with one or two of the Prophet's servants, had been busily employed in the room of Ayesha. There on the spot on which he breathed his last, they washed the body and laid it out.² The garment in which he died was left upon him : two sheets of fine white linen were wound around it ; and over all was cast a covering of striped Yemen stuff. Thus the body remained during the night, and until the time of burial.

Body of
Mahomet
washed and
laid out

On the morrow, when the people had assembled in the Mosque, Abu Bekr and Omar came forth to meet them. Omar first addressed the great assemblage : ' O ye people ! that which I spoke unto you yesterday was not the truth. Verily, I find that it is not borne out by the Book which the Lord hath revealed, nor by the covenant which we made with his Apostle. As for me, verily I hoped that the Apostle of the Lord would continue yet a while amongst us, and speak in our ears a word such as might seem good unto him and be a perpetual guide unto us. But the Lord hath chosen for his Apostle the portion which is with Himself, in preference to that which is with you. And truly the Word, that same word which directed your Prophet, is with us still. Take it, therefore, for your guide and ye shall never go astray. And now, verily, hath the Lord placed your affairs in the hands of him that is the best amongst us ; the Companion of His Prophet, the sole companion, *the Second of the two when they*

Speech of
Omar.
Allegiance
publicly
sworn to
Abu Bekr.
Tuesday,
14th
Rabi i.
June 9

¹ Khalifa (Caliph) signifies ' Successor.'

² As usual, when the name of Aly is introduced, tradition is overspread with fiction. A heavenly voice was heard ordering the attendants not to make bare the Prophet's body, for the eyes of any one that looked upon his nakedness would forthwith be destroyed. When Aly raised the limbs, they yielded to his touch, as if unseen hands were aiding him ; another, essaying to do the same, found the weight insupportable. Thus Fadhl, who had ventured on the task, was well nigh dragged down, and called out for help : ' Haste thee, Aly ! Hold, for my back is breaking with the weight of this limb.' Abbas refused to enter the room at the time, ' because Mahomet had desired always to be hid from him while he bathed.'

Besides the three named in the text (who, as the nearest and most intimate friends, naturally superintended the washing of the body), one of the Medina Citizens, Aws ibn al Khawla, was admitted by Aly into the room. Another son of Abbas is also named by some authorities as having been present. The servants employed on the occasion were Shakrân and Sâlih.

were in the cave alone. Arise! Swear fealty to him!' Forthwith the people crowded round, and one by one they swore allegiance upon the hand of Abu Bekr.

Speech of
Abu Bekr
on his in-
auguration

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

Discontent
of Aly and
Fatima

The homage done to Abu Bekr was almost universal. Sad ibn Obâda, deeply chagrined at being superseded, is said by some to have remained aloof.¹ It is probable that Aly, while the people were swearing allegiance, remained in his own house or in the chamber of mourning. The doctrine of his party is that he expected the Caliphate for himself; but there was nothing whatever in his previous position, or in the language and actions of the Prophet towards him, which could have led to such anticipation. As the husband of Mahomet's only surviving daughter, indeed, he felt aggrieved when Abu Bekr refused the claim of his wife to inherit her father's share in the lands of Fadak and of Kheibar. But Fatima failed in producing any evidence of her father's intention to bestow this property on her, and the Caliph justly held that it should be reserved for those purposes of State to which Mahomet had in his lifetime devoted it. Fatima took the denial so much to heart that she held no intercourse with Abu Bekr during the short remainder of her life. Whether Aly swore allegiance at the first to his new chief, or refused

Fatima re-
nounces
society of
Abu Bekr

¹ It is even said that he retired in disgust to Syria, where he died. Tabari, on the other hand, relates that he submitted to Abu Bekr, and acknowledged his authority.

to do so, it was certainly not till Fatima's death, six months after that of her father, that he recognised with any cordiality the title of Abu Bekr to the Caliphate.¹

¹ Some traditions say that he swore allegiance at the first, with the rest ; others, that he refused to do so till after Fatima's death.

The traditions of Fatima's deep grief at the loss of her father, and of her joy at his prophecy that she would soon rejoin him in heaven, &c., hardly accord with the persistent manner in which she urged her claim to the property. 'On the day after her father's death,' we learn from Wakidy, 'Fatima repaired with Aly to Abu Bekr, and said : " Give me the inheritance of my father the Prophet." Abu Bekr inquired whether she meant his household goods or his landed estates. "*Fadak and Kheibar*," she replied, "and the tithe lands at Medina,—my inheritance therein, even as thy daughters will inherit of thee when thou diest." Abu Bekr replied : " Verily, thy father was better than I am, and thou art better than my daughters are. But the Prophet hath said, *No one shall be my heir ; that which I leave shall be for alms*. Now, therefore, the family of Mahomet shall not eat of that property ; for, by the Lord, I will not alter a tittle of that which the Prophet ordained ; all shall remain as it was in his lifetime. But," continued he, "if thou art certain that thy father gave thee this property, I will accept thy word, and fulfil thy father's direction.' She replied that she had no evidence excepting that of the maid-servant Omm Ayman, who had told her that her father had given her Fadak. Abu Bekr, therefore, adhered to his decision.'

CHAPTER XXXV

THE BURIAL

Grave prepared in Ayesha's house. Tuesday, 14th Rabi i. June 9

WHEN Abu Bekr had ended his address, preparations were made for the burial. The people differed regarding the place most fitting for the grave. Some urged that the body should be buried in the Mosque close by the pulpit, and some, beneath the spot where as their Imam he had so long led the daily prayers, while others wished to inter him beside his followers in the grave-yard without the city. Abu Bekr, with whom as Caliph the matter rested now, approved none of these proposals: for, said he, 'I have heard it from the lips of Mahomet himself, that in whatsoever spot a prophet dieth, there also should he be buried.' He therefore gave command that the grave should be dug where the body was still lying within the house of Ayesha.

Grave dug in vaulted fashion

Another question arose as to the form in which the tomb should be prepared. Two fashions prevailed in Arabia: in one kind, the bottom or pavement of the grave was flat; in the other, it was partly excavated for the reception of the body, a ledge being left on one side of the vault or cavity. The former was the plan followed at Mecca, the latter at Medina; and for each there was a separate gravedigger. Both were now summoned. The man of Medina first appearing, dug the grave in the vaulted form; and so this fashion is followed by all Mahometans to the present day.

Body visited by people. Orations of Abu Bekr and Omar

The body remained upon the bier for four-and-twenty hours, namely, from the afternoon of Monday to the same hour on the following day. On Tuesday it was visited by all the inhabitants of the city. They entered in companies by the door which opened into the Mosque; and, after gazing once more on the countenance of their Prophet and praying over his remains, retired by the opposite entrance. The room was

crowded to the utmost at the time when Abu Bekr and Omar entered together. They are said to have prayed as follows: 'Peace be upon thee, O Prophet of God; and mercy from the Lord and his blessing! We bear testimony that the Prophet of God hath delivered the message revealed to him; hath fought in the ways of the Lord until that God brought forth his religion unto victory; hath fulfilled his words, commanding that He alone in his Unity is to be worshipped; hath drawn us to himself, and been kind and tender-hearted to Believers; hath sought no recompense for delivering to us the Faith, neither hath he sold it for a price at any time!' And all the people said, *Amen! Amen!* The women followed in companies, when the men had departed; and then the children and even the slaves crowded round the bier for a last look at their Prophet's face.

In the evening the final rites were paid to the remains. Burial A red mantle, worn by him, was first spread as a soft covering at the bottom of the grave; then the body was lowered into its last resting-place by the same loving hands that had washed and laid it out. The vault was built over with unbaked bricks, and the grave filled up.¹

Ayesha continued as before to live in her house thus honoured as the Prophet's cemetery. She occupied a room adjoining that which contained the grave, but partitioned off from it. When her father died, he was buried close by the Prophet in the same apartment, and in due time Omar also. It is related of Ayesha that she used to visit this room unveiled till the burial of Omar, when (as if a stranger had

Ayesha continued to occupy apartment next the grave

¹ There is wonderful rivalry, at least among the traditionists, as to which person was the last to quit the interior of the tomb. Moghira asserts that, having dropped his ring into the grave, he was allowed to go down and pick it up, and thus was the last. Others, hold that Aly sent down his son Hasan to fetch the ring. Others, that Aly denied the story of the ring altogether. Some allege that one or other of the sons of Abbas was 'the first to enter, and the last to leave, the grave.' These variations form a good example of the rivalry of the Alyite and Abbasside traditions.

I must not omit a tradition which seems to me to illustrate the naturalness of Omar's scepticism regarding the Prophet's death. Omm Salma says: 'I did not believe that Mahomet was really dead, till I heard the sound of the pickaxes at the digging of the grave, from the next room.' Ayesha also says that the sound of the pickaxes was the first intimation she had of the approaching interment. She had apparently retired, with the other wives, to an adjoining apartment.

been introduced) she never entered unless veiled and fully dressed.¹

¹ Ayesha tells us, she once dreamt that three moons fell from the heavens into her bosom, which she hoped portended the birth of an heir. After her husband's death, Abu Bekr told her that the grave of Mahomet in her house was the first and best of the moons; the other two were the graves of Abu Bekr himself and of Omar. She survived the Prophet forty-seven years.

Wakidy says there was no wall at first round Mahomet's house. Omar surrounded it with a low wall, which Abdallah ibn Zobeir increased.

CHAPTER XXXVI

CAMPAIGN OF OSÂMA ON THE SYRIAN BORDER; AND CONCLUSION

THE first concern of Abu Bekr, on assuming the Caliphate, was to despatch the Syrian army, and thus fulfil the dying wish of Mahomet. But the horizon was lowering all around; and many urged that the Moslem force should not be sent just yet upon this distant expedition. Even Omar joined in the cry: 'Scatter not the Believers; rather keep our army here: we may have need of it yet to defend the city.' 'Never!' replied Abu Bekr; 'the command of the Prophet shall be carried out, even if I be left here in the city all alone, prey to the wolves and beasts of the desert.' Then they besought that a more experienced soldier might be appointed to the chief command. On this, the Caliph arose in wrath. 'Out upon thee!' he cried, as he seized Omar by the beard; 'hath the Prophet of the Lord named Osâma to the leadership, and dost thou counsel me to take it from him!' He would admit of no excuse and no delay; and so the force was soon marshalled again at Jorf. Abu Bekr repaired to the camp, and, treating Osâma with the profound respect due to a commander appointed by Mahomet himself, begged permission that Omar might be left behind at Medina as his counsellor. The request was granted. He then bade Osâma farewell, and exhorted him to go forward in the name of the Lord, and fulfil the commission received at the Prophet's hands. The army marched; and the Caliph, with Omar alone, returned to Medina.

Campaign
of Osâma.
A.H. XI.
June, July,
A.D. 632

Within twenty days of his departure from Jorf, Osâma had overrun the province of Belcaa. In fire and blood, he avenged his father's death and the disastrous field of Muta. 'They ravaged the land,' says the historian, 'with the well-known cry of *Ya mansur amit* ("Strike, ye conquerors!"),

His trium-
phal return
to Medina

they slew all who ventured to oppose them in the field, and carried off captive the remainder. They burned the villages, the fields of standing corn, and the groves of palm-trees; and there went up behind them, as it were, a whirlwind of fire and smoke.¹ Having thus fulfilled the Prophet's last command, they retraced their steps. It was a triumphal procession as they approached Medina; Osáma rode upon his father's horse, and the banner, bound so lately by Mahomet's own hand, floated before him. Abu Bekr and the Citizens went forth to meet him, and received the army with acclamations of joy. Attended by the Caliph, and the chief Companions, Osáma proceeded to the Mosque, and offered up prayer with thanksgiving for the success which had so richly crowned his arms.²

The rapid
spread of
Musulman
conquest

With the return of Osáma's army to Medina a new era opens upon us. The Prophet had hardly departed this life when Arabia was convulsed by the violent endeavour of its tribes to shake off the trammels of Islam, and regain their previous freedom. The hordes of the desert rose up in rebellion, and during the first year of his Caliphate Abu Bekr had to struggle for the very existence of the faith. Step by step the wild Bedouins were subdued and forced to tender their submission. By a master-stroke of policy, they were induced again to take up their arms, and, aroused by the prospect of boundless spoil, to wield them on the side of Islam. Like blood-hounds eager for the chase, they were let forth upon mankind—the whole world their prey. They gloried in the belief that they were the hosts of God, destined for the conversion of His elect and for the destruction of His enemies. The cry of religion thus disguised or gilded every lower motive. The vast plunder of Syria and Irac was accepted as but the earnest of a greater destiny yet in store.

¹ Wakidy represents Osáma as killing in battle the very man that slew his father.

² The tidings of this bloody expedition alarmed Heraclius, and he sent a strong force into Belcaa. The attention of Abu Bekr had first to be directed nearer home. Reinforced by the army of Osáma, he had to quell the fierce spirit of insurrection rising all around. But a year had not elapsed, when he was again in a position to take the field in Syria, and to enter on the career of conquest which quickly wrested from the Empire that fair province.

Once maddened by the taste of blood, the lust of spoil, and capture without stint of female slaves, into a wild and irresistible fanaticism, the armies of Arabia swept their enemies everywhere before them. Checked towards the north by the strongholds of Asia Minor and the Bosphorus, the surging wave spread to the east and to the west with incredible rapidity, till in a few short years it had engulfed in common ruin the earliest seats of Christianity and the faith of Zoroaster.

But these are matters beyond the subject of this volume. I will merely add that the simplicity and earnestness of Abu Bekr, and of Omar also, the first two Caliphs, are strong evidence of their belief in the sincerity of Mahomet ; and the belief of these men must carry undeniable weight in the formation of our own estimate of his character, since the opportunities they enjoyed for testing the grounds of their conviction were both close and long-continued. It is enough that I allude to this consideration, as strengthening generally the view of Mahomet's character which throughout I have sought to support.

Lives of
first two
Caliphs an
argument
for Ma-
homet's
sincerity

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE PERSON AND CHARACTER OF MAHOMET

General
review of
Mahomet's
character

It may be expected that, before bringing this work to a close, I should gather into one review the chief traits in the character of Mahomet, which at different stages of his life, and from various points of view, have in the course of the history been presented to the reader. This I will now briefly attempt.¹

Personal
appearance

The person of Mahomet, as he appeared in the prime of life, has been portrayed in an early chapter; and though advancing age may have somewhat relaxed the outlines of his countenance and affected the vigour of his carriage, yet the general aspect remained unaltered to the end. His form, though little above mean height, was stately and commanding. The depth of feeling in his dark black eye, and the winning expression of a face otherwise attractive, gained the confidence and love of strangers, even at first sight. His features often unbended into a smile full of grace and condescension. 'He was,' says an admiring follower, 'the handsomest and bravest, the brightest-faced and most generous of men. It was as though the sun-light beamed in his countenance.' Yet when anger kindled in his piercing glance, the object of his displeasure might well quail before it. His stern frown was the augury of death to many a trembling captive. In later years, the erect figure began to stoop; but the step was still firm and quick. His gait has been likened to that of one descending rapidly a hill. When he made haste, it was with difficulty that one kept pace with him. He never turned, even if his mantle caught in a thorny bush, so

His gait

¹ Most of the illustrations here given are taken from the Section of Wakidy on the 'appearance and habits of the Prophet.' In the Supplement also will be found a selection of traditions on the subject taken from the same Section.

that his attendants talked and laughed freely behind him secure of being unobserved.

Thorough and complete in all his actions, he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. The same habit pervaded his manner in social intercourse. If he turned in conversation towards a friend, he turned not partially, but with his full face and his whole body. 'In shaking hands, he was not the first to withdraw his own; nor was he the first to break off in converse with a stranger, nor to turn away his ear.'

His habits thorough

A patriarchal simplicity pervaded his life. His custom was to do everything for himself. If he gave an alms he would place it with his own hand in that of the petitioner. He aided his wives in their household duties, mended his clothes, tied up the goats, and even cobbled his sandals. The ordinary dress was of plain white cotton stuff, made like his neighbours'; but on high and festive occasions he wore garments of fine linen, striped or dyed in red. He never reclined at meals. He ate with his fingers; and, when he had finished, he would lick them before he wiped his hands. The indulgences to which he was most addicted were 'Women, scents, and food.' In the first two of these, Ayesha tells us, he had his heart's desire; and when she adds that he was straitened in the third, we can only attribute the saying to the vivid contrast between the frugal habits at the birth of Islam, and the luxurious living which rapidly followed in the wake of conquest and prosperity. Mahomet, with his wives, lived, as we have seen, in a row of low and homely cottages built of unbaked bricks, the apartments separated by walls of palm-branches rudely daubed with mud, while curtains of leather, or of black hair-cloth, supplied the place of doors and windows. He was to all easy of access—'even as the river's bank to him that draweth water from it,'—yet he maintained the state and dignity of real power. No approach was suffered to familiarity of action or of speech. The Prophet must be addressed in subdued accents and in a reverential style. His word was absolute; his bidding law. Embassies and deputations were received with the utmost courtesy and consideration. In the issue of rescripts bearing on their representations, or in other matters of State, Mahomet displayed all the qualifications of an able and experienced ruler, as the

Simplicity of his life

reader will have observed from the numerous examples given. And what renders this the more strange is that he was never known himself to write; and, indeed, rather rejoiced (as his followers still do) in the title of *Ummy*, or the Illiterate Prophet.¹

Urbanity
and kind-
ness of dis-
position

A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration with which Mahomet treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say *No*. If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred silence. 'He was more bashful,' says Ayesha, 'than a veiled virgin; and if anything displeased him, it was rather from his face than by his words, that we discovered it; he never smote any one but in the service of the Lord, not even a woman or a servant.' He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present however small. When seated by a friend, 'he did not haughtily advance his knees towards him.' He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that *he* was the favoured guest. If he met any one rejoicing at success he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly. Gentle and unbending towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play, with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others; and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervades all these illustrations of his character.

Friendship

Mahomet was also a faithful friend. He loved Abu Bekr with the close affection of a brother; Aly, with the fond partiality of a father. Zeid, the Christian slave of Khadija, was so strongly attached by the kindness of the Prophet, that he preferred to remain at Mecca rather than return home with his own father: 'I will not leave thee,' he said, clinging to his patron, 'for thou hast been a father and a mother to me.' The friendship of Mahomet survived the death of Zeid, and his son Osâma was treated by him with distin-

¹ The fact is noticed in the Coran, Sura vii., and is largely used to the present day as an argument for its being inspired.

gushed favour for the father's sake. Othman and Omar were also the objects of a special attachment; and the enthusiasm with which, at Hodeibia, the Prophet entered into 'the Pledge of the Tree' and swore that he would defend his beleaguered Son-in-law even to the death, was a signal proof of faithful friendship. Numerous other instances of Mahomet's ardent and unwavering regard might be adduced. And his affections were in no instance misplaced; they were ever reciprocated by a warm and self-sacrificing love.

In the exercise of a power absolutely dictatorial, Mahomet was just and temperate. Nor was he wanting in moderation towards his enemies, when once they had cheerfully submitted to his claims. The long and obstinate struggle against his pretensions maintained by the inhabitants of Mecca might have induced its conqueror to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Mahomet, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and, nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecution, he treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration. Not less marked was the forbearance shown to Abdallah and the Disaffected citizens of Medina, who for so many years persistently thwarted his designs and resisted his authority, nor the clemency with which he received the submissive advances of tribes that before had been the most hostile, even in the hour of victory.

Moderation
and magnanimity

But the darker shades, as well as the brighter, must be depicted by the faithful historian. Magnanimity or moderation are nowhere discernible in the conduct of Mahomet towards such of his enemies as failed to tender a timely allegiance. On the field of Bedr he exulted over the dead, with undisguised and ruthless satisfaction; and several prisoners,—accused of no crime but that of scepticism or political opposition,—were deliberately executed at his command. The Prince of Kheibar, after being subjected to cruel torture for the purpose of discovering the treasures of his tribe, was, with his cousin, put to death for having concealed them, and his wife led captive to the conqueror's tent. Sentence of exile was enforced by Mahomet with rigorous severity on two whole Jewish tribes residing at

Cruelty
towards
enemies

Medina; and of a third, likewise his neighbours, the women and children were sold into captivity, while the men, amounting to six or eight hundred, were butchered in cold blood before his eyes.

Craft
and artifices

In his youth Mahomet earned amongst his fellows the honourable title of 'the Faithful.' But in later years, however much sincerity and good faith may have guided his conduct in respect of friends, craft and deception were not wanting towards his foes. The conduct of his followers at Nakhla, where the first blood in the internecine warfare with the Coreish was shed, although at the outset disavowed by Mahomet for its treacherous breach of the sacred usages of Arabia, was eventually justified by a revelation from heaven. Abu Basir, the freebooter, was countenanced by the Prophet in a manner scarcely consistent with the letter, and certainly opposed to the spirit, of the truce of Hodeibia. The plea on which the Beni Nadhir were besieged and expatriated (namely, that Gabriel had revealed their design against the Prophet's life) was feeble and unworthy of an honest cause. When Medina was beleaguered by the Confederate army, Mahomet sought the services of Nueim, a treacherous go-between, and employed him to sow distrust amongst the enemy by false reports; 'for,' said he, 'what else is War but a game of deception?' In his prophetic career, political and personal ends were frequently compassed by *divine* revelations, which, whatever more, were certainly the direct reflection of his own wishes. The Jewish and Christian systems, at first adopted honestly as the basis of his own religion, had no sooner served the purpose of establishing a firm authority, than they were cast aside and virtually disowned. And what is perhaps worst of all, the dastardly assassination of political and religious opponents, countenanced, if not in some cases directed, by Mahomet himself, leaves a painful reflection upon his character.

Domestic
life; poly-
gamy

In domestic life the conduct of Mahomet (if we except the unchecked range of his uxorious inclinations) was exemplary. As a husband his fondness and devotion were entire, bordering at times upon jealousy. As a father he was loving and tender. In his youth he lived a virtuous life; and at the age of twenty-five married a widow forty years old, during whose lifetime for five-and-twenty years he was a faithful husband to

her alone. Yet it is remarkable that during this period were composed most of those passages of the Coran in which the black-eyed Houries, reserved for Believers in Paradise, are depicted in such glowing colours. Shortly after the death of Khadija, he married again; but it was not till the mature age of fifty-four that he made the dangerous trial of polygamy, by taking Ayesha, yet a child, as the rival of Sawda. Once the natural limits of restraint were overpassed, Mahomet fell a prey to his strong passion for the sex. In his fifty-sixth year he married Haphsa; and the following year, in two succeeding months, Zeinab bint Khozeima and Omm Salma. But his desires were not to be satisfied by the range of a harem already in advance of Arab custom, and more numerous than was permitted to any of his followers; rather, as age advanced they were stimulated to seek for new and varied indulgence. A few months after his nuptials with Zeinab and Omm Salma, the charms of a second Zeinab were by accident discovered too fully before his admiring gaze. She was the wife of Zeid, his adopted son and bosom friend; but he was unable to smother the flame she had kindled in his breast; and, by divine command, she was taken to his embrace. In the same year he wedded a seventh wife, and also a concubine. And at last, when he was full threescore years of age, no fewer than three new wives, besides Mary the Coptic slave, were within the space of seven months added to his already well-filled harem. The bare recital of these facts may justify the saying of Ibn Abbas: 'Verily the chiefest among the Moslems (meaning Mahomet) was the foremost of them in his passion for women;'—a fatal example imitated too readily by his followers, who here adopt the Prince of Medina, rather than the Prophet of Mecca, for their pattern.

Thus the social and domestic life of Mahomet, fairly and impartially viewed, is seen to be chequered by light and shade. While there is much to form the subject of nearly unqualified praise, there is likewise much which cannot be spoken of but in terms of reprobation.

Proceeding now to consider the religious and prophetic character of Mahomet, the first point which strikes the biographer is his constant and vivid sense of a special and all-pervading Providence. This conviction moulded his thoughts and designs, from the minutest actions in private and social

Conviction
of special
providence

life to the grand conception that he was destined to be the Reformer of his people and of all Arabia. He never entered a company 'but he sat down and rose up with the mention of the Lord.' When the first fruits of the season were brought to him, he would kiss them, place them upon his eyes, and say: 'Lord, as thou hast shown us the first, show unto us likewise the last.' In trouble and affliction, as well as in prosperity and joy, he ever saw and humbly acknowledged the hand of God. A fixed persuasion that every incident, small and great, is ordered by the divine will, led to the strong expressions of predestination which abound in the Coran. It is the Lord who turneth the hearts of mankind: and alike faith in the believer, and unbelief in the infidel, are the result of the divine fiat. The hour and place of every man's death, as all other events in his life, are established by the same decree; and the timid believer might in vain seek to avert the stroke by shunning the field of battle. But this persuasion was far removed from the belief in a blind and inexorable fate; for Mahomet held the progress of events in the divine hand to be amenable to the influence of prayer. He was not slow to attribute the conversion of a scoffer like Omar, or the removal of an impending misfortune (as the deliverance of Medina from the Confederate hosts), to the effect of his own earnest petitions to the Lord. On the other hand, he was often the subject of superstitious dread. He feared to sit down in a dark place until a lamp had been lighted; and his apprehension was at times raised by the wind and clouds. He would fetch prognostications from the manner in which a sword was drawn from the scabbard. A special virtue was attributed to being cupped an even number of times, and on a certain day of the week and month. He was also guided by omens drawn from dreams: but these may, perhaps, have been regarded by him as intimations of the divine will.

**Mahomet's
unwavering
steadfastness
at Mecca**

The growth in the mind of Mahomet of the conviction that he was appointed to be a Prophet and Reformer is intimately connected with his belief in a special Providence embracing the spiritual as well as material world; and out of that conviction arose the confidence that the Almighty would crown his mission with success. While still at Mecca, there is no reason to doubt that the questionings and

aspirations of his inner soul were regarded by him as proceeding directly from God. The light which gradually illuminated his mind with a knowledge of the divine unity and perfections, and of the duties and destiny of man,—light amidst gross darkness,—must have emanated from the same source; and He who in his own good pleasure had thus begun the work would surely carry it through to a successful ending. What was Mahomet himself but an instrument in the hand of the great Worker? Such, no doubt, were the thoughts which strengthened him, alone and unsupported, to brave for many weary years the taunts and persecutions of a whole people. In estimating the signal moral courage thus displayed, it must not be overlooked that for what is ordinarily termed *physical* courage Mahomet was not remarkable. It may be doubted whether he ever engaged personally in active conflict on the battle-field. Though he often accompanied his forces, he never himself led them into action, or exposed his person to avoidable danger. And there were occasions on which (as when challenged by Abdallah to spare the Cainucca, alarmed by the altercation at the wells of Moraisi, or pressed by the mob at Jierrána) he showed symptoms of a faint heart. Yet even so, it only brings out in higher relief the singular display of moral daring. Let us for a moment look to the period when a ban was proclaimed at Mecca against all citizens, whether professed converts or not, who espoused his cause or ventured to protect him; and when along with these, he was shut up in the *Sheb* or quarter of Abu Tálib, and there for three years, without prospect of relief, endured want and hardship. Strong and steadfast must have been the motives which enabled him, amidst such opposition and apparent hopelessness of success, to maintain his principles unshaken. No sooner was he released from this restraint than, despairing of his native city, he went forth solitary and unaided to Tayif, and there summoned its rulers and inhabitants to repentance, with the message which he said he had from his Lord; on the third day he was driven out of the town with ignominy, while blood flowed from wounds inflicted on him by the populace. Retiring to a little distance, he poured forth his complaint to God, and then returned to Mecca, there to resume the same outwardly hopeless cause, with the same high confidence in its ultimate

success. We search in vain through the pages of profane history for a parallel to the struggle in which for thirteen years the Prophet of Arabia, in the face of discouragement and threats, rejection and persecution, retained thus his faith unwavering, preached repentance, and denounced God's wrath against his godless fellow-citizens. Surrounded by a little band of faithful men and women, he met insults, menace, and danger with a lofty and patient trust in the future. And when at last the promise of safety came from a distant quarter he calmly waited until his followers had all departed, and then disappeared from amongst an ungrateful and rebellious people.

And at
Medina

Not less marked was the firm front and unchanging faith in eventual victory, which at Medina bore him through seven years of mortal conflict with his native city; and enabled him, sometimes even under defeat, and while his influence and authority were yet limited and precarious even in the city of his adoption, to speak and to act in the constant and undoubted expectation of victory.

Denuncia-
tion of
polytheism
and idola-
try

From the earliest period of his religious convictions, the UNITY, or idea of ONE great Being guiding with almighty power and wisdom all creation, and yet infinitely above it, gained a thorough possession of his mind. Polytheism and idolatry, at variance with this grand principle, were indignantly condemned as levelling the Creator with the creature. On one occasion alone did Mahomet swerve from this position, when he admitted that the goddesses of Mecca might be adored as a medium of approach to God. But the inconsistency was soon perceived; and Mahomet at once retraced his steps. Never before nor afterwards did the Prophet deviate from the stern denunciation of idolatry.

Earnest-
ness and
honesty of
Mahomet
at Mecca

As he was himself the subject of convictions thus deep and powerful, it will readily be conceived that his exhortations were distinguished by a corresponding strength and cogency. Master of eloquence, his language was cast in the purest and most persuasive style of Arabian oratory. His fine poetical genius exhausted the imagery of nature in the illustration of spiritual truths; and a vivid imagination enabled him to bring before his people the Resurrection and the Day of judgment, the joys of believers in Paradise, and the agonies of lost spirits in Hell, as close and impending realities. In

ordinary address, his speech was slow, distinct, and emphatic ; but when he preached ' his eye would redden, his voice rise high and loud, and his whole frame agitate with passion, even as if he were warning the people of an enemy about to fall on them the next morning or that very night.' In this thorough earnestness lay the secret of his success. And if these stirring appeals had been given forth as nothing more than what they really were, the outgoings of a warm and active conviction, they would have afforded no ground for cavil ; or, yet a step further, should he have represented them as the teaching of a soul guided by natural inspiration, or even enlightened by divine influence,—such a course would not have differed materially from that trodden by many a sincere, though it may be erring, philanthropist in other ages and other lands. But, in the development of his system, the claims of Mahomet to inspiration far transcended such assumptions. His inspiration was essentially *oracular*. The Prophet was but the passive organ which received and transmitted a heavenly message. His revelations were not the fruit of a subjective process in which the soul, burning with divine life and truth, sought to impress the stamp of its own convictions on those around. The process, on the contrary, was one which Mahomet professed to be entirely external to himself—independent of his own reasoning, affections, and will. The words of inspiration, whether purporting to be a portion of the Coran or a simple message of direction, were produced as a real and objective intimation, conveyed to him immediately from the Almighty or through the angel Gabriel His messenger. Such was the position assumed by Mahomet. How far this conviction was fostered by epileptic or supernatural paroxysms (which do not, however, come prominently to view at least in the later stages of his career) or by cognate physiological phenomena, it is impossible to determine. We may readily admit that at the first Mahomet did believe, or persuaded himself to believe, that his revelations were dictated by a divine agency. In the Meccan period of his life there certainly can be traced no personal ends or unworthy motives belying this conclusion. Mahomet then was nothing more than he professed to be, ' a simple Preacher and a Warner ; ' he was the despised and rejected prophet of a gainsaying people, having no ulterior object but their reformation. He

may have mistaken the right means for effecting this end, but there is no sufficient reason for doubting that he used those means in good faith and with an honest purpose.

At Medina
worldly
motives
mingle
with
spiritual
objects

But the scene changes at Medina. There temporal power, aggrandisement, and self-gratification mingled rapidly with the grand object of the Prophet's life ; and they were sought and attained by just the same instrumentality. Messages from heaven were freely brought down to justify political conduct, in precisely the same manner as to inculcate religious precept. Battles were fought, executions ordered, and territories annexed, under cover of the Almighty's sanction. Nay, even personal indulgences were not only excused but encouraged by the divine approval or command. A special license was produced, allowing the Prophet many wives ; the affair with Mary the Coptic bond-maid was justified in a separate Sura ; and the passion for the wife of his own adopted son and bosom friend was the subject of an inspired message in which the Prophet's scruples were rebuked by God, a divorce permitted, and marriage with the object of his unhallowed desires enjoined. If we say that such ' revelations ' were believed by Mahomet sincerely to bear the divine sanction, it can only be in a modified and peculiar sense. He surely must be held responsible for that belief ; and, in arriving at it, have done violence to his judgment and the better principles of his nature.

Rapid
moral de-
clension
the natural
conse-
quence

As the natural result, we trace from the period of Mahomet's arrival at Medina a marked and rapid declension in the system he inculcated. Intolerance quickly took the place of freedom ; force, of persuasion. The spiritual weapons designed at first for higher objects were no sooner devoted to the purposes of temporal authority, than temporal authority was employed to give weight and temper to those spiritual weapons. The name of the Almighty imparted a terrible strength to the sword of the State ; and the sword of the State yielded a willing return by destroying ' the enemies of God ' and sacrificing them at the shrine of the new religion. ' Slay the unbelievers wheresoever ye find them, ' was now the watchword of Islam. ' Fight in the ways of God until opposition be crushed and the Religion become the Lord's alone. ' The warm and simple devotion breathed by the Prophet and his followers at Mecca, when mingled with worldly motives,

soon became dull and vapid ; while faith degenerated into a fierce fanaticism, or evaporated in a lifeless round of formal ceremonies. In its final evolution, Islam left far behind the toleration of early days when the men of Mecca were told that ' there should be no force in religion,' but that conscience alone must rule. And so also with the former Revelations which yielded the Prophet the first firm foothold for his aspiring step. The Jewish faith, whose pure fountain-head was now so much more accessible than before, as well as the less familiar Gospel, having served his purpose, were in spite of all former protestations of allegiance, cast silently aside. Islam, now resting on the sword, had done with them.

And what have been the effects of the system which, established by such instrumentality, Mahomet has left behind him? We may freely concede that it banished for ever many of the darker elements of superstition for ages shrouding the Peninsula. Idolatry vanished before the battle-cry of Islam ; the doctrine of the Unity and infinite perfections of God, and of a special all-pervading Providence, became a living principle in the hearts and lives of the followers of Mahomet, even as in his own. An absolute surrender and submission to the divine will (the idea embodied in the very name of *Islam*) was demanded as the first requirement of the faith. Nor are social virtues wanting. Brotherly love is inculcated towards all within the circle of the faith ; infanticide proscribed ; orphans to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration ; intoxicating drinks prohibited, so that Mahometanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown to any other creed.

Yet these benefits have been purchased at a costly price. Setting aside considerations of minor import, three radical evils flow from the faith in all ages and in every country, and must continue to flow *so long as the Coran is the standard of belief*. **FIRST** : Polygamy, Divorce, and Slavery strike at the root of public morals, poison domestic life, and disorganise society ; while the Veil removes the female sex from its just position and influence in the world. **SECOND** : freedom of thought and private judgment are crushed and annihilated. Toleration is unknown, and the possibility of free and liberal institutions foreclosed. **THIRD** : a barrier has been interposed against the reception of Christianity. They

Benefits of
Mahomet-
anism ;

Out-
weighed by
its evils

labour under a miserable delusion who suppose that Mahometanism paves the way for a purer faith. No system could have been devised with more consummate skill for shutting out the nations over which it has sway from the Christian faith; for there is in it just so much truth, truth borrowed from previous Revelations yet cast in another mould, as to divert attention from the need of more. *Idolatrous Arabia* (judging from the analogy of other nations) might have been aroused to spiritual life, and the adoption of the faith of Jesus; while *Mahometan Arabia* is, to the human eye, sealed against the benign influences of the Gospel. Many a flourishing land in Africa and in Asia which once rejoiced in the light and liberty of Christianity, is now crushed and overspread by darkness gross and barbarous. It is as if their day of grace had come and gone, and there remained to them 'no more sacrifice for sins.' That a brighter morn will yet dawn on these countries we may not doubt; but the history of the past, and the condition of the present, is not the less true and sad. The sword of Mahomet, and the Coran, are the most stubborn enemies of Civilisation, Liberty, and Truth, which the world has yet known.

Inconsistencies run through the character of Mahomet

In conclusion, I would warn the reader against seeking to portray for himself a character in all its parts consistent, as that of Mahomet. On the contrary, the strangest inconsistencies were blent (as we so often find) throughout his life. The student will trace for himself how pure and lofty aspirations were first tinged, and then gradually lowered, by a half unconscious self-deception. Nor will he fail to observe that simultaneously with the anxious desire to extinguish idolatry and promote religion and virtue in the world, there arose in his later years a tendency to self-indulgence; till in the end, assuming to be the favourite of Heaven, he justified himself by 'revelations,' releasing himself in some cases from social proprieties, and the commonest obligations of self-restraint. He will remark that while Mahomet cherished a kind and tender disposition, 'weeping with them that weep' and binding to his person the hearts of his followers by the ready and self-sacrificing offices of love and friendship, he could yet gloat over the massacre of an entire tribe, and savagely consign an innocent babe to the fires of hell. Inconsistencies such as these continually present themselves from the period of

the Prophet's arrival at Medina. It is by the study of them that his character must be rightly apprehended. And the key may be found, I believe, in the chapter on the doubts and difficulties that beset his first search after truth, and how he emerged therefrom. When once he dared to assume the name of the Most High as the seal and authority of his own words and actions, the germ was laid from which were developed the perilous inconsistencies of his later life.

MAHOMET and the CORAN, the author of Islam and the instrument by which he achieved success, are themes worthy the earnest attention of mankind. If I have at all succeeded in contributing some fresh materials towards the formation of a correct judgment upon them, many hours of study, snatched not without difficulty from engrossing avocations, will have secured an ample recompense. Conclusion

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER XXXVII

DESCRIPTION OF MAHOMET FROM THE BIOGRAPHY OF WAKIDY'S
SECRETARY

Extracts
from the
Secretary
of Wakidy

IN this appendix I offer the reader a selection from the Secretary of Wakidy's chapter on the person and character of Mahomet. The traditions will, I trust, prove interesting in themselves, as well as illustrate the style of the Prophet's biographers.

Prophecies
regarding
Mahomet

Description of Mahomet in the Old Testament and the Gospel.—Mahomet was thus foretold: 'O Prophet! We have sent thee to be a Witness and a Preacher of good tidings, and a Warner, and a Defender of the Gentiles. Thou art my servant and my messenger. I have called thee *Al Mutawakkil* (he that trusteth in the Lord). He shall not be one that doeth iniquity, nor one that crieth aloud in the streets; he shall not recompense evil for evil, but he shall be one that passeth over and forgiveth. His kingdom shall be Syria. Mahomet is my elected servant; he shall not be severe nor cruel. I shall not take him away by death, till he make straight the crooked religion; and till the people say, *There is no God but the Lord alone*. He shall open the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, and the covered hearts.' These are evident accommodations of passages in Isaiah xlii. and lxi. In one set of traditions from Ayesha, she speaks of them as prophecies *from the Gospel*, in ignorance that they are quoted there (Matt. xii. 18) as applying to Jesus.

His dispo-
sition

His disposition.—When Ayesha was questioned about Mahomet she used to say: 'He was a man just such as yourselves; he laughed often and smiled much.' *But how would he occupy himself at home?* 'Even as any of you occupy yourselves. He would mend his clothes, and cobble his shoes. He used to help me in my household duties; but what he did oftenest was to sew. If he had the choice between two matters, he would always choose the easier, so as that no sin accrued therefrom. He never took revenge excepting where the honour of God was concerned. When angry with any person he would say, "What

hath taken such a one that he should soil his forehead in the mud! ”

His humility was shown by his riding upon asses, by his accepting the invitation even of slaves, and when mounted by his taking another behind him. He would say : ‘ I sit at meals as a servant doeth, and I eat like a servant : for I really am a servant ; ’ and he would sit as one that was always ready to rise. He discouraged (supererogatory) fasting, and works of mortification. When seated with his followers, he would remain long silent at a time. In the Mosque at Medina, they used to repeat pieces of poetry, and tell stories regarding the incidents that occurred in the ‘ days of ignorance, ’ and laugh ; and Mahomet, listening to them, would smile at what they said. He hated nothing more than lying ; and whenever he knew that any of his followers had erred in this respect, he would hold himself aloof from them until he was assured of their repentance.

His manner of speech.—He did not speak rapidly, running his words into one another, but enunciated each syllable distinctly, so that what he said was imprinted in the memory of every one who heard him. When at public prayers, it might be known from a distance that he was speaking by the motion of his beard. He never read in a singing or chanting style ; but he would draw out his voice, resting at certain places. Thus, in the prefatory words of a Sura, he would pause after *bismillahi*, after *al Rahmân*, and again after *al Rahîm*. *His walking.*—One says that at a funeral he saw Mahomet walking, and remarked to a friend how rapidly he moved along ; it seemed as if he ‘ were doubling up the ground. ’ He used to walk so rapidly that the people half ran behind him, and could hardly keep up with him.

His eating.—He never ate reclining, for Gabriel had told him that such was the manner of kings ; nor had he ever two followers to walk behind him. He used to eat with his thumb and his two forefingers ; and when he had done would lick them, beginning with the middle one. When offered by Gabriel the valley of Mecca full of gold, he preferred to forego it ; saying, that when he was hungry he would come before the Lord lowly, and when full, with praise. *Excellence of his Morals.*—A servant maid being once long in returning from an errand, Mahomet was annoyed and said : ‘ If it were not for the law of retaliation, I should have punished you with this toothpick ’ (i.e. with an inappreciably light punishment).

Attitude at Prayers.—He used to stand for such a length of time at prayer that his legs would swell. When remonstrated with, he said : ‘ What ! Shall I not behave as a thankful servant should ? ’ He never yawned at prayer. When he sneezed he did

Humility

Speech

Gait

Habits in eating

Moderation

Customs at prayer

so with a subdued voice, covering his face. At funerals he never rode ; he would remain silent on such occasions, as if conversing with himself, so that the people used to think he was holding communication with the dead.

Appear-
ance,
habits, &c.

His personal appearance and habits.—He used to wear two garments. His *izâr* (under-garment) hung down three or four inches below his knees. His mantle was not wrapped round him so as to cover his body, but he would draw the end of it under his shoulder. He used to divide his time into three parts : one was given to God, the second allotted to his family, the third to himself. When public business began to press upon him he gave up one-half of the latter portion to the service of others. When he pointed he did so with his whole hand ; and when he was astonished he turned his hand over (with the palm upwards). In speaking with another, he brought his hand near to the person addressed ; and he would strike the palm of the left, on the thumb of the right, hand. Angry, he would avert his face ; joyful, he would look downwards. He often smiled, and when he laughed his teeth used to appear white as hail-stones. In the interval allotted for the purpose, he received all that came to him, listened to their representations, and occupied himself in disposing of their business and in hearing what they had to tell him. He would say on such occasions : ‘Let those that are here give information regarding that which passeth to them that are absent ; and they that cannot themselves appear to make known their necessities, let others report them to me in their stead ; the Lord will establish the feet of such in the day of judgment.’

Refusal to
make per-
sonal use of
the tithes

While he accepted presents, he refused anything that had been offered as tithe (Sadaca) ; neither would he allow any one of his family to accept what was brought in tithe ; ‘for,’ said he, ‘tithes (or alms) are the impurity of mankind’ (i.e. that which cleanses their impurity). His scruples were so strong, that he would not eat even a date picked up on the road, lest perchance it might have dropped from a tithe load. One day, little Hasan was playing by his grandfather when a basketful of dates was brought in ; on inquiry, Mahomet found that they were tithe, and ordered them to be taken away and given to the poor Refugees. But Hasan, having taken up one to play with, had already put it in his mouth ; the Prophet, seeing this, opened the boy’s mouth, and pulled it out, saying, ‘the family of Mahomet may not eat of the tithes.’

Food
relished

Food which he relished.—Mahomet had a special liking for sweetmeats and honey. A tailor once invited him to his house and placed before him barley bread, with stale suet ; there was also a pumpkin in the dish ; now Mahomet greatly relished the

pumpkin. His servant Anas used to say as he looked at the pumpkin: 'Dear little plant, how the Prophet loved thee!' He was also fond of cucumbers and of undried dates. When a lamb or a kid was being cooked, Mahomet would go to the pot, take out the shoulder and eat it. Abu Râfi tells us: 'I once slew a kid and dressed it. The Prophet asked me for the forequarter and I gave it to him. "Give me another," he said; and I gave him the second. Then he asked for a third. "O Prophet!" I replied, "there are but two forequarters to a kid." Nay, said Mahomet, *hadst thou remained silent, thou wouldst have handed to me as many forequarters as I asked for.*' He used to eat moist dates and cooked food together. What he most relished was a mess of bread cooked with meat, and a dish of dates dressed with butter and milk. When he ate fresh dates he would keep such as were bad in his hand. One asked on a certain occasion that he would give him the dates so rejected. 'Not so,' he answered; '*what I do not like for myself, I do not like to give to thee.*' Once a tray of fresh dates was brought to him; he sat down on his knees, and taking them up by handfuls, sent a handful to each of his wives; then taking another handful, he ate it himself. He kept throwing the date stones on his left side, and the domestic fowls came and ate them up. He used to have sweet (rain) water kept for his use.

Food which he disliked.—On Mahomet's first arrival at Medina, Abu Ayub used to send him portions of baked food. On one occasion the dinner was returned uneaten, without even the marks of the Prophet's fingers. On being asked the reason, he explained that he had refrained from the dish because of the onions that were in it, for the angel which visited him disliked onions; but others he said might freely eat of them. So also with garlic; he would never allow it to pass his lips; '*for,*' said he, '*I have intercourse with one (meaning Gabriel) with whom ye have not.*' He disliked flour made of almonds, saying that it was 'spendthrift's food.' He would never partake of the large lizard, for he thought it might have been the beast into which a party of the children of Israel were changed; but he said there was no harm in others eating it. When drinking milk, Mahomet once said, 'When a man eateth let him pray thus: *O Lord! grant Thy blessing upon this, and feed me with better than this!* But to whomsoever the Lord giveth milk to drink, let him say: *O Lord! grant Thy blessing upon this, and vouch afe unto me an increase thereof;* for there is no other thing which combineth both food and drink save milk alone.'

Food dis-
liked

Mahomet's fondness for women and scents.—A great array of traditions are produced to prove that the Prophet liked these of

Women
and scents

all things in the world the best. Ayesha used to say : 'The Prophet loved three things—women, scents, and food ; he had his heart's desire of the two first, but not of the last.' In respect to scents, traditions have been already quoted in the Supplement to Chapter XVII.

Straitened
means at
Medina

Narrowness of means at Medina.—A long section is devoted to this subject, containing many such traditions as the following. Fatima once brought Mahomet a piece of bread ; it was the first that had passed his lips for three days. Ayesha tells us that for months together Mahomet did not get a full meal. 'Months used to pass,' she says again, 'and no fire would be lighted in Mahomet's house either for baking bread or cooking meat. *How then did ye live?* By the "two black things" (dates and water), and by what the citizens used to send unto us ; the Lord requite them ! Such of them as had milch cattle would send us a little milk. The Prophet never enjoyed the luxury of two kinds of food the same day ; if he had flesh there was nothing else ; and so if he had dates ; so likewise if he had bread. We possessed no sieves, but used to bruise the grain and blow off the husks. One night Abu Bekr sent Mahomet the leg of a kid. Ayesha held it while the Prophet cut off a piece for himself in the dark ; and in his turn the Prophet held it while Ayesha cut off a piece for herself. "*What,*" exclaimed the listeners, "*and ye ate without a lamp!*" "Yea," replied Ayesha ; "*had we possessed oil for a lamp, think ye not that we should have lighted it for our food?*" "

Abu Hureira explains the scarcity thus : 'It arose,' he says, 'from the great number of Mahomet's visitors and guests ; for he never sat down to food but there were some followers with him. Even the conquest of Kheibar did not put an end to the scarcity ; because Medina has an intractable soil, which is ordinarily cultivated for dates only, the staple food of its inhabitants. There did not exist in the country means of support sufficient for the greatly increased population. Its fruits are the commonest products of the soil, which want little water ; and such water as was needed the people used to carry on their backs, for in these days they had few camels. One year, moreover, a disease (premature shedding) smote the palms, and the harvest failed. It is true that a dish used to be sent for the Prophet's table from the house of Sad ibn Obâda, every day until his death, and also in the same manner by other Citizens ; and the Refugees used to aid likewise ; but the claims upon the Prophet increased greatly, from the number of his wives and dependents.'

I have repeatedly noticed these stories, and have attributed them to the frugal habits of Mahomet compared with the sudden

growth of wealth and splendour in the Caliphate. The products of the surrounding country were, no doubt, at first inadequate to the wants of the great numbers who flocked with Mahomet to Medina. But it is evident that although Mahomet, in the early years of the Hegira, may have been reduced to common fare, he could hardly have ever suffered *want*, especially with so many devoted followers about him. It is the vivid contrast between the luxury prevalent in the days when tradition was growing up, and the simple life of Mahomet, which mainly gave rise to these ideas. Thus Abd al Rahmân, when in after years he used to fare sumptuously on fine bread and every variety of meats, would weep while looking at his richly furnished table, thinking of the Prophet's straitened fare. Another upbraids his comrade who could not live without bread made of the finest flour: 'What!' said he; 'the Prophet of the Lord, to the last hour of his life, never had two full meals on the same day, of bread and of oil; and behold, thou and thy fellows vainly luxuriate on the delicacies of this life, as if ye were children!'

The 'Seal' of prophecy on the back of Mahomet.—This, says one, 'Seal' of
prophecy was a protuberance on the Prophet's back of the size and appearance of a pigeon's egg. Ibn Sarjas describes it as having been as large as his closed fist with moles round about it. Abu Ramtha, whose family were skilled in surgery, offered to remove it, but Mahomet refused, saying: '*The Physician thereof is He who placed it where it is.*' According to another tradition, Mahomet said to Abu Ramtha: '*Come hither and touch my back;*' which he did, drawing his fingers over the prophetic seal, and, 'behold there was a collection of hairs upon the spot.' I have not before noticed this 'Seal,' because it is so surrounded with supernatural tales that it is extremely difficult even to conjecture what it really was. It is said to have been the *divine* seal which, according to the Scriptures, marked Mahomet as the last of the Prophets. How far Mahomet himself encouraged this idea it is impossible to say. From the traditions quoted above, it would seem to have been nothing more than a mole of unusual size, and the saying of Mahomet that 'God had placed it there' was probably the germ of the supernatural associations which grew up concerning it. Had the Prophet really attributed any divine virtue to this mole, he would have spoken very differently to one who offered to lance or remove it.

On his hair.—It reached, a follower tells us, to his shoulders; Hair according to another to the tip of his ears. His hair used to be combed; it was neither curling nor smooth. He had, says one, four curled locks. His hair was ordinarily parted, but he did not care if it was not so. According to another tradition,

L L

- ‘The Jews and Christians used to let their hair fall down, while the heathen parted it. Now Mahomet loved to follow the people of the Book in matters concerning which he had no express command. So he used to let down his hair without parting it. Subsequently, however, he fell into the habit of parting it.’ *On his being cupped.*—Some of the many traditions on this head have been quoted elsewhere. It was a cure which Gabriel directed him to make use of. He had the blood buried lest the dogs should get at it. On one occasion, Mahomet having fainted after being cupped, an Arab is said to have gone back from the profession of Islam. *On his moustache.*—Mahomet used to clip his moustache. A Magian once came to him and said: ‘You ought to clip your beard and allow your moustaches to grow.’ ‘Nay,’ said the Prophet, ‘for my Lord hath commanded me to clip the moustaches and allow the beard to grow.’
- On his dress.*—Various traditions are quoted on the different colours he used to wear,—white chiefly, but also red, yellow, and green. He sometimes put on woollen clothes. Ayesha exhibited a piece of woollen stuff in which she swore that Mahomet died. She said that he once had a black woollen dress; and she still remembered, as she spoke, the contrast between the Prophet’s fair skin, and the black cloth. ‘The odour of it, however, becoming unpleasant, he cast it off,—for he loved sweet odours.’ He entered Mecca on the taking of the city (some say) with a black turban. He had also a black standard. The end of his turban used to hang down between his shoulders. He once received the present of a scarf to be worn as a turban; it had a figured or spotted fringe, and this he cut off before wearing it. He was very fond of striped Yemen stuffs. He used to wrap his turban many times round his head, and ‘the lower edge of it would appear like the soiled clothes of an oil-dealer.’ He once prayed in a silken dress, and then cast it aside with abhorrence, saying: ‘*Such stuff it doth not become the pious to wear.*’ On another occasion, as he prayed in a figured or spotted mantle, the spots attracted his notice; when he had ended he said: ‘*Take away that mantle, for verily it hath distracted me in my prayers, and bring me a common one.*’ His sleeve ended at the wrist. The robes in which he was in the habit of receiving embassies, and his fine Hadhramaut mantle, remained with the Caliphs; when worn or rent these garments were mended with fresh cloth; and in after times the Caliphs used to wear them at the festivals. When he put on new clothes, whether an undergarment, a girdle, or a turban, the Prophet would offer up a prayer such as this: ‘Praise be to the Lord who hath clothed me with that which shall hide my nakedness and adorn me while I live. I

pray Thee for the good that is in this raiment, and I seek refuge from the evil that is in the same.' Mahomet had a piece of tanned leather which was ordinarily spread for him in the Mosque to pray upon. He had also a mat of palm-fibre for the same purpose : this was always taken, after the public prayers, into his wives' apartments for use there.

On his golden ring.—Mahomet had a ring made of gold ; he used to wear it, with the stone inwards, on his right hand. The people began to follow his example and make rings of gold for themselves. Thereupon the Prophet, ascending the pulpit, sat down and, taking off the ring, said : '*By the Lord, I will not wear this ring ever again ;*' so saying, he threw it from him. And all the people did likewise. According to another tradition, he cast it away because it had distracted his attention when preaching ; or, again, because the people were attracted by it. He then prohibited the use altogether of golden signet rings. *On his silver ring.*—Already mentioned at p. lix.

Golden ring

Silver ring

On his shoes.—His servant, Anas, had charge of his shoes and of his water-pot. After his master's death Anas used to show the shoes. They were after the Hadhramaut pattern, with two thongs. In the year 100 or 110 A.H., one went to buy shoes at Mecca, and tells us that the shoemaker offered to make them exactly after the model of Mahomet's, which he said he had seen in the possession of Fatima, granddaughter of Abbas. His shoes used to be cobbled. He was in the habit of praying with his shoes on. On one occasion, having taken them off at prayers, all the people did likewise ; but Mahomet told them there was no necessity, for he had merely taken off his own because Gabriel had apprised him that there was some dirty substance attaching to them (cleanliness being required in all the surroundings at prayer). The thongs of his shoes once broke and they mended them for him by adding a new piece ; after the service Mahomet desired the shoes to be taken away and the thongs restored as they were before ; 'for,' said he, 'I was distracted at prayer thereby.'

Shoes

His toothpicks.—Ayesha tells us that Mahomet never lay down, by night or by day, but on waking he applied the toothpick to his teeth before he performed ablution. He used it so much as to wear away his gums. The toothpick was always placed conveniently for him at night, so that, when he got up to pray, he might use it before his lustrations. One says that he saw him with the toothpick in his mouth, and that he kept saying *ad, ad*, as if about to vomit. His toothpicks were made of the green wood of the palm-tree. He never travelled without one. *Articles of toilet.*—Already noticed at p. 321. He very frequently oiled his hair, poured

Toothpicks

Articles of toilet

water on his beard, and applied antimony to his eyes. The Prophet used to snuff *simsim* (sesamum), and wash his hands in a decoction of the wild plum-tree. When he was afraid of forgetting anything, he would tie a thread on his finger or his ring.

Armour

Armour.—Four Sections are devoted to the description of his armour—swords, coats of mail, shields, lances, and bows.

Horses

His horses, &c.—The first horse which Mahomet ever possessed was one he purchased of the Beni Fezâra, for ten ounces of silver, and he called its name *Sabb* (running water), from the easiness of its paces. Mahomet was mounted on it at the battle of Ohod, when there was but one other horse from Medina on the field. He had also a horse called *Sabaha*; he raced it and it won, and he was greatly rejoiced thereat. He had a third horse named *Murtajis* (neigher). When the white mule arrived from Muckoukas, Mahomet sent it to his wife Omm Salma; and she gave some wool and palm-fibre, of which they made a rope and halter. Then he brought out a garment, doubled it fourfold, and throwing it over the back of the mule, straightway mounted it, with one of his followers behind him. This mule survived till the reign of Muavia. Farwa (the Syrian governor said to have died a martyr) sent the Prophet a mule called *Fizza*, and he gave it to Abu Bekr; also an ass, which died on the march back from the Farewell pilgrimage. He had another ass called *Yafur*. Aly was anxious to breed a mule similar to that of Mahomet; but Mahomet told him that 'no one would propose so unnatural

Riding
camels

a cross save one that lacked knowledge.' *Riding camels.*—Besides Al Caswa, Mahomet had a camel called *Adhba*, which in speed outstripped all others. Yet one day an Arab passed it when at its fleetest pace. The Moslems were chagrined at this; but Mahomet reproved them, saying: 'It is the property of the Lord, that whensoever men exalt anything, or seek to exalt it, then He putteth down the same.'

Milch
camels

Milch camels.—Mahomet had twenty milch camels, the same that were plundered at Al Ghâba. Their milk was for the support of his family: every evening they gave two large skinsful. Omm Salma relates: 'Our chief food when we lived with Mahomet was milk. The camels used to be brought from Al Ghâba every evening. I had one called *Arîs*, and Ayesha one called *Al Samra*. The herdman fed them at Al Juania, and brought them to our homes in the evening. There was also one for Mahomet. Hind and Asma, two herdmen, used to feed them, one day at Ohod, the other at Himna. They beat down leaves from the wild trees for them, and on these the camels fed during the night. They were milked for the guests of the Prophet, and his family got what was over.

If the evening drew in and the camels' milk was late in being brought, Mahomet would say : 'The Lord make thirsty him who maketh thirsty the family of Mahomet at night.' *Milch flocks.*—Milch flocks Mahomet had seven goats which Omm Ayman used to tend (this probably refers to an early period of his residence at Medina). His flocks grazed at Ohod and Himna alternately, and were brought back to the house of the wife whose turn it was for Mahomet to be in her chamber. A favourite goat having died, the Prophet desired its skin to be tanned. He attached a peculiar blessing to the possession of goats. 'There is no house,' he would say, 'possessing a goat, but a blessing abideth thereon ; and there is no house possessing three goats, but the angels pass the night there praying for its inmates until the morning.' *Mahomet's servants.*—Servants Fourteen or fifteen persons are mentioned who served the Prophet at various times. His slaves he always freed.

The houses of his wives.—Houses Abdallah ibn Yazid relates that he saw the houses in which the wives of the Prophet dwelt, at the time when Omar ibn al Aziz governor of Medina (about A.H. 100) demolished them. They were built of unburnt bricks, and had separate apartments with partitions of palm-branches, daubed (or built up) with mud ; he counted nine houses, each having separate rooms, in the space extending from the house of Ayesha to the house of Asma daughter of Hosein. Observing the dwelling-place of Omm Salma, he questioned her grandson concerning it ; and he told him that when the Prophet was absent on the expedition to Dumah, Omm Salma built up an addition to her house with a wall of unburnt bricks. When Mahomet returned, he went in to her and asked what new building this was. She replied : 'I purposed, O Prophet, to shut out the glances of men thereby !' Mahomet answered : 'O Omm Salma ! verily, the most unprofitable thing that eateth up the wealth of a believer is building.' A citizen, present at the time, confirmed this account, and added that the curtains (Anglo-Indice, *Purdas*) of the doors were of black hair-cloth. He was present, he said, when the despatch of the Caliph Abd al Mâlik (A.H. 86-88) was read aloud, commanding that these houses should be taken down and the site brought within the area of the Mosque, and he never witnessed sorer weeping than there was amongst the people that day. One exclaimed : 'I wish, by the Lord ! that they would leave these houses alone just as they are ; then would those that spring up hereafter in Medina, and strangers from the ends of the earth, come and see what kind of building sufficed for the Prophet's own abode, and the sight thereof would deter men from extravagance and pride.' There were four houses of unburnt

bricks, with apartments partitioned off by palm-branches; and five houses made of palm-branches built up with mud and without any separate apartments. Each was three yards in length. Some say that they had leather curtains for the doors. One could reach the roof with the hand. The house of Hāritha was next to that of Mahomet. Now whenever Mahomet took to himself a new wife, he added another house to the row, and Hāritha was obliged successively to remove his house, and to build on the space beyond. At last this was repeated so often that the Prophet said to those about him: 'Verily, it shameth me to turn Hāritha over and over again out of his house.'

Properties

Mahomet's private property.—There were seven gardens which Mukheirik the Jew left to Mahomet. Omar ibn Al Aziz, the Caliph, said that, when governor of Medina, he ate of the fruit of these, and never tasted sweeter dates. Others say that these gardens formed a portion of the confiscated estates of the Beni Nadhīr. They were afterwards dedicated perpetually to pious purposes. Mukheirik is said to have been a learned Jewish priest and a leader of the Cainucaa, who 'recognised Mahomet by his marks, and identified him as the promised Prophet.' But the love of his own religion prevailed, so that he did not openly join Islam. Nevertheless, on the day of Ohod he put on his armour, notwithstanding it was the Sabbath day, and went forth with the Moslems and was killed. His corpse was found and was buried near the Moslems; but he was not prayed over, nor did Mahomet beg mercy for his soul then or afterwards; the utmost he would say of him was, '*Mukheirik, the best of the Jews!*' He had large possessions in groves and gardens, and left them all to Mahomet.

Mahomet had three other properties:—I. The confiscated lands of the Beni Nadhīr. The produce of these was appropriated to his own wants. One of the plots was called *Mashruba Omm Ibrahim*, the 'summer garden of (Mary) the mother of Ibrahim,' where the Prophet used to visit her. II. Fadak; the fruits of this were reserved as a fund for indigent travellers. III. The fifth share, and the lands received by capitulation, in Kheibar. These were divided into three parts. Two were devoted for the benefit of the Moslems generally (i.e. for State purposes); the proceeds of the third, Mahomet assigned for the support of his own family; and what remained over he added to the fund for the use of the Moslems.

Wells

Wells from which Mahomet drank.—A variety of wells are enumerated out of which Mahomet drank, and on which he invoked a blessing, spitting into them. One night as he sat by the brink of the well called Gharsh, he said: 'Verily, I am sitting

beside one of the fountains of Paradise.' He praised its water above that of all other wells, and not only drank of it but bathed in it. He also drank from the fountain of Budhâa, taking up the water in both his hands and sipping it. He would send the sick to bathe in this fountain, 'and when they had bathed, it used to be as if they were loosed from their bonds.' The well called Ruma belonged to a man of the Beni Mozeina. Mahomet said that it would be a meritorious deed if any one were to buy this well and make it free to the public. Othman, hearing this, purchased the well for 400 dinars, and attached a pulley to it. Mahomet, again happening to pass the well, and apprised of what Othman had done, prayed the Lord to grant him a reward in Paradise, and calling for a bucket of water drank therefrom, and praised the water, saying that it was both cold and sweet.



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